

Parmenides 1.31-32 and the Status of *Opinion*: A Case for the Negative Reading
on Orthodox and Unorthodox Arrangements

BY

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Jeremy C. DeLong

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Chairperson: Stanley Lombardo

Tom Tuozzo

John Younger

Date Defended: October 7th, 2014

The Thesis Committee for Jeremy C. DeLong
certifies that this is the approved version of the following thesis:

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Chairperson: Stanley Lombardo

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Abstract:

While the meaning of lines 31-32 of Fragment 1 (DK 1.31-32) in Parmenides' epic-style poem seem to have significant implications for the overall argument of the poem, attempts to understand them have resulted in generations of interpretative deadlock. After considering the problem, I argue that the best way to make sense of these lines in relation to the overall poem is to hold that Parmenides consistently holds mortal opinions in low-regard, and that the third section of the poem (*Opinion*) should be far more limited in scope than has been traditionally thought. Not only is this negative reading preferable on the traditional arrangement of the poem, but the case for it is significantly strengthened on certain suggested rearrangements of the poem—rearrangements which are strongly supported independently of any interpretative commitments.

In what follows, readers will first find: a) an introduction to the overall poem, b) a survey and analysis of the variant Greek texts and modern translations of lines 31-32, and c) an explication of the primary interpretative dilemma modern commentators face in interpreting these lines. This provides both an in-depth summary and review of the literature on this particular topic, filling an important lacuna in the literature.

With these considerations in hand, the essay will turn to its secondary aim—considering how the interpretative dilemma might best be resolved. The relevant challenges for both positive and negative readings are considered under the traditional ordering (Diels-Kranz) of the poem. Having established the negative reading of lines 1.31-32 to be preferable on the traditional arrangement, several recently proposed rearrangements are considered, in terms of

what impacts the arguments for their respective changes to the poem, if acceptable, might have for our understanding of these problematic lines and the negative reading. Again, it is concluded that the particular arguments for rearrangement that are considered can only aid the negative reading.

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ἀλλ' ἔμπης καὶ ταῦτα μαθήσεται, ὡς τὰ δοκοῦντα
 χρῆν δοκίμως εἶναι διὰ παντὸς πάντα περ ὄντα

“But nevertheless, you will also learn these things—how the things accepted to be, acceptably ought to have been accepted: all things, altogether, just as *beings*.”

--Parmenides, *On Nature* (DK 1.31-32)

Part I: Introduction

Given the fragmentary nature of the extant Pre-Socratic texts, the relatively few lines we do have often end up bearing a far greater interpretative burden than they should. This is particularly the case for Fragment 1, lines 31-32 (DK 1.31-32)—the generally accepted conclusion to the *Proem* of Parmenides' sole known work, *On Nature* (ΠΕΡΙ ΦΥΣΕΩΣ).¹ In conjunction with the three lines immediately antecedent, we seem to have a programmatic outline for the overall text, which has traditionally been understood to be linear in sequence. Since so much of the latter text is missing, these final lines in the proem could prove to be the main textual source for understanding the overall structure and philosophical thrust of the text. Unfortunately, the meaning of lines 31-32 themselves is far from clear.

A close reading of the textual evidence quickly reveals that one cannot base interpretative views of these lines solely upon the Greek itself: there is at least one major variance in the textual transmission; the grammar is abstruse; the forms and syntax allow for

¹ I say “generally accepted” here because there is some question as to whether it is correct to take these lines, transmitted by Simplicius, as the correct ending of the *Proem*. Wherever these lines, or any other lines/fragments, should ultimately belong in the poem, I will consistently refer to the fragments and their lines by the traditional numbering from Diels-Kranz (DK). This introductory line also assumes, of course, that Parmenides did only write one cohesive work that has been transmitted through fragmented quotations. If one were able to demonstrate that Parmenides wrote several distinct works that have been conflated, rather simple solutions to the tensions addressed below might be had. However, I do not see how such an argument could be persuasive, given the evidence we have. H. Diels and W. Kranz, eds. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Berlin: Weidmann. [“DK”] 6th ed. 1951.

very different readings; and the referents are ambiguous. Thus, interpretative readings of these lines tend to be largely influenced by other textual evidence and philosophical considerations, both internal and external to the text. However, since these lines themselves might happen to be the *only* extant evidence undercutting any particular interpretation in the first place, concerns that we may be led astray by circular reasoning and/or anachronistic analyses are well-founded. The lack of any obvious or unproblematic way forward here has resulted in pervasive and persistent disagreement amongst interpreters. Nevertheless, these lines must be engaged by any serious interpretative endeavor.²

Since understanding what exactly DK 1.31-32 says in the context of the overall poem must come before any overall interpretative considerations of the poem, the first aim of this essay is to provide: a) an introduction to the overall poem, b) a survey and analysis of the variant Greek texts and modern translations of lines 31-32, and c) an explication of the primary interpretative dilemma modern commentators face in interpreting these lines in relation to the

² They must be dealt with even if one takes the rare view that these lines are not genuine. For example, Tarrant argues that due to the lack of attestation by later thinkers— especially those whose own interpretative views could have been far better supported by including these lines (i.e. Neo-Platonists)—along with the non-epic contractions in the participles, there is good reason to doubt their veracity. Instead, Tarrant suggests, they were in fact added to the prologue by even later Neo-Platonists, based upon their prior interpretative commitments of the poem. Harold Tarrant “The Conclusion of Parmenides’ Poem,” *Apeiron* 17.1 (1983): 73-84. While Tarrant is correct to point out the paucity of attestation by later thinkers, there are alternative possibilities for this lacking (e.g. simple historical accident, or ancient commentators did not know what to do with the lines any more than modern commentators, and so omitted them consciously). Furthermore, questioning the sole source of these lines (Simplicius) would also seem to warrant calling into question a number of other lines for which Simplicius is the only source, or the only one who provides any guidance for placement of the fragments. In any case, this essay will proceed on the brute assumption that lines 31-32 are in fact genuine lines from Parmenides (even if their placement may be debatable), on the basis that Simplicius is a reliable source, while acknowledging Tarrant’s challenge as a logically possible, albeit unpersuasive, alternative to dealing with these puzzling lines. One must also make sense of these lines even if one wants to agree with Kurfess—that Parmenides resorted to the sort of repetition found in other epic poetry, and claim that these lines actually come later in the poem (favoring Sextus’ version of the entire *Proem*, which provides Fragment 1.1-30, then jumps to the current Frag. 7.2-7). Christopher John Kurfess, *Restoring Parmenides’ Poem: Essays Towards a New Arrangement of the Fragments Based on a Reassessment of the Original Sources*, Doctoral Dissertation (Ann Arbor: University of Pittsburgh, Proquest/UMI) 2012. (Publication No. [3537944]).

overall poem. This provides both an in-depth summary and review of the literature on this particular topic, filling an important lacuna in the literature.

With these considerations in hand, the essay will turn to its secondary aim—considering how this interpretative dilemma might best be resolved. To address this issue, I first consider the challenges each view faces on the traditional arrangement of the poem, and evaluate which one on balance seems preferable. Next, several recent arguments which challenge the orthodox reconstruction of the Parmenides' poem are considered, both in terms of: a) what impacts these changes—if acceptable—might have for our understanding of these problematic lines, and b) whether they are convincing modifications commentators should accept.

The reasoning for considering rearrangements of the poem here is simple. First, if we find ourselves in persistent *aporia*—such as the persistent interpretative dilemma over DK 1.31-32—it is often a result of our failure to question some basic (yet ultimately mistaken) assumption(s). Since the fragmentary nature of the text itself is clearly the greatest obstacle Parmenidean scholars face, some of our problematic assumptions may very well lie in accepting the orthodox reconstruction of the poem, and challenging these assumptions might prove more fruitful than simply rehashing the interpretative dilemma on already well-trodden grounds. Second, not only do these recent proposals for rearrangement largely await critical treatment in the literature on their own merits, the arguments for them stop short of extensive consideration of how they might affect interpretations of the poem overall, especially in terms of understanding DK 1.31-32. These are questions well-worth considering.

Ultimately, it will be concluded that the “negative” reading of lines DK 1.31-32 and the status of *Opinion* is preferable to the more “positive” reading—even on the traditional

arrangement. However, it remains understandable that some will remain unconvinced of the negative reading in the face of an (apparently) extensive *Opinion*, with passages that can certainly seem to present some positive account. This is where the arguments for rearrangement can be helpful. Once these arguments (or at least certain parts of them) are understood and accepted, and it is recognized how they: a) emphasize the applicability of the conclusions in *Truth* to *Opinion*, and b) imply that a more restricted understanding of the scope and content of *Opinion* is warranted—then the “negative” reading of lines 31-32 becomes even more attractive than the orthodox reconstruction has suggested.

Introduction to Parmenides’ Poem (Orthodox Arrangement)

The extant 154 lines of Parmenides’ fragmentary epic poem are traditionally divided into three sections, arranged in the following linear order—*Proem*, *Truth*, and *Opinion*. However, the ordering, connectedness, and completeness of each section decreases drastically, as the text is generally thought to unfold.

Uncontroversially, the majority of the lines traditionally assigned to the *Proem* (DK 1.1-30) come first, having been explicitly reported to be the beginning, and quoted together, by Sextus Empiricus. This section is considered complete (or nearly so) with the addition of lines 31-32 from a different source (Simplicius).³ Overall, the lines all seem to tell a coherent story, without any noticeable gaps. In this section, the reader is presented with a mythical account of

³ While Sextus alone quotes lines 1-27 altogether, and while Lines 28-30 are reported by several additional sources (Diogenes Laertius, Plutarch, Clement, and Proclus), Simplicius *alone* cites lines 31-32 (following two lines that are nearly identical to lines 28-30 from Sextus). Sextus, however, continues on after line 30 with lines from the current Frag 7.2-7. Clearly, if we are to accept lines 31-32 as genuinely belonging here in the *Proem*, and deny Sextus’ report that 1.30 is followed by 7.2, then Sextus did not provide the complete *Proem*, but made a large jump forward in the poem. This recognition leaves room to think there may still be further lines that properly belong to this section, providing some additional support for Bicknell’s argument for the placement of Frag. 10 immediately after lines 31-32. P. J. Bicknell, “Parmenides’ Fragment 10,” *Hermes* 46 (1968) 629-31.

a young man traveling along an ethereal and/or cosmic path,, which is often considered autobiographical of Parmenides' own journey towards philosophical enlightenment. Likely ending up in the underworld, the youth has come to learn the truth about reality from (a likewise unnamed) goddess. Upon his arrival, the goddess welcomes the youth, and then appears to provide a programmatic outline of what is to be discussed in the poem:

“...And it is necessary for you to learn all things, (28b)

Both the still heart of persuasive truth,

And the opinions of mortals, in which there is no trustworthy persuasion.⁴ (30)

That the youth is supposed to learn the truth about reality (DK 1.29) is also uncontroversial, and traditionally understood to be satisfied by DK 2-8.49, which comprise the second major section of the poem, commonly referred to as ‘*Truth*’.

Assigning these particular fragments to *Truth* is well-grounded, and internal consistency highly recommends the particular ordering of the fragments mentioned above (or at least something very similar).⁵ The bulk of this traditionally-formulated section (DK 7-8) was quoted

⁴ χρεῶν δέ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι, ἡμὲν Ἀληθείης εὐπειθέος ἀτρεμῆς ἦτορ, ἡδὲ βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἔνι πίστις ἀληθῆς.

⁵ DK 2 advances the lesson promised to be learnt from DK 1. 28b-29—how learning “persuasive truth” requires positing *Being* instead of not-being. DK 3 provides the epistemic test that will serve as the background premise to the arguments in DK 8—that there is a strong relationship between thinking and being. DK 4 is more controversial in its assignment to *Truth*. DK 4 shares some common imagery and language with DK 1. 31-32 (Cf. the “παντὸς παντα” of DK 1 with the “πάντη πάντως” of DK 4). Thus, if the latter were moved to *Opinion* (Kurfess’ suggestion), then perhaps DK 4 should also be. However, this seems extremely unlikely, given the emphasis on investigation via reason in this fragment. DK 5 is far more “moveable” in terms of position than the others seem to be. For instance, Coxon (reasonably) moves DK 5 to immediately follow DK 1, based upon the implication that the line is introductory in nature: “It is indifferent to me whence I begin, for to that place I shall come back again.” A. H. Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides*. Richard McKirahan, ed. Revised and Expanded Edition (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2009). Coxon’s translation. DK 6 involves a significant controversy about the number of “ways of inquiry” present in Parmenides’ poem, and contains one of the most negative passages about mortals and their ways of understanding, which could be understood as a part of a negative, transitional introduction to *Opinion*. If any fragment traditionally placed in *Truth* is a candidate to be moved to *Opinion* based purely on content, DK 6 would be the primary suspect, with DK 4 and DK 5 following, in order of likelihood. However, Simplicius’ explicit testimony that DK 6.8-9a precedes DK 7.2 and DK 8.1-14 makes this highly unlikely. (*comm. A’s phys.* 78.1-10) This is the major tension underlying most arguments for rearrangement—one either trusts Simplicius’ explicit testimony, or one does not. If the former, the orthodox arrangement is hard to challenge; if

at length by Simplicius, attempting to preserve what he saw as the most important philosophical aspects of the poem—a work Simplicius noted to already be rare in his time. Due to their novel philosophical content, and relative completeness, these lines have received far more attention than the rest of the extant poem. For this essay, the important upshots from this section are twofold. First, “that which can be conceived of” is the primary guidepost for what exists, and “that which cannot be conceived” (i.e. not-being), does not exist. Secondly, the goddess uses this epistemic-ontological relationship to lay out arguments against motion, change, generation, perishing, etc.—all of which imply thinking of non-being, and thus cannot exist, as it is inconceivable. In the end, what is true about reality is that *Being* (whatever its numerical extension) is necessarily eternal, unchanging, indivisible and unified.⁶

At DK 8.50-52, the goddess explicitly ends her “trustworthy account and thought about truth/reality,”⁷ and from here on commands the youth, “hearing the deceptive arrangement of her words,” to learn mortal opinions.⁸ Since DK.8 itself contains the fundamental arguments of

not, many possibilities are opened, but little guidance/evidence remains, and charges of arbitrary placement increases greatly.

⁶ I leave aside here whether all reality is truly *one* such “being,” or whether Parmenides’ view was open to the existence of a plurality of such beings, as commentators like Curd advocate—though I admit I am skeptical of such interpretative moves historically. Even if we are willing to grant that Parmenides argument might be ultimately *consistent* with a plurality of Parmenidian-beings upon further reflection, this is not sufficient to demonstrate that this is what Parmenides himself was thinking his argument led to or concluded with, and this is not how Plato or Aristotle understood Parmenides. Furthermore, to claim that the Pluralists and Atomists might have been “begging the question” by not providing an explicit argument against strict monism—but instead simply moving on and developing a metaphysics consistent with a plurality of Parmenidean-beings—seems to be an anachronistic invocation of logical argumentation norms. To implicitly acknowledge the difficulties that had been raised before, and construct an account that avoids those difficulties, while also making sense of the multiplicity perceived in the world, would surely have served as a sufficient countervailing response, without the need for direct, explicit revocation. People could simply examine the two perspectives and judge which was more satisfactory by which one explained the world better. Patricia Curd. *The Legacy of Parmenides: Eleatic Monism and Later Presocratic Thought* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998). In any case, I leave the question open here.

⁷ ἐν τῷ σοι παύω πιστὸν λόγον ἠδὲ νόημα / ἀμφὶς ἀληθείης.

⁸ δόξας δ’ ἀπὸ τοῦδε βροτείας / μάθανε κόσμον ἐμῶν ἐπέων ἀπατηλὸν ἀκούων.

Truth, and also makes the transition from *Truth* to *Opinion*, we can be certain that discussion of *Opinion* did succeed *Truth*, thus following the same linear order promised at DK 1.28-30.

Opinion has traditionally been estimated to be far longer than the previous two sections combined. This is due to its fragmentary nature (only 44 verses, largely disjointed or incomplete, are attested), upon apparently quite disparate topics, suggesting a great deal of exposition would be needed to properly flesh-out and unify the accounts hinted at.⁹ Whatever its original length, the incompleteness of this section grants little confidence regarding the relative arrangement of the fragments, and the apparent disparity in content shrouds their relationship to each other, beyond being “descriptions of things in the world.”

As DK 8 comes to an end, mortals are explicitly said to err by distinguishing between (or “naming”) opposites—Fire (or more commonly in the fragments, “Light,” used interchangeably) and Night—by granting each different names and properties, when in fact there is truly only one thing (or name), that exists—presumably, *Being* itself. To name opposites is to suggest that one thing is lacking in some ways, or is at least “other” in some aspects, to its opposite, and thus requires thinking “is-not.” Positing not-being makes inquiry impossible, and thus conflicts with truth/reality (and *Truth*).¹⁰

This line of thought was first introduced at DK 8.34-41, where the goddess explicitly states that *Being* is all there is, and everything else that mortals take to be real—that there is generation and perishing, or change in any way, all of which require positing “is-not,” —is a

⁹ Diels estimated that we have 9/10 of *Truth*, and perhaps 1/10 of *Opinion*, suggesting the complete poem would have spanned 800-1000 lines. This may certainly be questioned, and will be below.

¹⁰ For an extensive discussion of the Light-Night dichotomy, see: Rose Cherubin, “Light, Night, and the Opinions of Mortals: Parmenides B8. 51-61 and B9” *Ancient Philosophy* 25.1 (2005) 1-23.

mistake, nothing more than a name.¹¹ This error of mortals is also explicitly addressed in DK. 9. In this passage, both light and night, along with their properties (or “powers”), have been given names; as a result of this universal naming of opposites, now “all is full of light and invisible night together, both being alike, since amongst neither is nothing (or “not being”).”¹² The only other fragment that undeniably carries on this discussion of “error-by-naming-opposites” is DK. 19. Here it is claimed that—only according to (presumably mistaken) belief—things which were named in certain ways came-to-be in the past, currently exist, and will ultimately perish.¹³ This fragment has generally taken to be the conclusion for *Opinion* (if not the entire poem).

When these fragments are considered alone, the entire thrust of *Opinion* clearly seems to be negative and didactic. The “opinions of mortals” are presented solely to illustrate how mortals err by naming opposites, accepting there are distinct things in the world, which leads them to stray from accepting the conclusions of *Truth*—that all is unified as *Being*. All references to generation, perishing, and change in these passages are clearly made out to be mere beliefs that mortals hold, and incorrect ones at that. Thus, there is no difficulty in accepting these passages alongside the arguments of *Truth*. Nor is there any reason to think *Opinion* stretches on at great length, when only these fragments are considered: DK 8.50-61 (even if DK 8.34-41 are included), DK 9, and DK 19 form a relatively succinct and pointed argument, for which little additional exposition seems necessary.

¹¹ It has been recently argued by Ebert (and supported by Palmer) that these lines actually belong at the end of DK 8, as part of the transition to mortal opinions. I will discuss this possibility further below. T. Ebert ‘Wo beginnt der Weg der Doxa? Eine Textumstellung im Fragment 8 des Parmenides,’ *Phronesis* 34 (1989). 121-38. John Palmer, *Parmenides and Presocratic Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 352-4.

¹² πᾶν πλέον ἐστὶν ὁμοῦ φάεος καὶ νυκτὸς ἀφάντου / ἴσων ἀμφοτέρων, ἐπεὶ οὐδετέρω μετὰ μηδέν. Coxon’s translation.

¹³ οὕτω τοι κατὰ δόξαν ἔφθ τάδε καὶ νυν ἔασι / καὶ μετέπειτ’ ἀπὸ τοῦδε τελευτήσουσι τραφέντα· / τοῖς δ’ ὄνομ’ ἀνθρώποι κατέθεντ’ ἐπίσημον ἑκάστωι.

However, the same consistency with *Truth*, the same universal negativity of treatment, and the same succinctness, cannot be so readily granted to *Opinion* overall, given the remaining fragments traditionally placed in this section—all of which lack a clear association with the “naming error” with which we can be certain *Opinion* is concerned. There are physical-cosmological explications promised as forthcoming (the origins of the sun, the moon, the aether, the earth and the stars; how the moon gets its light from the sun).¹⁴ There are passages that address (human?) sexuality and birth.¹⁵ There are passages hinting at a full theogony in the poem, which might even be the beginning of the cosmogony.¹⁶ One passage even appears to cross into the philosophy of mind, addressing the close relationship between the mind and body.¹⁷ In any case, the relationship between these “rogue” fragments, and the Light/Night naming error that uncontroversially begins (and likely ends) *Opinion*, is unclear. Are these passages a continuation of that negative exposition? Or, are they advancing a positive account, in contrast to the light/night naming-error?

Those who tend to think Parmenides held an entirely negative view of mortal opinions have been led to treat these “rogue” passages as suspect. Perhaps (some of) these passages do not belong in *Opinion* after all, but should actually be located in *Truth*, as Cordero has recently argued.¹⁸ At the very least, it is worth recognizing here that the placement of the fragments in the orthodox arrangement is worth further examination. Negative treatments also tend to

¹⁴ DK 10-12, 14-15

¹⁵ DK 12, 17?, 18.

¹⁶ DK 12-13.

¹⁷ DK 16.

¹⁸ Originally argued in Néstor-Luis Cordero, “The ‘Doxa of Parmenides’ Dismantled,” *Ancient Philosophy* 30 (2010) 231-246. For a revised version of the argument, see “Parmenidean ‘Physics’ is not part of what Parmenides calls ‘δόξα,’” *Parmenides: Venerable and Awesome*. Proceedings of the International Symposium (Buenos Aires, Oct. 29th-Nov. 2nd, 2007) (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2011) 95-113.

explain the contents of these passages in relation to the Light/Night naming error—a further exposition of how mortals go wrong, advanced for didactic purposes. Accordingly, these readers do not see anything positive promised to be learned in *Opinion* by DK 1.31-32.

On the other hand, as we have them, these “rogue” passages do seem to claim that generation, perishing, motion, and change actually occur—without the explicit caveat that such phenomena are erroneous beliefs of mortals. Furthermore, it seems that a full fleshing-out of this physics-cosmology, if a unified section, would seem to go on at significant length—perhaps many times longer than *Truth*. It seems strange for Parmenides to have gone on at length expositing a completely negative, false account of the world, which had no redeeming qualities. Finally, some have trouble accepting that Parmenides could truly have meant to deny all value to mortal accounts, and/or deny all reality to the apparent world—and thus madly deny his own existence, by entailment! For these reasons, some commentators are led to accept that these “rogue” fragments *do* offer a more positive, contrasting account about the apparent world as we experience it, and hold that DK 1.31-32 tells us to expect just that very thing.

Deciding between these broad interpretative views is perhaps the most troubling issue contemporary commentators face in their interpretation of Parmenides’ poem overall, and turns on more specific questions. What exactly comprises *Opinion*? What relationship does *Opinion* bear to the arguments in *Truth*? How positive (or negative) an account of *Opinion* is on offer in Parmenides? Is there evidence here for two parts (or more) of *Opinion*—a negative account centered on the Light/Night naming error, and then a positive physics/cosmogony that Parmenides offers as an alternative? Looking back to DK 1.31-32 for guidance in understanding these rogue fragments is natural, for several reasons.

First, if these “rogue” fragments *do* succeed the explicit discussion of the errors of mortals (Light/Night dualism), as tradition has it, then perhaps just as lines 28-30 seem to provide a linear pedagogical program for the earlier material, so too lines 31-32 may be the key to understanding these later passages. Secondly, these lines seem to parallel the positive/negative tensions explicated above. Given that the goddess has criticized the epistemic value of the “opinions of mortals” at DK 1.30 (and arguably continues to do so explicitly throughout the rest of the poem), any translation of DK 1.31-32 that is *too* positive about mortal opinions risks contradicting the goddess’ immediately prior dismissal of them. However, the concessive ἄλλ’ ἔμπης, in addition to the positive adverb δοκίμως (“acceptably”) in lines 31-32 certainly seems to suggest *some* positive thing to be learnt related to mortal opinions. What must be determined then is what positive claim is being made, concerning what exactly, and how far it extends.¹⁹

Thus, much interpretative support may be gained by determining whether the lines in DK 1.31-32: a) contain some positive caveat to the clearly negative description of the opinions of mortals at DK 1.30 (and seemingly throughout the rest of the poem), or b) are, despite the apparently positive implications, somehow consistent with that otherwise negative description. It should be noted that this is not a strict “dilemma,” as there are numerous interpretative positions to be taken along the positive-negative continuum. However, before any further progress can be made on understanding *Opinion* and its relationship with *Truth*, DK 1.31-32 and the preceding textual lines will have to be examined closely.

¹⁹ Thanassas summarizes the issue well, from his own perspective: “The only certainty in these verses seems to be the fact that, while the subjective opinions themselves (*doxai*) lack conviction, their objects, the appearing things (*dokounta*), are granted a certain positivity (“acceptably,” *dokimôs*) to [sic.]. But how far does this positivity extend?” Panagiotis Thanassas, *Parmenides, Cosmos, and Being: A Philosophical Interpretation* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1967) 23

Examining the Problematic Lines in Context: DK 1.28b-32

Returning to the *Proem*, recall our unnamed youth, traveling along a cosmic path to learn the “mysteries” of metaphysics. He is borne along in a chariot with blazing wheels, pulled by wise horses, and driven by the maiden daughters of the sun, who having unveiled their countenances, gain entry through the gates dividing night and day. The poetic imagery is commonly taken to be suggestive of a journey from ignorance (darkness) to knowledge (light).²⁰ Note that the imagery of light/night is already evident, and we know these passages do not belong in *Opinion*. This makes it difficult to claim that any particular fragment/passage necessarily belongs in *Opinion* on the grounds of such references.²¹

Upon arriving at his cosmic destination, the unnamed goddess sets forth what seems to be a general outline of how the rest of the poem will unfold, and what the youth must learn.

The goddess says:²²

...χρεὼ δέ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι	(28b)
ἡμὲν Ἀληθείης εὐπειθέος ἀτρεμές ἦτορ	
ἠδὲ βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἔνι πίστις ἀληθῆς.	(30)
ἀλλ' ἔμπης καὶ τὰυτα μαθήσεαι, ὡς τὰ δοκούντα	
χρῆν δοκίμως εἶναι διὰ παντὸς πάντα περ ὄντα	(32)

²⁰ This is largely based upon allegorical interpretations, going back to Sextus. Some more recent readings suggest the journey is towards darkness (the House of Night). See Palmer for a discussion of these variant interpretations. *Parmenides and Presocratic Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. 52-53.

²¹ This imagery of Light/Day and Darkness/Night may be problematized by further interpretative considerations. It stands in direct analogy to the Fire/Night mistake that is explicitly referred to as the mistake mortals make. If the section on the “opinions of mortals” in fact deals exclusively with these paired opposites, and this is actually the very end of poem, just as this imagery is found at the very beginning, we must further wonder what negative implication the goddess’ dismissal of the “opinions of mortals” has on the imagery of the proem. I think a case could be made here that Parmenides, though using their poetic meter, is in part aiming at rejecting the traditional authority of the poets (Homer and Hesiod) with this imagery. As Taran similarly points out, if the apparent world is illusory, so must the imagery in the *Proem*. This realization also tends to undercut allegorical interpretations of the *Proem*. However, this is all subject for a separate essay. 230.

²² While the first part of the proem is told from Parmenides’ own first-person perspective, upon meeting the goddess, the rest of the *Proem*, and the entirety of the rest of the poem, is related from the goddess’ (and thus a divine) perspective. The general progression of personal voice (1st in the *Proem*, 2nd in *Truth*, and 3rd in *Opinion*) may be indicative of relative placement of fragments in reconstructing the poem, and thus could support arguments for unorthodox arrangements of the poem’s fragments, as Cordero (2007; 2010) argues.

Line 28b is straightforward in terms of translation, with no variances in the Greek transmission—“It is necessary for you to learn (or “to hear” or “perceive”) all things.”

The next two lines narrow the scope of DK 1.28b’s broad claim, specifying what is to be learnt:²³

29) ἡμὲν ἀληθείης (εὐπειθέος/εὐκυκλέος) ἀτρεμῆς ἦτορ

–“both the unshakeable heart of persuasive truth,”²⁴

30) ἡδὲ βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἔνι πίστις ἀληθείης

–“and the opinions of mortals, in which there is no genuine trustworthiness.”

All commentators agree that there are (at least) two distinct things for the youth to learn outlined here, which are in contrast to each other in some significant way. However, the reader is already forced to make some judgments regarding the Greek transmission and translation.²⁵

It should first be noted that there is some significant debate about whether to translate ‘ἀληθείης’ as “truth” or “reality.” Coxon, Mourelatos and Palmer all offer substantial discussion on this distinction. While some prefer to translate “reality,” it is also generally accepted that while the object of discussion is “reality,” the sense is also that “truth of thought” concerning reality is central to the discussion. I have chosen to adopt the more traditional translation of “truth” here, both making clear: 1) that this line introduces the section traditionally referred to as *‘Truth’*, and 2) emphasizing the contextual epistemic contrast between the upcoming arguments of the goddess and the errors of mortals, which these lines

²³ Why it must be learned remains a further question, which seems explicitly answered by the goddess at the end of Frag. 8: so the reader may not to be led astray by such accounts, true as they may *seem*.

²⁴ The manuscripts vary between ‘εὐπειθέος’ and ‘εὐκυκλέος’. I address this controversy shortly.

²⁵ For the variant readings in the manuscripts for these lines, see Appendices A and B.

clearly delineate. However, the reader should keep in mind that the scope of truth for Parmenides explicitly concerns the necessary conditions for reality, or *Being*.²⁶ Thus, translating “truth” here should not be taken to imply that “reality” might not be a more appropriate translation at other points in the poem. I will often use “truth/reality” to indicate this ambiguity in translation.

Though I have read ‘εὐπειθέος’ and have translated it as “persuasive” here, there is persistent disagreement on which modifier of ἀληθείης is correct (εὐπειθέος/εὐκυκλέος).²⁷ εὐκυκλέος (well-rounded; well-wheeled) has attracted readers for several reasons. First, it could be looking back to the imagery of the wheels on P.'s chariot (δινωτοῖσιν κύκλοις-- “whirling” or “bronzed” wheels). Yet how this allusion to the chariot would be informative or meaningful is mysterious. More importantly, this epithet could also point forward to the metaphysical and cosmological description of reality found later in the poem (DK 8.43-44): “Being is...like a well-rounded ball.”²⁸ However, as Coxon points out, asserting reality to actually be εὐκυκλέος goes well beyond the metaphorical assertion in DK 8—“like a spherical

²⁶ Coxon 282-283. Alexander P.D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides*. Revised and Expanded Edition (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2008) 63-67, 156-7. Palmer 89-93.

²⁷ The arguments that follow here and below for choosing one reading of the Greek over another assume the reconstruction of the poem by DK, which implicitly assumes there is only one occurrence of such lines in the entire poem. However, Kurfess’ “repetition argument” is also worthy of noting here. Since he thinks the lines given by Simplicius are not in fact the final lines of the *Proem* but from later in the poem, his view does not require choosing between these modifiers. On his view, Sextus’ ‘εὐπειθεος’ is correct for the proemium before *Truth*, and ‘εὐκυκλέος’ is a fitting adjective for a proemium transitioning into *Opinion*. See Kurfess 24-27. There is also a third modifier attested for ἀληθείης here—‘εὐφεγγέος’ (“brilliant”)—which only appears in Proclus’s writings. While this may indeed be a fitting metaphorical description of truth/reality—both picking up on the imagery from the proem and possibly pointing forward, identifying truth/reality (ἀληθείης) with Light in *Opinion*—its lack of attestation, and likely Neo-Platonic influence, have resulted in a (nearly) universal rejection of this reading. See Taran 16-17, and Tarrant 75 for the charge of Neo-Platonism in this case. See Appendix A for a summary of commentators who read each modifier.

²⁸ “ἔστι...εὐκύκλου σφαίρης ἐναλίγκιον ὄγκωι”

ball...”²⁹ Finally, Simplicius is the only ancient source for the εὐκυκλέος reading. All other ancient commentators read εὐπειθέος, including Sextus, upon whose authority nearly the entire *Proem* is based (DK 1.1-30). Thus, εὐπειθέος is better attested.³⁰

Not only do the arguments for εὐκυκλέος fail to be convincing, further contextual considerations lead to a clear preference for εὐπειθέος (“persuasive”). Consider how the noun ἀληθείης in Line 29 is repeated in adjectival form ἀληθής in line 30, modifying the noun πίστις. Similarly, we should expect the associated adjective in line 29 (εὐπειθέος/εὐκυκλέος) to be closely related in meaning to the modified noun in line 30 (πίστις). While πίστις (which is uncontested in the manuscripts) is usually translated as “trust,” or “faith” (or the parallel states of being such—“faithfulness” or “trustworthiness”) it will certainly later on (if it did not already!) take on the meaning “to have *persuasive* force,” or something that “passes the test,” such as a proof in argumentation.³¹ Furthermore, since “πίστις ἀληθής” can be translated as “true trust,” the contrast seems to clearly be truth v. falsity, rather than “real v. unreal.”³² Thus, εὐπειθέος provides the closely related epistemic contrast—the sense of being “persuasive,” as truth should be—which these lines demand, in a way that εὐκυκλέος simply cannot.

Furthermore, ἀλήθεια is unequivocally associated with the πειθ— later, in DK 2.4. Here, the “path of persuasion” (πειθοῦς ἐστι κέλευθος) is such (persuasive) precisely *because* it “attends

²⁹ Coxon 283-4. Mourelatos, following Diels, rejects this line of argumentation as sufficient. 154-55. However, neither he nor I completely rely upon it alone for our rejection of εὐκυκλέος, nor is this consideration necessary.

³⁰ See Mourelatos, 2008 154-57 for further discussion on these points.

³¹ Taran also translates πίστις along these lines. 210, fn. 19.

³² The fact that ‘ἀληθής’ must have the epistemic sense of “truth” in this line also recommends translating ‘ἀληθείης’ in a similar fashion in the line above, as opposed to “reality.”

upon,” or “accompanies,” truth/reality.³³ For all of these reasons, εὐπειθέος is clearly the preferable reading.

Finally, I follow Palmer’s translation “genuine trustworthiness” of “πίστις ἀληθής” here. I worry that other translations such as “true conviction,” “true trust,” “genuine acceptance,” etc., can suggest the unintentionally unfortunate (and nonsensical) reading that no one actually *believes in* or *trusts in* the “opinions of mortals.”³⁴

With these considerations in mind, the translation of the contextual lines DK 1.28b-30 is adequately captured as:

“...It is necessary for you to learn all things:
both the unshakeable heart of persuasive truth
and the opinions of mortals, in which there is no genuine trustworthiness.” (30)

Leaving the lines lying at the heart of this inquiry to be dealt with:

ἀλλ’ ἔμπης καὶ ταῦτα μαθήσῃ, ὥς τὰ δοκοῦντα
χρῆν δοκίμως εἶναι διὰ παντὸς πάντα περ ὄντα [περῶντα] (32)

Prior to progressing further, it may be helpful to briefly outline the numerous textual difficulties and possibilities that are faced here.

The most immediate question to be addressed is: “what is the referent of ταῦτα?” Grammatically, the first (unbolded) clause “ἀλλ’ ἔμπης καὶ ταῦτα μαθήσῃ,” is ambiguous. The almost certainly concessive “ἀλλ’ ἔμπης” suggests an upcoming, *positive* clause that will be surprising, considering what has come before. The sense is surely “nevertheless (despite mortal opinions being untrustworthy), you will also learn *these* things...” This is the primary interpretative tension in these lines—what positive recommendation (in what sense, to what

³³ For further discussion on these points, see: Coxon 283-4; Mourelatos 154-58

³⁴ Palmer appears to share this worry. 92

extent, etc.), which is at least related to, if not identical to, mortal opinions—is upcoming? This concessive construction has led many to most naturally suggest that ταῦτα points backwards to the previous line (30), referring to and qualifying the “beliefs of mortals” (βροτῶν δόξας).³⁵

However, even accepting ‘ἀλλ’ ἔμπης’ as concessive also allows ταῦτα to point forwards, referring to the clause after the comma, introducing a *third* thing—something related to the “opinions of mortals,” but distinct—that will be surprising to learn (despite the fallibility of mortal opinions). Nothing in the syntax itself *requires* either reading. Thus, readers ultimately have to choose between one of the following formats regarding the referent of ταῦτα:

- 1) “Nevertheless (though mortal opinions possess no genuine trustworthiness), you will also learn how these things (the opinions of mortals)...”
- 2) “Nevertheless (though mortal opinions possess no genuine trustworthiness), you will also learn about these [related but distinct] other things (about to be mentioned)...”

While both readings must have some unexpected, positive contrast to the fallibility of mortal opinions, the kind of positive recommendation, and the degree, will be found to vary significantly between these readings, when further examined below.³⁶

The second clause (in bold, after the comma) presents both semantic and grammatical difficulties, which greatly depend upon: the relationship between the δοκ— words; what sense of χρῆν we adopt (strict necessity, past obligation, or counterfactual (*irrealis*); and the syntactical arrangement. As there are numerous interpretative and grammatical possibilities for nearly every word, and since the context is so uncertain, it is impossible to select among many

³⁵ For some arguments along these lines (outside of Mourelatos’, which will be considered below), see: Nestor-Luis Cordero, *By Being, It Is* (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2004). Richard D. McKirahan, *Philosophy Before Socrates: An Introduction with Texts and Commentary*. 2nd Edition (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2010) and G. E. L. Owen, “Eleatic Questions” *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series 10.1 (May, 1960) 84-102, and Palmer—all of who take these passages to refer to the *contents* of mortal opinions.

³⁶ See Appendices C & D for an overview on this.

of them without considering external evidence from the rest of the poem, which always risks question-begging circularity in favor of one's preconceived interpretation of the poem.

For instance, 'ὡς' could conceivably function as a relative pronoun ("as" or "how"), a conjunction ("nevertheless"), introduce a simile ("just as," "like"), begin a result clause, or as qualifying or strengthening ("truly,") the adverb ('δοκίμως')

'τὰ δοκοῦντα' (δοκέω) is clearly a substantive participle (pres. act. n. pl. nom/acc). However, what 'τὰ δοκοῦντα' means is a subject of much controversy, related directly to the previously mentioned problem of the ambiguous ταῦτα. The most common translations are "things that are accepted," or "appearances." The etymologically related adverb 'δοκίμως' allows many variant translations ("apparently," "imaginably," "believably," "acceptably"), and some have even argued it should actually be read as a verb.³⁷

'χρηῖν' is clearly an epic form of the verb χρή (3rd sg. Imperf. Indic. act.). However, its use here is difficult to grasp, and whether it is to be understood as a simple past-obligation or a counterfactual usage is hotly debated. Even limiting interpretative views to those that accept the counterfactual reading (as most modern readers do) yields numerous variant views. By position and context, 'χρηῖν' will almost certainly have to be closely associated with 'εἶναι,' which while certainly an infinitive of εἶμί (pres act ind), we are left to determine the syntactical relationship—such as whether 'εἶναι' should be read as a copulative (of predication or identity?) or an existential absolute.

³⁷ Diels famously emended δοκίμως to δοκίμως(αι), the aorist infinitive of δοκίμωμι, with the sense of "to be tested".

The prepositional phrase ‘διὰ παντὸς’ certainly goes together, meaning “throughout the whole,” “entirely,” or “altogether.”³⁸ ‘πάντα,’ could be adverbial (“in every way,” “on every side,” or “altogether”) and can be taken as directly modifying this prepositional phrase (which functions adjectivally for the overall participial phrase), or the participle itself at the end of line 32. However, this neuter-plural form of πᾶς is also commonly used as the substantive adjective for “all things.”

Not only is the text obscure, it is clearly corrupted, leaving us with a choice between two neuter-plural, present participles: 1) περῶντα, from ‘περάω,’ (“to pass through”) and 2) ὄντα,’ (modified by the particle ‘περ’), from εἰμί (“is/exists”). The determination between these two readings results in radically different interpretative outcomes, with the τὰ δοκῶντα being described respectively as “passing through” or “just being, in some unified or complete manner (διὰ παντὸς πάντα).

Finally, if one reads ὄντα,’ the particle ‘περ’ must also be accounted for. The exact force this particle possessed in epic poetry is hard to discern, as Denniston and other commentators admit, and the various grammatical distinctions are not easily separable.³⁹ In participial phrases, ‘περ’ is most commonly concessive. However, we are already in a concessive clause due to the ἄλλ’ ἔμπησ,’ so this sense simply will not work.⁴⁰ The other common senses of ‘περ’ in epic poetry are hard to distinguish, and generally emphasize (“intensive” sense) and/or focus on one thing (“determinative” or “limitative” senses), often at the exclusion of other considerations. These senses can be variably captured in translation by:

³⁸ The preposition ‘διὰ’ (“through”) can take either genitive or accusative (with the same meaning) in poetry. Here, it clearly takes the expected genitive singular ‘παντὸς’ (in the singular—“the whole” or “the entirety”).

³⁹ For the uses of ‘περ’, see J.D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934). 481-490.

⁴⁰ As Mourelatos notes, a concessive ‘περ’ wrecks any attempt at translation. 214, fn. 59.

“indeed,” “completely,” “just,” or “truly”. In the next section, I begin eliminating these interpretative possibilities.

What does DK 1.31-32 Say?

As it seems prudent to settle on the most likely Greek text before beginning any fine-grained translation, I begin at the end, with the variant participial endings—“περῶντα” versus “περ ὄντα.” Simplicius is our sole source for lines 31-32, and out of four manuscripts attesting these lines, ‘περ ὄντα’ is favored over ‘περῶντα’ 3-to-1, and always in earlier or contemporary manuscripts. Thus, ‘περ ὄντα’ is clearly better attested. While this alone would be sufficient to justify reading ‘περ ὄντα,’ there are further considerations that make reading ‘περῶντα’ problematic.

As Mourelatos has famously (and correctly) argued, the sense of ‘περῶντα’ (from περάω) is to “pass through and *leave behind*.” It does not mean “to pass into and *remain present*,” as the translation “pervade” implies. While the latter could be an attractive interpretation—explaining how τὰ δοκοῦντα are pervasive throughout the world (διὰ παντὸς πάντα), much like Fire/Night are said to be in DK. 8—once the semantics of the verb are correctly understood, the reading is no longer attractive, or even sensible. After all, “the last thing we expect from the goddess is a revelation that the δοκοῦντα of mortals ‘transcend all things.’”⁴¹

Furthermore, reading ‘περῶντα’ leaves *Being*—the primary object of inquiry for the poem—entirely unmentioned in the *Proem* by name. Reading ‘περ ὄντα’ happily provides just

⁴¹ Mourelatos 212-14. Thanassas also agrees that Mourelatos’ arguments should have ended the debate on this. 24, fn. 2. For a list of major contemporary commentators and their preference for each reading, see Appendix B.

such an introduction, and in a particularly fitting way, though this may not be obvious at first. Taking the neuter-plural participle literally (which agrees with ‘τὰ δοκούντα’ and πάντα), and modifying it with the “determinative” ‘περ,’ the sense of ‘περ ὄντα’ is “things that genuinely are,” or “just as beings.”⁴² However, it should be recognized that the neuter-plural participle does not require us to also translate the participial *action* itself in the plural. Instead, this can be translated: “just as things *being*,” or “things genuinely *being*.”⁴³ With this understanding, it is clear that reading ‘περ ὄντα’ at this terminal position places all the emphasis of the *Proem* on exactly what we would expect it to—*Being, qua being*, at the exclusion of extraneous considerations.⁴⁴ Furthermore, this ending appropriately transitions into what is to be discussed immediately afterwards—the arguments in *Truth* on the necessary conditions for *Being*.⁴⁵

Again, while advocates of the ‘περῶντα’ reading have argued for similar contextual recommendations, these arguments are only possible/tenable under the mistaken understanding of ‘περῶντα’ as “pervade”.⁴⁶ As long as Mourelatos’ argument against this

⁴² The particle ‘περ’ is probably best understood in either the determinative sense, which is closely related to and implicitly includes the “intensive” sense, to the exclusion of other considerations. Denniston 482-483. Mourelatos also advocates this understanding. 214, fn. 61. Owen, on the other hand, argues specifically for the intensive use.

⁴³ The singular use here should not be controversial. As Mourelatos himself points out, Parmenides seems to remain as neutral as possible regarding the ontological number of *Being* prior to the arguments of DK. 8, using the both singular and plural indiscriminately to refer to *Being* in DK. 4. Numerous others have also adopted singular translations here (e.g. Coxon, Curd, Owens). Only Thanassas emphasizes the plural form, translating “beings.” As I ultimately leave open the number of *beings* Parmenides argues for, I am not strongly committed to either singular or plural translations in this essay.

⁴⁴ Mourelatos insightfully compares this use of ‘περ’ to the later philosophical ‘ἦ’. 214-15.

⁴⁵ Thanassas (2007, 26) also comments on the significance of this word’s placement. Mitchell Miller also finds the inclusion of the “is” in the *Proem* good reason to preference this reading. “Ambiguity and Transport,” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 30 (2006): 1-47. 13

⁴⁶ For instance, Palmer argues that this line, meaning “had actually to be, all through all pervading,” ties in well with the DK. 9.3-4, where it is said “all is full of light and invisible night together.” However, Palmer seems to entirely ignore Mourelatos’ argument against this reading. Ignoring Mourelatos on this point when reading ‘περῶντα’ is not uncommon, and the oversight can be even more glaring—at least Palmer offers *some* argumentation for the reading. On the other hand, Coxon, whose scholarship is perhaps second-to-none but

meaning stands—that ‘περῶντα’ means “to pass through and *leave behind*,” or “transcend,” not “persistently permeate”—there are simply no grounds to defend the ‘περῶντα’ reading, and all should adopt the ‘περ ὄντα’ spelling instead. Given this, I ignore all interpretations reliant upon the ‘περῶντα’ reading from here on.⁴⁷

Taking a broader view of the participial phrase, the prepositional clause ‘διὰ παντός’ clearly has the sense of “through(out) all things.” Taking the singular form literally can also yield translations along the lines of: “as a whole,” “completely,” or even “altogether”. As noted above, ‘πάντα’ has several possible grammatical and syntactical possibilities, with the more common substantive-adjective use (“all things”) being most likely here, as a subject replacing ‘τὰ δοκῶντα.’ However, the syntax for the overall participial phrase remains unclear.

If ‘περ ὄντα’ is taken as a copulative, we could read: a) “all things just being altogether” (πάντα as substantive subject; unity of all things δοκῶντα predicated), or b) “just being all things altogether” (πάντα as substantive object; δοκῶντα are suggested to be all there is).⁴⁸ However, as argued above, ‘περ ὄντα’ can also be taken in the more substantive, absolute sense (with no predicate), emphasizing its ontological sense. This can be understood in these

Mourelatos on Parmenides, passes over his selection of ‘περῶντα’ over ‘περ ὄντα’ without a *single word* on controversial selection in his otherwise excellent commentary on the text.

⁴⁷ Mourelatos also points out that the metaphorical sense of “pervade” in relation to mortal opinions is unattested elsewhere in the Greek corpus, which if correct, would be surprising given its apparent appeal. For his arguments on this, see 212-213, which I omit from the arguments in my text, as they are not as clearly convincing as Mourelatos seems to think they are. Thanassas also provides a further challenge to the ‘περῶντα’ reading, pointing out that if τὰ δοκῶντα (“appearing things”) are supposed to “pervade everything,” what could possibly be the “everything” that is distinct from, yet “pervaded by,” these τὰ δοκῶντα? Clearly, they could not be anything discovered by the senses. I leave this out of the text as well, as there are obvious objections to this line of argumentation as it stands (e.g. Palmer’s limitation on the scope of τὰ δοκῶντα to the only the Light/Night dualism easily avoids this worry). However, Thanassas’ point can be helpful if further assumptions are made clear, and I come back to this below in my discussion of the referent of ταῦτα. Cf. my fn. 48, for more on Palmer’s view.

⁴⁸ Mourelatos reads the copulative sense here: “just being all of them altogether.” 216.

translations: “as *being(s)*, indeed, all things altogether,” “all things just *being*, altogether/as one,” or perhaps more clearly, “all things, altogether, just as *being(s)*.”⁴⁹

While no certainty between these syntactical constructions can be had, I think this participial phrase is clearly suggestive of offering insight into the relationship between the *Opinion* and *Truth*. Not only is there a clear ontological emphasis on any arrangement, the sense of an existential unity being predicated in relation to τὰ δοκούντα can hardly be denied. Indeed, the phrasing ‘παντὸς πάντα’ is mirrored only in one fragment, clearly belonging to *Truth*.⁵⁰ Thus, as reading ‘περ ὄντα’ invokes the arguments in *Truth*, I prefer the latter ontological and absolute sense for the entire participial phrase—“all things, altogether, just as *being(s)*”. This reading best captures the exclusionary emphasis on *Being* required by ‘περ’, and thus best makes the transition to *Truth*, while invoking the unity of *Being* in DK. 8.⁵¹

To move any further in this analysis, it is necessary to analyze the meaning of the δοκ- words, which the careful reader cannot help but notice appear repeatedly in each line (DK 1.30-32)—a repetition that suggests a strong relationship is intended between these lines.⁵²

However, while certainly closely related, we should also expect some fine-grained distinctions in each of their respective iterations (noun, participle, adverb). It has been widely held that for

⁴⁹ This is essentially Thanassas’ interpretation of the participial phrase. He describes this grammatical reading of the participle ὄντα “not as a copula but in an ‘absolute’ syntactic construction...to attribute to it the entire ontological weight of the verb “to be” that we encounter in other parts of Parmenides’ poem: ‘all that appears is.’” 24.

⁵⁰ Cf. DK. 4 “πάντη πάντως”, which explicitly speaks to the unity of *Being*. Also, the arguments in DK. 8 for a unified *Being*, “like a sphere,” are certainly suggested by this description of “all things, altogether, *being*.”

⁵¹ I again leave *being(s)* numerically ambiguous, as I am ambivalent either way. One can go ahead and make it singular, in anticipation of *Truth*, and I think the reader is supposed to recognize this in retrospect. Or, one can leave it plural, waiting for the arguments in *Truth* to make the move to discussing *Being* as a unified, singular thing, but recognizing here that the reader is supposed to understand that they will learn about τὰ δοκούντα in terms of *Being*.

⁵² ἡδὲ βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἐνί πίστις ἀληθῆς
ἀλλ’ ἐμπεῖς καὶ ταῦτα μαθήσεαι, ὡς τὰ δοκούντα
χρῆν δοκίμως εἶναι διὰ παντὸς πάντα περῶντα [or περ ὄντα]

epic in general (and Parmenides in particular), *δοκ*— words (from *δοκέω*) have the sense of “active cognitive acceptance,” in that they have been “reliably *tested*,” and are thereafter found “acceptable” to our minds.⁵³ In short, the general sense is “acceptable upon examination,” whether ultimately true or false. This basic etymological sense is universally accepted.

On the understanding of *δοκ*- words as “acceptable,” the following determinations can be made. First, “*βροτῶν δόξας*” are thus not to be confused with any *mere* beliefs, easily dismissed. Instead, they are views that mortals have accepted and endorsed for what at least appeared to be good reasons, or upon significant grounds—even though they are false, in this case. Second, the adverb ‘*δοκίμως*’ has the sense of something *tested* so as to be “reliable,” or “*trustworthy*”; or rather, to make explicit the adverbial nature—“acceptably.”⁵⁴ Finally, but far more controversially, the substantive participle (‘*τὰ δοκούντα*’) should thus be translated as “the things deemed acceptable [to be the case, by mortals],” or the “things that seem [to be the case, to mortals].” However, what exactly the “things deemed acceptable” refers to remains controversial. I return to this below, and its relationship to the referent of *ταῦτα*, after consideration of *χρήν*.

⁵³ Cordero 31, Coxon 285, Curd (1998) 22, Mourelatos 195-205, Owen 86, Palmer 176-8, Taran 212-13.

⁵⁴ This assumes, of course, that ‘*δοκίμως*’ is in fact an adverb, contrary to Diels’ proposed reading. *δοκιμός* is listed in LSJ as an o-contract verb, supposedly identical to *δοκιμάζω*, and Parmenides’ line 1.32 is explicitly listed as one of three possible sources for this otherwise rare form. What exactly this listing relies on, I do not know. Diels’ own emendation of these lines, reading the verbal form *δοκιμῶσ(αι)* as *δοκίωμι* is another verbal possibility. However, Diels’ emendation has been so regularly refuted on numerous grounds (unnecessary; requires an unacceptable sense of *χρήν*; impossible elision of (-ai) in hexameter poetry—only found in two instances of Comedy; form is rare if not otherwise nonexistent in epic poetry) that it is either completely ignored, or quickly dismissed with a mere footnote (most commonly citing Reinhardt’s objections. 6-10. Also, see Taran 212, fn. 22, and W.R. Chalmers “Parmenides and the Beliefs of Mortals,” *Phronesis* 5.1 (1960): 5-22; 6-7, for an excellent summary of the criticism of Diels’ verbal emendation.

Much like selecting ‘περ ὄντα’ over ‘περ ὠντα,’ determining the correct sense of χρῆν will also reduce the number of interpretative possibilities up for consideration. As noted above, χρῆν is clearly an imperfect form of χρή. Imperfect forms of this verb generally carry the sense of either: a) a counterfactual, or b) a past obligation. Mourelatos argues extensively for the counterfactual reading, pointing out first that in Archaic Greek, χρή did not have the sense of “necessity” we find in later texts, but the sense “it is fitting” or “it is right/proper”.⁵⁵ This, in conjunction with taking δοκίμως to mean “acceptably” leads him to charge the past obligation reading as paying “too strong a compliment to mortal δοξαί”—a problem that we must indeed be careful to avoid, as noted above, and which many modern translations suffer from. For if τὰ δοκοῦντα is at all *related* to mistakes of mortals (which it clearly seems to be, whether ταῦτα points backwards or forwards), we don’t want to end up having line 31 irrevocably contradict the negative description of mortal opinions in line 30. Why this is problematic can perhaps most readily be seen by comparing the sample translation Mourelatos provides for χρῆν as a past obligation, to his final translation with the counterfactual:

(Past Obligation): “you shall learn...how it **was fatefully right** for the things found acceptable to be [or “to exist”] acceptably.”⁵⁶

(Counterfactual): “you shall learn...how it **would be right** for things deemed acceptable to be acceptably.”

Under a past obligation translation, we seem committed to saying there *has been* something *right* going on with what mortals have believed/endorsed *all along*—that they are fine just as they are. In light of the completely negative description of the opinions of mortals in the

⁵⁵ Mourelatos (2008) 207.

⁵⁶ Mourelatos (2008) 207. I have modified the translation here to read “acceptably,” to best mirror the counterfactual example, though Mourelatos actually uses “with full endorsement” to capture the meaning of δοκίμως. I take this is only a matter of stylistic change, as “acceptable to be acceptably” is awkward.

immediately preceding line, such translations yield a “glaring contradiction” to the goddess’ denial of the trustworthiness in the opinions of mortals, as they cannot simultaneously be lacking in all fidelity, yet it be “fatefully right” to hold these views, now, or in the past, *as they are*.⁵⁷

The second translation, then, is far more consistent with something being wrong with what mortals have accepted, and admitting that their errors persist. The positive spin from *δοκίμως* is not that the “things deemed acceptable” are actually acceptable (or have been in the past), but that the youth will be shown *some sort of* alternative account of these things that would be acceptable. What exactly that positive alternative is has yet to be determined. It could be, as many have thought, Parmenides’ own, personally endorsed cosmology. Or (as I argue below), it could mean that the opinions of mortals should be understood in terms of *Truth*. Either way, Mourelatos certainly seems correct: the counterfactual interpretation is *required* due to the positive sense of *δοκίμως*; and the burden of proof lies on those who would challenge that sense of *χρήν* here.⁵⁸ Accordingly, I dismiss all interpretative views reliant

⁵⁷ For a very recent example of a translation that makes this mistake, see Palmer: “how what they resolved had actually to be, all through all pervading.” 363. It takes a lot of further explanation that is not obvious in the translation to avoid this unfortunate implication, and thus suggests a poor translation is on hand, as the next note makes more clear.

⁵⁸ Mourelatos (2008) 207. For the opposite conclusion on the sense of *χρήν*, in addition to understanding *δοκίμως* as “acceptable,” See Taran 205-216. To find the heart of Mourelatos’ criticism of Taran, pay attention to how the past obligation sense of *χρήν*, which entails necessity and correctness, has had to be softened over the exposition to mean “*how* [the accepted things] came to be accepted” (216). The point is that even those who have defended the past obligation reading have had to actually back away from its strict requirement of necessity to maintain a coherent interpretative view of the lines, which requires not saying anything *too* positive of the accepted things. Similarly, Owen (1960) admits that the world of appearances cannot be said to “assuredly exist,” but avoids concluding that *χρήν* is counterfactual by suggesting the goddess is reporting the views of mortals themselves in these lines, second-hand. See Mourelatos (2008) 209, fn. 46 for further criticism of Owen. Curd 1998 also accepts *χρήν* as a past obligation, while reading *περ ὄντα*. Coxon also adopts the past necessity sense of *χρήν*, but reads *περὶ ὄντα*.

upon the past obligation understanding of $\chi\rho\eta\acute{\nu}$, and commit to the counterfactual reading, which can be variously translated as “ought to have been” or “should/would have been.”⁵⁹

I pause here to take stock of the progress so far. I will translate $\epsilon\acute{\mu}\pi\eta\varsigma$ και as “nevertheless...also,” acknowledging the concessive sense of $\epsilon\acute{\mu}\pi\eta\varsigma$ ’ (at least as far as “despite mortal beliefs being untrustworthy”), again leaving the referent for $\tau\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\tau\alpha$ and the exact sense of $\tau\grave{\alpha}$ δοκοῦντα open for the moment. Since $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ does not seem to be introducing any special sort of subordinate clause, I will take it as most other commentators seem to—a relative adverb of manner (“how”).⁶⁰ Thus, the translation at this point reads:

“But nevertheless (despite the lack of genuine trustworthiness of mortal opinions), you will also learn these things: how ($\tau\grave{\alpha}$ δοκοῦντα—“the things accepted”) ought to have been (δοκίμω ς —“acceptably”) ($\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$ —“to be”): all things, altogether, just as *being(s)*.”

Though the meaning of the words set off in parentheses are clear, I leave them unincorporated at this point, as the syntactical relationship between these words remains unclear.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Unfortunately, even those who recognize the aptness of the counterfactual $\chi\rho\eta\acute{\nu}$ here do not always properly understand what is “counter-to-fact” in these lines. For example, Cordero argues for a particular interpretation along these lines that should be resisted. Translating $\chi\rho\eta\acute{\nu}$ as “might have been necessary,” he claims that while $\tau\grave{\alpha}$ δοκοῦντα are not in fact real, they are what “*might have really existed* (that is, they might have occupied the place of true, real knowledge) if truth did not exist.” This means the goddess is promising to teach the youth an account of how, despite the opinions of mortals being false under current conditions, they might have been true otherwise, had the truth of *Being* not been the case. This is immensely confused. The error seems to be the suggestion that if there was no objective truth about *Being*, then all that would exist would be opinion, and thus, opinions *would be true*—which clearly does not follow. Cordero himself even admits this position makes no sense, given that the truth *does* exist. Yet he remains committed to ascribing this view to Parmenides, waving the objections of implausibility away by asserting that similar errors have occurred in the history of philosophy, while not even providing one parallel example, so we are left to guess at just who is supposed to be making such errors. Whatever other deep errors we might find in this description, it should be clear that the force of lines 31-32 is not how the *world itself* might have been otherwise (an ontological claim), and thus how epistemology might have been affected; rather, the lines remain clearly within the epistemic realm throughout. The counterfactual is not *how opinions might have been true*, under certain necessary conditions (i.e. the actual world being different); instead, it is how mortals *should have understood* the world (perhaps given the *necessary* conditions required for there to be anything, such as *Being*), if one wants to emphasize that etymological aspect of $\chi\rho\eta\acute{\nu}$, but that mortals in fact currently (*counterfactually*) fail to do so. Cordero (2004).

⁶⁰ Mourelatos (2008) 210 is the only modern commentator I am aware of to pay enough attention to $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ to comment on its grammatical function.

⁶¹ Here are some possible syntactical constructions that have been favored in the literature, outlined by Mourelatos 194, fn 1:

Fortunately, given the determinations made above, most of these possibilities have been dismissed as “live” options. To finish off the translation, and determine what DK 1.31-32 *means*, further consideration of ‘τὰ δοκοῦντα,’ and the referent of ‘ταῦτα,’ is required. However, these further considerations can only be adequately addressed in the context of the primary interpretative dilemma.

The Contemporary Interpretative Dilemma in Lines 31-32: Orthodox Arrangement

At this point, the primary interpretative dilemma for the overall poem becomes relevant—what is the relationship between *Truth* and *Opinion*? In what sense are the objects of mortal opinion, the “things deemed acceptable,” to be acceptably understood in terms of *Being*? What status, in terms of positive or negative recommendation, does Parmenides ultimately grant *Opinion*? While there are numerous variant interpretations along the positive-negative continuum, there seem to be two main approaches that can be generally addressed here.

First, one could adopt a more negative approach, and understand this as meaning that mortals beliefs about the world are completely erroneous. To understand how the objects in the world are properly understood is not to understand them as they appear to mortals—coming-to-be, changing, perishing, etc. Rather, proper understanding requires accepting that the *Being*, as argued for in *Truth*, is all there really is. This could mean denying the apparent

1) χρῆν takes εἶναι as subject, εἶναι takes subject (τὰ δοκοῦντα), δοκίμως adverbially modifies εἶναι, and “διὰ παντός...” is a participial phrase referring to τὰ δοκοῦντα.

2) Same as #1, except εἶναι serving as copula between subject (τὰ δοκοῦντα), and predicate (περῶντα), with διὰ παντός πάντα and δοκίμως both linked to the predicate.

3) Verb χρῆν takes as subject inf. δοκιμῶσαι (read instead of δοκίμως), the latter taking περῶντα as a subject (with understood τινά or σέ) τὰ δοκοῦντα, complemented by εἶναι, is the object of δοκιμῶσαι. “διὰ παντός...” can be attached to either a) τὰ δοκοῦντα or b) περῶντα.

4) Same as #3, except: εἶναι is complement of δοκιμῶσαι; τὰ δοκοῦντα is subject of εἶναι.

world entirely—it is all an illusion.⁶² It would also be possible for one to hold that the arguments in *Truth* are consistent with a reality composed of a plurality of *beings*, but accepting that Parmenides does not provide this positive view in his poem.⁶³ In either case, the lesson promised in DK 1.31-32 is fulfilled in *Truth*. There is no positive account on offer in *Opinion*, no “acceptable” cosmology that Parmenides himself endorsed, etc. *Opinion* is offered purely as a didactic lesson on how mortals err.⁶⁴ One final set of somewhat “middling” views I also place on the more “negative” side of this dichotomy—those views which take Parmenides to be arguing that fundamental reality is as described in *Truth*, and that the account of the apparent world in *Opinion* is Parmenides’ own best account of the world of human experience, from that empirical perspective. *Opinion* is still not true—it is just an accurate description of appearances based upon empirical senses, a description which is completely false and misleading.⁶⁵

Secondly, on the more positive approach, one can read these lines as promising an account of the apparent world of change that is in some way consistent with the arguments in *Truth*, and that this promise is fulfilled later on, in *Opinion* (particularly by those “rogue” fragments discussed above). The world exists in its plurality, participating in change, but is all in some way unified as, dependent upon, and/or perhaps ultimately composed of, changeless *beings*. It has been common for proponents of more positive readings to translate ‘τὰ δοκοῦντα’ as “appearances.” Such a translation is also often accompanied by a “Platonic,”

⁶² Mourelatos (2008), and Owen are representatives of this negative view.

⁶³ Curd originally followed this line of thinking (1991), but later changed her mind for more positive interpretations (1992 and 2009)

⁶⁴ Taran and Cordero explicitly support these views of *Opinion*.

⁶⁵ Coxon, McKirahan, and Nehamas best fit this latter, more “middling” but still rather negative, view. The criterion I am using to place these in the negative camp is the emphasis on *Truth* being reality, and whatever is described in *Opinion* being false, mistaken, lacking legitimacy, and/or ultimately something which should not be accepted. Alexander Nehamas, “On Parmenides’ Three Ways of Inquiry” *Deucalion* 33/34 (1981): 97-111.

two-world view, in which gradations of reality are posited.⁶⁶ *Truth* is thus about how things really are at the divine level of reason (much like the Forms), but the apparent world needs to be explained as well, and can be done so in a manner appropriate for mortal beings.⁶⁷ Thus, it is claimed, Parmenides is offering in *Opinion* an “acceptable” account of the world from the empirical, human perspective—an account that is somehow consistent with ultimate reality, and not completely false and/or illusory.⁶⁸

Different translations and syntactical arrangements tend to support different interpretative views. Examining the implications of variant readings for DK 1.31-32, and what it most naturally must mean given the conclusions drawn above, may help in narrowing down the interpretative options further, while avoiding question-begging as much as possible.

What does DK 1.31-32 Mean?

It has been taken as most natural by many that ‘ταῦτα’ should be understood to point backwards, to ‘βροτῶν δόξας’. As noted above, this is due to the concessive nature of ‘ἀλλ’

⁶⁶ As usual, there are many diverse views relying upon the translation “appearances,” and which to various degrees might be charged with adopting this more Platonic view of Parmenides. Historically, such positive views of *Opinion* dealing with “appearances” or “phenomenon” begin with Aristotle, but are more often related back to the Neo-Platonist Simplicius. While few modern commentators want to openly admit that they adopt such an anachronistic Platonic explanation, many views are implicitly indebted to this interpretative background. Even the phrases “The Way of Seeming,” or “world of appearances,” which I have at times above fallen into using, is indicative of this influence. On the negative reading, there is no account of the “world of appearances,” or separate reality to be discussed beyond the *Being of Truth*, but an account of how mortals, relying on their senses rather than reason, have been misled regarding their understanding of the one and only reality. Palmer’s recent proposal comes very close to the “two-world” view of Plato. He argues that *Truth* is solely focused on the characteristics of *necessary being*. This allows for there to also exist things that are accidental (things that are, but need not be), and thus the world of change, which is evident to us mortals, can also have a positive account given of it. On his view, the error of mortals is not mistakenly supposing these things exist, but since they are only ever exposed to accidental being by their senses, they are mistaken in thinking that these are the *only* things that do exist, failing to recognize immutable *Being* as a category of existence revealed only by reason.

⁶⁷ This view is advocated by Cherubin and Finkelberg. A very similar but more fine-grained view, is offered by Thanassas. Aryeh Finkelberg, “Being, Truth and Opinion in Parmenides” *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 81.3 (1999): 233-248.

⁶⁸ J. L. Owens also fits into this more positive mold, and translates “appearances.”

ἔμπης,” and is further supported by the similar language and context found at the very beginning of *Opinion*, “δόξας βροτείας...μάνθανε.”⁶⁹ What would ‘τὰ δοκούντα’ have to mean, on this reading, with the prior referent for ‘ταῦτα’ being “the opinions of mortals”?

These “accepted things” certainly cannot be taken to be identical to the “opinions of mortals” in themselves. Such a translation would require us understanding that the mortals’ subjective *opinions themselves* (their very mental states) ought “to acceptably be all things...just as *being(s)*—as if mortal thoughts comprised all the *beings* in the world.”⁷⁰ Clearly, we need some objective “things in the world” as a subject, if they should acceptably be all the *beings*.⁷¹ So, by “opinions of mortals,” one should understand that either 1) the *contents* of mortal opinions are being referred to—what is believed to be the case by mortals, or 2) the *objects* of mortal opinions—the things in the world mortals opine about.

Understanding ‘τὰ δοκούντα’ as referring to the *contents* of mortal opinions still requires the backwards-pointing ταῦτα, and thus there are still just two broad categories of things to learn from the goddess (truth and opinion). One way to understand this is to take the entire phrase “ὡς... ὄντα” epexegetically, as a report of what mortals themselves believe about the world. The sense is that the reader will learn these very things—what it is that mortals mistakenly believe—and the rest of lines 31-32 explicate what exactly those beliefs are: “how the things accepted ought to be acceptably...as *beings*.” While some editors do read ‘τὰ

⁶⁹ I am indebted to Long for bringing this to my attention. In Line 8.51-52, “mortal opinions” is again object to the same verb (μανθάνω) that we find in line 31 (just in the present-tensed imperative mood, rather than the future tense).

⁷⁰ No translation of the participial phrase would make sense of this. How the opinions themselves ought to be: 1) all things, being altogether, 2: just being, all things altogether, 3) pervading throughout all things.

⁷¹ I know of no one who makes this mistake, but it is worth pointing out what is *not* meant when saying ταῦτα points backwards to ‘βροτῶν δόξας’, to avoid any confusion.

δοκοῦντα’ in just such a way, this does not make any sense on my translation.⁷² Mortals themselves do not think that what they have accepted should be acceptable in terms of *Being*—they don’t even know what *Being* is yet!

If not epexegetic, how else could ‘τὰ δοκοῦντα’ refer to the *contents* of mortal opinions? One could understand these contents as the descriptions of the beliefs, or the meaning of the propositions, that mortals affirm accurately describe the world. This can be done with a general understanding of the kind of things that mortals hold (e.g. “things change,” “there is generation,” etc.), or with the more particular focus on the Light/Night dualism introduced as *the error* of mortals in *Opinion*.⁷³ At first, taking ‘τὰ δοκοῦντα’ to refer to some description of what mortals believe on my translation seems to result in the nonsensical claim that one will learn how “the things accepted/believed by mortals” should have been otherwise...just as *being(s)*. In what way could it make sense that the things mortals accept ought to acceptably be...as being(s)?

First, the manner of acceptance can be expounded—mortals do not accept these things as false, but as true. They accept these things *are the case*, and thus these opinions are “things accepted (to be)”. This predication of truth can be understood as part of the meaning of “τὰ δοκοῦντα”; or, one can explicitly read εἶναι here as a providing the predicative existential or

⁷² It is not clear how much sense this could make on any translation, frankly. For an example reading along these lines, Owen’s has been most influential. However, I deny the need to shift the discussion from first-hand to second-hand accounts here. Also Taran as correctly criticized, there is no reason to think that this is from a mortal perspective—in fact, it cannot be, as mortals would not refer to things as τὰ δοκοῦντα, especially not in terms of *Being*, as I note above. It is also worthy of noting that Owen is still relying on, and being led astray by, the problematic past obligation reading of χρήν, which I believe has been adequately dismissed above. Owen 88. Taran 211, fn. 21.

⁷³ Many take the more general approach. Owen and Palmer in particular adopt the latter association between τὰ δοκοῦντα and the Light/Night naming error.

veridical sense.⁷⁴ All that is left to incorporate now is “χρῆν δοκίμως”. It now seems that δοκίμως is most appropriately taken to adverbially modify χρῆν, meaning “acceptably ought to have been”. Sketching this out, the goddess can now be understood as promising that, despite the untrustworthiness of mortal opinions, one will also learn the manner in which those very things mortals accept to be the case, would have been acceptable. Translating this literally provides:

“But nevertheless, you will also learn these things—how the things accepted to be the case, acceptably ought to have been: all things, altogether, just as *being(s)*.”

However, this translation persists in suggesting the unfortunate implication that beliefs would have been acceptable if they actually were *being(s)*. The troubling element seems to be a lack of predicate adjective in the verbal phrase “acceptably ought to have been”—ought to have been *what?* It cannot be “to be *being(s)*! So, in what way should the accepted things have been otherwise, in order to be acceptable? The answer seems to require understanding the relevant context and repeating it again. What mortals did accept should have been *accepted* in a different way—as *being(s)*, or in terms of *Being*. The subject phrase thus must also be the understood predicate of χρῆν, with the participial phrase epexegetically explaining the *manner in which* the “things that are accepted” ought to be acceptably accepted. Incorporating this, the appropriate translation seems to be:

“But nevertheless, you will also learn these things—how the things accepted to be the case, acceptably ought to have been (*accepted*): all things, altogether, just as *being(s)*.”⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Though the word order is somewhat strained reading εἶναι in this way, and thus is not commonly adopted, it is certainly not impossible. However, this objection is easily avoided by incorporating the existential/veridical qualifier into the participle itself.

⁷⁵ My translation is most closely mirrored by M. Miller’s translation. He is the only other commentator to suggest this additional existential/veridical conception in τὰ δοκοῦντα by his translation “what are deemed (to be).” I

This translation has several advantages. First, it takes ταῦτα most naturally in the concessive context, looking backwards to ‘βροτῶν δόξας’—despite their falsity, we will also learn about how mortal opinions could have been true—if mortals understood the truth, in terms of *Being*.⁷⁶ Understanding τὰ δοκοῦντα as the *contents* of mortal opinions, maintains the central family meaning of the δοκ- words throughout these lines—“cognitive acceptance.” Finally, it maintains the epistemic emphasis that was so clear in the previous contextual lines (28b-30)—what should be believed to be the case—while introducing the ontological subject of *Being* as the standard by which the world is to be known according to *Truth*. What we find in these lines on this translation is “the *transition from mortal beliefs to ontological truth*,” as Thanassas aptly avers.⁷⁷

The final possibility must now be considered, however—that τὰ δοκοῦντα refers not to what mortals believe to be the case (or “to exist”), but to *objects* that mortals believe to *exist*. It seems possible to maintain all the elements of the translation above for the *contents* of mortal opinions, but simply change “things accepted to be the case” to “things accepted to exist.” This reading results in an increased ontological focus over the epistemological, but if ταῦτα is still understood as pointing backwards, and the subject of the clause is the “things that mortals accept to exist” the sense of cognitive acceptance is not wholly lost, allowing for

only wish I had read his translation earlier, as it likely would have made arriving at my own independent adoption of this sense far less onerous.

⁷⁶ Whether one wants to count this as a further thing to learn about both mortal opinions and truth—the relationship between them—and thus maintain that there are only two things to be learnt by the youth, or count this as a new, third thing on the list of lessons, hardly matters. The key is that what is to be learnt is some epistemic and veridical relationship between the two. What should not be done is to count this as a third thing to be learnt, and conflate this negative reading with the more positive views that also insist a third lesson is on offer.

⁷⁷ Thanassas 25. Emphasis in the original. Recall that the absolute construction of ὄντα is also Thanassas’, so this is consistent with that reading. Thanassas and I differ in our further interpretations over the relationship between *Truth* and *Opinion*, however.

the counterfactual *χρήν* to still be understood in terms of “should have accepted otherwise.” In some ways, this understanding of τὰ δοκοῦντα is even more attractive on my translation than the one above, as it is very easy to understand mortals misunderstanding what exists, by failing to accept existing things in terms of *Being*. Perhaps some commentators even have this in reading in mind. However, the explicit attention to these details in the literature is quite lacking, and this clearly does not seem to be what the vast majority of writers have in mind when they take τὰ δοκοῦντα to refer to the *objects* of opinion.

Instead, scholars who adopt this view almost invariably adopt a very different translation of τὰ δοκοῦντα, reading “things that seem,” or “appearances.” While these are still things that seem or appear *to mortals*, the association with mortals and their cognitive acceptance is now secondary. The emphasis on this view is almost entirely existential, with the focus on *things*, not what mortals think about these things. Since the *objects* of mortal opinions (on this view), are distinct, objective things in the world, we do get a change of subject from line 30, and a third thing to learn. Thus, ταῦτα must be read as pointing forwards here. It should also be noted that the shared family meaning of the *δοκ-* words is interrupted in the middle, as mere “appearances” do not adequately capture the sense of “cognitive acceptance” advocated above, in which one holds a well-grounded view based upon significant consideration.⁷⁸ Losing this sense of “acceptance” wrecks the reasoning behind my translation:

“But nevertheless, you will also learn these (upcoming) things—how the things that seem to exist, acceptably ought to have (seemed) to be (in the past): all things, altogether, just as *being(s)*.”

⁷⁸ For extensive discussion of the “cognitive acceptance” view of *δοκ-* words, see: Mourelatos (2008) 195-205. For extensive discussion of the anachronistic charge to the translation, see: Cordero (2010) 236-7, and (2004) 152-155.

While it may make sense to say that the things that seem really are, in fact, *being(s)*, this sense cannot be brought out of the translation. It certainly doesn't seem right that the counterfactual here could be that the ways things seemed to be should have been, or seemed otherwise, in the past—or that appearances should have *appeared* other than they actually do (or did) appear. This concern is not avoided by mere syntactical rearrangement, either.

Consider: “how the appearances ought to have been, to be acceptably...just as *being(s)*”, or “...how it would have been right for the things that seem, to be...just as *being(s)*. Again, it would not be correct to claim that the appearances themselves *should have been otherwise*.

Trying to make such a translation say something sensible requires far too much interpretative work for it to be plausible. While one might object “so much the worse for your translation,” the inconsistency with my particular interpretative commitments above is not the only reason to reject such a reading.

First, translating “appearances” (or “things that seem”) is probably anachronistic. It is unlikely that $\delta\omicron\kappa$ - words possessed this connotation this early in the Greek corpus. The rather negative connotation in $\delta\omicron\kappa$ - words (“untrustworthiness”) concerning mortal views, describing *mere* beliefs about what was apparent to the senses, but distinct from fundamental reality, is generally thought to be a later Sophistic use, employed most extensively and famously by Plato.

Even if one is not convinced that such an early use of “appearances” for $\delta\omicron\kappa$ - words is anachronistic, the oft-associated interpretative view—that Parmenides allows for “gradations of reality,” so that there is the “really real” world of *Truth*, and then a “second best” account of the apparent world—almost certainly relies on imposing a Platonic view on this earlier text.

While it is clear that Plato was influenced by Parmenides, the history of philosophy has to wait

for Plato to make the epistemic distinctions between true knowledge, falsehood, and correct opinion (and the corresponding ontological degrees this epistemic trichotomy suggests). As Taran, Cordero, and Owen have all pointed out, the dualistic elements in Parmenides are pervasive and undeniable—there is no room for “degrees of reality” in his view. There is only one *object* of inquiry—“that which is, and cannot not be”. What is-not, cannot be, and cannot be thought of. The arguments in *Truth* accurately describe this single reality; the mistaken dualism upon which mortals name opposites leads them to provide false descriptions of this one and only reality. There are no gradations of reality, no distinction between a “really real” truth, and the “world of appearances,” or things which simultaneously “are and are not.” There are simply correct and incorrect accounts of the one real world.⁷⁹ This should be evident to close readers of the text itself. It should be even more clear if one is familiar with Plato’s own treatment of Parmenides—as one who denies any reality whatsoever to non-being, since *Being* is all there is.⁸⁰ That such views are so pervasive likely says more about the influence Plato has had upon us, and the excessive speculations of some commentators committed to finding *something* positive in *Opinion* (especially in those “rogue” fragments), wanting to avoid the conclusion that Parmenides was so “mad” as to deny the entire world of appearances—including his own existence—than it does about Parmenides’ own views

Given these considerations, it now seems clear that ταῦτα should be taken as pointing backwards, and that τὰ δοκούντα picks up and continues the discussion of mortal opinions. I leave the question whether this should be understood as the *contents* (“things accepted to be

⁷⁹ For some notable discussion on Parmenides’ dualism and there being “no middle ground,” see: Cordero (2004) 152-155; Charles Kahn, “The Thesis of Parmenides,” *The Review of Metaphysics* 22.4 (1969) 700-724. 722; Long 99-100; Austin Scott, “Parmenides and Ultimate Reality,” *Ultimate Reality and Meaning* 7 (1984): 220-232, 230-32. Taran 207-209, 221-222 fn. 51, 223-230; Owen (1960) 86

⁸⁰ Taran 269-278.

the case”) or *objects* (“things accepted to exist”) of mortal opinion open, while denying the Platonizing translation of “appearances” or “seeming.” With this major piece of the puzzle having been settled upon, my translation of lines 31-32 can be finalized, with the generic “to be” standing in for the ambiguity between the epistemic *contents* and existential *objects* emphasis.

“But nevertheless, you will also learn these things—how the things accepted to be, acceptably ought to have been accepted: all things, altogether, just as *being(s)*.⁸¹

Or, more fleshed out, to eliminate (most) ambiguities:

“But nevertheless (despite the lack of genuine trustworthiness of mortal opinions), you will also learn these things about them: in what way the things in the world accepted by mortals to be should have been accepted to be, to be accepted in an acceptable manner: they should have accepted that all these things exist altogether, just as *being(s)*.”

I take it that my negative translation of these lines, while denying some especially strong positive accounts of *Opinion*, remains generally open between the positive and negative interpretative views. Though the negative reading is far more natural—mortal beliefs are false, and the things they have believed, should no longer be believed; they should modify all their beliefs to align with the parameters of *Being*, as established in *Truth*—it is not required. One could still hold that there is some positive account on offer in *Opinion*, which provides an account of the changing plurality we experience in the world, yet is simultaneously consistent with *Being*. Additional evidence external to DK 1.31-32 must now be considered to resolve this dilemma.

⁸¹ My translation is most closely mirrored by M. Miller’s translation. He is the only other commentator to suggest, by his translation “what are deemed (to be),” that εἶναι is to be taken as a predicate adjective for τὰ δοκοῦντα; or at the very least, the existential sense is understood in the contextual meaning of τὰ δοκοῦντα.

Challenges for the “Positive” Reading—Orthodox Arrangement:

As the Platonic interpretation, and its accompanying translation of “appearances” for τὰ δοκοῦντα have been adequately dealt with above, I will say nothing further on this mistaken view here. Instead, I will address the problems that any positive account of *Opinion* faces in general. Let it be noted up-front that while it may very well be true that we live in a world full of change and plurality, and that some account of this world as it is would be expected, it simply does not follow that any treatment by Parmenides of the world we experience would be positively endorsed.

Less anachronistic than Platonic arguments, but equally problematic, are positive accounts arguing that descriptions of the apparent world by mortals are in some sense “acceptable” for humans, *qua* human beings, while truth remains at the divine level. This view falls flat on its face. While in the past mortals may only have been able to provide sensible accounts of the world, truth has been revealed to mortals by Parmenides poem. So, it is plainly wrong to continue to claim that it is “acceptable” for mortals to continue thinking about reality in their mistaken ways, when truth is accessible to mortals, and they (the youth and the reader of the poem) are learning it!

More broadly, all positive views face significant charges of inconsistency within the text itself. Given the extensive, explicit, and (apparently) universally derisive treatment of “mortal opinions” throughout the poem, the defender of a positive reading must explain how such a view could possibly be consistent with the poem overall. While a negative treatment in one area of the poem does not necessarily prevent a more positive treatment elsewhere, the lack of

any clear and explicit change in treatment makes the positive case extremely unlikely. A quick survey of the treatment of the “opinions of mortals” found throughout the rest of the poem makes this challenge clear.

Let lines 31-32 be considered ambiguous in terms of a positive or negative recommendation for *Opinion* in general. It has already been established that DK. 1.30 has clearly negative, epistemic connotations for mortal opinions, as do the Light/Night fragments that begin (and apparently end) *Opinion* (DK 8.50-61, 9, 19). However, these are not the only places in the poem where mortal beliefs are clearly and explicitly derided.

At DK. 6, the goddess warns the youth from the path which:

“mortals with no understanding stray two-headed, for perplexity in their own breasts directs their mind astray, and they are borne on deaf and blind alike in bewilderment, people without judgement, by whom this has been accepted as both being and not being the same and not the same, and for all of whom their journey turns backwards again.”⁸²

Frag. B7 offers a similarly scathing criticism of mortal’s tendency to relying upon their senses, rather than reason alone:

“But do keep your thought from this way of enquiry. And let not habit do violence to you on the empirical way of exercising an unseeing eye and a noisy ear and tongue, but decide by discourse the controversial test enjoined by me.”⁸³

Only at DK.8.60-61, when the goddess provides her explicit rationale for providing the youth her deceptive, yet “entirely fitting” (ἔοικότα πάντα—“likely,” “fitting,” or “probable”) account, is there any possibility for a positive recommendation related to *Opinion*.

⁸² Coxon’s translation. ἦν δὴ βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδὲν / πλάζονται δίκρανοι· ἀμηχανίη γὰρ ἐν αὐτῶν / στήθεσιν ἰθύνει πλακτὸν νόον· οἱ δὲ φοροῦνται / κωφοὶ ὁμῶς τυφλοὶ τε, τεθηπότες, ἄκριτα φύλα, / οἷς τὸ πέλειν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶναι ταῦτον νενόμισται (15) / κού ταῦτον, πάντων δὲ παλίντροπὸς ἐστὶ κέλευθος.

⁸³ Coxon’s translation. ἀλλὰ σὺ τῆσδ’ ἀφ’ ὁδοῦ διζήσιος εἶργε νόημα / μηδέ σ’ ἔθος πολὺπειρον ὁδὸν κατὰ τήνδε βιάσθω, / νωμᾶν ἄσκοπον ὄμμα καὶ ἠχήεσαν ἀκουήν / καὶ γλῶσσαν, κρῖναι δὲ λόγῳ πολὺδῆριν ἔλεγχον (5).

τόν σοι ἐγὼ διάκοσμον εἰκότα πάντα φατίζω, (8.60)
ὥς οὐ μή ποτέ τις σε βροτῶν γνώμη παρελάσσει.

“This order of things I declare to you to be likely in its entirety,
in such a way that never shall any mortal outstrip you in practical judgement”

Those who are attracted to the more “positive” view of DK 1.31-32 and *Opinion* take “εἰκότα πάντα” as indicating that Parmenides is about to provide an account of the apparent world that is “acceptable” in some way (perhaps his own, personally endorsed physics and cosmology). Even if this reading of ‘εἰκότα πάντα’ were granted, since DK 1.31-32 can only be seen to support this view retrospectively, DK. 8.60-61 would be the sole outlier in the text explicitly providing any sort of positive recommendation of an account based upon *Opinion*. Thus, this argument is tenuous at best, and the charge of inconsistency remains strong.

However, there is no good reason to accept this reading of ‘εἰκότα πάντα’. The sense of this passage in context clearly seems to be that the goddess is didactically providing the youth with the most “likely” of mortal accounts that one might come across—perhaps one that is the most intellectually tempting—yet still ultimately mistaken. The goddess explicitly provides her reasoning for providing such a deceptive, yet tempting account—so that the youth will never be surpassed in judgment by any mortal.⁸⁴ There is no positive, Parmenides’ endorsed, “second-best” account that is promised here, or even hinted at. It is an account that explains the basic errors of mortals (naming opposites), wrapped in a familiar cosmogonical and theogonical shroud which mortals are accustomed to accepting as true. This understanding

⁸⁴ τόν σοι ἐγὼ διάκοσμον εἰκότα πάντα φατίζω, ὥς οὐ μή ποτέ τις σε βροτῶν γνώμη παρελάσσει.

seems obvious contextually, and has the further recommendation of remaining consistent with the otherwise negative treatment of mortal opinions elsewhere.

Are there not any further reasons to think a positive account of the apparent world, distinct from the opinions of mortals, might be on offer in Parmenides' poem? Is it really not the case that a third thing to learn might not be on offer? It should be admitted that in DK 6.3-9, there is good reason to think a *third* "path of inquiry" has been introduced—the one which mortals mindlessly wander, thinking things *both* are and are-not. While the number of ways of inquiry and their relationship to different parts of the poem is a very important question in Parmenidean scholarship, I do not have room here to fully discuss the issue. However, I hold if one wants to point to this passage at all, whatever distinctions one might make regarding its relation to the "ways of inquiry" in terms of number), that this "mixed path," which mortals mindlessly wander, holding that things both are and are-not, must clearly be associated with the naming errors in *Opinion*. Thus, it simply will not help any positive account of DK 1.31-32 that finds three things to be learnt (with the third supposedly being positive), to try and relate this lesson to a supposedly coordinate third "path of inquiry" — when that passage contains the most unabashedly negative criticism to be found of mortal opinions in the entire poem. Thus, I freely grant any hypothetical commentator who wants to appeal to the "third way of inquiry" as a premise, as I cannot conceive of how this might support a positive reading of DK 1.31-32 or "save" *Opinion* in any way—the negative treatment can only support the negative reading.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ I generally find Long's view on this issue attractive. A.A. Long, "The Principles of Parmenides' Cosmogony," *Phronesis*, 8.2 (1963): 90-107. Also, Cf. my fn. 76—I am open to my view introducing a third thing to be learnt. Thus, even if it is admitted that there are three "paths of inquiry," I could far more easily incorporate it into my negative reading of DK 1.31-32, without the tension the positive views face.

But, what about those “rogue” fragments? Certainly they suggest that a more positive account *is* on offer, right? I will have more to say on these when considering arguments for moving these out of *Opinion*. However, it should be noted that even without moving these fragments elsewhere, they are no serious challenge for the negative view. It should be noted first that, as we have them, out of context as they are, it should not be assumed that these passages are positively endorsed or “acceptable” in any way, as they could have been criticized at any point in the lines that are missing. Even more problematic for the positive view is that, on the traditional arrangement, the context implied by this very arrangement makes all of these passages negative! Since these supposedly “positively endorsed,” “best account” passages are book-ended by the clearly negative Light/Night naming error of mortals, their context is framed by an explicitly negative exposition of mortal errors!

Challenges for the “Negative” Reading—Orthodox Arrangement:

The negative view suffers from none of these shortcomings. There is no tension in consistency between negative descriptions of mortal opinion elsewhere, and DK. 1.31-32, as there is no positive “saving” of mortal opinion—they are false throughout, and there is nothing “acceptable” about them as they are. That things in the world would only acceptably be accepted if understood in terms of *Being*, this reading has the virtue of taking the arguments in *Truth* seriously, while accounts of *Opinion* that claim there are “acceptable” descriptions of change and becoming do not. There are no worries of Platonic two-world anachronism, and the translation “things that are accepted by mortals to be” does not depend upon δοκ- words possessing negative connotations about “appearances” so early in the philosophical tradition.

On the other hand, there are some other puzzling challenges that the positive view

could more easily avoid, or better account for. First, one may object that the negative view supports the traditional material monist interpretation of Parmindes'—that there really is just *one Being*, and nothing else in the world. This view has the upshot of Parmenides' argument denying not only the entirety of the rest of the world, but his own existence! Was he truly so “mad” as to do this?

I do not find this to be a particularly strong objection. First, as noted above, while the negative reading is admittedly *consistent* with the material monist interpretation, it certainly does not require it. The negative reading is committed to denying any positive account of *Opinion* exists in Parmenides' poem, or was intended by Parmenides himself. Even if one argues that Parmenides' views on the number of *Being* might ultimately be consistent with pluralistic accounts of the world as humans experience it, it does not follow that this was what he was expounding in *Opinion*.⁸⁶ Instead, it is merely claimed that Parmenides is not providing such an account in the section of his poem we refer to as *Opinion*.

Finally, even if the more radical monist approaches are advocated by supporters of the negative reading, this is not as unlikely (or “mad”) as it might seem at first. Parmenides' views were apparently understood in some way similar to this by those closest to his time period and most familiar with his philosophy—Zeno, Melissus, Plato. As to whether this would take a deluded mind to even consider such a radical position, it may just be that Miller was correct: as ridiculous—even mad!—as this self-denying conclusion may seem—we may just have to accept that Parmenides was (as Miller describes Plato's view of him), a “philosopher whose nobility of

⁸⁶ Here, I am considering the later works of Curd, and responses to Parmenides that took his arguments for ungenerated, changeless *Being* seriously, while developing pluralistic accounts that explain the world of motion. My point is, even if one thinks Parmenides did not outright deny these accounts, and did not favor the strict numerical monism he is traditionally thought to have championed, it does not mean that Parmenides was providing such an account in *Opinion*.

intellect drives him to accept conclusions, even if they oblige him to regard the obvious or trivial as nonsense, and even if they force him to throw away the ladder he has used to reach those conclusions.”⁸⁷

Second, and more troubling for the negative view, I think, is that if there is really nothing positive to mortal opinion, and if *Opinion* were as lengthy as is suggested by its diverse claims, one must now explain why Parmenides would have written such an apparently extensive section (*Opinion*), with descriptions relying on the very phenomena completely dismissed as real in *Truth*. While describing *Opinion* as “didactic” certainly seems correct, this explanation is not sufficient—one does not write extensive cosmogonies and theogonies based upon mistaken principles, just to make a point.⁸⁸ *Prima facie*, it seems rather perverse that Parmenides, having completely denied motion, change, generation, etc. so succinctly in *Truth*, would then provide such a lengthy exposition dependent upon those very phenomena, as a demonstration of what is completely false.

I believe these worries can be best alleviated by considering some recent arguments for rearranging the fragments in the poem, which I briefly cover in the next section. However, given all of this, and despite some lingering worries about the extent of *Opinion*, the negative reading seems clearly preferable on balance, even on the traditional arrangement of the poem. Thus, the negative reading should be accepted as the best view for DK 1.31-32, as things stand.

⁸⁷ Fred D. Miller, Jr. “Parmenides on Mortal Belief,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 15.3 (1977): 253-265. 253.

⁸⁸ This is Cordero’s explanation for Parmenides’ *Opinion* in his earlier book, before he proposed rearranging the text—I imagine the obvious lacking in this explanation, when confronted with the diversity and apparent length of *Opinion*, largely motivated his proposed rearrangement.

Part II: How Might Arguments for Unorthodox Arrangements be Helpful Here?

I have argued that while the “negative” reading of lines 31-32 is more natural than the more “positive” reading—even on the traditional arrangement—it is understandable that some may remain unconvinced. The primary concerns remaining to be addressed are the a) (apparently) extensive treatment of phenomena in *Opinion* that were resoundingly denied in *Truth*, as well as b) the “rogue” passages that many think should be understood in some positive way. As suggested in the beginning, it may be that these tensions persist due to questionable assumptions regarding the traditional reconstruction of the poem, and these proposed rearrangements are the most obvious candidates for questioning those assumptions. While I will only be able to very briefly point to the implications of these new proposals, I believe there are elements in these arguments that, when properly understood and embraced, make the “negative” reading of lines 31-32 even more attractive than the orthodox composition and understanding has allowed. The upshots of these arguments generally involve: a) strengthening the divide between *Truth* and *Opinion*, in terms of veracity and falsehood, b) emphasizing the applicability of the conclusions in *Truth* to *Opinion*, and c) imposing a more restricted understanding of the scope and content of *Opinion*.

Ebert’s Reconstruction:

Ebert’s proposed restoration is perhaps the most easily accepted, and though nothing is changed but a relatively minor transposition of text, it provides some of the best support for

the negative reading of DK 1.31-32 (and of *Opinion* in general).⁸⁹ Ebert has rightly pointed out that DK. 8. 34-41 have nothing to do with the surrounding discussion. DK. 8.42 picks up logically where 8.32-34 leave off, transitioning from discussion of *Being's* static (or “unmoving”) attribution, to the need for the complete perfection of *Being*. Lines 34-41, in their traditional position, seem to be a strange aside. Lines 34-37 diverge into discussion of thought, and how thinking about something requires thinking about timeless *Being*. Only the description of *Being* at DK. 38 as “complete” (οὐλόν) and “changeless” (ἀκίνητον) are relevant to the prior discussion in DK. 8, and support this traditional placement. However, the thrust of lines 37-38 is not in the form of making the argument that these are the characteristics of *Being*—it is already taken for granted that this has been established.

After this, in lines 39-41, it is claimed that everything besides *Being*, which mortals believe to be real, is “a name,” which includes the phenomena of coming-to-be, perishing, change in location, and the differences between darkness and light. But this thought is left incomplete on the current arrangement (What is it to be “a name”? Why is this important or relevant?). However, when these lines are placed immediately after DK. 8.52 (just after the goddess has explicitly indicated she ceases discussion of *Truth*, and will now discuss mortal opinions with a deceptive (ἄπατηλόν) arrangement of words), the discussion of mortals

⁸⁹ Though Ebert's proposed restoration is relatively recent (1989), it was actually first proposed by Guido Calogero in 1937, though entirely ignored. A.A. Long, in 1963, also noted the close relationship between these lines, but likewise appears entirely unaware of Calogero's proposal. Long 97-99. My knowledge of Ebert's (and Calogero's) work is restricted to Palmer's discussion in his monograph. See Palmer, Appendix, 352-4.

naming dark and light things is immediately picked up again at DK 8.53-59. Furthermore, DK 8.34-41 provide an appropriate transition that is otherwise lacking between DK 8.52-53.⁹⁰

Based upon Palmer's analysis of Ebert's restoration, I am convinced that it should be adopted.⁹¹ More importantly here, adopting this restoration makes the positive reading of DK. 1.31-32 far more difficult (if not impossible) to maintain, thus greatly strengthening the case for the negative reading. This placement makes it clear that the arguments in *Truth* must be carried over and applied to the entire next section (*Opinion*), and that the things in mortal opinions that contradict the arguments in *Truth* are not real—"for nothing else either is or will be except What is..."⁹² It is only in the mistaken opinions of mortals that generation, perishing, and change in location or brightness are to be found—not in reality. These phenomena are nothing more than names mortals mistakenly impose upon *Being* itself. DK 8.53 now clearly can be taken as explaining the way in which mortals come to make these errors, believing in generation, perishing, etc.—"For they fixed their minds on naming two forms..."⁹³ Clearly, nothing between DK 8.50-59 (especially not after including lines 34-41 in the middle) can be taken in a positive manner, and since later fragments discussed above explicitly carry on this "naming error," even to the end of the poem (DK. 19), it becomes exceedingly difficult to make room for a positive account in *Opinion*, one that shows how an account of the apparent world can be acceptably understood in terms of being, with its plurality and change maintained with some degree of actuality.

⁹⁰ Palmer provides numerous other advantages to this restoration, which I cannot go into here. Again, see his appendix 352-4, for a complete discussion on how persuasive Ebert's proposal is. See my Appendix E a comparison of the placements, under Palmer's translation.

⁹¹ Palmer is so convinced, he goes so far as to chastise all recent editions and commentators that continue to ignore Ebert's arguments.

⁹² Palmer's translation. 371.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

The only remaining strategy I can see for the defender of the positive reading of DK 1.31-32 (and a positive account in *Opinion*) is to divide up *Opinion* into compartmentalized sections.⁹⁴ The positive-reader can accept that DK 8.50-59 are clearly negative, pointing out how mortals have erred. They can then say that all the negative claims, and the applicability of the arguments of *Truth* to *Opinion* are confined to that section alone, and a new section of *Opinion* begins at DK 8.60-61—when the goddess says that she provides “this arrangement/ordering” (‘διάκοσμον’) which is “entirely fitting/likely (‘εοικότα πάντα διάκοσμον’), so that no mortal will outdo the youth in judgment. After this, the defense will aver, we find some acceptably positive account, particularly in the “rogue” fragments, that does not deny the reality of the entire world.

It has already been pointed out that the context of the presentation of this “likely arrangement” points towards an exposition of errors which are provided didactically, so that the youth (or reader) will avoid these same metaphysical errors. The context is not in favor of some positive, “second-best” account of reality. Further, it should be noted that the verbal tense (φατίζω) here is present—so the passage is actually ambiguous on whether the “likely arrangement” refers to some future, positive account, or backwards to the clearly negative account just discussed. More problematically, there are fragments that are normally placed *after* 8.60-61 that would be hard to deny carry on the naming error of mortals explicitly, supposedly up to the end of the entire poem (DK 19). It would seem the positive view would require some rearranging (or convincing “restorations”) of its own before the positive section can be said to start here at DK 60-61. Since Cordero has already offered some suggestions

⁹⁴ Thanassas interprets *Opinion* along these lines.

along these lines (admittedly from the more negative perspective), it is worth considering his position on the “rogue” fragments here.

Cordero’s Rearrangement:

Cordero’s recent proposal consists of two primary points. First, as we can be certain of the error of mortals involving the naming errors surround the forms Light/Night, we should restrict our understanding of *Opinion* to that context. Second, the idea of Parmenides himself offering a positive account of the world of appearances is a fiction, reliant upon anachronistic Platonizing of Parmenides, leading to an “arbitrary” placement of the “rogue” fragments in *Opinion*, when they actually belong in *Truth*. Given these background premises, Cordero wants to draw a line between cosmological and physical accounts (as part of *Truth*), and the fire/night naming error (*the only contents of Opinion*). In brief, Cordero concludes that DK. 10-11, 13-15, and 17-18 should all be moved to *Truth*, in this basic order, and should precede DK 6.⁹⁵ Similarly, DK 16 should be placed between DK 6 and DK 7.⁹⁶

The upshot of this argument for the negative reading of DK 1.31-32 should be clear. Were the physical and cosmological passages placed *before* the arguments for *Being* in *Truth*, this would provide a literal *elenchus* against which lines 31-32 could operate. The goddess’ promise—that one will learn the manner in which accepted things should rightly be accepted...just as beings—would be explicitly satisfied in *Truth*. For when the goddess a little

⁹⁵ Bicknell long ago argued that DK. 10 should be moved, from *Opinion*, to the end of the *Proem*, somewhere after DK 1.31-32. While this sort of move makes some sense, and gets one of the lines that suggest a great length to *Opinion* out of that context, the argument depends upon its sister line, with essentially the same content, remaining in *Opinion*. Whatever the merits of avoiding such gross repetition Bicknell has identified are, this move clearly does not help the negative reading, and doesn’t seem to have any effect on the positive reading of DK 1.31-32.

⁹⁶ Cordero 2010.

later tells the youth that he will come to *know* how the aether, stars, planets, moon, animals, deities, etc., *came-to-be*, and how the moon *moves* in its orbit, not only is there no need for an extensive account of this generation and locomotion necessary in *Opinion*, such is not needed in *Truth* either. The upcoming arguments in DK 8 deny that any of these things actually ever happened at all. That is what it is to really *know* about these things—that they are not.

Unfortunately, Cordero's arguments for rearrangement are not only far from convincing, they are hardly tenable. Cordero is surely guilty of overstating his case for the arbitrariness of the placement of these fragments in the *Doxa*, as the ancient *testimonia* are far from "arbitrary" grounds for the traditional arrangement.⁹⁷ When ancient commentators, who had far better access to Parmenides work than any reconstruction we have now, tell us one passage precedes or follows another, this evidence is not to be ignored lightly. Not only does Cordero seem to (almost) entirely ignore the *testimonia*, he even does so inconsistently. The apparent inconsistency lies in his choice of passages to move and leave behind—by leaving DK 12, his entire argument collapses quickly.

DK 12 does include mention of fire/night imagery.⁹⁸ Since Cordero thinks *only* passages that invoke this dualism are to be assigned to *Opinion*, this may have been part of Cordero's reasoning for leaving it in *Opinion*. However, DK 12 does not include any specific mention of the naming error. Imagery related to fire and darkness/night is quite common in cosmological

⁹⁷ While I cannot extensively challenge Cordero's arguments here, Kurfess has done an admirable job of pointing out how Cordero largely ignores and/or derides the scholarship behind the traditional arrangement.

⁹⁸ αἱ γὰρ στεινότεραι πλῆντο πυρὸς ἀκρήτοιο,
αἱ δ' ἐπὶ ταῖς νυκτός, μετὰ δὲ φλογὸς ἴεται αἴσα·
ἐν δὲ μέσῳ τούτων δαίμων ἢ πάντα κυβερνᾷ·
πάντα γὰρ ἢ στυγεροῖο τόκου καὶ μίξιός ἄρχει
πέμπουσ' ἄρσενι θῆλυ μιγῆν τό τ' ἐναντίον αὐτίς
ἄρσεν θηλυτέρωι.

accounts (and we have already noted the Light/Night symbolism is evident in the *Proem*), and if we wanted to limit *Opinion* solely to the naming error, it could be left out. However, doing so requires ignoring Simplicius' explicit direction that this fragment comes after Truth—which is probably the other reason Cordero left it in *Opinion*. However, once DK 12 is included in *Opinion*, and we take into account other *testimonia* (even from the same author, in the same passage), so it seems many of the other fragments Cordero wanted to move must also remain in *Opinion*, as their content is also in DK 12.

Simplicius clearly ties DK 12 & DK 13 closely together, one after the other, and the nameless divinity in DK 12 is taken to be the subject who creates the god of love in DK 13.⁹⁹ Not only does Cordero have a fragment with a cosmological theme in *Opinion* (DK 12), but the only fragment suggesting a theogony is to be found in *Opinion* (DK 13) should clearly accompany DK 12. After this, since this fragment also provides quite plausible links to the other assorted fragments that don't really go together otherwise, and the *testimonia* regularly relate these topics to *Opinion*, we have to add those related fragments back in. For example, the goddess in DK 12 is also described as being responsible for initiating sexual unions. Fittingly, DK 17 & 18 also include this topic, and thus all the evidence points to them belonging in *Opinion*. Even the confusing DK 16 is related to hot/cold dualism by its ancient commentator (Theophrastus)—not far away in meaning from the Light/Night naming error!¹⁰⁰ At the very least, one should conclude that wherever DK 12 goes, 13, 17, and 18 should follow.

What about the remainder (DK 10, 11, 14, 15)? Is there still a case to move *some* of these to *Truth* as part of Parmenides' *physics* instead of *Opinion*? Not really. Once again,

⁹⁹ Simplicius. *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics* 39. Coxon 238.

¹⁰⁰ *On the Senses* 3. Coxon 140.

Simplicius explicitly states that Parmenides begins his “treatment of the sensibles” with DK 11.¹⁰¹ There have been arguments to move DK 10 to the end of the *Proem* before, but even were this granted, as DK 10 and 11 both promise knowledge of the generation of the cosmos, moving one is not sufficient to reduce the length and scope of *Opinion*, as the negative view seeks to do.¹⁰² Finally, though DK 14 and 15 do not receive any good attestation of their placement by Plutarch, since both make claims about the moon, and we are supposed to learn about the moon in DK 11, and since DK 12 can even be read as part of the cosmogony, there simply is no good case to be made here. While such rearrangements might initially seem attractive for their explicit satisfaction of the promise in DK 1.31-32, at least on the negative view, accepting these moves requires ignoring all the evidence of arrangement from ancient commentators.

Restricting the *Doxa*:

Cordero’s conclusion regarding rearrangement should be completely denied. However, his argument is worth consideration. Not only does he remind us that the poem’s reconstruction may be problematic (though clearly not as deeply flawed as he ends up suggesting), more importantly, he does make a very good case for insisting that we limit our understanding of *Opinion* to the context of the Light/Night naming error. This does not require moving any fragments out of *Opinion*, however. Instead, we should simply realize that all of the accounts in these “rogue” fragments can be understood in terms of further exposition along the Light/Night naming error, just as the traditional arrangement implicitly recognizes, by placing

¹⁰¹ *Commentary...On the Heavens* 559. Coxon 234.

¹⁰² Bicknell’s proposed move. Cf. fn. 95

DK 19 at the end of the poem—which, as noted above, results in book-ending all of *Opinion* in the context of the clearly negative naming error of mortals. But isn't there still the worry about excessive length? Why so much, if of no account?

Again, *Opinion* is to be taken didactically on the negative view, and so Parmenides sets out to give as full an account as he thinks is necessary to properly instruct his readers how to avoid the errors of mortals. It may have to be admitted that since other theogonies and cosmogonies of his time were rather lengthy, and since he might have been modeling his account after them, excessive length may have just worked itself into this poem. On the other hand, perhaps the entire supposition that *Opinion* would have required a lengthy explication in order to adequately address its myriad of disparate topics is a mistake. Kurfess has recently argued, quite convincingly, I believe, that as there is no evidence of any additional content for *Opinion* amongst the *testimonia*, other than what we have in fragments.¹⁰³ This suggests *Opinion* is not as extensive as it has traditionally been supposed. With these considerations in hand, the negative reading of DK 1.31-32 is strengthened, along with the negative status of *Opinion*.

I have argued that DK 1.31-32 is best understood on the negative reading, both in-itself and with regard to the poem overall. There is no positive account of *Opinion* being promised, and thus the status of *Opinion* remains thoroughly negative as well. While this was demonstrated on the traditional arrangement of the poem, consideration of several proposals for rearranging the poem have, on balance, provided additional support for the negative reading. These include recognizing that the arguments in *Truth* are explicitly applicable to

¹⁰³ 177-189. One can take this general argument for a more limited *Opinion* without also accepting Kurfess' association of the "rogue" fragments with a reincarnation myth, along the lines of Plato's "Myth of Er."

Opinion (Ebert's Reconstruction); that *Opinion* should be understood in the only context we have certainty of (the Light/Night naming error); finally, I have noted how the worry that *Opinion* is simply too extensive for it to be nothing but an illusory account might be challenged.

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Appendices

Appendix A: DK 1.28b-30—Variant Readings		
	Context Lines (TLG) ...χρεῶν δέ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι (28b) ἡμὲν Ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμῆς ἦτορ (29)	
Line #	Apparatus Criticus: Commentary on Selections	Modern Endorsements
28	Greek is uncontested; all sources and manuscripts agree	No discrepancies
29	<p style="text-align: center;"> ἡ μὲν--Plutarch τῶ μὲν/τὸ μὲν--Proclus. ἡμὲν--All other sources </p> <p>While ἡ μὲν makes sense as a μὲν...δέ construction, the feminine article fails to agree with the neuter subject (ἦτορ). Though Proclus attempts to correct the gender mismatch, the epic conjunctions (ἡμὲν...ἦδε) are preferable.</p> <p>ἡμὲν is preferable (also preferable is ἦδε in line 30, for the same reasoning).</p>	No contemporary discrepancies.
	<p style="text-align: center;"> εὐφεγγέος--Proc. (bright; brilliant). Fitting metaphorical description of truth/reality, but almost certainly incorrect. No modern commentators follow this reading. </p> <p>εὐκυκλέος--Simpl. ("well-rounded"): Supported by later physical description of reality DK 8.43-44),</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> εὐπειθέος--All others (Plut., Sext., Clem., Diog.) εὐπειθέος provides the necessary, positive contrast to the lack of "genuine trustworthiness" found in line 30, and truth/reality is later explicitly associated with "persuasion" ("πειθοῦς ἐστὶ κέλευθος") at DK 3.4 </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> εὐπειθέος is preferable contextually, and better attested. </p>	<p>εὐκυκλέος is read by: Cordero (2004), Geldard (2007), Henn (2003), Miller (2006), Palmer (2009), Taran (1965).</p> <p>εὐπειθέος is read by: Coxon (2009), Curd (1998), Finkelberg (1990), Lombardo (1982), McKirahan (2010), Mourelatos (2008), Thanassas (2007).</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"> ἀτρεμῆς--Sext. NLE 114, Clem., Procl., Simpl. </p> <p>The best contextual evidence for this reading is that Sextus further describes the _____ ἦτορ with the synonymous "unchanging foundation of knowledge" (τὸ τῆς ἐπιστήμης ἀμετακίνητον βῆμα) (S.E. 144).</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> ἀτρεκέος--Plut. Sext. 111, Diog. </p> <p>While three manuscripts of Sextus Empiricus contain only ἀτρεμῆς, two manuscripts (both the earliest and latest) contain both words, but in opposite locations (111 and 114).</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> ἀτρεμῆς is better attested, and thus preferable </p>	<p>ἀτρεμῆς is universally accepted by modern commentators.</p>

Appendix A: DK 1.28b-30—Variant Readings		
Context Lines (TLG) ἡδὲ βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἔνι πίστις ἀληθῆς. (30)		
Line #	Apparatus Criticus: Commentary on Selections	Modern Endorsements
30	<p><u>δόξας</u>--Plutarch, Sextus (114, NE 111), Diogenes, Simplicius f acc pl.</p> <p><u>δόξαι</u>--Sextus (111), Proclus (C) f nom pl.</p> <p><u>δόξαις</u>--Clement, Proclus (NP) f. dat pl</p> <p><u>δοξας</u>: is clearly preferable--need an accusative to be the object of πυθέσθαι</p>	<p><u>δόξας</u> appears to be universally accepted by contemporary commentators.</p>
	<p>ταῖς--Sextus, Clement, Simplicius τῆς--Diogenes αἰς--Plutarch, Proclus</p> <p>ταῖς v. τῆς No important interpretative difference; both are dat. pl. forms agreeing with the preposition ἔνι</p>	<p>ταῖς--is nearly universal.</p> <p>τῆς is read by Coxon, as the proper epic dat. pl. form. Palmer (2009) agrees. Cf. Bryn Mawr text.</p>
	<p><u>οὐκέτι</u>--Diog. This adverbial reading ("no longer") suggests temporal relativism in relation to truth conditions and/or persuasiveness (depending upon how πίστις ἀληθῆς is understood), which is contrary to the overall gist of the poem.</p> <p><u>οὐκ ἔνι</u> is attested by all other mss., and is contextually preferable</p>	<p>All contemporary commentators read <u>οὐκ ἔνι</u></p>

Appendix B: DK 1.31-32 (Variant Readings)

Thesis Lines (TLG):

ἀλλ' ἔμπης καὶ ταῦτα **μαθήσεται**, ὡς τὰ **δοκοῦντα** (31)

χρῆν δοκίμως εἶναι διὰ παντὸς πάντα **περῶντα** (32)

Line #	Apparatus Criticus: Commentary on Selections	Modern Endorsements
31	<p>(μανθάνω) μαθήσεται: 2nd sg. fut. Epic. / 3rd sg. Fut. Mid. *The 3rd person future form is impossible in this context.</p> <p>(μυθήσομαι) μυθήσομαι: 1st sg fut ind mp / 1st st aor subj mp epic. *The aor subj. form is also impossible in this context.</p> <p>The future construction is technically possible, yet quite awkward: "Yet nevertheless, I myself will speak these things (to you), how..."</p> <p>μαθήσεται is clearly preferable. continues the direct address of the Goddess to the youth, which began at line DK 1.23 (με προσήδα...).</p>	<p>μαθήσεται appears to be universally accepted by modern commentators.</p>
	<p>δοκεῦντα--Coxon's reading.</p> <p>Coxon provides <i>no</i> explanation for his emendation here. I can only guess that he thinks the epic e-contract would not result in an -ου, but an -ευ.</p> <p>δοκοῦντα--ALL coddices</p> <p>δοκοῦντα is preferable</p>	<p>δοκεῦντα--Coxon only.</p> <p>All others read δοκοῦντα</p>
32	<p>περῶντα: Simplicius A From περάω. Yields nonsensical translations once the verb's true meaning--"to pass through and leave behind"--is understood.</p> <p>περ ὄντα: Simplicius DEF Fittingly introduces the main topic of P.'s poem--<i>Being</i>, in th <i>Proem</i>.</p> <p>περ ὄντα is clearly preferable</p>	<p>περῶντα is read by: Cordero (2004) Coxon (2009), Geldard? (2007) Henn (2003), Taran (1965), Palmer (2009)</p> <p>περ ὄντα is read by: Curd (2009), Lombardo (1982), McKirahan (2010), Mourelatos (2008), Owen (1960) Thanassas (2007),</p>

Appendix C: DK 1.31-32: Modern Views on Greek Grammar & Translation

Contemporary Commentator	Referent of ταῦτα: Backwards (δόξας) *2 things to learn Forwards (τὰ δοκούντα) *3 things to learn.	Translation of τὰ δοκούντα	Grammatical form of χρῆν	Translation of δοκίμως	περῶντα or περ ὄντα? Grammar of περ?	Translation: DK 1.31-32
Cordero 2004	Backwards	"things that appear <i>in opinions</i> ." Thus, the <i>contents</i> of mortal opinions.	unreal (Counterfactual) imperfect "what could have happened, had what is the case been otherwise."	"really" "truly"	περῶντα	"But, nevertheless, you will also learn this: how it might have been necessary that things that appear in opinions really existed, ranging over everything incessantly."
Coxon	Backwards	"things that are believed to be." <i>contents</i> of mortal opinions.	Past obligation	"acceptance"	περῶντα	"Nevertheless you shall learn these also, how it was necessary that the things that are believed to be should have their being in general acceptance, ranging through all things from end to end."
Curd (1998)	Forwards	"the things that seem" objects of mortal opinions	Past obligation	"be reliable"	περ ὄντα	"But nevertheless you shall learn these things, too, how it was right that the things that seem be reliable, being indeed the whole of things."
Finkelberg	Backwards	"opinions" <i>contents</i> of opinions?	Counterfactual	"genuinely"	περῶντα	"How those opinions would have (or had) to be genuinely..."
Kahn	Backwards	"things that seem" <i>objects</i> of opinions.	Past obligation	"acceptable"	περῶντα	"you must also learn how what seems (true to men <i>had to be acceptable</i> (to them)-- how its acceptance as valid was fitting and inevitable-- since this seeming penetrates all things throughout (the mortal universe)."
A.A. Long (1963)	Backwards	"things which seem" (to mortals) <i>contents</i> of opinions	Past obligation	"genuine"	περῶντα	"But nevertheless you shall learn these things too, how the things which seem had to have genuine existence [for mortals], permeating everything completely."

Appendix C: DK 1.31-32: Modern Views on Greek Grammar & Translation

Contemporary Commentator	Referent of τὰυτα: Backwards (δόξας)*2 things to learn Forwards (τὰ δοκούντα)*3 things to learn.	Translation of τὰ δοκούντα	Grammatical form of χρῆν	Translation of δοκίμως	περὶ ὄντα or περὶ ὄντα? Grammar of περ?	Translation: DK 1.31-32
M. Miller	Forwards	"what are deemed (to be)" <i>Contents of mortal opinions</i>	Miller explicitly says χρῆν is an "unfulfilled past obligation," which is actually a <i>counterfactual</i> form, which his translation agrees with.	"eminently"	περὶ ὄντα intensive	"But nevertheless you shall learn these as well, how for what are deemed [to be] It would have been right that they be eminently, just being all things in every way."
Mourelatos	Backwards	"things deemed acceptable" <i>Contents of mortal opinions</i>	Counterfactual	"acceptably"	περὶ ὄντα determinative	"But, nevertheless, this also you shall learn, how it would be right for things deemed acceptable to be acceptably: just being all of them altogether."
Nehamas	Forwards	"appearances" Makes this clear, despite translating "what seems to be."	Counterfactual	"real"	περὶ ὄντα determinative	"still you will learn these things too, how what seems had to be real, being indeed the whole of things."
G. E. L. Owen	Backwards is best.	The <i>content</i> of mortal opinions, at 2nd-hand from the goddess.	Past obligation	"acceptably"	περὶ ὄντα is preferable.	"Still, you shall learn these things too, <i>namely</i> how the things-that-seem had to have genuine existence, being indeed the whole of things."

Appendix C: DK 1.31-32: Modern Views on Greek Grammar & Translation

Contemporary Commentator	Referent of ταῦτα: Backwards (δόξας) *2 things to learn Forwards (τὰ δοκούντα) *3 things to learn.	Translation of τὰ δοκούντα	Grammatical form of χρήν	Translation of δοκίμως	περῶντα or περ ὄντα? Grammar of περ?	Translation: DK 1.31-32
J. Owens	Forwards, 3	"appearances" <i>Objects</i> of mortal opinions	Past obligation	"acceptably"	Leaves it open	"how the appearances had to be perpetually and everywhere present in a way that assured their acceptance," or "how they [appearances] all had to exist always in genuine fashion."
Palmer	Backwards	"what they resolved" <i>contents</i> of opinions	Past obligation	"actually"	περῶντα	"Nonetheless these things too you will learn, how what they resolved had actually to be, all through all pervading."
Taran	Backwards	"appearances" in the sense of "beliefs of men" <i>contents</i> of mortal opinions	Past obligation	"acceptable"	περῶντα	"Nevertheless you shall learn these [opinions] also, how the appearances, which pervade all things, had to be acceptable [to mortals]"
Thanassas	Forwards	"appearing things" <i>objects</i> of opinions.	Counterfactual	"accepted"	περ ὄντα	"But nevertheless these you shall learn as well, how appearing things should be accepted: all of them altogether as beings."
Waterlow	Forwards	"things that seem" <i>objects</i> of opinions.	Counterfactual	"testing all things" Follows Diels' emendation δοκιμῶσ(αι)	περ ὄντα	"Thou must learn it even so, That, testing all things, so thou may'st declare The Things that Seem, how men should judge they Are;"

Appendix D: Variant Views on The Relationship Between *Truth* and *Opinion*

Commentator	Referent of ταῦτα: Backwards (δόξας) *2 things to learn Forwards (τὰ δοκοῦντα) *3 things to learn.	Whose Δόξα? Opinions of Others'? or Parmenides'	Lines 31-32 & the Relationship Between <i>Truth</i> and <i>Opinion</i>
Bowra	Unaddressed. 2?	Others? Uncertain.	<p>Uncertain. Two kinds of existence. Truth is revealed by reason; permanent and unchanging (divine), Appearances are revealed by senses; ever changing and untrustworthy (mortal). Being is real, appearances illusory. Asserts influence by Pindar and contemporaries. Implicitly denies Platonizing interpretation. Proem and knowledge tied up in imagery of religious revelation.</p> <p>Negative view of <i>Opinion</i>.</p>
Cherubin	Unaddressed.	Others'	<p>The account in <i>Opinion</i> shows the general misunderstandings that mortals are prone to, recognizing distinct objects in a changing world. This account is contrary to all true inquiry and order. However, humans--being things in the world themselves that are mortal, come-to-be, change, and perish--it is inescapable, and thus "fitting," that mortals understand the world in these ways.</p> <p>Somewhat Positive view of <i>Opinion</i>.</p>
Cordero	2	Others'	<p>Opinions are false, but must be learnt--they can be deceptive, and can mislead one who does not know the truth. Knowing what opinions are in contrast to truth helps guard the knowing person against deception.</p> <p>Account of <i>Opinion</i> presents a hypothetical alternative--how the world would really be, <i>IF</i> the truth about being did not require what it does.</p> <p>Completely Negative view of Δόξα</p>

Appendix D: Variant Views on The Relationship Between <i>Truth</i> and <i>Opinion</i>			
Commentator	Referent of ταῦτα: Backwards (δόξας)*2 things to learn Forwards (τὰ δοκούντα)*3 things to learn.	Whose Δόξα? Opinions of Others'? or Parmenides'	Lines 31-32 & the Relationship Between <i>Truth</i> and <i>Opinion</i>
Coxon	2	Parmenides'	<p>Parmenides' goddess promises to teach "how the empirical world must have its being in human acceptance and belief simply, and how this being is both acceptable and accepted universally."</p> <p>Coxon seems to both 1) take Parmenides' monism seriously, yet 2) simultaneously admit that Parmenides offers in <i>Opinion</i> an account of human experience, in the terms of that experience. The account is not true, but maintains fidelity to that viewpoint.</p> <p>Somewhat positive account of Δόξα.</p>
Curd 1998	3	Parmenides'	<p><i>Truth</i> sets forth the conditions for being. All apparent/seeming things are dependent on Being. <i>Opinion</i> sets forth Parmenides' own cosmology, which is supposed to be consistent with a plurality of Parmenidean beings, and thus the cosmology is a "reliable" way of understanding the world.</p> <p>Very positive account of <i>Opinion</i></p>
A.A. Long (1963)	2	Others' (mortals in general)	<p>The cosmogony of <i>Opinion</i> is a detailed, entirely false picture of reality. This false account is to be identified with the mistaken way of inquiry discussed at DK 6.4-9, in which mortals take things to simultaneously be-and-not-be. DK 1.30-32 promise this negative account.</p> <p>Overall, <i>Opinion</i> provides support for the arguments in <i>Truth</i>. First, by providing an exemplary example of mortal errors, so the reader will not be misled by such erroneous opinions in the future. Second, by showing how all mortal accounts fail, this further supports, didactically, the arguments of <i>Truth</i>.</p> <p>Like Taran, Long takes the Light/Night dualism to be exemplarily reflective of the basic errors of all mortal accounts, which all fail by positing non-Being in as well as Being.</p> <p>Very Negative Account of <i>Opinion</i>.</p>

Appendix D: Variant Views on The Relationship Between <i>Truth</i> and <i>Opinion</i>			
Commentator	Referent of ταῦτα: Backwards (δόξας) *2 things to learn Forwards (τὰ δοκοῦντα) *3 things to learn.	Whose Δόξα? Opinions of Others'? or Parmenides'	Lines 31-32 & the Relationship Between <i>Truth</i> and <i>Opinion</i>
McKirahan	2	Parmenides'	Parmenides accepts the arguments in <i>Truth</i> . The world as experienced is not true. However, it deserves an account. <i>Opinion</i> is supposed to be the best possible account of the world as it appears to mortal. Thus, it is valuable to that degree. However, since it fails, and it is the best possible account, all accounts of the apparent world will also fail. Mixed Account of <i>Opinion</i>
M. Miller 2006	2	Parmenides'	Identifies τὰ δοκοῦντα with Light/Night, and argues that the error mortals make is thinking there is nothingness in them, when in fact there is not, as they form a unity together, and make each other what they are. Very Positive Account of <i>Opinion</i>
Mourelatos	2		We should not just realize mortal opinions are false, but we should learn about them and understand how accepted things <i>would have to be</i> in order to be true/exist (209) Explicitly denies the reading of "appearances" as a third thing to be learned. Instead, what is to be learned is: "(a) "what it takes for δοκοῦντα to be genuinely or really; (b) what is the reason for saying that δοκοῦντα are not δοκίμως, as things are (= among mortals)." Generally Negative Account of <i>Opinion</i>
Nehamas	3	Parmenides'	Parmenides is drawing the distinction between appearance and reality. DK 1.31-32 explicitly describe the mistake of mortals, taking what appears to be as the way things actually are. An accurate, correct description by Parmenides of the world of appearances is on offer in <i>Opinion</i> . However, the world of appearances is not the real world. To say things <i>appear</i> to change is possible, and <i>Opinion</i> gives such an account; it would be wrong to say things <i>actually</i> change. Somewhat Positive Account of <i>Opinion</i>

Appendix D: Variant Views on The Relationship Between <i>Truth</i> and <i>Opinion</i>			
Commentator	Referent of ταῦτα: Backwards (δόξας) *2 things to learn Forwards (τὰ δοκοῦντα) *3 things to learn.	Whose Δόξα? Opinions of Others'? or Parmenides'	Lines 31-32 & the Relationship Between <i>Truth</i> and <i>Opinion</i>
G.E.L. Owen	2	Parmenides'	<p>Lines 31-32 are an exegetic account of what mortals themselves actually believe, which the goddess reports at second-hand--that they take the things they believe in (the two forms--Light and Night) to assuredly exist.</p> <p>However, the cosmology is still entirely false and illusory; Parmenides does not provide a positive account in <i>Opinion</i>. Owen's interpretation merely eliminates the apparent tension, by denying the goddess says anything positive about mortal opinions in DK 1.31-32.</p> <p>Very Negative Account of <i>Opinion</i></p>
J. Owens	3	Parmenides'	<p>Parmenides' physical views in <i>Opinion</i> are his own, and to be taken seriously. The world of appearances is not illusory, for this would be self-refuting. While the world of change is misleading and not really true, it exists. Lines 31-32 promise to explain how appearances had to be distributed throughout everything to be accepted, to exist genuinely. The perceptible world is the <i>object</i> of the entire poem--<i>Truth</i> just reveals what all these things are <i>really</i> like, which is not revealed by our senses.</p> <p>Very Positive Account of <i>Opinion</i>.</p>
Palmer	3	Parmenides'	<p>Parmenides is not discussing the dualism of what exists and what does not exist, but the distinction between necessary being and contingent being. The mistake of mortals is that by relying on their senses alone, they think that the only things that exist are contingent beings. Only by reason does one recognize there must be necessary beings, and what such being would be like.</p> <p>Very Positive Account of <i>Opinion</i>--Account of Contingent being.</p>

Appendix D: Variant Views on The Relationship Between <i>Truth</i> and <i>Opinion</i>			
Commentator	Referent of ταῦτα: Backwards (δόξας) *2 things to learn Forwards (τὰ δοκοῦντα) *3 things to learn.	Whose Δόξα? Opinions of Others'? or Parmenides'	Lines 31-32 & the Relationship Between <i>Truth</i> and <i>Opinion</i>
Taran	2	Others' Mortals in general	DK 1.31-32 promise to relate how mortals come to be deceived, which is whenever they start naming distinct opposites, denying the unity of <i>Being</i> that all things belong to, and asserting plurality and change. <i>Opinion</i> sets forth a minimum error (dualism instead of monism) that leads mortals to be mistaken. However, mortals can learn truth. Very Negative View of <i>Opinion</i>
Tarrant	2 (would be 3, if 31-32 were real)	Others	Is skeptical that lines 31-32 are even genuine. If they are, he thinks they do in fact suggest a positive account of "appearances" to be put forth, and how they had to exist in an "acceptable" manner, in a Platonic way; but, they aren't, so Parmenides is denying truth and reality to <i>Opinion</i> . Negative account of Parmenides' <i>Opinion</i> (Omit lines 31-32)
Thanassas 2007	3	Parmenides' (Though he denies there is a unified <i>doxa</i> -many parts)	The apparent world is the one in which we find Being, and understand it at all. It is the sole object of inquiry. Thus, to understand Being is not to discredit or eliminate the objects of experience. Rather, Being belongs to the world. Both ways of cognition (truth and opinion) are focused on the same objects. <i>Doxa</i> understands these as appearances, Truth "as <i>beings</i> ." Also, seems sympathetic to Curd's view that Parmenides is allowing for a multiplicity of beings, as long as they meet the standards of being in-themselves, but not necessarily as complexes. 2 parts of the poem are distinct and complementary kinds of inquiry.(82-83), one divine, the other human (84). Very Positive Account of <i>Opinion</i>
Waterlow	3	Others	P. is a strict monist. <i>Doxa</i> presents a dualism that is false, where mortals err. Genuine, certain knowledge can only be achieve <i>a priori</i> ; denies reliability to senses. Completely Negative Account of <i>Opinion</i>

Appendix E: Ebert's Proposed Reconstruction (Palmer's Translation)	
DK 8.29-44a in Translation	DK 8.50-59 in Translation
Without lines 34-41 (Ebert)	Without Lines 34-41 (Orthodox):
<p>And remaining the same, in the same place, and on its own it rests, and thus steadfast right there it remains; for powerful Necessity holds it in the bonds of a limit, which encloses it all around, Wherefore it is right that What Is be not unfulfilled; for it is not lacking: if it were, it would lack everything. (33)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Where 34-41 traditionally are placed)</p> <p>But since there is a furthest limit, it is perfected (42) from every side, like the bulk of a well-rounded globe, from the middle equal every way: (44a)</p>	<p>At this point I cease for you the trustworthy account and meditation (50) regarding true reality; from this point on mortal notions learn, listening to the deceptive order of my verses. (52)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Where 34-41 should be, on Ebert's view)</p> <p>For they fixed their minds on naming two forms, (53) one of which it is not right to name, wherein they have wandered astray: but they distinguished things opposite in form and assigned them marks distinct from one another, for the one the etherial flame of fire, (56) being gentle, most light, every way the same as itself, yet not the same as the other; but that one is in itself the opposite, dark night, dense in form and heavy. (59)</p>
With Lines 34-41 (Orthodox):	With Lines 34-41 (Ebert):
<p>And remaining the same, in the same place, and on its own it rests, and thus steadfast right there it remains; for powerful Necessity holds it in the bonds of a limit, which encloses it all around, Wherefore it is right that What Is be not unfulfilled; for it is not lacking: if it were, it would lack everything. (33)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The same thing is both for understanding and that because of which there is understanding. (34)</p> <p>For not without What Is, depending on which it has been expressed, Will you find understanding: for nothing else either is or will be except What is, since Fate bound it to be whole and unmoved; to it all things have been give as names, all that mortals have stablished in their conviction that they are genuine, both coming to be and perishing, both being and not, and altering place and exchanging brilliant colour, (41)</p> <p>But since there is a furthest limit, it is perfected (42) from every side, like the bulk of a well-rounded globe, from the middle equal every way: (44a)</p>	<p>At this point I cease for you the trustworthy account and meditation (50) regarding true reality; from this point on mortal notions learn, listening to the deceptive order of my verses. (52)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The same thing is both for understanding and that because of which there is understanding. (34)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For not without What Is, depending on which it has been expressed, Will you find understanding: for nothing else either is or will be except What is, since Fate bound it to be whole and unmoved; to it all things have been give as names, all that mortals have stablished in their conviction that they are genuine, both coming to be and perishing, both being and not, and altering place and exchanging brilliant colour, (41)</p> <p>For they fixed their minds on naming two forms, (53) one of which it is not right to name, wherein they have wandered astray: but they distinguished things opposite in form and assigned them marks distinct from one another, for the one the etherial flame of fire, (56) being gentle, most light, every way the same as itself, yet not the same as the other; but that one is in itself the opposite, dark night, dense in form and heavy. (59)</p>