

APPENDIX FRAGMENT 5

So far I have only glancingly confronted the question of Fragment 5, which at first blush would seem to be in clear tension with the linear, sequential discursive architecture I have suggested that Parmenides' use of *hodos* imagery helps give to his poem.¹ The fragment, which comes to us from Proclus, runs as follows:²

... ξυνὸν δέ μοί ἐστιν,
ὄππότεν ἄρξωμαι· τότε γὰρ πάλιν ἴξομαι αὐθις.

The translations and interpretations that scholars have provided differ on two key points: (i) how to render *xunon*, and (ii) whether to take *hoppothēn . . . tothi* as correlative. In what follows, I shall survey different possible interpretations, assess their merits and demerits, and finally consider how well each interpretation squares with the account of Parmenides' poem I have provided above.

Point (i) has yielded the following alternatives. One school renders the first two clauses as 'it is indifferent to me | from where I begin'.³ The second, which has commanded the lion's share of favour in recent decades, offers a more diverse array of interpretations; so we find 'it is common for me | that where I begin . . .',⁴ 'it is a common point | from which I start . . .',⁵

¹ See e.g. C. Osborne (1997) 33–35.

² See e.g. Tarán (1965) 51; Coxon (2009) 55.

³ E.g. Jameson (1958); Tarán (1965) 51; Barnes (1982) 177; Coxon (2009) 54; McKirahan (2010) 146; one finds minor variations of word order across these sources. Similarly, one finds 'it is all one to me' (Gallop (1984) 59; Thanassas (2007) 93; 'it is all the same to me' (O'Brien (1987) 23 [= 'Où que je commence, cela m'est indifférent'], likewise Sedley (1999) 122); 'gleichviel ist mir's aber, wo ich beginne' (Diels (1897) 33).

⁴ Cordero (2004) 123; he continues '... there I shall return again'; see also 'Il est commun pour moi où je commence' (Cordero (1984) 37).

⁵ Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (2007) 244; see also 'it is a common point for me, from which I shall begin' (Palmer (2009) 85 n. 104, 365).

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‘commonly present it is, | wherever I start from ...’,⁶ and ‘in common, for me, is the point from which I shall begin ...’.⁷

Regarding point (ii), the widely accepted view, at least before Bodnár’s important article on Fragment 5, was that these clauses were correlative (viz. ‘wherever I start from, to that place I shall return again’). As Bodnár points out, however, there is no need to interpret *hoppothen* and *tothi* as correlative; *hoppothen* and *tothi*, that is, can refer to two different things.⁸

This yields a four-part grid of possibilities.

Appendix 1: Table 1

	Correlated	Uncorrelated (‘Focal Image’) ¹¹
‘Indifferent’	1a	1b
‘Common’ (etc.)	2a	2b

Refining the set of possible translations accordingly, we have:

- 1a: ‘It is indifferent to me | where I begin, for there I shall come back again ...’;
- 1b: ‘It is indifferent to me | where I begin, for to [x] I shall come back again ...’;
- 2a: ‘It is a common point | from which I begin, for there again and again I shall return ...’;⁹
- 2b: ‘It is a common point | from which I start, for to [x] I shall come back again ...’.¹⁰

⁶ Bodnár (1985) 61.

⁷ LM 36–37. See also Löw (1935) 9; Meijer (1969) 104; Hölscher (1969) 77, 118.

⁸ Bodnár (1985) 59.

⁹ Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (2007) 244. See also LM 36–37, and also, it would seem, Mourelatos (2008b) 193.

¹⁰ Bodnár (1985) 61 offers: ‘Commonly present it is, | wherever I start from, for there I will return again’; in light of his observation that *hypothen arxōmai* is to be a subordinate conditional clause rather than an indirect question, for the sake of clarity, if not elegance, we might offer: ‘Commonly present it is, | wheresoever I start from, for there I will return again.’

¹¹ Bodnár (1985) 59, with helpful diagram.

Each rendition presents its own interpretative challenges. In the case of (1a), the two main questions are, first, why the starting point should be ‘indifferent’; if the starting point will determine the end point, it should presumably be of great importance. Second, there is also the question of just what kind of thing might qualify as a reference for *hoppothen* and *tothi*: an(y) object of inquiry? A key principle? One of the four *sēmata* in Fragment 8?

Proponents of (2a), meanwhile, must answer the question of just what the goddess’s starting point is, and in what sense this could be understood to be ‘common’. For their part, proponents of (2b) must not only answer these two questions – what is the starting point, and in what way is it ‘common’ – but must also fill in the ‘[x]’: to what, precisely, does *tothi* refer? Similarly, proponents of (1b) must also answer this last question – to what, precisely, does *tothi* refer – as well as the second question posed to proponents of (1a). What kind of thing might be an appropriate candidate for the reference of both (i) *hoppothen* and (ii) *tothi*, and (iii) in what way should it be ‘indifferent’ to the goddess where she begins? These concerns can be summarized in the following way:

To which, or to what kind of, ‘starting point’ does *hoppothen* refer?
(1a, 1b, 2a, 2b)

In what sense does the goddess ‘come back again’ to that to which *tothi* refers? (1a, 1b, 2a, 2b)

Why, or in what sense, is the starting point ‘indifferent’? (1a, 1b)

Why, or in what sense, is the starting point ‘common’? (2a, 2b)

To which, or to what kind of, point of return does *tothi* refer? (1b, 2b)

As the list above suggests, one of the central challenges for any interpreter of Fragment 5 is to find a reference (or, in the case of 1b and 2b, references plural) for *hoppothen* and *tothi*. One of the primary ways to grapple with these questions is to consider where in the sequence of Parmenides’ ‘Route to Truth’ Fragment 5 might have been located;¹² to the extent that this

¹² The notion that this fragment might have been located in the *Doxa* has not been seriously entertained since Karsten (1835), and for good reason; see discussion in e.g. Jameson (1958) 16–17; Tarán (1965) 52.

reference or references might be contained in an adjacent fragment, the question of location takes on a particular importance, especially for interpretations 1b, 2a, and 2b, where at least one relative pronoun needs a specific reference that is not merely ‘indifferent’. Two proposals are commonly found:

- 2: vicinity of Fragment 2 (viz. immediately before or after Fragment 2)¹³
- 8: vicinity of Fragment 8¹⁴ (e.g. as Fragment 5)¹⁵

Before deploying this framework to survey possible interpretations of Fragment 5, it will be useful to frame what follows with the remarks of two scholars who have written on this fragment. More than half a century ago, Tarán suggested that many discussions of Fragment 5 are occupied with ‘conjectural interpretations’ that go well ‘beyond the evidence’; responding to this some decades later, Bodnár insisted that whether or not this is true, nevertheless ‘we *are* able to contrast and rank different interpretations of this fragment’.¹⁶ Both points remain valid. Fragment 5 is so cryptic and denuded of context that any interpretation of it must be deemed considerably more speculative than most other aspects of interpreting Parmenides’ fragments; it can therefore provide only feeble grounds for supporting or militating against a particular interpretation of Parmenides’ poem as a whole. On the other hand, certain interpretations are in and of themselves stronger than others according to such criteria as how well they address the questions listed two paragraphs above, how well their central claims are reflected or borne out in the existing fragments of Parmenides’ poem and the arguments they make, and what new

¹³ This position could be described already in 1985 as a ‘growing new orthodoxy’ (Bodnár (1985) 59 and 62 n. 17). It is placed there in the sequence of Parmenides’ fragments by e.g. Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (2007), Coxon (2009), and LM; see also e.g. Mourelatos (2008b) [1970] 193, Sedley (1999) 122, Cordero (2004) 122–24, Palmer (2009) 85 n. 104. The view is in fact much older; Diels originally placed this fragment directly before Fr. 2 (Diels (1897) 32), and Reinhardt persisted in calling this Fragment 3 (see Reinhardt (1916) 60).

¹⁴ The lone source for the fragment, Proclus, quotes it alongside portions of Fr. 8.25 and Fr. 8.44 (Procl. *in Parm.* 708.16–17).

¹⁵ I count Fragment 5 as close to Fragment 8 since scholars such as Curd both take the reference of the relevant indefinite pronouns to be parts of Fragment 8 (viz. the *sēmata*), even though they do not relocate Fragment 5 so that it sits adjacent to Fragment 8; see likewise remarks at Barnes (1982) 177.

¹⁶ Tarán (1965) 51; Bodnár (1985) 57, emphasis original.

light they shed on other fragments or long-standing cruxes in the interpretation of Parmenides.

Finally, it is also true that the scantiness of the evidence at our disposal makes it difficult to rule out any interpretation of Fragment 5 conclusively. Rather, the exercise of trying to make sense of Fragment 5 also invites us to reflect on the many different kinds of hermeneutic circularity inherent in the act of making sense of the fragments of Parmenides' poem that remain. How are we to understand any given individual fragment in relation to the larger sense of what it was Parmenides was trying to accomplish? If we introduce the question of Parmenides' larger project – is he a neo-Ionian cosmologist? A metaphysician critical of earlier cosmological projects? A mystic? Something else entirely? – earlier or later into the process of reading Parmenides, how does this guide our subsequent interpretations of individual fragments like Fragment 5? When we encounter a word like *xunon* – or indeed, more generally – should we prioritize the semantic parallels and intertextual linkages with Homer or, say, Heraclitus? Do we give free reign to a 'creative genius not much in debt to anyone',¹⁷ or ought we to try to re-embed Parmenides' concerns and arguments within their cultural, intellectual, or discursive contexts? How hard should we try? How much do our answers depend on our own (often unacknowledged) presuppositions and commitments concerning the development of ideas and the process by which conceptual and intellectual change occurs?

Some Interpretations

Many proponents of 1b, 2a, and 2b have found it desirable to locate Fragment 5 in the vicinity of Fragment 2. We may begin with one of Bodnár's proposals, a form of 1b₂ that can be rendered: 'It is indifferent from where [viz. from which object of inquiry] I start, for there [viz. "the outcome of Fragment 2", or "that it exists"] I will return again.'¹⁸ To the question of to what point of return *tothi* refers, the answer would be: 'the procedure described in Fragment 2'.¹⁹ The 'starting point', meanwhile, would be 'objects of inquiry', and

¹⁷ Schofield (2003) 44. See Introduction, n. 23.

¹⁸ Bodnár (1985) 59–61.

¹⁹ Bodnár (1985) 59, and see also Barnes (1982) 157 n. 65 and Owen (1960) 94–95.

the meaning of ‘indifferent’ would be that no matter the specific object of inquiry with which one started, one would still apply the procedure described in Fragment 2 just the same – and would thus ultimately arrive in each case at the same conclusion (viz. ‘that the object of inquiry in question exists’).²⁰ On this interpretation, Fragment 5 would introduce (if before Fragment 2), or emphasize (if after), the enormous importance of Fragment 2 in Parmenides’ subsequent arguments – a plausible, indeed valuable, function.²¹ What is more, Bodnár’s interpretation has the additional benefit of justifying the notorious absence of a subject in Fragment 2, which, following Barnes, he supposes to be the *subauditur* subject ‘the object of inquiry’.²² Since any object of inquiry would be just as suitable a starting point as any other (hence the ‘indifference’ of the goddess), Fragment 5 would suggest that there is no need to specify any subject in Fragment 2.²³

Versions of 2a, meanwhile, have their own respectable pedigree, notably in the discussions of Reinhardt, Hölscher, and Bicknell.²⁴ The traditional objection to this view has been that it is incompatible with the meaning of the word *xunon*.²⁵ This is only true, however, if one insists that *xunon* can *only* rightly be construed to mean ‘indifferent’. As Bodnár points out, however, this meaning is otherwise unattested beyond Heraclitus 103, and the interpretation of that fragment is itself much disputed. (In fact, one finds advocates of both ‘indifferent’ and ‘common’ who adduce the parallel in support of their reading of Parmenides.)²⁶ By contrast, in Homer the word ‘common’ is clearly the primary

²⁰ Bodnár (1985) 60.

²¹ Bodnár (1985) 59–60.

²² Bodnár (1985), and cf. Barnes (1982) 157 n. 65.

²³ For a slightly different version of 1b₂, see Sedley (1999) 122 n. 15, who allies himself with Bodnár’s reading; as he sees it, *tothi* refers ‘not to the arbitrarily chosen starting point, but to what-is. [The goddess] would then mean that all arguments, wherever they may start from, will bring you back to being, because ultimately that is the only possible subject of rational discourse’.

²⁴ See e.g. Reinhardt (1916) 60, and discussion in Bodnár (1985) 58; Hölscher (1969) 77, 118; Bicknell (1979) 9–11.

²⁵ E.g. Gallop’s criticism of Bicknell (Gallop (1984) 37 n. 57), or Bodnár’s of Hölscher (Bodnár (1985) 58).

²⁶ For ‘indifferent’, see e.g. Diels (1897) 51; Tarán (1965) 52; Heitsch (1991) 148; Coxon (2009). For ‘common’, see e.g. Cordero (1984) 173; Cordero (2004) 123; Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (2007) 244 n. 1.

meaning;²⁷ whichever rendering of *xunon* one prefers, that is, it does not seem possible entirely to rule out ‘common’. Furthermore, one might feel that had Parmenides wanted to convey the notion of indifference, he had many other hexameter-friendly words with a venerable Homeric pedigree.²⁸ In short, the primary argument against interpretation 2a has been largely defanged.

If nothing stands in the way of pursuing 2a₂, what might it mean? A particularly attractive expression of this position has recently been advanced by John Palmer, who stakes out what we might call a ‘recursive’ version of 2a₂. On this view, Fragment 5 underscores that Fragment 2 announces the foundational point or ‘fundamental principle’ (e.g. ‘that it is and cannot not be’)²⁹ anchoring the goddess’s argumentation, a point or principle to which she will recur again in the course of the arguments of Fragment 8.³⁰ Of course, as nearly all contemporary interpreters agree, at various points – most explicitly in Fr. 8.15–18 – Parmenides’ arguments *do* recur back to just this point or principle. Whether it introduced or immediately followed Fragment 2, Fragment 5 would thus underscore the paramount importance of Fragment 2 and serve ‘as a comment by the goddess on the recursive character of her argumentation’.³¹ The notion of recursiveness thus provides the meaning of *xunon*, ‘common’, insofar as the principle of Fragment 2 is not only the point from which Parmenides’ goddess will begin (ἄρξωμαι), but is also that to which she will recur time and again in the course of her subsequent argumentation (πάλιν ἴξομαι αὖτις).³²

If there is no ban on translating *xunon* as ‘common’, reading 2b₂ is also fair game. This interpretation works in a similar way to 1a₂. As Bodnár, who presents this view, observes, both *xunon* and *tothi*

²⁷ See Bormann (1971) 180.

²⁸ See Bodnár (1985) 61, 63 n. 26, where other arguments for ‘common’ can be found; likewise Cordero (2004) 123.

²⁹ See Palmer (2009) 85 n. 104 for both quotations and lucid summary of the ‘recursive’ position’s merits.

³⁰ See esp. Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (2007) 244 and Palmer (2009) 85 n. 104; also Hölscher (1969) 77.

³¹ Palmer (2009) 85 n. 104.

³² There is also what we might call a ‘dialectical’ reading of Fragment 5 that is best classified as a version of 2a₂. Cordero (1984) 172–73 and (2004) 123, building on Meijer (1969) and Meijer (1997) 123–24, is the most prominent spokesman for this view.

would here refer to the outcome of Fragment 2;³³ the idea is again that no matter the object of inquiry with which one starts, one will again be funnelled through the ‘procedure’ of Fragment 2 and forced to the conclusion ‘it [viz. the object of inquiry] exists’.

Reading 1a remains to be addressed. Despite a rather chequered critical reception, there are still proponents of the view advanced by Kirk and Raven (what we might term 1a₈),³⁴ namely that ‘every attribute of reality can be deduced from every other’.³⁵ A recent presentation of this view has been assayed by Patricia Curd; she asserts that ‘the goddess’s remarks in B5 should be taken, not as a description of the route [of inquiry presented in Fragment 8], but as an account of the various characteristics of what-is ... Whatever aspect of what-is that we begin with, we will eventually reach the others.’³⁶

This interpretation has the virtue of making excellent sense of the notion of indifference, and also of providing a clear answer to the question of what category of thing would qualify as a reference for *hoppothen* (viz. a *sēma* addressing the nature of what-is). On the other hand, just what might be meant by the clause introduced by *gar* becomes mysterious, since it is not clear in what sense the mutual deducibility of the *sēmata* could be captured by the phrase τόθι γὰρ πάλιν ἴξομαι αἴθις. More specifically, to what would *tothi* refer on this interpretation? Surely not to a *sēma*, or to something in the *sēma*-like category, for the idea is not that the goddess provides a proof of the same attribute more than once. It is hard to think of how one could answer the question in a way that would produce the sense: ‘whatever aspect of what-is that we begin with, we will eventually reach the others.’³⁷

³³ Bodnár (1985) 63 n. 27.

³⁴ See n. 15 above.

³⁵ Kirk and Raven (1957) 268, see also 278; endorsed also by Guthrie (1965) 97 n. 1. Bodnár (1985) 59 called the view ‘fanciful’ (and see also excellent analysis in *ibid.*, 62 n. 14), though others (e.g. Gallop (1984) 19) have been more enthusiastic.

³⁶ Curd (1998b) 69. Strikingly, Curd continues in a footnote: ‘This is the case even if some of the attributes of what-is depend on others; for instance, it seems that the discussions of the characteristics “unshaking” and “complete” depend on proofs of ungenerability and cohesiveness. Were we to begin with the completeness of what-is, we would have to pause to consider whether anything else could come to be in order to complete it, or whether it is divisible and so could lack a part of itself.’

³⁷ Curd (1998) 69.

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This interpretation faces another set of difficulties. Is the claim that no matter with which aspect of what-is we begin, we will eventually reach all the others borne out by the actual argumentation of Fragment 8 that Parmenides chose to make, especially in fragments 2 and 8? As Curd herself notes,³⁸ Parmenides has expressly chosen to base his argument for *akinēton* (Fr. 8.26–28) on the results of his first *sēma*:

Αὐτὰρ ἀκίνητον μεγάλων ἐν πείρασι δεσμῶν
ἔστιν ἀναρχον ἄπαστον, ἐπεὶ γένεσις καὶ ὄλεθρος
τῆλε μάλ' ἐπλάχθησαν, ἀπῶσε δὲ πίστις ἀληθείης.

And also ἀκίνητον within the limits of great bonds
It is unbeginning, unending, since generation and destruction
Have wandered far off, and genuine conviction expelled them.

It is by no means clear that the concern can be waved aside by observing that ‘were we to begin with the completeness of what-is, we would have to pause to consider whether anything else could come to be in order to complete it, or whether it is divisible and so could lack a part of itself’.³⁹ Such an assertion misses the point, and the possible objection it would address is not one we might easily imagine arising. If, say, with either Owen or Austin, one sees the sequence of argumentation in Fragment 8 to be cumulative in that aspects of later points build on earlier ones (or even if one considers it, with Sedley, to be cumulative in some respects, since, for example, *sēma* 3 builds on *sēma* 1), then it stands to reason that ‘were we to begin’⁴⁰ with arguments for the third or fourth attributes of *to eon*, we should of course be able to unfold

³⁸ Curd (1998) 69 n. 16; see n. 36 above. Since Parmenides rarely deviates from the present tense aspect elsewhere in the poem (see especially Chapter 6 above), the use of the aorists ἐπλάχθησαν and ἀπῶσε is especially noteworthy and arresting. (Notably, we also saw the perfect in 8.15–18, another instance in which the strict sequencing of the argumentation was centrally important. Here we find a rare but striking *return* to narrativity, now at the ‘argument’ level of dependence: a key signal of the ordering power of *he hodós* and the importance of the sequence of the *sēmata*.)

³⁹ Curd (1998) 69 n. 16.

⁴⁰ Similarly revealing is the use of the phrase ‘each attribute follows directly or indirectly from the *krisis* or decision between is and is not’ (Curd (1998) 69, emphasis added). The caveat ‘indirectly’ is precisely the point: as the argument now stands, one may go *directly* from the *krisis* between is and is not to the argument for the attribute ‘ungenerable and imperishable’, but most go *indirectly* – that is, by way of *sēma* 1, ‘ungenerable and imperishable’ – from the *krisis* to get to the attribute ‘immobile and unshaking’.

from them arguments for earlier attributes. Rather, the real difficulty, obscured by the phrase ‘were we to begin’, comes from the other direction: for how, precisely, could one ‘begin’ by proving that *to eon* is *akinēton* had one not already delivered the proof for the attributes ‘imperishable and ungenerable’? The charitable verdict on this question is well summarized by Barnes: ‘I do not think that this interpretation of [Fragment 5] can be ruled out; and it is possible to invent arguments, similar to those of B8, which would support the thesis it ascribes to Parmenides. But as it stands B8 does not attempt to establish the mutual implication of all the “signposts”.’⁴¹ A more critical interpreter might ask what is to be gained by interpreting Fragment 5 in this way, especially when one is required to invent hypothetical (and in some cases potentially quite controversial) arguments that Parmenides gives no indication of having made.⁴²

Finally, one might observe further infelicities implied by this interpretation. It would seem quite unsatisfactory, for example, to think that what is currently the fourth and final *sēma*, *teleston/tetelesmenon*, usually glossed as ‘completeness’ or ‘perfection’, might come at some point other than the end of the argumentative sequence. Are we to imagine that, rather than forming the climax or culmination of Parmenides’ previous claims about the nature of what-is, the argument for completeness might come at an arbitrary point in the middle of the ‘Route to Truth’, or was to have been followed by some other attribute (such as, say, the indivisibility of what-is)?

Reviewing the four ways of construing Fragment 5 on their own merits, then, provides the following picture. The examples of interpretations 1b₂ and 2b₂ surveyed above make strong sense on their own terms, fit neatly with the existing fragments of Parmenides’ poem as they stand, and even have the added benefit of illuminating a notoriously vexing aspect of Fragment 2. Interpretation 2a₂, freed from the unjust charge that it is incompatible with the semantics of *xunon* (and perhaps capitalizing on

⁴¹ Barnes (1982) 177.

⁴² Incidentally, it is not clear that Curd’s innovative and important notion of ‘predicational monism’ would be harmed at all by accepting interpretation 1b, 2a, or 2b of Fragment 5 – nor that it necessarily benefits from the version of 1a₈ that she espouses.

a better-attested sense of the word),⁴³ likewise makes excellent sense of the Greek and provides clear and persuasive answers to the central questions that confront interpreters of Fragment 5; what is more, the ‘recursive’ reading in particular captures a vitally important phenomenon of the argumentation as we actually find it in Fragment 8. For its part, the Raven–Curd view of 1a makes excellent sense of the first half of Fragment 5, but struggles to make good sense of the Greek in the clause introduced by *gar*. In addition, it seems to introduce unnecessary, and potentially controversial, hypotheses about arguments Parmenides might have made but apparently did not.⁴⁴ What is more, it is far from clear what new, valuable insights into the nature of Parmenides’ arguments it delivers. In sum, interpretations 1b₂, 2a₂, and 2b₂ offer coherent accounts of the Greek of Fragment 5 that are also strongly consistent with what we find in the rest of Parmenides’ poem; each also offers the added benefit of illuminating otherwise obscure portions of the ‘Route to Truth’. By contrast, interpretation 1a₈ relies on a controversial construal of the semantics of Fragment 5, is not well supported by the arguments as we now find them, and, finally, does not seem to illuminate other aspects of Parmenides’ poem (while raising more difficult questions in its own right).

Squaring the Circle with the *hodos* of Inquiry?

As the previous section made clear, despite the fact that Fragment 5 is so obscure and decontextualized, we can nevertheless attempt to evaluate relative strengths or weaknesses of different interpretations based on the information that we now have. I also suggested, however, that its ambiguity and deracination makes this fragment a weak basis for contesting or supporting a more holistic interpretation of Parmenides. Still, it is worth seeing how my account of the structure of Parmenides’ poem squares with the foregoing interpretations of Fragment 5.

⁴³ See nn. 26, 27 above.

⁴⁴ It is also worth reflecting on the fact that at no other point does Parmenides state, otherwise indicate, or even suggest that he might have made the arguments another way but declined to do so.

Despite the alarming first impression, interpretations 1b, 2a, and 2b are fully consistent – and, indeed, even elegantly consonant – with my analysis above. In readings 1b₂ and 2b₂, what matters is that wherever one begins one’s inquiry, one will inevitably be funnelled into the *krisis* expressed in Fragment 2 (*tothi*), and from there, inevitably and necessarily along the (logical or rhetorical) rut road of fragments 6, 7, and 8. The ‘recursive’ 2a₂ is perhaps even more intuitively attractive. On this interpretation, Fragment 5 would express the fundamental importance of the *sequentiality* of the argumentation in the ‘Route to Truth’: only by passing via the *krisis* in Fragment 2 could one proceed to the *sēmata* in Fragment 8⁴⁵ (or even: once one has passed via the *krisis* in Fragment 2 – and perhaps another *krisis* in fragments 6 and 7 – one *must* proceed along the path formed by the *sēmata* of Fragment 8).

By contrast, the Raven–Curd version of 1a₈ may seem at first glance to fit rather less neatly with the account I have provided above; the linear, sequential, goal-oriented aspects of the word *hodos* and the discursive architecture distinctive to it that I have outlined may seem difficult to reconcile with the apparently circular qualities often attributed to reading 1a.

In response to this, one can record two observations. The first is that, as noted above – and asserted by both Sedley⁴⁶ and Curd – in the poem that we now have, Parmenides chose to express his arguments with at least *some* sense of order, and it is by no means clear that his claims about the nature of *to eon* are ‘mutually implicative’. At the least, the onus seems to be on those who wish to assert such a position to prove its possibility, or at least provide a clearer picture of how this might work – and why this view is attractive in the first place.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ And, perhaps, a second *krisis* in fragments 6 and 7 in between. I intend to address this question in a future publication.

⁴⁶ It is worth recalling once more that Sedley associates himself with a version of 1b₂; see n. 23 above.

⁴⁷ Even those who find this interpretation ‘intriguing, if unprovable, speculation’ admit that ‘[t]his goes far beyond the available evidence No such pattern of circular reasoning has ever been traced’ (Gallop (1984) 19). Bodnár (1985) 62 n. 14 offers one version before dismissing it as implausible; McKirahan (2008), for his part, expressly states that the ‘notionally equivalent’ characteristics, of, ‘[f]or example, “whole” and “all together” are not synonyms, and do not as a rule entail one another’ (189).

Second, one might ask just how damaging this interpretation of Fragment 5 ultimately is to the argument I have advanced above. Even were one to accept Curd's interpretation, for example, the implications for the argument I have presented in this book would be little different from those explored in Chapter 6 in relation to Sedley's reading of Fragment 8. Even if Parmenides had ordered his arguments differently, and expressly asserted as much in Fragment 5, the fact remains that he needed *some* kind of discursive architecture in which to express his ideas. In this context, what I have asserted in this book amounts to this: Parmenides thinks, speaks, and, most importantly, argues *through roads*. What I termed in passing *hodopoiēsis* – creation or composition via the road, road-poetry, poetry about *hodoi* – emphasizes the degree to which the word and image of the *hodos* and the discursive architecture it triggers via *Odyssey* 12 organize the structure and progress of Parmenides' discourse in a distinctive way, both at the level of rhetorical schemata and types of dependence. It is this distinctive way that I claim mediates the transition from Homeric narration to Parmenidean deductive argumentation (as we would call it); that would remain true whether or not the 'underlying geography' of the 'story-world' – be it the Sirens' meadow, the Wandering Rocks, Scylla, Charybdis, and Thrinacia, or the *krisis* between 'IS' and 'IS NOT', the *krisis* between 'IS' and 'IS and IS NOT' (perhaps), and each of the four *sēmata* – were anchored in a fixed map. Put another way, we can observe that Homer might have elected to put Thrinacia first and the Sirens' meadow last; in that case, he would have told a different poem, but would this have changed the need for his character Odysseus to travel from one point to another via a *hodos*, and the manner in which his goddess, Circe, narrates the points in a sequence, and then describes each item and advises Odysseus' about how to navigate each one? Even in the event that Parmenides put the argument for 'completeness' in middle of his argument and, say, the argument for ungenerability and imperishability last, (1) he would still have had to order them in a sequence, and (2) this sequence would still necessarily come after Fragment 2 (and, potentially, 6 and 7).