

INCORPORATING CLASSICAL STUDIES IN EDUCATION:
PARMENIDES' FRAGMENTS AS TEACHING TOOLS
AND SPECIFIC EMPHASIS ON PARMENIDES' PROEM

A Thesis

by

DEBORAH YATES

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

May 2006

Major Subject: Curriculum and Instruction

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,
Committee Members,
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ABSTRACT

Incorporating Classical Studies in Education:

Parmenides' Fragments as Teaching Tools

And Specific Emphasis on Parmenides' Proem. (May 2006)

Deborah Yates, B.A., Texas A&M University; M.A., Texas A&M University

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Patrick Slattery

A thesis presented on Parmenides of Elea, born in 510 B.C.E., serves as a muse for my studies in education. I find his fragments and specifically his poem, "On Nature," to be very captivating as a metaphor for education and for life. Specifically, his work points towards the importance of being on a journey in quest of knowledge. I utilize his metaphor as a quest in a personal educational journey and also in an academic one that can be applied to the searches of others.

I am interested in utilizing the writings of Parmenides' work to form a framework for a philosophy curriculum for secondary schools. The thesis is centered on Parmenides' proem-introduction, poem and its applications for applying philosophy to values clarification and ethics.

DEDICATION

Mary Carucci, my favorite Aunt and my muse for Parmenides!

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GLOSSARY

FRAGMENTS. They are writings in the study of Parmenides, a Pre-Socratic philosopher, which has survived partially from the year of the birth of Parmenides, 510 B.C.E. (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2005).

TEACHING TOOLS. They are practical, hands-on methods for making learning easier. For example, it could be computer technology or neumonic devices. Now, many programs exist for helping students learn Classics and social studies. And also there are books and heuristic devices that serve as teaching tools. In the case of studying Parmenides, there is the tracing of the different paths that Parmenides journeys upon and showing metaphors for inquiry learning.

PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY. This utilizes the act of searching or questing for knowledge; it is a process of putting the pieces together along paths of knowledge. This metaphor for Parmenides' trip to the goddess for enlightenment, is similar to the Greek idea of invoking the muse.

CLASSICAL STUDIES. Classical studies encompass the study of Ancient Latin and Greek languages including civilization, religion, politics and philosophy. In many cases it will involve classical or biblical archeology.

PROEM. A proem, in the case of Parmenides' proem, is a preliminary statement and/or prose poem. His prose poem, "On Nature" is obscure among those who are not familiar with his work. Yet, with the scholars who are devotees of his work, it is something of keen interest.

PARMENIDES. In B.C.E. 510, the pre-Socratic philosopher, Parmenides was born. He was born in Elea, Italy. At the time he lived there it was part of Greece. Now, the area survives with some inscriptions and is now called Velia, Italy. There is a Parmenides Foundation in Velia, Italy that seeks to keep the inquiry and spirit of questioning, that Parmenides brought to life, alive continually.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Basis for Research

I begin by discussing my paper on Parmenides in the following way. I form as the basis for my qualitative research the following two sources: *The Handbook of Qualitative Research Second Edition* by Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln and “Hermeneutics, Aesthetics, and the Quest for Answerability: a Dialogic Possibility for Reconceptualizing the Interpretative Process in Curriculum Studies.”

The research I will present in this paper is primarily or almost entirely autobiographical and hermeneutical. I am basing my research on the article, “Hermeneutics, Aesthetics, and the Quest for Answerability: a Dialogic Possibility for Reconceptualizing the Interpretative Process in Curriculum Studies.” This article is by Patrick Slattery, Karen Krasny and Michael O’Malley (2004).

Autobiographical Research

On discussing the basis for autobiographical research I refer to Denzin & Lincoln (2000). From the section on evocative personal narratives I draw the basis for my autobiographical research in this piece, where I share personal reflections on Parmenides’ Fragments, and my reactions to them. The following I quote from this volume:

Like many other social scientists who took these matters seriously, my confidence in orthodox, social science methodology was shaken the critiques of poststructuralist, postmodernist, and feminist writers. I turned to narrative as a mode of inquiry because I am persuaded that social science texts needed to construct a different relationship between researchers and subjects and between authors

This thesis follows the style of *American Educational Research Journal*.

and readers. I wanted a more personal, collaborative, and interactive relationship, one that centered on the question of how human experience is endowed with meaning and on the moral and ethical choices we face as human beings who live in an uncertain and changing world. I also wanted to understand the conventions that constrain which stories we can tell and how we can tell them, and to show how people can and do resist the forms of social control that marginalize or silence counternarratives, stories that deviate from or transgress the canonical ones (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Hermeneutical Research

Going further, the foundation for my research with the hermeneutical angle, is based on Slattery, Krasny & O'Malley (2004). This article makes application to schools based on qualitative research.

The conclusion is that the method of teaching be more interpretative and less hierarchical and chain of command. The conclusion is the pedagogy should be something experiential and transformative (Slattery, et al., 2004).

Qualitative Research

The call in the above article is for the qualitative evaluation of schools and their progress. Are people being transformed and growing in their lives and skills towards others? The deference is given to Dewey in this respect as he calls for growth in education and participation in the community. And in my paper, I am calling for this also. I am calling for Parmenides' Fragments to open students up to being more democratically engaged citizens, who are thoughtful and fully aware of their lives, participating in society and others. I start my presentation on Parmenides by introducing my research and my knowledge of the subject.

Let me begin by stating what my research is not. My research is not traditional Parmenides scholarship and not a definitive view on Parmenides' routes

and what they mean. You may want to consult more of the traditional literature, if this is what you are looking for. I do cite from some of the books that I base much of my study from for supplementation.

The Basis for My Research

One of the definitive guides to Parmenides that I utilize in my paper is *The Route of Parmenides* by Alexander Mourelatos. Also, I use *The Pre-Socratic Philosophers* by Kirk, Raven and Shofield (1957). Kingsley's *Reality* and *In the Dark Places of Wisdom* are seminal as are *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* and *A Young Person's Guide to Philosophy*.

Finally, *Philosophy Teaches Kids to Think Before Making up Their Minds* also helps with understanding Philosophy for the beginner as does Jostein Gaarder's (1996) *Sophie's World*.

Kingsley's books chronicle the journey of Parmenides and show how his life influences our life. He makes the life of Parmenides come alive and displays his actions, thought and importance during his time period with that of civilization today.

Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery takes a departure point from where a school boy, Harry, starts asking philosophical questions in science class. In the science class he involves other students in his questions and gets them and the teacher involved. As things progress, everyone can see that it is possible for children to think philosophically.

In *A Young Person's Guide to Philosophy*, Matthew Lipman (1992), guides everyone through a pictorial and historical guideline for experiencing philosophy

through the ages. He begins with Thales and ends up with Wittgenstein. His section on Parmenides is fairly good and fairly accurate. Even though this book is supposed to be for children; it really has more of an adult audience.

The Route of Parmenides and *The Pre-Socratic Philosophers* are both similar in that they are scholarly works on pre-Socratic philosophers and Parmenides. They follow traditional scholarly research based on the ancient texts. I will utilize their work as a scholarly basis for the explication of Parmenides poem and the teaching tools with his fragments.

The article, *Philosophy Teaches Kids to Think Before Making up Their Minds*, and *Sophie's World* are two forms of communication which are centered greatly on teaching kids how to think philosophically.

Primarily, *Sophie's World* plunges Sophie, a high school girl into a philosophical world and has her deal with philosophical issues as they come up with life in school with her friends and her parents. All of these works form the basis for my research into Parmenides.

The Importance of Parmenides for Secondary Education

Secondary education often lacks intellectual breadth and depth. Much of high school can be wasted with content mastery, basic skills and no specific tools for how to think.

Philosophy teaches students how to think and to prepare well on paper to argue their case like a lawyer. This preparation of thinking and writing skills that philosophy offers is not wasted for the college years. Parmenides' writings can be used to prepare students psychologically and mentally for further studies.

Now, the important ingredient in this paper on Parmenides is its importance for Secondary Education. In Europe and other countries, often Philosophy is included in the vein of what is taught and imbibed intellectually speaking. However, in the United States, Philosophy in High School is often left on the sidelines.

Often, American education is not as rigorous as its foreign counterparts because it seems that testing is the only significant factor in American learning. And while foreign learning involves testing also, High schools often include other things such as a liberal arts program in an American university might provide. This has to change for our educational system in America to be competitive with the rest of the world.

Grappling With Parmenides

Not only are we behind in Math and Science education, but we are behind in the arts and literatures. Foreign languages also need to be improved in their importance of study in the United States. This brings me back to the study of Parmenides.

The idea of integrating the study of Classics with mainstream public education is where I am leading in this paper. Students need to become more familiar with other cultures and the classics provide this kind of lesson that supports the foundation of our Western educational system.

So, it is easier after having studied some of the staples of mythology, classics, ancient civilizations and ancient languages in translation, to get close to the idea of the humanities framework that makes people want to learn humanistically

how people are similar and different, and how to get along with others.

I am positing a Philosophy and Ethics curriculum for Secondary School that will include values clarification and sensitization to different cultures. We live in a post 911 culture in which we have no choice but to learn about others and work at solutions beyond firepower.

When diplomacy fails, that is when we have no choice, but to harm one another. In a recent conversation with a Fulbright Professor at Texas A&M University from Iraq, who teaches English Literature, we discussed together how much we would both like to see the proliferation of books over bombs.

Finding Easy Answers Is Not the Solution

That does not mean there is not a place for military power, but personally learning to understand one another seems much more pleasant than war. We have a friend from the Middle East who cooks delicious Arabic food for us and teaches us a few words in Arabic, we enjoy it so much. Too bad the world cannot sit at the table and eat together rather than fight.

About the Parmenides' Curriculum again, I am attempting to get the students immersed in another culture and another method of doing things for the purpose of letting them understand other people's culture. For example, Parmenides was a member of a religious sect from the Pythagoreans; it was a variation on traditional Greek myth and lore about spirituality.

Whenever, someone was sick or needed inspiration about making laws or doing politics they would sit with others in a trance and do meditation. It was probably very similar to current day transcendental meditation. Now, the point of

the matter is not that we need to agree with them on their personal religious views, but to learn to understand other cultures better.

Grappling With Parmenides: There Are No Easy Answers

You may wonder, if I as an adult have had to grapple with Parmenides and struggle to understand him, how can a younger person understand? The point of my taking everyone on a journey with Parmenides is not to arrive at truth or reality, but to keep the questions alive.

Scholars often cannot agree upon their conclusions about Parmenides. But According to Kingsley (2003), often the ones who are the most wrong are those who assume they understand Parmenides' riddling Fragments.

What is most significant for students is working with others and the instructor. There are no real answers with the questions that persist with Parmenides. Each generation must answer these questions anew and people must learn to live with ambiguity.

Learning How to Apply Philosophy to Everyday Life

What I want to prove regarding Parmenides and education is that education should be a journey not a destination. My goal is not simply to theorize about ancient Greek philosophy, but to encourage students and teachers to look at things from all the angles by looking at education as a journey and not a destination. I give some consideration to Whitehead's (1978) *Process and Reality*. In his writing, learning is based on a process not product. With so much emphasis on high stakes testing, teachers are losing control over their classrooms from *NCLB*.

I am taking everyone in this paper through Parmenides' quest for

knowledge as an educational journey. My aim is to prove that something as simple as a proem-introduction and poem from the ancient world can serve as a metaphor and muse for learning today; whether it be in ethics, philosophy or curriculum studies.

My journey encompasses ten chapters including the following: Introduction, Research Questions, The Route of Parmenides, Autobiographical Method, Hermeneutical Method, Literature Review, Parmenides' Fragments as Teaching Tools, Parmenides as a Muse for Curriculum Development in Secondary Schools, Explication of Parmenides Proem and Poem and Conclusion.

Each chapter focuses on important issues in education and Parmenides' Fragments to powerfully integrate both ideas. In education today, there has to be a springboard for writing assignments and class discussion in Philosophy and/or English classes that integrate philosophy in Secondary Schools.

Often, classrooms fail to get real thinking and writing patterns across to the students. The aim should be generating more significant discussions and writing assignments that get to the bottom of things, rather than scratching the surface of learning.

Often, reading about current events in a newspaper can be combined with literary studies or philosophical studies with a proper pattern for making the past, present and future meet together. Parmenides' Fragments serve as an important springboard for discussion of current events. Often, students lack knowledge of History. Students can have a point of view about philosophy or current events that lacks vision or depth. Much of it is based on what the students have been told.

However, one must challenge personal opinions by reading great literature and great philosophical minds.

Having a module regarding studying philosophy and using Parmenides as a muse can give students a fuller picture about history and how things were in the past. This can give them an ability to struggle through great themes in literature and philosophy and great ideas.

Rather than not being sure about where they are going or have been, they will develop a confidence that comes from having studied things from the past. Then, they can get involved in studying some of the great theorists of today and discovering the ties they all share.

The concept of studying philosophy as a journey is something that can be learned in school and applied to one's life. Students and teachers alike should approach education as a quest looking to find similarities and differences between works of theory and practice.

While studying Parmenides' writings I have been inspired to learn more about other groups and learn to break down walls. I met an individual during a poster session who recommended that studying modern languages as well as classical ones would be a way to connect with more people also. I am also interested to find out ways to connect with more people and cultures.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study will address the following questions. 1) What is the significance of Parmenides' Life and work? 2) Is it possible that an unknown figure, such as Parmenides, would be able to have so much seen, yet uncredited affect, on western civilization and history? 3) Finally, how can Parmenides' Fragments serve as teaching tools with other classical writers to be incorporated into the school curriculum so that they are accessible to all students and not just the privileged ones?

The significance of Parmenides' life and work is that social issues and problems have plagued people throughout the centuries with their problems and riddles. Often, when people are in trouble they think that the answer is to avoid these issues and not talk about them. Traditionally, that has not been the answer to overcoming difficult issues.

His fragments, allegorically, are bits of revelation that come to him after his trip to seek enlightenment from the goddess. She sends him on a journey to find truth. In a similar way, we are all in sync with Parmenides because we all have hidden issues and secret problems that for which we are seeking enlightenment. Parmenides' affect on modern knowledge has a lot to do with being and knowledge. He deals with issues such as "how can we know if something exists or not?". This is an issue that modern philosophers and people deal with a lot. Often, in talking to children, adults will defend how they know that something is thus and

so. Often the adult will helplessly answer that “it just is because I said so!”. Parmenides covers both bases by saying that, “it is,” and “it is not.” This is a helpful way of thinking about things. Parmenides’ Fragments are published in Raven et al. (1983).

Also, the credit that Parmenides has is for modern logical systems that he developed. The way it worked is that our Western system of logic is based on Plato and Aristotle’s system, which came from pre-Socratic philosophers such as Parmenides and others. The reason for Parmenides being singled out for such honor is that his system was more qualitative than the other pre-Socratic Philosophers. He based his ideas on revelations from the goddess more than scientific fact. His writings form the basis for mythology and insights into ancient religion and they also form the basis for the work of the heart in thought.

Finally, Parmenides Fragments serve as teaching tools because his fragments are like riddles that puzzle the intellect and the spirit. Students in schools based on the current curriculum are in situations where their mind is fed information rather than challenged. Utilizing the Fragments of Parmenides to challenge ideas in student’s minds, gives them information to reflect upon and challenge the status quo. And then, going further, the curriculum can help the students see knowledge and learning as a quest for greater understanding.

Finally, the Fragments help the students to be in the driver’s seat with their learning; they are not in a situation where they cannot control their own learning. They can put the pieces together like a puzzle and come to various conclusions, while working with Parmenides’ sayings.

CHAPTER III

THE ROUTE OF PARMENIDES

Taking an Intellectual Journey With Parmenides

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1995) states in his *The Cost of Discipleship*, that when God calls a man, He calls him to come and die. This intellectual journey that was Bonhoeffer's, and the journey of all intellectuals and students, rests on that which one is willing to give one's all.

There is a route that we take to achieve enlightenment in the spirit of Parmenides that can lead us to change views and renounce the cozy safety of an earlier life in quest of controversy and uncertainty. Bonhoeffer was certainly that figure. This leads us into our journey of *The Route of Parmenides* by Alexander Mourelatos.

The Theme of Growth and Change in Education

Alexander Mourelatos puts forth the theme of growth and change in *The Route of Parmenides* in the following manner. According to him, there are two routes of Parmenides in the proem, the introductory matter, and then the poem of Parmenides (Mourelatos, 1970).

These two routes form the "quest for reality" (Mourelatos, 1970). Of the two routes, one is called "Is" and the other is called, "Not necessarily so" (Mourelatos, 1970). To think about the choices between the paths of "is" and "is not" can be difficult. The main reason this is so is that when dealing with the two paths, it is difficult to imagine how "is not" can exist (Raven et al., 1983).

The Two Routes of Parmenides

To apply the two routes of Parmenides to education is to create a powerful metaphor for existence and non-existence. People are often in a situation where they feel invisible because of the system of education. To take this to its logical conclusion, it is necessary for the teacher to take a survey at the beginning of the semester to gauge where the students are at in respect to the material.

If what is being presented is very far beyond what the students know, then there must be extra readings for help that the student can access in addition to the teacher. The two paths of being and non-being are very helpful for students today. Very often students can feel invisible, as if they are one speck on an ant hill.

The teacher can work to successfully mitigate this by taking the effort to call on students equally and work with them individually in class by looking at what they are doing and giving feedback to them. This would work better with students in the lower grades, than the higher grades.

The best way is to remember Parmenides' two paths, "It is," and "It is not." No one can easily overcome roadblocks to success individually. We all need the help of others and their caring. To be a teacher is to postulate and practice in everyday life the way of the "It is," rather than "It is not." Students need the support of the teacher to make their dreams a reality.

CHAPTER IV

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL METHOD

Arts-Based Research

The Rodin Exhibit at the Munson William Proctor Art Institute in Utica, New York 2004, was striking in its display of the sculpture—"The Thinker." This piece of art more than any other is evocative of the conceptual framework of the arts and education. Similar to excavating a burial site in archeology, is the search for buried treasure, that forms the mind, imagination, soul, spirit and heart of the human being. According to Heraclitus, one never steps into the same river twice. In the case of Parmenides, there is never a repeat performance ever.

One must become intimate with a text. The text, as Gadamer has said, is something with which we enter into a relationship (Pinar et al., 1995). The text is living and evolutionary as culture evolves (Richerson & Boyd, 2005). Parmenides writes in his poem, introduction, about his journey to visit the sun goddess and learn of her wisdom. The Latin word, "sapientia," speaks of this wisdom. This is similar to the use of "Sophia" in Jostein Gaarder's *Sophie's World* (1996). The construct of wisdom as feminine gives strength to notions of the Virgin Mary as a feminine presence, similar to Parmenides consulting the goddess on his journey. This is something Mother Teresa perhaps could fathom in her inspirations to help the poor of India (Fremantle, 1977).

Autobiographical Experiences and Education: An Interview With a Teacher

C.S. Wood (personal communication, October 2, 2005) claimed that the

secret to good discipline in her class was based on a discipline regime developed by The Flippen Group. She says that she makes each child sign a social contract which they must live up to in order to remain in the class. Their participation is necessary to ensure order in the class. When I asked her how she maintains fairness in the class she said that what seems to work best is when she treats everyone fairly and does not grade others differently.

In a similar manner, the environmental appropriateness for learning in schooling with technology is also centered on fairness. There has to be a plan for the learning environment to be appropriate technologically speaking. The students and the teacher have to agree on something to make it work (Curry, Truby, Dunham & Pabst, 2000).

Social Contract

The first thing that they have to agree on is the usage of the computer. The computer, for some students from underprivileged homes, is a luxury. If the assignments call for heavy computer usage, it might not be appropriate in a learning environment to expect students to have access to the computer at home to do the assignments. If possible, there should be staffing for the students to be able to come in after school and access the computers. If this is a difficulty for the students, grant writing might be in order. The biggest issue is that of getting the students, teacher and staff to work fluidly together (Dejoy, 1991).

After there has been an agreement made among students and the teacher about how they will utilize resources and behave online, the real meat of the project of appropriate learning environments can begin. The design of the learning

environment will either work for the students or not. The flexibility of delivery is the beauty of the online environment in which students can access this part from any place. The central element of developing an appropriate learning environment for online learning is culture.

Cultural Issues

Things have to be set up so that in various cultures, the delivery will still work. How for example, would a student in Mexico and Texas feel about a discussion about how technology can help them with their homework? Would not a poorer student with less access to technology be at loss to know how to handle this question? (McLoughlin, & Oliver, 2000).

Kluth, Straut & Biklen, (2003), assert that coming up with a learning appropriate environment does not only center on reworking the curriculum, but with increased interaction with students. According to their research, it might involve a team of teachers working together to make things work properly. This collaboration between professionals, with time spent sharing their opinions and working out things together, leads directly into the kind of dialogue needed for an appropriate learning environment. This is seen in the research of Horn (2000), whose book, *Teacher Talk*, asserts that teachers need to challenge established norms in teaching and work together to lighten the load. He quotes a teacher, Barry, from his research:

Part of the reason that we don't communicate with people is because it has been structured to make it ever more difficult to have communication. One of the major weaknesses in this school is communication. From top down, from bottom up, our weakest point is communication. We do not do it effectively (Horn, 2000).

This is a quotation from the teacher, “Barry,” in the book.

Funding Leads to Greater Appropriateness in Learning Environments

Paige & Marcus (2004) assert that the way to make environments appropriate in learning is to allow for greater funding to situations in which students are below par in poorer, mainly minority neighborhoods. As always the staffing and tracking of classrooms makes an interesting commentary on the expectations of leaders themselves towards students.

Steelcase Inc. (1996-2005) asserts that the key to developing an appropriate learning environment is collaboration. In collaboration remains strength. Technology can be used to foster better collaboration which can lead to students learning more and developing more.

For example, on the professional level in education, coauthoring is seen as a powerful method of increasing the usefulness of data and the strength in presentation. Collaboration is not really that different. Peer editing and working together in groups, can strengthen the classroom beyond the teacher’s lecture. Studying Parmenides’ Fragments can lead to greater collaboration.

Holmevik & Haynes (2002) claim that asynchronous learning environments are excellent devices to teach English composition. By allowing the students to communicate with each other via chat and email, the learning environment mode grows stronger.

Writing Across the Curriculum

It is important to utilize writing across the curriculum in an appropriate learning environment. The online learning method allows for this. Teachers and

students can access each other 24/7, 365 days a year. This is in a lot of ways a better system. But what might be the caveat of this technology learning environment? Well, sometimes, the face to face element is missing and students would rather look someone in the eye, than look the computer in the face.

My interview with C.S. Wood (personal communication, October 2, 2005) brought up some interesting issues. The question that I posed to her was central in me finding out how she maintained classroom order. Her answer was that she had every student sign on with the social contract that they would abide by and if not they would be out of the class. This is a crucial element—for the student to control their learning. And that is what is a similar issue with the Parmenides Curriculum.

This is a significant issue for a discussion of an appropriate learning environment with technology. For example, for students to use technology appropriately they would have to do the same thing. It would be possible to envision students in a classroom all using computers and seeing chaos ensue.

The only solution would be for the students to agree to ground rules. Would there be chatting on the computer during class? How would they share with others their time with the computer? When they were finished using the technology would they agree to put it back? Collaboration would be the main focus.

Feminist Research

To posit wisdom as feminine in a Western sense is to deconstruct male notions of superiority, whether mental or physiological. This also calls into question notions of grandeur and providence, which speak of other certain theories

of similar kinds. It is important to consider what is being said by the Pre-Socratics. There is a concept of knowing that is feminine and special. There is wisdom inherent in this.

We need to think about what Parmenides is saying here and if it is fair to posit a special feminine knowledge in a situation. My take is that it is very fair. Parmenides' logic (Austin, 1986) is that "it is and it is not." This is a postmodern concept and one different from the prevailing theories in practice now, which would be contemporary philosophically. We must realize that things change and are always in flux as Heraclitus says.

What is quotidian seems odd and what is strange seems ordinary (Sallis and Maly, 1980). To paraphrase Heraclitus, the human experience is one of trying to fabricate the sensational and avoid the ordinary. If we admit that we are not that different from others, we cease to be extraordinary and unique. Parmenides explains why "is not and is," are basically the same thing—there is no schism.

The conceptions of it is and it is not, in a postmodern sense defies modern day logical conceptions, but for Parmenides these things make sense in a different way. "Is not" really is about how the goddess really says of "being that it is not lacking" (Austin, 1986). Parmenides speaks of the human quest for wisdom—that of knowing one does not know. This is something that Socrates spoke of and demanded in his Platonic dialogues—the need for people to admit that they know nothing.

The Search for the Goddess

To search for the goddess and covet her wisdom is to admit that one does

not know anything and needs divine wisdom to be able to figure things out. When we look for God, we look for that part of ourselves that is missing or absent. The problem of human existence is alienation and ignorance. We are apart from others, and our faith is a quest for knowing. As Sartre says, we are alienated and there is no exit. Hell is other people and we are surrounded with others and yet always separated.

Supposedly Parmenides in Fr. VIII 5, excludes future and past “being” because “being,” according to Parmenides, is (Taran, 1965). “To be,” is to be in the present tense, according to him. We cannot posit past or future, as there is a seamless whole and entirety to existence that continues into all time.

Being for Parmenides is something rather moot. He cannot somehow even know if he does exist. So, how can he even question his existence? Like Heraclitus, change is something always in flux, always in question. He is not sure of anything, except that everything changes. We can never enter the same river twice. To be a person of faith, means to question everything. According to Descartes, “I doubt, therefore I am.” To doubt means that I do exist because I have the ability to go further by questioning everything. This is similar to Descartes’ *Cognito*, “I think, therefore I am.”

Questioning Produces Knowledge of Existence

In flux and questioning is the surety of existence. I am not sure and that in that state of not knowing and being always unsure, I can be sure of my cognition, my humanity and my faith. In the garden of Eden, the first family gained knowledge by losing innocence.

To posit one's own existence is to call into question everything one has within. In our loneliness and alienation as human beings we find we need others and God. In this proleptic moment, past, future, and present coalesce into one pregnant moment of pain that gives birth to a sense of knowing that never goes away (Slattery, 1995).

Struggling With Issues Is the Road to Enlightenment

What do we know that is not fleeting and temporal? Is there anything that endures? Supposedly, in the Christian religion, in I Corinthians 13, "Love endures much." Yet, is love worth anything but pain? We do not know, but as for Parmenides, he went to the goddess for enlightenment. As Sartre says, "Hell is other people." Let us face our demons and then, having worked through our own issues, we can coexist peacefully with others.

Attractions in life come and go. Do we like certain people? That is part of life together on earth. We cannot imagine another course of being in this world. We must collaborate and get involved with others—this is a curse and a blessing. To be with others is problems and pain all integrated. We must transcend where we are (Slattery, 1995). We must embrace pain and involvement, but never missing the point that individualism can lead to hurt. And going further, to embrace pain is to know that flattery can get you anywhere, but it may lead where you do not wish to go.

Postmodernism and Pre-Socratic Philosophy, Primarily Parmenides

Parmenides embraces a postmodern concept of why "not is" (Austin, 1986). There are two routes in Parmenides, being and non-being. It is hard to make a

distinction between these two venues. One path leads in one direction and one in the other. To divorce one from the other is to create an artificial separation. There cannot be one without the other, the two must be together.

For Parmenides, his route to the goddess is a quest for knowledge, but it can also be a metaphor for the quest for divine love in the same manner that C.S. Lewis posits the same in his books such as *The Sacred Romance*. Something about love is eternal. We all seek human and spiritual companionship and desire to collaborate with others or a special significant other. In this interaction, something pregnant happens that is divine and worthy of an interaction with the goddess.

Something about flowers speaks of love. When we smell flowers we think of our beloved. To give flowers to someone speaks of devotion and love. We cannot receive without first giving. To give is to become unified in purpose and devotion to others. By the strength of our devotion to others, is the power in being with and for the other. This is often discussed by Simone de Beauvoir in her existentialist discussions of her philosophy of being and doing for the other.

Alienation, Existentialism and Jean Paul Sartre

Loneliness is the core issue of human existence. Parmenides is on a quest to find knowledge and in the same breath company. Being alone is very existential and Sartrean in the sense that it is a hell of our own making. Let us interact and be sociable and we will have friends. This is what he is doing. To interact and collaborate is the substance of life. On the route of Parmenides, according to Mourelatos (1970), we participate in a relationship between Justice and Persuasion. In this relationship, we realize that what we are becomes changed in the persuasive

element. We cannot look at different things in life and stay the same; we must change as we are changed.

Going further in the same vein, Heraclitus tells people to be careful entering his house because there are gods there. This is similar to the piety of Parmenides consulting the goddess before action (Kirk, 1954). The metaphor from Heraclitus of the body fixing its wounds to a spider caring for its web, is similar to Parmenides' route in which everything is interconnected (Kahn, 1979).

On the route of Parmenides, we transcend time to enter into a relationship between distance and nearness. In this relationship, we realize that we have become changed. Our perspective is forever mutated. Life is what we make it, and there is no option to stay the same. To feel the change that we undergo makes us more human and sensitive to life as it is. In this kind of life there is a beauty that transcends the ordinary. A friend of ours could be a god in this world and we would treat him or her as such. There would be no rationale to stay the same after such a transformation.

Examining Our Lives and Socrates

As Socrates has well said "the unexamined life is not worth living." Such is the task of philosophy, rhetoric and education—to ensure that reflection occurs and that one's life is not unexamined. To conduct philosophical inquiry is the route to learning and education (Albert, 1980). For one to think, is the basis for learning, and for learning any other skills that one needs for one's life. It is not enough to be in the world and part of it, one must meditate on the simplicity and beauty of the universe. This cultivates an atmosphere in which one can listen to the stillness

within and learn how to hear the voice within. The beauty and complex simplicity of Parmenides' Fragments function as a stimulus to learning and higher thought in the pupil.

An Example of a Teaching Tool From Parmenides' Fragments

One can also use them as a heuristic tool that aids towards better learning. These reflective habits are often cultivated while studying philosophy and lead to greater learning ability. Yet, Parmenides' Fragments can function as an introduction to the genre of philosophy and form a basis for its understanding. Thought and discussion are the basis for philosophical inquiry, which has its foundation in rhetoric. The learning process is also related to inquiry. Much of the discussion of these fragments is a kind of discussion of these issues in a pithy form. They allow the students and instructor to dialogue about these things, while learning to put things together philosophically. Using myth and folklore, one is able to safely discuss these things, which might seem too controversial otherwise. For example, Fragment 17 is one such example:

When man and woman mingle the seeds of love
That spring from their veins, a formative power
Maintaining proper proportions moulds well-form bodies from diverse
blood.
For if, when the seed is mingled, the forces therein clash
And do not fuse into one, then cruelly
Will they plague with double seed the sex of the offspring (Gallop,
1984).

This allows the broaching of difficult subjects.

Teaching Understanding From Parmenides

This fragment is a reference to the possible cause of intersexuality or

homosexuality. And it forms a nice basis for dialogue. It is interesting to see the thoughts of the Ancient Greeks about these matters and compare them with our own.

One of the major questions that are often asked regarding philosophers and philosophy is the question: Why keep asking questions that never go away? (Noddings, 1995). It is this process of discussing and keeping alive the questioning nature of humankind that keeps one's intellect alive. The questions are the same, but the implications for them always differ in each new age as society changes and its use for philosophy deepens. It is a sort of cosmic dance of living, learning and relating that we are all participating in by asking these questions. The Fragments are the heart of these issues. They provide a forum for a discussion and provide opportunities to discuss opinions and relationships to issues.

The Hermeneutical and Parmenides

Montgomery Furth, 1993, states that the task of an interpreter of Parmenides is to find the simplest, most reasonable explanation of his works. Furth is referring to his poem, mainly, but I apply Furth also to the Fragments of Parmenides as a whole. Reading each fragment functions as a sort of riddle and it is a test of the mind to play with it and to read it for comprehension. A sort of ancient brain-teaser, it functions as a means to questioning what we think we know and pushes the limits of that. Also, it changes us in that we are never quite the same after wrestling with these puzzles. We can find ways to think on a higher level about ordinary functions. According to Kirk et al. (1957), Parmenides' ideas largely influenced later Greek philosophy.

Differences Between Ancient Philosophy and Rhetoric

Merrill Whitburn (2006) discusses the difference in focus between the teaching in ancient Greece of Isocrates and Plato and Aristotle. Isocrates focused more on rhetoric, while Plato and Aristotle focused more on philosophy (Whitburn, 2000). This division of the two forms of these studies can be seen nicely melded in Parmenides' Fragments as rhetoric and philosophy both. The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines rhetoric in the second definition as: "The study of writing or speaking as a means of communication or persuasion." The Merriam Webster Dictionary also uses its second definition for philosophy as, "Pursuit of wisdom." Thomas Benson refers to the rarity of the unification of rhetoric and philosophy, but maintains that it is at the center of "classical learning" as follows from George Kennedy:

One of the principal interests of the Greeks was rhetoric...In its origin and intention was natural and good: it produced clarity, vigor and beauty, and it rose logically from the conditions and qualities of the classical mind...Though a practical and philosophical tradition may be discerned, and though there were temporary vagaries, the history of ancient rhetoric is largely that of the growth of a single, great, traditional theory to which many writers and teachers contributed (Benson, 1988).

Another Teaching Tool From Philosophy and Rhetoric in Parmenides

From reading this quotation, unification of rhetoric and philosophy leads to a beautification of learning in the classical vein and looking at Parmenides' fragments exemplifies this.

Fragment 9 shows an effective means of discourse (rhetoric) as well as philosophy. It is as follows:

But since all things have been named light and night,
 And these [have been applied] according to their powers to these
 things
 and to those,
 All is full of light and obscure night together,
 Of both equally, since neither [is it the case that] nothing shares in
 them
 (Gallop, 1984).

Learning About Night and Light

This refers to the equality of status of light and night (Gallop, 1984). This is probably due to the fact that one shines half the time and the other, the respective half. This, according to Mitchell H. Miller Jr. (1979), is a dualism. In that, “all things” are subordinated into light and night. This functions as a rhetorical way in philosophy for a skillful, effective sounding form of speech. It also functions as a means to teach ways of composing pleasing speech and writing.

To go further into ways of using the Parmenidean fragments as teaching tools, it is important to look at their structure. Alexander Mourelatos (1970) in his book, *The Route of Parmenides*, refers to the epic nature of Parmenides’ fragments. The poetic nature of the fragments lends a musical, mythical quality to them. They serve as sayings and maxims that inspire the heart and lead forward the intellect. The ability to encapsulate an idea and engender discussion is a powerful part of the literature and philosophy of the fragments. The following fragment, 16 reflects this:

For as each man has a union of the much-wandering limbs,
 So is mind present to men; for it is the same thing
 Which the constitution of the limbs thinks,
 Both in each and every man; for the full is thought
 (Gallop 1984).

Epistemology in Parmenides

This fragment, 16, leads into a sort of theory of knowledge for Parmenides. This is an exposition of the way of truth and gives some relevance to it by discussing the parts of the intellect and the roles they play (Gallop, 1984). For Parmenides, thought is the action of the minds as the limbs with actions walk out their thoughts.

The issue of negation comes up in Fragment 8 and serves as a good learning tool for logic in philosophy. A quote from fragment eight states the following:

A single story of a route still Is left; that [it] is; on this [route] there are
Signs very numerous; that what-is is ungenerated and imperishable;
Whole, single-limbed, steadfast, complete;
Nor was [it] once, [it] is now, all together.
One continuous, for what coming-to-be of it will you seek?
In what way, when, did [it] grow? Neither from what-is-not shall I
allow You to say or think; for it is not to be said or thought
That [it]is not. And what need could have impelled it to grow
later or sooner, if it began from nothing?
Thus [it] must either be completely or not at all
(Gallop, 1984).

Central to interpreting this fragment and learning the concept of negation is the idea that Fragment eight does not violate the canon of Fragment two. This is true because it has only double negations. Fragment eight does not say that being does not exist, but only that it has certain “non existent properties” (Austin 1986). Ketchum (1990) goes further with this concept of negation discussing the concept in Parmenides’ poem. He mentions that “What is nothing” is synonymous with “nothing” used as a definite term”.

Parmenides in Context of His Colleagues

Anthony Long (1996) suggests in learning to understand Parmenides that we

take his work in light or interpretation with his colleagues of his time period and compare their work and his and decide what to think of his work. He mentions that Parmenides and Heraclitus share a similar problem with relation of “knower to known”. He also discusses two other contemporaries of Parmenides, Empedocles and Anaxagoras. These two philosophers attempt to give similar situations in which “what is’ cannot cease to be”.

Alexander Mourelatos (1970) in his article, “Determinacy and Indeterminacy” discusses Parmenides’ poem in the following passage:

Come now and I shall tell you, and you listen to the account and carry it forth, which routes of inquiry alone are for knowing: the one that (...) is and that it is not possible (for...) not to be, is the courses of Persuasion, for it attends truth; the other, that (...) is not and that it is right (for...) not to be, that one I mark for you as being a byway from which no tidings ever come. For you could neither come to know the thing itself which is not, for it cannot be consummated nor could you point it out (Mourelatos, 1970).

He refers to there being some questioning discussion over how to explain and interpret the *esti* (it is), that is first and the *einai* (to be, infinitive), of the route that is positive. In the past, people have construed it as meaning that the subject was held back and that one had to guess who this was contextually.

Parmenides and Platonic Philosophy

The teachings of Parmenides tend to unify things and to avoid the dualisms with Platonic philosophy. He asserts that everything is just the multiple appearance of the one thing that exists, which is being. When things appear to change according to him, they do not really change. This is because all is immutable and one (Austin, 1986). Instead of there being a distinction between the forms and the

visible things, everything is one. It creates a universe that is more tightly knit and dependent on each other and less prone to separate the ordinary from the heavenly sphere. For example, the dichotomy between the earthly and the heavenly, can be seen in Fragment 15A. It is as follows, “The earth rooted in water” (Gallop, 1984). Parmenides also makes heat and cold first values (Fairbanks, 1898). For him, the heavens and the earth are one as we as inhabitants are deeply involved in the cosmic dance between all that is nature.

The next thing that can be learned through Parmenides is the cyclical nature of Eastern thought versus Western thought. This is an idea that is present in Asian philosophy more so than in Western ideas. Fragment 19 states the following:

Thus according to belief, these things were born and now are
And hereafter, having grown from this, they will come to an end,
And for each of these did men establish a distinctive name (Gallop,
1984).

Being is immutable, unchanging and eternal. Life is cyclical like in the Hebrew Scriptures, Book of Ecclesiastes, “There is a time to be born and a time to die.” You can feel the cycle of life moving along and everything repeating itself (Gallop, 1984).

The Relevance of Parmenides Fragments

Parmenides’ Fragments are great teaching tools because of his concern for nature and other things based on logic regarding its relevance. The Pythagoreans influenced him to appropriate his method for proofs to the problems of being and non-being. Based on generalizations from formal logic, his teachings in the form of epic poems centered on the view that being was immutable and uncreated. His

work is great for learning principles of abstraction in that his discipline was for training people in diligence and acumen (Cho, 1999).

Parmenides' poem especially forms a learning process and teaches much about Greek myth, folklore and the epic format. In Fragment One, the speaker of the poem travels to the Goddess. He is taken by the mares and follows the daughters of the sun. The gates are guarded by Justice who admits him because of the persuasion of the daughters of the sun. Then the Goddess welcomes the narrator and makes a speech (Cherubin 2003). The speech serves as a good example of rhetoric and gives a paradigm for taking a journey, which is similar to that of learning. The goddess' speech is as follows:

Young man, coming to our abode the companion of immortal charioteers, with the mares which carry you, Welcome! For it is no bad Fate, which sent you along this route (though it is far off the beaten track of men), but rather Rightness and Justice. Now you must learn everything, both the unshaking temper of persuasive Truth, and the opinions of mortals, in which there is no true trust. Still, though, you will learn this as well: how the things of opinion should have been in order to be acceptable (Austin, 1986).

To Err Is Human, to Forgive Is Divine

This serves as an educative experience for the young man. First, he learns that there are those who are wiser than him in this situation (namely the goddess). Then, he learns to rely on others by waiting for the sun maidens to escort him by carrying the chariot to the goddess. He also learns to respect Justice, for she is wise. This entire experience is an allegorical, moral type of fable in which he meets Truth and encounters Faith, etcetera. It is useful to see how people in other cultures teach morals and virtues. The poetry is also beautiful. Also, the gates are

Night and Day which again go back to Fragment 9 in which Night and Light are equal in value. Also, the keys of retribution to the doors are held by Much-Avenging Justice. Even the keys are symbolic of the power that Justice holds.

In Fragment Two, the Goddess says that she will only discuss the route of inquiry which is good. She says that one route is Persuasion and the other is a completely “uninformative track.” For her, the path is one of ideas. Each step is a thought, a process towards greater enlightenment. One’s beliefs determine the questions that one asks and the path that one takes. She discourages the young man from taking a certain road in Fragment 6 and Fragment 7 because they are much too based on experience and not based enough on thought. In Fragment 8, the Goddess shows that there are contradictions in what makes the method of inquiry possible and that Light and Night are of which mortals think the world is fundamentally composed (Cherubin, 2003). During this journey, the mortal must continually contemplate what is and what is not. Also, it is this paradox between being and non-being which forms a unified whole for him. He cannot grasp the entirety of his actions apart from this unified substance.

Matter Is Immutable According to Parmenides

After discussing the route of Parmenides, it is wise to discuss Parmenides’ view that change is not possible. Parmenides deduces that everything is permanent, uncreated and impossible to be destroyed. For him, there is no plurality, just the conception that one thing is. It is difficult to know what that one thing is, but according to Parmenides, it is everything (Cohen, 2003).

Now the logic of Parmenides is very interesting and much can be learned

from it. Parmenides' method of philosophical inquiry is one of rationalism. In a similar manner to rationalists, he concludes that any assertion that is essential or obviously true must be so. Logically derivable truth has preference over ideas regarding being coming from sensory information. Things must be logical, not just based on common sense (Austin, 1986). This means that "anything rationally conceivable must exist." Parmenides did not believe that there were things one could conceive of that did not exist (Randall, 2003). Parmenides did not believe in just looking at the sense world to gain knowledge because he felt that that would be deceptive to the way things really are (Austin, 1986).

The Scholars Question to Whether There Is Two or Three Paths to Parmenides

Parmenides speaks of three paths in his poem: the way of objective truth, the unthinkable way and the way of subjective belief. These paths differ in the following ways. The way of objective truth states necessarily that all possibilities exist. This is both a consistent and coherent path. The unthinkable way states that no possibilities exist necessarily. This path is consistent, but incoherent. Existence under this system of the second path is incoherent because it is impossible for something to be possible and yet necessarily not exist. Path three holds that some things are conceivable and exist and others do not. It is path three, the way of subjective belief that Parmenides forbids. One cannot be sure of anything on this road (Randall, 2003).

The story of the three paths seems like good allegorical moral training. The concept of taking the right path and seeking the right direction for one's life is communicated here strongly. Also, it is important for us to see how Parmenides

spells this out. He says in the first path, the way of objective truth, that we will be sure of things on this path. We will know that everything that can exist, will exist. So, for this path lots of possibilities exist.

In the second path, things are completely different. In this unthinkable way, no possibilities exist. Because being does not exist, everything here is empty of meaning. It is similar to one choosing a path for one's life and finding that a certain road is a dead-end path with no choices and no opportunities. Now, the way of subjectivity holds that some things exist and some do not. But Parmenides warns against this path because it can be a deceptive one. For example, some things can exist in definition, but not in real life. Therefore many life lessons exist on the three paths of Parmenides' route.

Parmenides and Religion

Now Parmenides' religious beliefs are interesting to ponder and certainly form a good way of deciding on one's religious beliefs today. Although he was not a strong believer in religion, he deduced that the gods must somehow exist because it would be hard for people to believe in something that did not exist. "For you could not know that which does not exist (because it is impossible) nor could you express it." He enjoyed pondering the meanings of the universe and those of the doings of the gods (Stenudd, 2006). For Parmenides, mysticism and philosophy are one in that he sees inspiration from the gods as the basis for doing philosophy. James Whitehead (2006) refers to Martha Nussbaum as stating that a "philosopher was 'an initiate who has received insight into the truth from a goddess...'".

Manfred Frings (1988) quotes Parmenides as saying that it is by walking the trails of truth that a man learns all things. So often, truth is viewed as knowing something absolutely, not as a process towards learning and understanding. The ways of Parmenides are those that lead towards higher abstract thinking and learning. One is not arriving, but in an ever moving state of reaching towards knowledge and insight. The road towards the goddess is never shorter; it is always longer and fuller as we reach towards the goal of truth and study, which is learning.

Dialectic in Parmenides

Going forward with a quest for learning in Parmenides, it is important to question traditional ways of receiving Parmenides' fragments. Often, in the past, it has been seen incorrectly that his 'being' perpetuates distinctions between things of reason and things of sense. This is not correct. This is rather a method of having the reader reconcile his or her perceptions with that of what is that for Parmenides. The central issue is to find a subject which allows all adjectives to tie in nicely together (Tejera, 1997).

Another thing that can be learned from studying Parmenides' Fragments is dialectic (Ortega Y Gasset, 1980). According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, dialectic is "a discussion and reasoning by dialogue as method of intellectual investigation." It is also "the Socratic techniques of exposing false beliefs and eliciting truth." And it is also "the Platonic investigation of eternal ideas." It seems that Parmenides having come before Plato perhaps had some influence on Plato in the area of dialectic. The fragments make statements about the external world and

elicit discussion. This is an excellent method of learning that one can gain from reading Parmenides.

This method of dialectic is an excellent means for deciding truth by exposing lies. Plato is often seen as a culminating figure after the pre-Socratics, who supposedly tried to find truth, but had very simple and poor methods of doing so. In actuality, it is probably true that Plato borrowed much of his Socratic method from Parmenides and other pre-Socratic philosophers. This method of dialectic created a forum for learning which was powerful and all inclusive. It made learning an investigation and not simply a one-way ticket in a certain direction towards “truth.”

Parmenides and His Contemporaries

Parmenides ponders the eternal questions. He discusses the nature of the moon and the sun and how the heaven came to be. It is almost possible to see Parmenides smoking a pipe and looking into the night around a campfire surrounded by several of his friends, the other pre-Socratic philosophers such as: Anaxagoras, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Empedocles, Heraclitus, Melissos, Pythagoras, Thales, Xenophanes and Zeno. It would have been interesting to hear what they would have said to each other. The method of teaching by discussion, questioning and reasoning, which has its roots in rhetoric, is also rooted in the pre-Socratics and their methods. Learning is a process of inquiry that involves not only listening, but speaking.

Oppositeness in Parmenides

Waterfield comments on an important facet of Parmenides' views that bear

repeating: it is his concept of oppositeness. It occurs towards the end of Fragment 8: “The distinguished opposites in bodily form set up signs separate from each other—here the bright flame of fire, gentle and very light, in every way the same with itself and not the same with the other. And they, off by itself, contrariwise, thick night, a solid and weighty bodily form. All this, I declare to you, is a world-order in semblance, so that no mortal judgment will outstrip you” (Austin, 1986). According to Waterfield (2000), these are opposites that appear also in Aristotle’s *Physics*. So these opposites appear in other places than the Fragments. So, it is interesting to note that Parmenides sees these opposites as yet single, unchanging and part of the whole.

Love and Parmenides

Leading from the discussion of Parmenides from metaphysics, going into a discussion of the goddesses’ creation of love, Fragment 13 states, “She devised Love first of all the gods.” Then in Fragment 14 it says, “(the moon) night shining around the earth wandering, a foreign light.” Following that, it states in Fragment 15, (the moon) night-shining around the earth wandering, a foreign light. And in fragment 15A (the earth) rooted in water. Here is a succession of earth images starting with love and ending with it being in the earth.

According to Wilbur (1979), Comforth positions the goddess as have placed love in the earth. Parmenides’ view of the cosmic is the goddess being at the center of the earth and guiding the dark non-being on one hand and love the light on the other. Supposedly, there is still some light and fire within the earth on this arrangement which stands for the goddesses desire for perfection within the earth.

Love, perhaps, is the rationale for the goddesses dividing the different sides of the womb for the two genders. The boys supposedly reside on the right and the girls on the left.

Being and Parmenides

Being for Parmenides was not a religious thing, but a concept that embodied the unity of all things (Jaeger, 1947). From Fragment 6, we get Parmenides' concept of being: "It is fitting to say and to think what-is is. "For it can be whereas nothing cannot." (Austin, 1986). In Parmenides, it is possible to see that Parmenides sees being as uncreated and unable to be corrupted. If it was able to be generated it would have to come from something and then it would cease being. To extrapolate from Parmenides' concept of being, it is interesting to note that there is much relevance now to his ideas. For example, everyone seems so rushed and hurried today that the idea of simply meditating quietly and considering the eternal being, while relating to life in this way would be scientific and peaceful.

Going further with the pondering, Scoon (1928) wonders why Parmenides allows for a way that is false (referring to it as the way of opinion, others call it the way of subjectivity?). It is interesting to question and discuss why this would be. Perhaps it is because Parmenides' system of truth is not a final destination, but a journey. He wants to allow each person on the journey to question and discover for himself or herself how things should be.

Parmenides on Argumentation and Assertion

Jyl Gentzler (1998) mentions that Parmenides uses arguments first and that there is an emphasis on assertion. This is also characteristic of the other Eleatics.

Varga asserts that the eleatics were the most important people for advancing the cause of logical argumentation. The contradiction of the two routes between “is” and “is not” are important here as Parmenides has them in Fragment 8 as follows, “...The decision in the matter lies in this: it is or it is not. For it has been decided, as it must, to leave the latter unthinkable and nameless (for the route is not a true one) and to leave the former to be or to be true.” The act of logical assertion is very important in philosophy and we have the pre-Socratics to thank for this.

Jan Swearingen (2001) refers to the speech of the goddess in Parmenides’ poem. It is quoted as follows from the end of Fragment One:

...Now you must learn everything, both the unshaking temper of persuasive Truth, and the opinions of mortals, in which there is no true trust. Still, though you will learn this as well: how things of opinion should have been in order to be acceptable (Austin, 1986).

The opinions of mortals play an important role for Parmenides. The narrator of the poem is instructed that he must learn from their ways, but realize that they are only opinions.

Learning and Parmenides

This is so true and much can be learned from this. Some things in life simply need to be learned and then often it is best to forget them, but the process is done in learning them and studying them. This is the philosophical process and the one for learning that must occur. Learning is a process that involves selecting various ideas simply for the purpose of grappling with the learning process. In this process of selecting ideas, one learns which one to like better. But the process still occurs in things that matter most.

David Park (1980) discusses the importance that intellect played in the lives of the ancients. It was probably of much more significance than that of us today. In that, developments like television and other kinds of distracting technologies had not been invented yet. It is easy to think that the ancients did not know that much compared to us, but their architecture alone shows they had the knowledge to produce things far superior to what we have today. The quiet of the uncluttered time and space led to discoveries and ponderings in a way that we are not acquainted with doing today. According to Windelband (1899), Parmenides felt strongly moved to go against the idea of space being void and so went in favor of “motion and plurality.” Later developments in physics have found this to be true.

Signposts of the Road of Parmenides

Fragment five is rather interesting because it has a very real and reflective moral to it. It is as follows: “It is all the same to me where I start off from because I’ll get back there again.” This continuous pattern makes for an interesting takeoff point for Parmenides. And thus we return full center from the end to the beginning again. To examine one’s life is the purpose for living. The point of our existence is to travel the route of knowledge that Parmenides’ puts forth for us.

Many signposts are on the road for us. Some signposts lead us towards pure knowledge and some lead towards distractions. It is up to us to find the true path of knowledge and avoid paths that lead nowhere. In studying Parmenides, “thinking and being are the same, ”: Fragment 3.

To think is to reach forward and to reach inward. Parmenides’ Fragments lead one well as a heuristic tool and function so that we can learn more from

ourselves and from others. The journey to the goddess of the poem does not stop; it is a continual journey each time one opens a book to study philosophy, literature and other subjects in this journey for enlightenment.

From Parmenides, much is gained in the dialectical quest for knowledge. To be is to be one with the universe and that is accomplished in being involved in the conversation that is life with other humans in intellectual discourse. It is time to go with Parmenides and take part in the journey that awaits. There is a goddess of Justice and sun-maidens to take one away. And the knowledge of learning awaits. The route of Parmenides is one of realizing that “being is...” The journey awaits and there is no end in sight, ever. Throughout the ages it reverberates and the stillness calls waiting to discovered whispering,...“ Being is...for being and thinking are the same. And they are and we are...one.”

CHAPTER V

HERMENEUTICAL METHOD

Hermeneutics

I like the quotation that begins the book, *Curriculum Development in the Postmodern Era* by Dr. Patrick Slattery. I agree with this quotation and wish to utilize it in what follows:

The fundamental human quest is the search for meaning and the basic human capacity for this search is experienced in the hermeneutic process, the process of interpretation of the text (whether artifact, natural world, or human action). This is the search (or research) for greater understanding that motivates and satisfies us...The act of theorizing is an act of faith, a religious act...It is an expression of the humanistic vision in life. (Slattery, 1995).

This quotation enters into the core of what I am doing with my theorizing with Parmenides. I am taking as a metaphor, his journey to the goddess for enlightenment, in his proem and poem, for the special journey each one of us and each researcher takes through knowledge together. Specifically, in education each student is taking this journey.

Postmodernism and the Pre-Socratic Philosophy of Parmenides

Going further in discussing hermeneutically the similarities between Postmodernism and the pre-Socratic philosophy, we can take a contemporary perspective on Parmenides. It is possible to apply his theories to curriculum development in the sense that Parmenides was somewhat postmodern, believing that—it is and it is not. A sense of absurdity in absolutes and hegemonies of the ruling class pervades his writing. Applying the term “post-modern” to curriculum

development creates a sort of eclecticism of possibilities. It is a movement which attempts to transcend modernity. It is eclectic in the sense that it “borrows” from a variety of time periods and styles.

The crux of post-modernism is in its power to critique modernity. It can take theories and theorists from a broad philosophic and aesthetic base to critique modernity. It allows for questioning and dialogue in the curricular process. Some confusion about postmodernism occurs when people mistakenly assume that postmodernism is mainly emotional and lacks logic. It depends on the point of view when looking at things in this way (Slattery, 1995).

A Personal View on Hermeneutics

According to Curry, Truby, Dunham & Pabst (2000) learning environments must be designed, and nothing can be left to chance. The design of the learning environment is powerful; it reflects the philosophy of the teacher. For example, the circle can be used for teaching practices. Often, using the hermeneutic circle is a way of showing equality between the teacher and the students; it creates a powerful tool of dialoguing and helping. For another example, there is a sense of power in the familiar. By repeating the same settings in a classroom setting, the students feel more comfortable.

Whether it be “show and tell,” or a five minute time for students to chat together online, the sharing aspect of school is what makes things strong. An appropriate learning environment mainly includes collaboration. In collaboration, students get together in groups and make teams together. Whether this is in person or online, this is team-building and it strengthens the learning process.

R. Horn (2000), communicates that the power to transform the educational model occurs by dialoguing. An appropriate learning environment is formed strongly by communication. Before the teacher even creates the environment, there should be give and take with other teachers and researchers.

Going further, it might even be possible, that the ideal learning environment would occur with multiple teachers and multiple classes. It might be that those tracked might be mainstreamed into a regular classroom, so that inclusion could occur.

A Historical Position on Curriculum

A discussion of postmodernism catapults us directly into a historical position on curriculum. The first perspective on history concerns the conception of history as a progressive linear timeline in which things get better and better. The second perspective works on the idea that history is constantly being made and being re-evaluated. Postmodernism challenges the traditional linear organization of history by proposing an end to meta-narratives and an idea of the linear progression of history (Slattery, 1995).

History Must Be Individual

History cannot be a collective or a unified whole, it must be individual. Autobiography allows for the varied voices of all of us to speak and to be heard. Autobiography re-interprets history by involving us in meaning-making in the same way that the hermeneutic circle does. Education must go beyond competition for awards in schools and test scores to collaboration and cooperation. There are many players in the dynamics of educational reform. The power of the postmodern

paradigm lies in the ability to co-opt many theories and theorists, applying diverse philosophies to educational reform (Slattery,1995).

Autobiography allows us to become active participants in history and participate. Ethics is centered in a concept of seeing education as a vehicle for challenging social injustices and giving new visions for the future. To the extent that we own our everyday lives and our personal experiences, we make our own history (Slattery, 2003).

Personal Ethics

Ethics must become personal, we must make it real for ourselves. What rituals define our lives, give us meaning or define us? Robert Fulghum in his book, *The Rituals of Our Lives* discusses these very things. How can we make meaning out of everyday experiences? The concept of autobiography makes our lives into mini novels and histories. It takes ethics beyond systems of rules into how life guides us into our truth. This concept of aesthetic ethics transcends the ordinary and brings to the forefront the idea of the aesthetic experience in the beauty of the ordinary. *Art as Experience* by John Dewey explores the aesthetics of the ordinary (Slattery, 2003).

Curriculum as Theological Text

The idea of the curriculum as a theological text is an interesting metaphor for curriculum development. Taking religion and spirituality out of the schools has led to a void in our minds and spirits. The whole dimension and depth of the human spirit has suffered. The suggestion has been put forth that it is possible to include theology in the curriculum in ways that could transcend traditional

methods. Many issues remain. Should there be a sacred, secular distinction? Is it possible to utilize religion for transcendence? For example, Paolo Friere has used Liberation Theology for educational change. Also, the progressive educator, John Dewey has included a spiritual side to his famous *Pedagogic Creed*. I quote: “the job of the educator is to serve as a prophet” (Slattery, 1995).

The Prophetic Vision of Education

The prophetic vision is central to the educational vision. Without the power to look into the future what hope would we have? Might we have proleptic hope? At the core of spirituality, as a force in education, is hermeneutics. Without interpretation, there is no power. The ability to participate in the hermeneutic circle is the ability to engage in meaning-making, to take back the power to define ourselves and our experiences. At the core of hermeneutics is the dedication to studying the original language, manuscript inspection, and textual criticism. The desire to learn and go further must be based in the desire to transcend the accepted interpretation and look further to the text itself (Slattery, 1995).

Semiotics in Metaphors of the Text

Signs and symbols and metaphors are the language of the text. It is not enough to look to the surface. One must look beyond. Whether one must interpret literally or figuratively is significant. Should we look deeper or just accept things as they are? It is fine to accept methodology and traditional rules to the extent necessary. But then, we must go further to develop our own meaning-making skills. The concept of eschatology as meaning, “hope for the future” is powerful in its re-interpretation of past conceptions. For so often, eschatology was

seen as a study of the end times. It has been seen in some theological genres as a study of the end of the world or end time events (Slattery, 1995).

Re-Interpretation of Parmenides

The re-interpretation of this subject is to find hope in the midst of dark days. Spirituality is alone what gives meaning in times of crisis or terrorism. This hope for the future is what hermeneutics is all about. Proleptic hope is when we see past, present and future time as the same instant. According to biblical scholars, when Jesus died on the cross, it seems to the people as if time was standing still. When we see ourselves and our lives as they truly are, we experience a proleptic hope that we can be transformed through meaning-making. The hermeneutic struggle is one of making sense of the text. It consists of re-interpreting its words so that the present, past and future coalesce and meet in one pregnant moment, unified and solidified (Slattery, 1995).

Autobiography

Autobiography is the means of reclaiming the “soul” of education. It is a process of meaning-making and reflection. It is based on “currere,” to run or running in Latin, or to run the course. It signifies the necessity for the curriculum to be active, and a verb, rather than noun. The noun denotes a static, fixed quality, while verb denotes a process rather than a product as is mentioned in *Process and Reality* by Whitehead. Autobiography permits the reflective process in education. So much of education is rushing to meet standards and quotas. Too little of the enthusiasm for learning exists such as that fostered in students with teachers from popular films such as “*Dead Poets’ Society*” (Slattery, 1995).

To run the course is to challenge oneself intellectually. To read is to ruminate and to reflect. This allows for reading a book in the joy of discovery or doing numbers for their sheer pleasure. To question is to conclude that there is more to the story than we have been told. To theozize is to meditate on meaning and to pray that we may be able to transcend. To theorize is a prayerful act (Slattery, 1995).

To run the course has many meanings. It can mean to transcend accepted interpretations. It can mean to develop what is intrinsically meaningful to ourselves. It can mean learning more about things that pique our interest. What it does not mean is to remain static, shallow, underdeveloped psychologically and spiritually (Slattery, 1995).

Theology and Aesthetics in Parmenides

Taking theology and aesthetics together, there is a need for piety and reverence in everyday. Piety is not taken in the traditional sense, but in that of creating magic and rituals out of the everyday and also the reverence that it includes. There is a beauty in faith that can transcend the gloom of the apocalyptic part of the segment of life that exists (Slattery, 1995).

By embracing the moment, we can see the beauty of the theological text and the piety that creates a powerful, eclectic sense of ethics that can liberate as well as transform us. The lifeblood of theory is the practical. What we can theorize about, we can do. There is no limit to what we can imagine, so there are no limits to what we can do. To imagine is to be prophetic. To visualize is to create (Slattery, 1995).

Proleptic Hope in Parmenides

Proleptic hope gives us the courage to treat past, present and future as the seamless unity that it truly is. The ability of autobiographical narratives to instruct and transform are boundless. It is a fresh genre—one that is full of hope and giving a historical voice to those we have not heard from before (Slattery, 1995).

To the extent that we openly acknowledge the depth of pain and suffering in our lives, we experience personal and collective renewal. Faith is not something we have in the future; it is a way of life.

Hope and the Educational Journey

It seems plausible that hope would be something internal. Yes, we can encourage each other, but hope is more a condition of realizing the power that is within each of us to make a difference in lives of others. Education should be holistic rather than segmentary. There should be no need to separate things out. We are the totality of our experiences. All of life must be allowed to be a part of one's educational life—the spiritual, emotional, physical, secular and sacred. It is all connected. Discourse should be an important part of education. Horn (2000), in his book, *Teacher Talk*, discusses how important conversations between teachers are becoming. John Dewey also believed that students should have an active role in education. They should be able to construct knowledge and actively participate in their learning.

Growth in Education

As Langston Hughes has said, “We grow deep like rivers.” The river is a metaphor of education; it is a process, rather than a product. We cannot know

what we do not experience. We cannot experience what we do not know. The river is symbolic of a spiritual journey that takes us places to which we are unaccustomed and where we often would not care to be (Slattery, 2003).

Only when we accept this journey and are willing to go where we have not gone before, can we truly be open to learning. The ability to grow as a person during the educational process is a goal of true education. Education cannot neglect the spiritual side of the student. It must minister to the whole person by facilitating the inner process of self-discovery (Dewey, 1934).

The educational journey, that is spiritual, is filled with prophetic voices. John Dewey in his pedagogic creed saw the teacher as prophet. To instruct, guide and mentor is truly a “prophetic” calling. We should handle this job with sacred awe and care. Proleptic hope is similar to the vision of hope expressed in Emily Dickinson’s poem, “Hope is the thing with feathers.” Hope gives us wings to fly and realize our dreams. Hope is not something ethereal and intangible. It is something we can count on to give us that extra lift.

The Aesthetic in Education

The aesthetic means being present in the present moment of education. We are a unified cohesive force to ourselves and the world. To be involved in art is to be involved with reflective, meaning-making. Life is a process of artistic discovery. The way we cook, decorate our offices, serve our food and teach our classes is an art form that should spell hospitality. We cannot be suffocated in an educational “malaise.” We must transcend the dullness of the mundane of everyday. Every encounter is a sacred one.

In the syncretical moment, we take from all the richness of the puzzle pieces of our lives and begin to put the parts together. Experience is what gives us the perspective to transcend. Everything is part of a context. In teaching, we often decontextualize. Too much of our education is separated from our experience. Education should be a reflective process of meaning-making. Truly, the hermeneutic circle should be in effect making us all active learners (Slattery, 1995).

Constructing Meaning in Curriculum

We construct our meaning, thinking for ourselves while questioning and dialoguing with the material as we continue the quest for knowledge. Curriculum is entering the great conversation. It is about having the courage to ask the tough questions. The answers will come, but they will take time. The process is more important than the product (Slattery, 1995).

We need to dialogue with ourselves, sometimes taking other positions and seeing things from other viewpoints. We cannot always approach curriculum from our view, we are the curriculum and our lives form the basis for the text.

Balance in Curriculum

A broad base of knowledge in philosophy and other disciplines is necessary for a balanced attitude towards curriculum. The complicated conversations are the framework for learning. Learning is an adventure and dialogue is the mode of accomplishing that. Knowledge grows with use. To learn occurs in discourse communities. Discussion and presentation refines the ideas we already possess. Knowledge is not set in stone; it is living much in the way a living language differs from a dead one. We must test our theories and interact in order to hypothesize.

Nourishment in Education

The conversation that is learning amounts to understanding that life is fluid and amorphous, not static and fixed. To allow for time maximization, there must be time set apart for our peaceful meditation. To only focus on classroom material and pedagogy takes time away from the instructor's nourishment (Slattery, 1995).

We must nurture ourselves before we can nourish others. Reading things that allow for escape time will maximize this in the end. We must interact with each other. The student's question that interrupts the lesson is a great opportunity for synthesis and cohesion. When the person, whether student or teacher, begins to say "I do not know," it is the beginning of meaning-making (Slattery, 2003).

Stimulating Curiosity in Learning

When we know that we do not know, that stimulates our curiosity rather than just elucidating "facts." We merge with the learning process. We have become the hermeneutic circle and proleptic time—past, present, and future has merged for us now. We are together with the students, active, participating and interactive. Time is now and everything that happens is part of the process. To interact intellectually is to begin a journey that is the conversation. Let us converse and begin the discovery (Slattery, 1995).

Educational Theories Regarding Parmenidean Ideas

Marsh (1995) discusses Eisner's (1979) education criticism model. This is a three-part model based on 'description,' 'interruption' and 'appraisal.' This is for the purpose of evaluating the classroom. What is the quality of the classroom interaction? Is it high quality? This lends an aesthetic value judgment to education.

Usher and Edwards (1994) refers to Derrida's 'playing with language'. This is much similar to Wittgenstein's explanation of language games. Do we take the text seriously or should we 'play with the words'? Is the concept of the curriculum set in stone or fluid? Should learning be like painting? This would make it either a process or a final categorical event. In fin de siecle narratives we are often given a flavor of the conception of an apocalyptic future or present. Can we approach these things from the traditional approach or should we transcend that?

Transcendence and Parmenides Applied Towards Education

And when we transcend where will we go? Maxine Greene (1995) states that for her, the arts are the vehicle of transcending the hopelessness of the human condition and the educational malaise. "The absence of the arts is reflected in the push for the 'measureable' and the 'reasonable' and the 'attainable'." The transcendence is where we look for inspiration. This is not the immediate or the concrete.

The fundamental human quest is the search for meaning and the basic human capacity for this search is experienced in the hermeneutic process, the process of interpretation of the text (whether artifact, natural world or human action) (Slattery, 1995).

Art and Architectural Ideas About Education From Postmodernism

Art and architecture are about building the future and building our lives. The building that is built or the art, is symbolic of the philosophy it represents. It was discussed upon the death of the famed architect Philip Johnson that his postmodern architectural masterpieces reached into heaven. Having designed the Sony Building, the AT&T Building, the Crystal Cathedral and his glass box house, his daring

creations were fascinating and energizing.

His ambition was to create the finest room in the world. His creations defied the imagination and pushed the limits of what was humanly possible to do in architecture. His worth furthermore was testimony to the enduring power of love and what it is possible to do when one can imagine oneself and others at their finest. He mentioned once when speaking of the Cathedral, Il Duomo, at Florence, Italy that when he designed buildings he wanted to give future generations something that would awe them like Chartres awed him.

The day will come when, after harnessing space, the winds, the tides and gravitation, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And on that day, for the second time in the history of the world, we shall have discovered fire (Teilhard de Chardin).

CHAPTER VI

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kingsley's *Reality and In the Dark Places of Wisdom* are seminal as are *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* and *A Young Person's Guide to Philosophy*. Stottlemeier is a fictitious character in Matthew Lipman's book (1992). *The Route of Parmenides* and *The Pre-socratic Philosophers* are also important. Finally, "Philosophy Teaches Kids to Think Before Making up Their Minds" also helps with understanding Philosophy for the beginner as does Jostein Gaarder's *Sophie's World*.

Kingsley's books chronicle the journey of Parmenides and show how his life influences our life. He makes the life of Parmenides come alive and displays his actions, thought and importance during his time period with that of civilization today.

Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery takes a departure point from where a school boy Harry starts asking philosophical questions in science class. In the science class he involves other students in his questions and gets them and the teacher involved.

As things progress, everyone can see that it is possible for children to think philosophically. In *A Young Person's Guide to Philosophy*, Matthew Lipman (1992), guides everyone through a pictorial and historical guideline for experiencing philosophy through the ages. He begins with Thales and ends up with Wittgenstein. His section on Parmenides is fairly good and fairly accurate. Even

though this book is supposed to be for children; it really has more of an adult audience.

The Route of Parmenides and *The Presocratic Philosophers* are both similar in that they are scholarly works on pre-Socratic philosophers and Parmenides. They follow traditional scholarly research based on the ancient texts. I will utilize their work as a scholarly basis for the explication of Parmenides poem and the teaching tools with his fragments.

The article, “Philosophy Teaches Kids to Think Before Making up Their Minds” and *Sophie’s World* are two forms of communication which are centered greatly on teaching kids how to think philosophically. Primarily *Sophie’s World* plunges Sophie, a high school girl into a philosophical world and has her deal with philosophical issues as they come up with life in school with her friends and her parents. All of these works form the basis for my research into Parmenides.

CHAPTER VII

PARMENIDES' FRAGMENTS AS TEACHING TOOLS

Specific Teaching Tools Application

The fragments of Parmenides (Fairbanks, 1898) had teachings regarding socialization and political uses. Parmenides remarked that he had been involved with Pythagorean society making laws. His truisms were similar to William Bennett's (1993) series on moral education, which is the foundation of ethics. I would utilize his sayings as a means to discussing ethics and philosophy with students.

Fragment One

The first fragment is made up of Parmenides' poem in the allegory about Parmenides visiting the goddess for enlightenment. I would use this as a metaphor for instruction. The moral of this fragment is that students always need to ask a friend for information or ask their teacher for help in the same manner that the ancient Greek and Romans often invoked a muse for inspiration.

Fragment Two

The second fragment of Parmenides is one based on Truth and choice is inherent in it. The point of the writing is that there is a way of Truth and one of Persuasion. One needs to be careful to make the right choices in life and discern between good and evil.

Fragment Five

The fifth fragment of Parmenides is regarding a common point of departure

for Day and Night. This is about the universe having a clock of day and night. This should lead to all of us knowing that there is time for rest and time for work that should be respected. This divides life into time for work, play and rest.

Fragment Six

The sixth fragment deals with mortal error. This fragment teaches that the gods are supreme and mortals err. This has a lot to do with the statement, to err is human, to forgive is divine. Knowing that wisdom is in groups and not resident in one person makes us all realize that we are human and fallible.

Fragment Seven

The seventh fragment deals with the advisability of taking the way of Truth over the way of Persuasion. This fragment deals with the speaking of sophists at that time, people with smooth speech who would convince people to do the wrong thing. Going further, I explain how learning environments are essential to studying philosophy.

Autobiographical Nature of Learning Environments

In my fifth grade for the first time, I had two teachers for fifth grade, one for language arts and one for science and math. This was the first time I had the experience of having two teachers. We would switch back and forth between classes and teachers. I enjoyed that year better because of being exposed to double the amount of learning with two teachers and new students.

By creating a classroom without walls and adding new groups of classes and teachers, the ability to learn increases. It is not enough to follow the neat pattern that traditional models have followed.

What if a student simply cannot understand a certain teacher or has been tracked improperly in a class and feels trapped? Expanding teachers, classrooms and assignments or even adding technology can make things more user-friendly.

Why can this be? Students who do not understand are now free to ask their classmates and their teachers questions over the internet. Since, they are not made to feel embarrassed for not knowing, more learning can take place.

Dejoy (1991) talks of an appropriate learning environment as one in which the teacher does not only direct the learning process, but participates as a co-learner; this encourages students to learn and develop the learning process to a greater breadth and depth of discovery.

It is not enough for a teacher to initiate the learning process, students should themselves be stimulated to learn and stimulate the other students to take place in hands on learning. Learning is a collaborative effort and one that requires cooperative and integrative methods.

My early memories of computer classrooms and computer-teachers were some of my favorites in education. We shared tips and tricks about computers and made friends. In fact one of my very good friends was made later in high school sharing computer work.

When Technology Fails

Incorporating computer technology into an appropriate learning environment can be wonderful, but it can also be horrible. For example, certain students sit in positions where it is difficult to see the computer presentation from their seat. Since, it is difficult to learn in this angle, sometimes they feel left out.

For teachers to utilize an appropriate learning environment, it is important to poll students during the class to see their ability to work well in such environment. It might even be necessary to change things in the classroom if they are not working.

For example, the traditional rows-based classroom where students sit in rows, might make it difficult for students, to see the computer transparency screen on the LCD projector. This can make it so that some students need to move into another seat. This seating change option would be very necessary for students to get the most out of the class. Maybe another means of attendance data would need to be construed for this.

I worked one summer, summer of 1998 at the Norwick Center for Media and Instructional Technology, at the Central University Libraries at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. The office I worked in provided technological assistance to faculty at the university. We set up computer presentations with internet and LCD projectors, VCRS, Bell and Howell Projectors and other technological mediums for the faculty.

It is my conviction, that more seminars and classes on technology need to be attended by faculty. Even though, media support can be wonderful, the options are increasing in today's world and more technology options can create better and more powerful teaching.

Languages and Literatures Go Technological

Being in the field of Philosophy and Classics, I have seen teachers chafe at new technological methods, and I feel that this would be understandable. It can be

assumed that relying on new technology would dumb down the curriculum by making students unable to spell without spell checkers and incapable of writing good term papers.

But in studying appropriate learning environments, this is not being seen as true. More and more students are learning to write better online and through the teacher's review with peer editing, their writing is growing stronger. Asynchronous learning environments are becoming more popular due to electronic writing communities.

Now with ancient languages, such as Latin and Greek, there are now online texts, previously only located abroad or in rare book collections, now available to all. E-books make the classics engaging and available everywhere. Technological tools and online linguistic explanations make it easier and easier for students to computer drill with languages.

Even publishing online has gained greater recognition and more and more print-based journals are being published online to greater audiences. The computer can enhance learning environments, but it must be a carefully managed environment to prevent educational problems such as plagiarism and inappropriate content.

Conclusion

In conclusion, an appropriate learning environment is one that the students contract how to behave and interact in their own virtual and classroom world. In all societies there must be laws. And by agreeing to certain demands, it makes students and the world of intellectual interaction much stronger and more stable.

Then, it is important to have collaboration in the classroom. Students and teachers must work together and help each other with problems in the classroom. There must be a spirit of camaraderie and scientific exploration. By allowing students some alone time to work out their problems, this can strengthen the class.

Finally, technological needs and computer-assessed time per student must be decided and calculated, especially in poorer neighborhoods. This would allow for an appropriate learning environment. Having students allowed access to computers after hours, security and time slots for using the computer will prevent chaos and allow everyone time to work together and yet alone also.

Appropriate learning environments can be improved with proper relationships and technology. It is important for students and teachers to explore boundaries and scholarship in these virtual and collaborative learning environments. There is no time like the present to explore these issues inside and outside of our classrooms.

And more and more the issue of classroom space is contracting and expanding as we take our coursework, teaching and curriculum development, outside the classroom walls by integrating it beyond where we are and where we hope to be. It is not enough to work alone in the past, we must transcend.

CHAPTER VIII

PARMENIDES AS A MUSE FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Parmenides: The Muse for Secondary School's Curriculum

Parmenides creates a framework for success in schools by getting students in touch with their inner heartbeat. Schooling and education must be passionate and engaging for students to be interested and engaged themselves. Curriculums that leave art, music and philosophy out of the curriculum are leaving out the “heart” of education. The heart of education is where students can rely on themselves to think and feel independently.

Traditionally, the Greeks “invoked the Muse” for learning and study. “The Muse,” was a goddess of the arts and the humanities in ancient Greece. I do not think it is strange to encourage students to invoke their muse in doing education their way. To invoke their muse is to encourage students to reach within and decide what thing or person inspires their learning and to write about this.

For me, my muse is George Gershwin, composer of Rhapsody in Blue. My goal as a pianist was to be able to play this Concerto arranged for piano. I found a lot of soul behind Gershwin's music and a lot of rhythm. For me, I would not have as much of a personal encouragement and intellectual drive without his music—ballads, jazz and Broadway music.

Parmenides: Charting the Path for Student Success

Parmenides as a muse for curriculum studies is a different path for each

student. Everyone takes a muse for themselves from a different source. I want to encourage each student to learn as someone who takes something different from each source.

For example, Slattery (2003), mentions Jason Polluck as a personal muse for his writing, philosophy and art. I assert that this is a useful way for each person to tap the creative energies within, to think of an artist, writer, theorist or musician who inspires them.

Often, people can then get involved with activities that motivate them to greatness. This can be something as simple as donating to a cause, collecting stamps or volunteering for something they believe in.

For me, personally, I have been interested in volunteering for literacy and I did an internship with the Literacy Volunteers of America as a literacy tutor. This sort of thing is similar to what John Dewey in *Art as experience* (1934) mentioned that people needed to be exposed to the arts at all levels, and specifically, that the arts needed to be accessible to all levels of society. Also, he felt that education should be community-oriented where people learn and then apply what they learn to society.

CHAPTER IX

EXPLICATION OF PARMENIDES' PROEM

It Is and It Is Not

According to Raven et al. (1983), Parmenides' poem including a proem, or introduction, to a hexameter poem, chronicles the journey of Parmenides to the goddess for enlightenment. Then she takes him to the underworld.

According to the proem, or introduction to the poem, Parmenides is carried by mares to the goddess for enlightenment and then to the Gates of Night and Day. It is not some ill-fate that has carried him this way. He has hopes of being enlightened by the goddess.

After his trip to the goddess, she explains that there are two paths: "it is" and "not to be." And explication of the Greek will follow. Mourelatos (1970), refers to there being some questioning discussion over how to explain and interpret the esti (it is), that is first and the mei einai (to not be, infinitive), of the route that is positive. In the past, people have construed it as meaning that the subject was held back and that one had to guess who this was contextually.

The Two Paths of Parmenides

There is a positive and negative interpretation of the subjects in the Greek. "Esti" is positive in its construction meaning, "It is!", while "Mei Einai," means, "it is not to be" (Mourelatos, 1970). So, extrapolating this we have two paths in the beginning of the poem of Parmenides. One path is "is" and other is "is not".

In our modern language of English, this is integral to setting up a logical

syllogism for a small child in which one would teach that there are two answers to a question, “Yes!” and “No!”. While this might seem overly simplistic, it is the beginning of understanding our Western way of life.

In the same way that Parmenides learns from the goddess that there is an “objective” path and a “subjective” path of understanding, we must also learn the same thing. Going further, scholars have also posited a possible third path of “nothingness.” Yet, this still cannot be confirmed and seems remarkably similar to that of the “subjective path.”

Understanding the quest of Parmenides is powerful for understanding who we are as people and where we are going. To go on the wrong path can get someone confused. And in Parmenides’ case, his goal or “carrot” of achievement occurs by following the goddess’s instructions and learning from her.

To put this contemporarily, understanding must take us somewhere. It is not enough to imbibe knowledge senselessly like drink, we must have a destination and follow it to be successful. This is important in the case of Parmenides and in our case.

Going further, we must think of these two paths, the “objective path” and the “subjective path.” This is similar to the goddess drawing up a map for Parmenides signaling where the hidden treasure is. Rather than letting him wander aimlessly, he is being taken to the spot of his quest (Mourelatos, 1970).

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

Self-Directed Learning

Parmenides played a powerful role in teaching students to teach themselves. So much of education is focused on the teacher and on what he or she knows, or has been trained to know. The power, though, is not at what the teacher knows, but what the student can learn for themselves.

Students in schools are often trained to rely on what the teacher can give them, rather than to learn things themselves. There can be training from the teacher, but the students need to learn to think for themselves rather than just parroting back to the teacher what he or she says.

Independent thought produces architectural wonders, computer science, new inventions and an ability to lead in civil society. If we want our students to be leaders in a free society, we need to train them to think like leaders.

For me, grappling with the Fragments, led me to question, my beliefs, my values and my ambitions. I enjoyed the quest and the challenge of which looking at the past gave me a vista. Yet, looking at the Fragments is not only a voyage into the past, but a glimpse of the future.

For one, my example of using fragments as teaching tools is only the beginning of what can be done to incorporate old ideas into new ones. For example the Traditional Canon of English Literature can be utilized in classrooms. This is often still done in classrooms. For example, teachers often teach Chaucer,

Shakespeare and Beowulf and sometimes involve students in reading the traditional texts in the traditional languages.

Applying Parmenides to Learning in Schools

For one, reading Parmenides in the original Greek would be different and and too inaccessible for students, since it is radically different to understand for English speakers. But the concept of bringing older works into the educative and teaching environments is the same.

I assert that looking into the past has relevance for students because we all are the sum total of what we have experienced. For example, I feel that somehow all that Parmenides did and experienced is in me for having read of his adventures.

It would be impossible for me, at my level to completely understand all that a Parmenides scholar understands, when he or she reads Parmenides in the original. Yet, I assert that is not the object of our study. My assertion is that the process of struggling with a text and seeing it as a metaphor is more powerful than having the orthodox, correct interpretation developed.

Postmodernism and Parmenides

For this reason, I co-opt postmodernism as a theory I wish to pose the study of Parmenides in this piece. If it is possible for something to be two things at once, then it can go against the accepted interpretation and define itself anew. I do not suggest in any way, that students at the lower levels must struggle with Parmenides' Fragments in the original Greek, but I think there is a way, to utilize these fragments as a metaphor for being on quest for knowledge with our personal life and work. My hope is that whatever the students find by looking at Parmenides,

they will see themselves better, their culture better and allow themselves to find their life work better.

My purpose in introducing Parmenides is that not only is his work a forgotten treasure trove of the philosophical, magical and mystical—it is also a means of incorporating education of faith and philosophy in a non-sectarian manner that will allow people of different faiths the opportunity to come together and dialogue rather than fight. For me, studying Parmenides was a quest of faith, learning and discovery. I am hoping that others can read his work and come together along lines that for too long have been divisive and miserable, rather than awe inspiring and clever.

Yet, teachers who challenge the status quo by teaching inquiry and meditation, can expect that there will be those who challenge their ideas and interests inside and outside of the classroom. I cannot guarantee that it will be, but it is my sincere hope that discussion rather than antagonism can take place and I sincerely assert that taking the position of Parmenides is the answer. His assertion is that “it is” and “it is not” regarding serious philosophical questions and philosophy of religion. In the global village and post 911 setting that we all find ourselves in, this is not only necessary, but critical.

Being Open to New Teaching Approaches

Rather than me teaching a student that Parmenides is “thus and so,” I might learn something from being open to a new approach. To involve students in scholarship and analysis is the answer to problem we both posed in this first place. Learning so often becomes rote and not about putting down the roots that students

need to grow. As Dewey has mentioned, education should be about growth, not skill levels and attainments. Sometimes students just need time to marinate in something and get comfortable with something new.

Traditional tests and skill levels have their place, but the arts, music and philosophy play the role of the Muse in education. The power of awakening the soul cannot be forgotten in education. Students often become complacent, passive learners where they should be active and interactive with knowledge bases.

Rather than scrap traditional teaching, I am asserting that it is important to try creative methods with those that have already been time tested, to enrich learning. It is not enough to passively teach students, who will learn to passively learn. Teachers should interact with their subject material profoundly enough that students will see the interactive component and interact also.

The Power of the Evocative

The power of studying Parmenides is in realizing that anything: a text, a poem or a song, can be evocative of an educational journey or destination. The inspirational component to education is something that cannot be left out of the equation. Students are watching the teacher to see if she or he notices the effort that is being put forth.

If the student is working hard and the teacher does not notice or reward the student for good work and good behavior, there is not an incentive for the student to continue learning. So often, education is focused on negativity such as, maintaining orderly conduct or keeping the class organized. There is good argument and research to support this.

Yet, the component of encouragement and mentoring is a powerful force in education that cannot be ignored. So often, I will hear someone tell me that they had a teacher who believed that they could do anything or that, on the other hand, they had a teacher who explicitly told them they would be a failure.

This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Dewey speaks of the teacher as a prophetic figure and I am inclined to agree with him. The teacher calls forth the power out of the child or pupil to attain their power and success. I do not believe otherwise.

Students do not go beyond the expectation of the teacher. For this reason, there should not be any limits to the expectation of teachers.

Where We Are Now in Educational History

Fragments of Parmenides are powerful because they bring out the power of the written word. We are at a point now in educational history when our view of the past seems myopic. We can barely remember what we did yesterday and often last week. How would we ever remember what happened in 510 B.C.E.? The birth of a philosopher who was barely known, yet pivotal in Western philosophy is something none of us languish over. With the advent of the internet, television sports and an explosion of entertainment; the solitary life of inquiry, meditation and self-reflection is similar to becoming engrossed in the air we breathe. It is ubiquitous, limitless, and yet presumed worthless.

For so many of the students and even teachers in school, reading pre-Socratic philosophy seems so far from our culture, distant and possibly even irrelevant. The case must be made for why Parmenides' proem and also some of

his fragments should be read. So much of this depends on the rationale that Parmenides' writing forms the framework of our Western culture (Kingsley, 2003). So many students graduate from high school and college with no knowledge of classical education in the United States.

The Democratic Vision of Studying Classics Among All Classes of People

It seems as if classical education forms the basis of a wealthy preparatory school education for only the elite. The best case for incorporating the study of Parmenides' into a values, ethics and philosophy curriculum for the public school would be that our rich cultural heritage as Westerners needs to be experienced by all groups of people in our society, not just the culturally prominent. One of the main purposes of this research project and proposal is to make the writings of Parmenides', especially his poem, and his prose poem "On Nature," accessible to those who in the past were not given access to it.

Since Parmenides pre-dated Socrates, Aristotle, Pythagoras and others, his work has not received the credit due to him and other pre-Socratics, such as Empedocles, Heraclitus, Orpheus and Pythagoras. Much of the learning of the Western world owes itself to Parmenides and the other pre-Socratics (Kingsley, 1999). Parmenides is also the father of logic, and lays the foundation for philosophy and science in Western civilization (Kingsley, 2003).

Parmenides' ideas have many applications that are significant for learning and the improvement of society at-large (The Parmenides Foundation, 2000). This interdisciplinary group of scholars and researchers was founded in the year 2000 in Elea, Italy, the birthplace of Parmenides. They have named the Foundation for

Parmenides and they are honoring him in their quest for higher thought and utilizing his principles to seek a higher good for society and education. They have developed a curriculum for such purposes.

Parmenides Scholars are able to make application to study with this foundation in Italy. In Parmenides' proem, there is a discussion concerning how he goes on a quest to meet the sun goddess for enlightenment. The metaphor can be turned into one of philosophical inquiry for everyone. This can form a basis for students in school for learning about philosophy and ethics from this perspective.

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