

# BEING AS *PÉLEIN* IN PARMENIDES' POEM

## SER COMO *PÉLEIN* NO POEMA DE PARMÊNIDES

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**Abstract:** Parmenides enacted a breakthrough in the history of philosophy by isolating and turning thought toward the notion of “being as such” through the verb εἶναι, noun τὸ εἶν, and their cognates. His uses of these terms have been well scrutinized. This essay is a consideration of the less-discussed language of being through the archaic verb πέλειν in Fragments 6 and 8. While there is no certainty that Parmenides’ uses of πέλειν are decisive, the verb might offer further insight into Parmenidean being insofar as it indicates being in a dynamic, intermixed, and revealed sense. On this reading, πέλειν invokes being as the activity of that which is revealed to be the case in being as it is, emphasizing both intermixedness and completeness.

**Keywords:** Parmenides; being; metaphysics; πέλειν.

**Resumo:** Parmênides impulsionou um novo desenvolvimento na história da filosofia ao dirigir o pensamento para a noção de “ser enquanto tal”, designando-o com o verbo εἶναι, com o substantivo τὸ εἶν e seus cognatos. Os usos que ele fez desses termos já foram amplamente investigados. Este ensaio aborda uma expressão menos discutida do ser, por meio do verbo arcaico πέλειν, empregado nos Fragmentos 6 e 8. Embora seja incerto que os usos de πέλειν por Parmênides sejam conclusivos, esse verbo pode oferecer outras informações sobre o ser parmenidiano, na medida em que indica um ser com sentido dinâmico, intermisturado e revelado. Nesta interpretação, πέλειν invoca o ser como a atividade daquilo que se revela como tal no ser tal como é, enfatizando tanto a mistura quanto a completude.

**Palavras-chave:** Parmênides; ser; metafísica; πέλειν.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Parmenides enacted a breakthrough in the history of philosophy by isolating and turning thought toward the notion of “being as such” through the verb εἶναι, noun τὸ εἶν, and their cognates. His uses of these terms have been well scrutinized. This essay is a consideration of the less-discussed language of being through the archaic verb πέλειν in Fragments 6 and 8 and how these appearances might be significant in Parmenides’ account of being. While there is no certainty that Parmenides’ employment of πέλειν is decisive, this essay is an exploration of how the verb’s uses might offer further insight into Parmenidean being insofar as the term indicates being in a dynamic and revealed sense. On this reading, πέλειν invokes being as the activity of that which is revealed to be the case in being as it is, simultaneously emphasizing both intermixedness and completeness. Most of all, the verb helps Parmenides subtly indicate that despite its not being spatiotemporally determined, being nevertheless is active in some sense. This entails a development of being’s sense as initially posited in Fragment 2 that allows for a turn toward that which has being and hence the study of nature in the *Doxa*.

Parmenides’ narrating goddess first addresses being “nakedly” in Fragment 2,<sup>1</sup> speaking of being via ἔστι(v) and εἶναι (2.3 and 2.5) without complementing subject or predicate. She thus invites the reader to reflect upon being, which is perhaps the most ubiquitous of notions that necessarily accompanies “all things” (πάντα, 1.28). But the goddess’ phrasing in Fragment 2 presents being without familiar accompaniments like subjects and predicates. The effect is to highlight the hidden condition of reality that makes possible thought and speech, that is, the being that is always there but that mortals miss as they mistakenly take the beings to be fundamentally independent and separate (χωρίς, 8.56) from one another in the most basic sense. The goddess’ corrective indication of being causes the familiar, represented by the mythic imagery in the Proem, to recede,<sup>2</sup> while highlighting being as the ground of everything that is imaged in images and the superordinate content of thought as such. Grasping this sense of being is a most profound challenge to thinking, and one as demanding today as it was in Parmenides’ time.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of course, complete certainty cannot be attained about the ordering of the fragments and hence in exactly what order these notions appear. But even so, as Folit-Weinberg (2022) shows throughout his book-length study, Fragments 1, 2, 6, 7, and 8 must have appeared in that order.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Miller (2006).

<sup>3</sup> Much has been written about this articulation of being. For an attempt to summarize the history of its reception, see Smith (2025). Accounts of Parmenidean being significantly influen-

The hypothesis defended here is that following her provocative invocation of being as such and attempts to grant insight into its ubiquity in the subsequent Truth fragments, Parmenides' goddess prepares the reader to understand being in further, deeper, and complementary senses. These include the senses of 'that which is brought together' and 'that which becomes apparent' entailed by *πέλειν*. Thus understood, the poem gradually and dialectically allows the initial insight into "pure being" (*εἶναι*) to open onto the sense in which being necessarily entails intermixing that reveals itself to thought and speech (*πέλειν*). This prepares the turn from being itself (*εἶναι*) to that which has being (*τὸ εὖν*), and, finally, the Parmenidean study of nature that follows in the *Δοξα*.<sup>4</sup>

## II. PARMENIDES' USES OF ΠΕΛΕΙΝ

Typically translated simply as "to be", Parmenides' narrating goddess apparently uses the verb *πέλειν* in five surviving instances. (One instance, at 8.19, is controversial in the manuscript traditions, but the controversy will not figure into this essay.<sup>5</sup>) The appearances of the verb are as follows:

- 6.8 οἷς τὸ πέλειν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶναι ταῦτ' ὀν νενόμισται  
 8.11 οὕτως ἢ πάμπαν πελέναι χρεὼν ἔστιν ἢ οὐχί.  
 8.18 ἔστιν ὁδός), τὴν δ' ὥστε πέλειν καὶ ἐτήτυμον εἶναι.  
 8.19 πῶς δ' ἂν ἔπειτα πέλοι τὸ εὖν; πῶς δ' ἂν κε γένοιτο;  
 8.45 τὸ γὰρ οὔτε τι μεῖζον οὔτε τι βαιότερον πελέναι χρεὼν ἔστι τῆι ἢ τῆι.<sup>6</sup>

The middle three occurrences (8.11, 8.18, and 8.19) are grouped together in the heart of Fragment 8, where Parmenides' goddess is offering a series

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cing the present discussion include Kahn (2012), Mourelatos (2008), Curd (2004), Miller (2006), Bryan (2021), Wiitala (2025), and Sanday (2025). Following Kahn's seminal work, the goal is not to reduce Parmenidean being to an existential, predicative, identity-marking, veridical, or locative sense as distinguished in modern philosophy, but instead grasp the interconnections among these senses as rooted fundamentally in predication and identity. Furthermore, and as well-emphasized by Bryan, Parmenides has the goddess offer this as an "experience" of insight and not a propositional argument.

<sup>4</sup> In this way, the interpretation offered here is deeply indebted to McKirahan (2008) and Sanday (2025) in understanding *τὸ εὖν* to draw upon the sense of "that which has being."

<sup>5</sup> The term *πέλοι* at 8.19 is controversial and contested. It is emended by Diels-Kranz as *ἀπόλοιτο* and Coxon as *πέλοιτο*. See Curd (2004, 79 n 37) on why *πέλοι* is most likely here, and compare comments at Palmer (2009, 384). Further endorsements of reading *πέλοι* include McKirahan (2008, 195), Laks and Most (2016, 44), and Tor (2023, 267 n 82).

<sup>6</sup> Parmenides' Greek follows Gallop (2000) unless otherwise noted. Translations follow Gallop, heavily modified.

of signposts (σήματα, 8.2) to give depth to her account of being that began in Fragment 2. The final (8.45) is among the goddess' concluding remarks on Truth before turning to *Doxa*. In each of the four Fragment 8 instances, πέλειν is the verb Parmenides has the goddess use to describe the activity of being, either through the nominalized ἔστι or as τὸ ἐόν. The first occurrence (6.8) is a stray instance in Fragment 6, arising amid the goddess' description of the mortal error of taking “the to-be” (τὸ πέλειν) and “not to be” (οὐκ εἶναι) to be “the same and not the same” (ταῦτόν κού ταῦτόν).

Pre-Homeric and Homeric uses of πέλειν indicate motion and can have the sense of “to turn”, “to be intermixed with”, “to stir”, and “to go around”.<sup>7</sup> In his 1924 Homeric dictionary, Richard J. Cunliffe accounts for “to turn” as the original sense of πέλειν, implying the further senses of “to turn out to be, to come to be, become, come into being, and simply to be.”<sup>8</sup> Via \*k<sup>w</sup>el-, the verb shares a common Proto-Indo-European root with τέλειν, meaning “to complete”, “to finish”, and “to resolve”.<sup>9</sup> Through the same etymological origin of \*k<sup>w</sup>el-, πέλειν also shares a common root with κύκλος, an important

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Tor (2023, 266 n 81).

<sup>8</sup> Cunliffe (1924, 321). At *Iliad* 11.392 is a use of πέλειν that illustrates this well. Here the Greek soldier Diomedes mocks Paris the Trojan for shooting an arrow that wounds him only lightly. In his battlefield boasting, Diomedes insists that his own spear is far deadlier than Paris' arrow, saying: ἦ τ' ἄλλως ὑπ' ἐμεῖο, καὶ εἴ κ' ὀλίγον περ ἐπαύρη, / ὄξυ βέλος πέλεται, καὶ ἀκήριον αἶψα τίθησι (“When it is up to me, and even if it grazes only a little, / The spear *is* [πέλεται] sharp, and you will quickly be left standing heartless [i.e., dead]”; *Il.*11.391-92, following Allen [1920]). Diomedes draws on the “revelatory” sense of πέλειν (in the middle form πέλεται, which seems not to differ in sense from the active verb; cf. Cunliffe [1924, 321]). The LSJ highlights a double-sense of becoming and being at issue, glossing Diomedes' boasting as: “quite otherwise does my spear become sharp, i.e., in a very different way does my (emphat.) spear prove its edge.” As this dual translation implies, Diomedes is simultaneously referring to the spear's becoming sharp and the sense in which its already being sharp is revealed under the right conditions. Heeding the secondary sense of “proving its edge,” the becoming at issue here is not a matter of change to the sword's intrinsic nature; in other words, Diomedes is not referring to a temporally determined alteration in the physical matter of the blade that sharpens it upon his particular act of throwing. Instead, he refers to a set of conditions in which the underlying, implicit attribute of the thing is shown or revealed to be the case. His throwing demonstrates that the blade is deadly, and the blade's deadliness becomes evident upon the throwing.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Hofmann (1950, 260-261) and Mourelatos (2008, 186 n 50). Mourelatos (2008, 121) writes, “The concept [τέλειν] is rich and uniquely Greek. No single word in English plays a role comparable to that of τελέω. I am using “complete” not as a translation but as a signal for a concept which, based perhaps on the paradigm of “rounding out”, covers the territory of the English verbs “to fulfill”, “achieve”, “accomplish”, “effect”, “realize”, “perfect”, “consummate”. It is, of course, through this idea of achievement – vital to Aristotle's use of τέλος – that the word admits of the weaker sense of “end”, in the sense of “extremity” or “terminus”.

Parmenidean word meaning “circle”, “ring”, and bearing the sense of “completeness” and the English idiom “full circle”.<sup>10</sup>

Archaic poets commonly use *πέλειν* synonymously with *εἶναι* to accommodate poetic meter. Parmenides’ uses also seem to reflect this approach, as in each of the five above instances, *εἶναι* could not be substituted to maintain the meter.<sup>11</sup> Hence, concerning Parmenides’ uses of *πέλειν* to refer to being, there are three possibilities: (1) there is nothing to learn about Parmenidean being from his deployment of *πέλειν*, as the term is strictly synonymous with *εἶναι*; (2) Parmenides uses *πέλειν* to his detriment, perhaps due to the limitations of language for expressing his abstract point; or, instead, (3) Parmenides uses *πέλειν* strategically to draw the reader’s thinking closer toward his philosophical insight.

The standard account among commentators is (1): there is, on this view, no special shade of meaning in Parmenides’ uses of *πέλειν* to indicate being, and hence no attention to the verb itself is warranted beyond the attention given to *εἶναι*. Because *πέλειν* is typically used purely synonymously with *εἶναι* by other authors, the assumption is that Parmenides employs the word strictly for the sake of poetic meter.<sup>12</sup> As evident by its placement in each instance above, Parmenides seems to reach for this verb when the meter cannot accommodate *εἶναι*, as is common in roughly contemporaneous poetry. This uncontroversially leads to textual quirks, perhaps best represented by the surprising contrast at 6.8 in *τὸ πέλειν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶναι* – that is, between “the to-be” (*τὸ πέλειν*) and “not to be” (*οὐκ εἶναι*) – which breaks the hypnotically repetitive contrast between *εἶναι* and *οὐκ εἶναι* throughout the poem

<sup>10</sup> Used by Parmenides at 1.8 (*κύκλιος*), 1.29 (*εὐκύκλεος*, in manuscripts following Simplicius), 8.43 (*εὐκύκλου*), and 10.4 (*κύκλωπος*). On 1.29 and the Parmenidean notion of the *κύκλος* and its connections to other important Indo-European terms, see Berruecos Frank (2019), who argues that “el uso de *εὐκυκλής* dentro del Proemio de Parménides no es simplemente una adjetivación inusitada y cargada de presupuestos neoplatonizantes, sino que se trata de una expresión tradicional legada por el imaginario y la poética indoeuropea” (20). On the etymological connection between *πέλειν* and *κύκλος*, see Hofmann (1950, 261) and Beekes (2009, 778-779 and 1169).

<sup>11</sup> The author owes this observation to David Sider.

<sup>12</sup> Gallop (2000, 44) writes, “*pelein, pelenai* verb, originally ‘to be in motion,’ but used [in Parmenides’ poem] simply as a synonym for *einai*, ‘to be.’” Similarly, Burnet (1930, 174 n 2) says of Parmenides’ uses at 6.8, “There is no difference between *πέλειν* and *εἶναι* except in rhythmical value.” Complementary observations about *πέλειν* are in accounts of earlier sources like Homer: Autenrieth (1891, 226) writes that *πέλειν* is “a poetic synonym of *εἶναι*, *γίγεσθαι*, perhaps originally containing some idea of motion [...], but in Homer simply *to be*.”

(e.g., at 2.3, 2.5, 6.1-6.2, and 8.16).<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, commentators following such an interpretation take similar usage in places like Pindar and Sappho to imply that there is nothing special to make of Parmenides' instances of *πέλειν* in understanding his account of being.

As one of very few recent commentators to give serious attention to this surprising word deployment, Shaul Tor (2023) defends a version of (2): Parmenides, according to Tor, uses *πέλειν* to his detriment. Tor addresses the consistent identification of *πέλειν* with verbs of motion, activity, and dynamic change,<sup>14</sup> noting that derivative compounds *ἀμφιπέλομαι*, *ἐπιπέλομαι*, *περιπέλομαι*, as well as derivative verbs *πολέω* and *πολεύω*, are all motion verbs, while cognate nominal forms like *αἰπόλος*, *ἵπποπóλος*, and *δικασπόλος* express some kind of activity.<sup>15</sup> On this basis, Tor endorses an understanding of *πέλειν* in Parmenides as preserving the senses of motion, dynamism, and change, while not insisting that *πέλειν* still means "to move" even in the earliest surviving sources. Tor argues that *πέλειν* reflects Parmenides' unfortunate need to use language to indicate being, including a word associated with motion to name something that apparently does not move. Tor's discussion is noteworthy and an uncommon instance of taking *πέλειν* to be philosophically significant, and Tor's analysis offers highly valuable resources for the questions at issue here.

The goal in this essay's subsequent sections, by contrast, is to explore possibility (3): *πέλειν*, according to this interpretation, draws the reader's thinking closer to Parmenides' philosophical insight. This follows from the sense that Parmenides planned his poem very carefully and intended his language to unfold the notion of being gradually over the course of the poem, granting insights into the nature of being that must be returned to again and again (cf. Fragment 5) before being can come to be known. The discussion here is speculative by necessity, since certainty about Parmenides' authorial intentions might likely be impossible to achieve. Nevertheless, there are

<sup>13</sup> Repetition is one component of Parmenides' "double speak," an experiential poetic method; see Elbert Decker (2021) and Elbert Decker (2025), along with comments in Section IV.

<sup>14</sup> Although Tor calls *πέλειν* in Parmenides "a functional equivalent of the verb 'to be,'" (2023, 266), he is one of the few recent commentators (to the author's knowledge) who has taken *πέλειν*'s subtle shades of meaning to be philosophically relevant in considering Parmenides' thought. Tor, however, takes Parmenides' usage to be indicative of language's restrictions in bringing philosophical insight. Below follows the argument that the ambiguity is intentionally provocative, using language to call the reader to think beyond language.

<sup>15</sup> Tor (2023, 266 n 81). Cf. Beekes (2009, 1168-1169).

ample reasons to take Parmenides' poetic composition to be strategic, often subtly, in drawing the reader into a new kind of thinking.<sup>16</sup> The goal, hence, is to explore *πέλειν* in Parmenides' poem in the hopes that such exploration might shed light on the nature of being.

According to such a reading, Parmenides' gradual introduction of *πέλειν* and its cognates precisely at key moments in Fragments 6 and 8 partially enacts a heightened perspective regarding the nature of being achieved through the dialectical movement of the poem. What begins as insight into being *as such* is transformed into an account of the rootedness of the beings in being,<sup>17</sup> along with an employment of language that shows being itself to be dynamic, complete, and grounding the activity of the beings. Hence, on this reading, Parmenides is doing something more interesting and philosophically significant with his uses of *πέλειν* than merely using it when εἶναι cannot be employed: he is drawing upon *πέλειν* and its subtle entailments to grant deeper insight into the εἶσθιν, the subject of the poem's section on Truth.

### III. ΠÉΛΕΙΝ AT FRAGMENT 8.11

Three of Parmenides' five surviving uses of *πέλειν* occur within nine lines in the heart of Fragment 8 (at 8.11, 8.18, and 8.19), and hence studying this stretch of text yields the greatest insights into Parmenides' employment of *πέλειν*. Parmenides' goddess in Fragment 8 gives the *kouros* and reader a series of reflections and arguments to use in making sense of her initial insights into being *as such* that were first disclosed in Fragment 2. Like in Fragment 2, "being" here in Fragment 8 is introduced with reference to a bare εἶσθιν (8.2) lacking subject or predicate, and remembering this elided and nominalized subject will be crucial in tracking its sublation via *πέλειν* into being in the sense of τὸ εἶν. That Parmenides chose to employ *πέλειν* increasingly within

<sup>16</sup> See especially Berruecos Frank (2024) on how the poem, and particularly Fragment 8, use poetry and poetic devices like meter and rhythm experientially to offer depth to the philosophical account. This is *contra* the many, dating back to antiquity, who have criticized Parmenides' poetic skills.

<sup>17</sup> In his *Commentary on De Caelo*, Simplicius tracks this distinction, writing that some earlier figures like Parmenides "posited two levels: that of what truly is, the intelligible; and that of what comes-to-be, the sensible, which they thought one should not speak of as 'being' *simpliciter*, but as 'manifested being.' Hence they say that truth concerns what-is, whereas Doxa concerns what comes-to-be" (quoted in Gallop 2000, 96, modified). In the *Commentary on the Physics*, Simplicius adds, "What in one way is, but in another way is not, could not be before what-is *simpliciter*, but is posterior to it" (quoted in Gallop 2000, 99, modified).

this stretch suggests that the term is useful in giving shape to the sense of being at issue as it has been developed up to this point, complementing the senses in which it is “steadfast” (ἀτρεμέζ) and “complete” (τελεστόν, 8.4).<sup>18</sup>

As mentioned above, all four uses of πέλειν in Fragment 8 describe the action of being as a subject, first as ἔστιν and then as τὸ εἶν. Furthermore, the instances at 8.11 and 8.18 are stated on the same line as another use of ἔστιν or εἶναι as a verb, while the appearance at 8.19 concerns τὸ εἶν (and, furthermore, anticipates the ἔστι and ἔσεσθαι at 8.20). According to the interpretation on offer, πέλειν will thus turn out to be one way of speaking about the nature of being that will guide the reader’s thinking toward the goddess’ intended subject by illustrating the senses in which it is dynamic that contrast with its status as not spatiotemporally determined. Insight into πέλειν is, in this way, an ampliative means of understanding the nature of being itself.

In Fragment 8’s first usage, the goddess describes being’s lack of growth and hence necessary completeness at Fragment 8.9[b]-8.11 as follows:

8.9 ... τί δ’ ἄν μιν καὶ χρέος ὄρσεν

8.10 ὕστερον ἢ πρόσθεν, τοῦ μηδενός ἀρξάμενον, φῶν;

8.11 οὕτως ἢ πάμπαν πελέναι χρεῶν ἔστιν ἢ οὐχί.

8.9 ... And what need could have compelled [it, i.e., being (ἔστιν, 8.2)] to grow

8.10 later or sooner, if it had burst forth (φῶν) from nothingness (τοῦ μηδενός)?

8.11 Hence [it, i.e., being (ἔστιν, 8.2)] must either “be completely” (πελέναι πάμπαν) or be in no way (ἔστιν οὐχί).

With the subject ἔστιν carried over from line 8.2, this is an argument for the impossibility of ἔστιν to be subjected to growth and hence temporal determination, as well as a prohibition against positing *ex nihilo* creation.<sup>19</sup> The goddess argues counterfactually that were being to have been generated, its nature would have been subject to a temporal continuum of earlier and later. Were this the case, then being furthermore must at some point have “burst forth” (φῶν) from nothingness (τοῦ μηδενός, 8.10). But being as such cannot be grounded in a prior temporal continuum, since temporality and continua both presuppose being to be as they are. In other words, a temporal continuum that itself gives rise to being is incoherent given that temporality must “be” before it can give rise to anything. Hence, being must

<sup>18</sup> The term τελεστόν is variant in the manuscripts; see Gallop (2000, 34 and 64) for an overview.

<sup>19</sup> Throughout this section, cf. Mourelatos (2008, 98-100) and Sanday (2025, 185-187).

be conceptually prior to temporality, that is, omnitemporal. Bursting forth, similarly, would imply a “need” (χρέος, 8.9), or a causal source (i.e., something that “is”), from which the growth would extend and hence not nothingness. Thus understood, ἔστιν as something that does not grow must either “be completely” (πελέναι πάμπαν) or not at all (ἔστιν [...] οὐχί). The goddess thus has demonstrated that being is not temporally determined and instead is omnitemporal. Furthermore, given that its only origin other than itself could be nothingness and that it could not in fact have originated from nothingness, being must have no origin other than itself.<sup>20</sup> Hence this entails [ἔστι] πελέναι πάμπαν, or “being ‘to-be’ completely.”

Parmenides’ choice to contrast being and nonbeing *qua* being in every way (πάμπαν πελέναι) and being in no way (ἔστιν [...] οὐχί) is striking. The goddess’ point seems to be that the “is” (ἔστιν) is revealed as dynamically ‘be-ing’ fully (πάμπαν πελέναι) rather than emptily in no way (ἔστιν [...] οὐχί). Being, in other words, has been revealed to be engaged fully and completely in all ways, on pains of it being in no way. Parmenides thus uses the language of πέλειν to articulate the resulting argument that being is omnitemporal and not generated from anything other than itself. The term’s use at 8.11 following the counterfactual argument also has the sense of what “turns out to be” the case. This entails emphasis on the notion’s ultimate rootedness in being and the notion of the end, as in its shared root with τέλειν. In other words, πέλειν here reflects what is the case in the sense of what turns out to be the case as an end, and in the sense of that which is revealed.

As Tor has shown, the Parmenidean uses of πέλειν furthermore can be read as sensitive to the dynamism and motion evinced in the word’s many cognates.<sup>21</sup> Such a reading is relevant here insofar as being is a self-predicating “activity”, as evident in the contrast with its impossible bursting forth from nothingness. This contrast is between a created and hence dynamic sense of being and an uncreated but nevertheless dynamic sense of being, resting on the incoherence of the latter. Perhaps it might seem as though such an observation is in conflict with the goddess’ claim at 8.4 that being is ἀτρεμές, typically translated as “unmoving.” But ἀτρεμές has the sense of “firm, stable, and calm,” which surely could be consistent with the “life-like” dynamism of πέλειν. In other words, Parmenides uses the verb-adverb combination πελέναι

<sup>20</sup> Thus supporting the goddess’ claim at 8.3 that being is “ungenerated and imperishable” (ἀγένητον ... και ἀνώλεθρόν).

<sup>21</sup> Tor (2023, 266-268).

πάμπαν to illustrate that while being does not owe itself to time, it nevertheless engages in some kind of activity and is not merely “inert.”

Hence, [ἔστι] πελέναι πάμπαν has several relevant shades of meaning: through considering the impossibility of temporal determination and external origins, it has been revealed that being completely turns out to be fully in the complete and dynamic sense, or in the fully realized sense. Given that this concludes one of several arguments concerning being's a-spatial and omnitemporal nature in Fragment 8, the πελέναι has the weight of both the conclusive “turning out to be the case” and “being completely”.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, and preserving the sense of dynamism implied by πέλειν as a motion verb, the being of ἔστιν turns out to be *do-ing* its activity, *be-ing*, in the full or complete sense, as reinforced by πάμπαν. Since it is not in need of growth, the ἔστιν is “fully and dynamically activated”, and thereby complete in itself. Hence, what began as insight into being as such has developed into an understanding of being as a dynamic grounding principle that has been revealed to thinking.

#### IV. ΠΕΛΕΙΝ AT FRAGMENT 8.18-8.19

Parmenides has the goddess use the verb πέλειν again twice in the next eight lines, and in rapid succession. The claims in these lines strengthen the goddess' argument concerning being's omnitemporality and show what turns out to be the case when thinking pursues being in this so-called “tenseless” sense.<sup>23</sup> The verb πέλειν is first (8.18) valuable in showing the intermixedness of being and truth, and next (8.19) allows Parmenides to have the goddess link temporally determinate terms together that demonstrate being as omnitemporal. Fragment 8.15[b] - 8.20 reads:

- 8.15[b] ... ἡ δὲ κρίσις περὶ τούτων ἐν τῷ δ' ἔστιν·  
 8.16 ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν· κέκριται δ' οὖν, ὥσπερ ἀνάγκη,  
 8.17 τὴν μὲν εἶν ἀνόητον ἀνώνυμον (οὐ γὰρ ἀληθὴς  
 8.18 ἔστιν ὁδός), τὴν δ' ὥστε πέλειν καὶ ἐτήτυμον εἶναι.  
 8.19 Πῶς δ' ἂν ἔπειτα πέλοι τὸ εὖν; πῶς δ' ἂν κε γένοιτο;  
 8.20 εἰ γὰρ ἔγεντ', οὐκ ἔστι, οὐδ' εἴ ποτε μέλλει ἔσεσθαι.

<sup>22</sup> Pace McKirahan (2008, 194-95), who argues that οὕτως is not a conclusion indicator, but rather a reference to the manner of being of the “is”. While McKirahan worries that being's “fully to be” is not warranted by the present circumstances, the present reading invokes a sense of “fully to be” that does indeed follow from the local concerns in Fragment 8.

<sup>23</sup> On the “tenseless,” see Tarán (1965, 175-188), Owen (1966), and Mourelatos (2008, 103-108).

8.15[b] ... But the choice between these matters depends on this:

8.16 'Is' or 'is not?' (ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν); but it has been chosen,<sup>24</sup> as is necessary,

8.17 to release the one as unthinkable, unnameable (for it is not a true

8.18 route), but to allow the other such that [it, i.e., being, (ἔστιν, 8.16)] is (πέλειν) and it really is (ἐτήτυμον εἶναι).

8.19 And how could what-is (τὸ ἐόν) be (πέλοι) in the future (ἔπειτα)? How could it come to be (γένοιτο)?

8.20 For if (it) came to be (ἔγενε'), (it) is not, nor if at some time (it) is going to be.

In these lines, the goddess restates the exhaustive and mutually exclusive distinction between being and nonbeing at issue since Fragment 2 and again insists that positing being is necessary. Drawing further on the elided subject, she concludes (ᾧστε, 8.18) that being (ἔστιν, from 8.16) "is and really is" (πέλειν καὶ ἐτήτυμον εἶναι, 8.18).

The clause [ἔστι] πέλειν καὶ ἐτήτυμον εἶναι is of particular interest. In a sense, the clause could be rightly translated as "is is and really is", capturing the hypnotically Parmenidean identification of being as such. This interpretation is entirely appropriate. But in a deeper sense, the goddess informs the reader through the employment of πέλειν that the release of οὐκ ἔστιν (8.16) as an unthinkable and unnameable route leaves only an ἔστιν that has been revealed as principle of dynamic determinacy (πέλειν) that, in the final instance, *is* in the truest sense (ἐτήτυμον εἶναι) and therefore is the *ground* of truth as such. The μέν-δέ clause (8.18-8.19) has the force of releasing the opposed term (οὐκ ἔστιν) in a way that yields conclusive insight into being insofar as it is full and true. As Alexander Mourelatos has shown, the veridical weight of ἐτήτυμον εἶναι is a decisive moment in the goddess' overall account in Fragment 8 and the Truth section as a whole, linking the sense of being at issue throughout to the notion of truth.<sup>25</sup> Being, in other words, is the grounds of the revelatory insight into what is truly the case despite its lying in concealment from mortals. That this moment of insight entails use of πέλειν to

<sup>24</sup> That the language of κρίνειν is better understood as 'to choose' (among options) rather than 'to decide' (as a power of rationality) is defended compellingly in Bryan (2025).

<sup>25</sup> Mourelatos (2008, 100). For Mourelatos, this concerns the sense of being as "speculative predication," or being as that grounds of what underlies mere sensory phenomena, at issue throughout the poem. Mourelatos's powerful interpretation of this notion has influenced generations of Parmenides scholars and is significantly at play in the interpretation throughout this essay.

connect being and truth is furthermore significant, demonstrating the crucial intermixedness of these two important notions.

Hence, [ἔστι] πέλειν καὶ ἐτήτυμον εἶναι is an instance of what Jessica Elbert Decker calls Parmenidean “double speak,”<sup>26</sup> which is a mode of communicating complex ideas through repetition and polysemic words that indicate truth in different senses to audience members at different levels of maturity. On the basic level, this phrase repetitively communicates the point that “is is and really is” that allows novice listeners to make progress into conceiving being as such. On the deeper level, the phrase indicates several insights into the ἔστιν: it is in the dynamic and revealed sense (πέλειν), it is truly, and is thereby the grounds of truth. In this way, πέλειν does not entail “merely” a repetition of the conceptual weight built into the εἶναι, but instead is a means of offering insight and depth into the nature of the ἔστιν. Being has been revealed to be true, revelatory, and dynamic, particularly insofar as its nature implies intermixedness with truth in the fullest sense.

The argumentative coda at 8.19-8.20 restates the prohibition against being as temporally determined, reinforcing its necessary omnitemporality. The goddess indicates via rhetorical question the mutually established impossibility of being (ἔόν) coming to be in the future (ἔπειτα πέλοι τό), coming to be in the present (γένοιτο, 8.19), or having come to be in the past (ἔγεντ[ο], 8.20).<sup>27</sup> As Mourelatos points out, the alliterative -το shared among πέλοι τό, γένοιτο, and the uncommon ἔγεντ[ο] work together to link the terms into a single thought: the future being, present generation, and past generation of being all yield the same absurdity that being at some point was not and hence that its being is temporally determined.<sup>28</sup> The goddess rests her case on this absurdity.

Although the use of πέλειν as πέλοι at 8.18 is variant across manuscripts and highly debated,<sup>29</sup> it could be the goddess' way of denying the sort of generative activity associated with being at 8.18 to a mode of temporal generation prohibited at places like 8.3-8.4 and 8.9-8.11. Just as being has been revealed to be intermixed with truth at 8.18, it likewise has been revealed to be unmixable with temporal determinism at 8.19. That it forms a hendiadys with γένοιτο (8.19) is furthermore appropriate, since the dynamic activity invoked via πέλειν at 8.18 must be kept conceptually distinct from the seemingly

<sup>26</sup> See Elbert Decker (2021 and 2025) on double speak in the writing of archaic philosophers and poets.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Sanday (2025, 187).

<sup>28</sup> Mourelatos (2008, 102-103).

<sup>29</sup> See footnote 5 above.

adjacent but ultimately distinct activity of becoming (γένοιτο) mentioned on the next line. The usage at 8.19 would thus further reinforce the sense in which πέλειν has shown itself apt to offer insight into the activity of being as it has unfolded in the poetic time of the Truth, working as a linking verb to show both what being *is* and what it “is not”.

## V. ΠΕΛΕΙΝ AT FRAGMENT 8.45

The poem’s final use of πέλειν comes at 8.42-8.45. Much as the uses at 8.11-8.19 occur amid the developing account of being in an omnitemporal sense, the appearance at 8.45 occurs within the discussion of being’s non-spatially determined nature. Commentators have understood this stretch of argumentation to concern being’s “completeness,”<sup>30</sup> and hence the etymological connections among πέλειν, τέλειν,<sup>31</sup> and κύκλος prove especially relevant. Fragment 8.42-8.45 reads:

8.42 Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πείρας πύματον, τετελεσμένον ἐστὶ  
8.43 πάντοθεν, εὐκύκλου σφαίρης ἐναλίγκιον ὄγκω,  
8.44 μεσσόθεν ἰσοπαλὲς πάντη· τὸ γὰρ οὔτε τι μείζον  
8.45 οὔτε τι βαιότερον πελέναι χρεόν ἐστι τῆι ἢ τῆι.

8.42 Since, thus, there is a furthest limit,<sup>32</sup> [it, i.e., being, (τοῦ ἔοντος, 8.37)] is completed (τετελεσμένον)  
8.43 from every direction like the mass of a well-rounded sphere (εὐκύκλου σφαίρης)  
8.44 everywhere from the center equally pushing out (μεσσόθεν ἰσοπαλὲς πάντη);<sup>33</sup> for not any larger  
8.45 nor any smaller to be (πελέναι) must [it] be (χρεόν ἐστι) here or there.

While her aim at 8.9-8.20 was to show that being’s restrictedness from growth renders it not temporally determined, here the goddess shows that being similarly is not spatially determined through relegation to the spatial continua of the “here” and “there” or the “smaller” or “larger”. Just as the temporal continuum cannot be determinate of being since such a continuum

<sup>30</sup> See Mourelatos (2008, 120-129), who connects 8.42-8.49 with the earlier proof for completeness at 8.32-8.33 and its key use of οὐκ ἀτελεύτητον.

<sup>31</sup> The relevant sense of τέλειν and its cognates here is “complete”; cf. Tarán (1965, 119).

<sup>32</sup> The notion of πείρας (“bond,” “limit,” “chains,” “fettters”) also has important implications for a Parmenidean understanding of being; cf. Wiitala (2025).

<sup>33</sup> Following Mourelatos (2008, 123-124) in translating μεσσόθεν ἰσοπαλὲς πάντη to capture the dynamic tension of wrestlers in conflicting equilibrium.

presupposes being, so too do spatial continua necessarily draw on being to be as they are.<sup>34</sup> Implicitly, this also indicates how being is not subjected to quantitative determinacy more broadly, given that the notions of 'more' and 'less' both presuppose being "more" and being "less". Since being is not spatially or quantitatively determined, it must be "fully" and not in the "lopsided" senses implied by comparative terms.

Parmenides' use of *πέλεναι* (8.45) thus again acts as an activity verb describing what being "does," precisely when being has shown itself to be prior to the space and time in which verbs typically operate. In this instance, the verb keeps the notion of being "active" and "alive", metaphorically of course, while denying its dependency on space and time to encourage the reader to keep the invigorated sense present to mind throughout the goddess's discussion. This concerns what being has shown itself through the course of the poem to be and to do: that is, to remain consistent across the spatiotemporally determined beings and receive their many changes without itself changing. While space and time do not affect being itself, it nevertheless "does" something and "is" something.

Noteworthy, furthermore, is *πέλειν*'s appearance at 8.45 in near proximity to its etymological cousins of the completed (*τετελεσμένον*, 8.42) and the well-rounded (*εὐκύκλου*, 8.43). Regardless of whether Parmenides intends this stretch of the poem as an etymological exercise, he seems to recognize the intuitive sense in which these concepts fit together, and how thinking through them can bring insight into the being that is the subject of the Truth section. Rather than mere apophasis, this stretch of the poem gives insight into what being "must be", frequently resting on the basis of what it "cannot" be. In trying to bring such an abstract notion to mind, the images of the spatially complete and the well-rounded prove to be helpful.

Mourelatos has also noted the weight of "equally" (*ἰσοπαλές*, 8.44) and its root *παλ-*, indicating the dynamic sense of striving.<sup>35</sup> Mourelatos recognizes both the alliterative and conceptual resonance with the *πέλεναι* at 8.45, emphasizing that the two strain together "as if to produce the word-play

<sup>34</sup> This, of course, opens onto the controversy as to whether Parmenides literally believes being is spatially extended and spherical; see Tarán (1965, 150-158) for a history of the debate. Following Mourelatos (2008, 123-128), the argument here firmly supports that the points about being as complete and circle-like are *metaphorical* signposts to help draw the reader's thinking toward being's status as determinate of spatiality as such and not vice versa.

<sup>35</sup> Mourelatos (2008, 123-124). Cf. Tor (2023, 267 n 83), who likewise associates the root *παλ-* with "the sense of striving or fighting, cf. *πάλη*, *παλαίω*, *πάλαισμα*, *παλαιστής*, etc."

ἰσοπαλές – ἴσως πέλει” (“equally pushing, being equal”). This, along with πέλειν’s association with motion, further develop the senses in which being must be understood dynamically despite its being prior to spatiotemporal determination.

Parmenides’ goal has been to show via the goddess the stable and unchanging notion, being, that is superordinate to the many things that move, change, and “are” insofar as they partake of being. Throughout Fragment 8, he has the goddess use signs to bring thinking toward this strangest and most difficult of insights. In so doing, the goddess frequently has drawn on performative contradictions, much like she did earlier in the poem when indicating the impossibility of indicating nonbeing (2.5-2.7).<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, she has used notions of completion and circularity as helpful signposts along the way. Thus, it is quite fitting that the goddess prepares to conclude her discourse on truth by noting that it dynamically “turns out” to be the case that being is not a spatiotemporally determined entity subjected to size and hence the kind of spatiotemporally determined there-being that mortals are accustomed to taking dynamism to entail. The active language of πέλειν proves to be helpful in resolving the inquiry into the nature of ἐστίν as a stable source of dynamic change.<sup>37</sup>

Having begun from being as such, Parmenides has used πέλειν in the pregnant sense of the dynamic, intermixed, and revealed, emphasizing the sense of what *is* the case and thereby is true. Being has, in other words, proven itself to be prior to space and time yet nevertheless active in some sense, a nonbecoming cause of revelation and truth, and the implicit source of spatiotemporally determined insights into the a-spatial and omnitemporal grounds of reality. This setup is appropriate as that which has being (τὸ ἔόν) comes into view, anticipating the turn to the mortal realm immediately to follow in the *Doxa*. This will allow for sublation in the *Doxa* into a spatiotemporalized sense of being that nevertheless preserves the initial insight into the a-spatial and omnitemporal notion of being itself at issue earlier in Truth. This prepares the reader for the movement through the fundamental notion of being into the spatiotemporal beings themselves, or the turn from Truth to *Doxa*, inaugurated at 8.51.

<sup>36</sup> On this, see Elbert Decker (2025, 240-246).

<sup>37</sup> Mourelatos (2008, 186 n 50) makes a similar observation about the so-called Cornford Fragment.

## VI. ΠΕΛΕΙΝ AT FRAGMENT 6.8

These considerations allow for some observations about Parmenides' first extant use of *πέλειν* at 6.8, where the narrating goddess contrasts *πέλειν* with *οὐκ εἶναι* ("not to be") and criticizes mortals for mixing together these two notions by taking them to be "the same and not the same" (*ταυτόν ... κοῦ ταυτόν*, 6.8-6.9). Accounting for the function of *πέλειν* here requires an interpretation of Fragment 6 in full, which is as follows:

- 6.1 Χρή τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ' ἐὼν ἔμμεναι· ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι,  
 6.2 μηδὲν δ' οὐκ ἔστιν· τά σ' ἐγὼ φράζεσθαι ἄνωγα.  
 6.3 Πρώτης γάρ σ' ἀφ' ὁδοῦ ταύτης διζήσιος <...><sup>38</sup>  
 6.4 αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' ἀπὸ τῆς, ἣν δὴ βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδὲν  
 6.5 πλάττονται, δίκρανοι· ἀμηχανὴ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῶν  
 6.6 στήθεσιν ἰθύνει πλακτὸν νόον· οἱ δὲ φοροῦνται  
 6.7 κωφοὶ ὁμῶς τυφλοὶ τε, τεθηπότες, ἄκριτα φῦλα,  
 6.8 οἷς τὸ πέλειν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶναι ταυτόν νενόμισται  
 6.9 κοῦ ταυτόν·<sup>39</sup> πάντων δὲ παλίντροπὸς ἔστι κέλευθος.

- 6.1 It must be that what is (τ' ἐόν) is there for speaking and thinking is; for [it] is there to be (ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι),  
 6.2 whereas nothingness is not (μηδὲν δ' οὐκ ἔστιν);<sup>40</sup> this is what I bid you to consider.  
 6.3 For <...> you from this first route of inquiry  
 6.4 and then also from this one, on which mortals knowing nothing  
 6.5 wander, two-headed; for helplessness in their  
 6.6 chests guides their wandering mind; and they are carried  
 6.7 deaf and blind alike, dazed, uncritical tribes,  
 6.8 by whom to be (τὸ πέλειν) and not-to-be (οὐκ εἶναι) have been thought both same (ταυτόν)  
 6.9 and not the same (κοῦ ταυτόν); and the path of all is backward-turning.

By nominalizing τὸ πέλειν, Parmenides has the goddess treat *πέλειν* as a categorical notion.<sup>41</sup> Surprisingly (and as mentioned above), τὸ πέλειν here

<sup>38</sup> The verb is missing from every manuscript tradition, and all proposed emendations have significant implications for the interpretation of the passage. Hence, the verb is elided here. See Curd (2004, 56-58) for an overview of the textual problem.

<sup>39</sup> Following Gallop in inserting a semicolon. Diels-Kranz inserts a comma.

<sup>40</sup> Translating μηδὲν δ' οὐκ ἔστιν as "nothingness is not" following Miller (2006, 6).

<sup>41</sup> Though how to take the τό here is controversial; see, e.g., Wedin (2014, 66).

plays a contrasting role with οὐκ εἶναι (not-to-be), a position reserved for being in the sense of εἶναι in key instances throughout Truth.

Recall that on the common interpretation, πέλειν substitutes for εἶναι strictly for metrical (i.e., non-philosophical) reasons. Upon such an interpretation, there is nothing special to learn about being from this surprising appearance of πέλειν. While he surely could have rewritten the line to avoid the strange vocabulary shift away from the recurrent contrast between εἶναι and οὐκ εἶναι throughout the rest of the poem, perhaps – or so it follows from this view – he was simply unconcerned to do so.

But as considered throughout, πέλειν carries its own weight as a term connoting, while not reducing to, being as such. Charitably interpreted, it could be instead that Parmenides uses the term πέλειν strategically here. According to one candidate reason, Parmenides might perhaps be punning on the different vocabulary of being, using a “not the same” (i.e., different, κοῦ τὰντόν, 6.9) term to refer to the notion that has been at issue since Fragment 2 under the term εἶναι.<sup>42</sup> If this were the case, then the “backward-turning” path leads mortals astray insofar as they fail to recognize the sameness and difference amid both the words used to denote phenomena and the phenomena themselves. Surely such irony was not lost on Parmenides and the usage likely implies such a pun, even if only weakly so.

More deeply, Parmenides seems to be emphasizing here the sense in which to be (particularly as πέλειν) entails intermixing with ways of being that mortals miss. If such a shade of meaning is indeed entailed here, πέλειν would be arising for the first time in the poem at this key moment concerning mortal misapprehension about the nature of being. If so, then mortals err precisely insofar as they confuse the relations between nonbeing and intermixing, taking the two to be the same and not the same.

Mitchell Miller has drawn attention to such a possibility, detailing the contrast between the articulations of nonbeing at 6.1-6.2 and 6.8.-6.9.<sup>43</sup> Miller notes that the phrase “nothingness is not” (μηδὲν δ’ οὐκ ἔστιν, 6.2) clearly

<sup>42</sup> This accords with Tor (2023: 267), who writes, “In this context, rich with imagery of constant fluctuation and movement, the term πέλειν [at 6.8] can plausibly be seen to underscore a linguistic aspect of the error of the mortals. The human confusion about the nature of Being is reflected through both the formal contradiction in lines 8–9 (‘the same and not the same’) and the readiness of human language (a language that Parmenides too continues to speak) to refer to Being through a term redolent with connotations of becoming and movement” (Tor 2023, 267). The diagnosis of the error defended here, however, is not exactly the same as Tor’s.

<sup>43</sup> Miller (2006, esp. 6-7).

correlates with the goddess' insights into nonbeing in Fragment 2, while the phrasing at 6.8-6.9 – “by whom to be (τὸ πέλειν) and not-to-be (οὐκ εἶναι) have been thought both same (ταυτόν) and not the same (κοῦ ταυτόν)” – seems to introduce a new and separate problem concerning the natures of being and nonbeing.<sup>44</sup> Accordingly, the mortal error entails confusion about the determinate relations between the beings that intermix with being, as perhaps emphasized by the use of τὸ πέλειν, and the constitutive nature of nonbeing (οὐκ εἶναι). To draw on incongruous modern formulations, this entails failing to heed the distinction between determinate negative relations (e.g., of the form “X is not Y”) and nonbeing *as such* (e.g., “X is not”).

Such a reading gains support through some notions later in the poem. At 8.53-8.59, the goddess criticizes the (or at least *a*) mortal error as follows:

- 8.53 Μορφὰς γὰρ κατέθεντο δύο γνώμας ὀνομάζειν·  
 8.54 τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεῶν ἐστίν - ἐν ᾧ πεπλανημένοι εἰσίν  
 8.55 τὰντία δ' ἐκρίναντο δέμας καὶ σήματ' ἔθεντο  
 8.56 χωρὶς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, τῇ μὲν φλογὸς αἰθέριον πῦρ,  
 8.57 ἥπιον ὄν, μέγ' ἐλαφρόν, ἐωυτῶ πάντοσε τωυτόν,  
 8.58 τῶ δ' ἐτέρῳ μὴ τωυτόν· ἀτὰρ κάκεινο κατ' αὐτό  
 8.59 τὰντία νύκτ' ἀδαῆ, πυκινὸν δέμας ἐμβριθές τε.

- 8.53 For they [mortals] established two forms in their minds for naming,  
 8.54 of which it is not right to name one – wherein they have gone astray –  
 8.55 and they distinguished opposites in body and established signs  
 8.56 separate (χωρὶς) from one another: here, on the one hand, aetherial  
 fire of flame,  
 8.57 which is gentle, very light, everywhere the same as itself,  
 8.58 but not the same as the other; but on the other hand, that one too  
 by itself  
 8.59 in contrast, dark night, a dense and heavy body.

In this passage, the goddess seems to develop her criticism of mortal thinking in Fragment 6. Key are the goddess' criticism of the “separate” (χωρὶς, 8.56) ontological entities posited by mortals and their subjugation to continua like the bright and dark (8.56 with 8.59), light and heavy (8.57 with 8.59), and same and other (8.58). Mortals erroneously take the spatiotemporal beings

<sup>44</sup> This opens onto the popular question of whether the goddess introduces a “third route” of inquiry here in addition to the two described in Fragment 2. Discussions of the problem with endorsements of “two-route” readings include Cordero (2004, 97-124) and Curd (2004, 50-63); discussions by “three-route” readers include Palmer (2009, 51-105) and Evans (2025).

to be fundamentally disconnected without recognizing the being *as* “such” in which all the beings necessarily share. Furthermore, they fail to recognize that constitutive continua of more and less that structure the determinate natures of beings presuppose being “as such” as a prior principle of unity from which multiplicity is derivative. In sum, mortals miss the necessity of positing a unifying principle while rushing into explaining the nature of beings with reference purely to multiplicity.

On such a reading, the *πέλειν* at 6.8 gives an initial glimpse into these problems that could not be fully unpacked until the reader has been led through the complicated arguments of Fragment 8. The later arguments show the confusions among being and nonbeing alongside sameness and not-the-sameness, insofar as mortals take all being to be spatiotemporal being, missing the being as such that must be prior to that which is spatiotemporally determined. Furthermore, mortals miss the notion of intermixedness, failing to grasp that beings are beings precisely insofar as they are intermixed with particular kinds of being. The employment of *πέλειν* at 6.8 could be a subtle way of emphasizing this. Similarly, the failure to heed the goddess’ words leads mortals to fail to grasp the sense in which difference – represented by continua of opposites in which spatiotemporal things must partake to be as they are – presupposes a prior unity from which difference is derivative. Accordingly, Parmenides aims to have the goddess show that nonbeing must be understood to mean “difference”, and “not” absolute nothingness, and that mortals err in failing to heed this distinction.<sup>45</sup>

The *πέλειν* at 6.8 perhaps might gesture toward the goddess’ argumentative moves to follow in Fragment 8. If nothing else, it is noteworthy that Parmenides chose to phrase this important instance of contrasting being and nonbeing with a term, *πέλειν*, that would factor into the poem later. The appearance at 6.8 is, in any case, one of many exercises of thinking through being that Parmenides offers to prepare the turn toward the difficult terrain of Fragment 8 and, subsequently, the *Doxa*.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The argument motivating this essay has been that, instead of acting as mere placeholders for εἶναι, Parmenides’ uses of *πέλειν* grant insight into Parmenidean being that go beyond what can be gleaned from a study of

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Miller (2006, 36-39), who draws on the enigmatic Fragment 4 to motivate such a reading.

εἶναι alone. While roughly contemporaneous authors treat πέλειν strictly as synonymous with εἶναι, attending to the constellation of meanings entailed by πέλειν brings depth to how Parmenides understands being as such and how he has the goddess disclose it experientially and dialectically to the reader over the course of the poem. After a provocative appearance in Fragment 6, πέλειν gradually arises at key moments in Fragment 8 as a verb indicating motion, intermixedness, ends, completeness, and the revealing of what turns out to be the case and is thereby true. Attention to these shades of meaning demonstrates how being, despite not being determined by space or time, is nevertheless active in certain senses. These senses include the ways that being shows itself to the reader through reflecting on the goddess' teachings and thereby grants access to truth.

In the course of his poem, Parmenides turns thinking toward being as such to show what follows from it: being, thus revealed, is not opposed by nonbeing but rather is the causal source of nonbeing, which is better understood simply as constitutive difference and as represented by the continua of opposites at play throughout Parmenides' poem. Being as such thus has been revealed to be the ground of intermixing, and it explains the constituted nature of the beings. This unfolding of being sublates being in its a-spatial and omnitemporal sense to allow insight into being as a constituting nature and hence the compositions of that which have being. From there, Parmenides has prepared the reader to return to mortal thinking, free from the danger of falling victim to its deceptive ordering, and understand what is and is not true about how mortals speak about reality as a whole.

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