Adluri, Vishwa. *Parmenides, Plato, and Mortal Philosophy: Return from Transcendence*. Continuum studies in ancient philosophy. London; New York: Continuum, 2011. xv, 212 p. \$120.00. ISBN 9780826457530.

Adluri's book is a radical and provocative reading of Parmenides and Plato. Adluri focuses on the philosophical journey as a common theme in Parmenides' *On Nature* and Plato's *Phaedrus*. The philosopher's journey is not a metaphor; it is an ontological condition that maps the trajectory nature of mortal individuality. The journey is "a mode of being in phusis and thus a primary mode for philosophy as well" (p. 7). Parmenides' *kouros* and Plato's Socrates in *Phaedrus* signify the return of the mortal singular; it is a return from transcendent immortality and *logos*, to painful mortality and *thumos* within the tragic awareness of the fragility and temporality of being.

Adluri's book is divided in three sections. After an introductory chapter on the aims and an outline of his work, the study moves from the question of time and mortal individuality (chapter 1) and Parmenides' philosophical importance (chapter 2) in Section I, to a detailed evaluation of Parmenides' philosophy of being which corresponds to the three parts of his poem (chapter 3-5) in Section II. Finally, an analysis of Plato's *Phaedrus* and the mortal image of Socrates in comparison to Parmenides and the journey of the *kouros* (chapter 6) constitutes the discussion of Section III.

In chapter 1, Adluri perceives mortal individuality through the prism of time. The analysis does not engage in a philosophy of time in metaphysical terms, but in the question of time in ontological terms; the *aporia* of time should be found not in abstract reasoning but at the crossroads between mortality and immortality. In this light, Adluri challenges the common view of a 'static being' in both Parmenides and Plato; both ancient thinkers engage us in the question of time and its subject matter: the mortal individual. Through an overview of *thumos* and the mortal soul from Homer to Plato, Adluri conceives the journey of the *kouros* in Parmenides as a return from transcendence to our real existence within time.

Having established the significance of the *aporia* of time, chapter 2 focuses on the importance of Parmenides as a Pre-Platonic pioneer. Adluri brings into the discussion such modern thinkers as Nietzsche and Heidegger and the contemporary revival of Presocratic thought as well as recent interpretations in Presocratic scholarship. This short chapter clarifies Adluri's reading of Parmenides and it could be regarded as an introduction to Section II and the detailed analysis of Parmenides' poem.

Parmenides' poem *On Nature* is divided into three parts: (1) the Proem; (2) the Way of Truth (*alētheia*); and (3) the Way of Opinion (*doxa*). Adluri follows

the three parts of Parmenides' poem in chapters 3 to 5. Chapter 3 emphasizes the importance of the mortal journey in the Proem. The journey is not a metaphor but a unifying theme with philosophical importance in Parmenides' poem and particularly the *thumos* and the self. The journey of the young *kouros* not only bridges mortality and immortality but also manifests the fate and limits of the mortal soul. Adluri also offers an interesting discussion between *phusis* and *techne* in the Proem: whereas *phusis* distances mortals and immortals, *techne* in the form of magic and rituals as *logoi*, bridges the boundary between mortals and the gods.

Chapter 4 focuses on Parmenides' Way of Truth. Adluri offers an insightful account of the realm and identity of the goddess as well as the purpose of her double speech. The poem portrays the realm of the goddess as one of *logos*. The journey is a 'round-trip', a double *logos* from *doxa* to *alētheia*, from mortality to immortality, and vice versa. As the author Adluri concludes, "the proof of the superiority of what-is over what-is-not is to be found in the exclusion of *phusis* from *logos*" (p. 77). The atemporality of 'now' (*nun*) eliminates the *aporia* of time in the eternity of *logos*. Whereas thinking and being are symmetrically identified in the metaphysics of *logos*, they are asymmetrically expressed in the mortal existence of *thumos*.

Chapter 5 deals with Parmenides' account on mortal *doxa*. Adluri's account directs us to rethink mortal *doxa* not as an apotheosis of the immortality of being but as a necessary return from *logos* and as transcendence to the dynamics of *phusis* and *thumos*. Adluri maintains that "Parmenides 'pours' into the journey the sum of his wisdom, his poetry, and his acute mind, and rises, incarnate, into the sky to shine with the goddess and partake of immortal being" (p. 88).

Section III includes chapter 6 and engages us in a comparative philosophical reinterpretation of Plato's *Phaedrus* in the light of Parmenides' ontology of mortality. Adluri conceives Plato as 'Post-Parmenidean' and successfully brings an analogy of the journey of Parmenides' *kouros* with the image of the charioteer found in Plato's *Phaedrus* in the myth of the soul. However, as Adluri suggests, Parmenides and Plato share not the common held view of immortal being but a deeper philosophical connection of the mortal journey.

The book's concluding chapter is more than a summary of the arguments presented in the previous chapters. It continues the dialogue between Parmenides and Plato, but this time in relation to Heidegger's philosophy of being. Adluri proposes to rethink Parmenides' being not through Heidegger and the end of metaphysics but through Plato and the question of mortality. The poem of Parmenides "links metaphysics to the liminal experience of the *thumos*, that is, death" (p. 130). Philosophy as an experience is a journey between life and death and as such it should be evaluated.

Finally, the book also includes an appendix with a new, complete translation of the surviving fragments of Parmenides with some textual notes. A bibliography and a general index are also included.

Overall, Adluri's book is a balanced and insightful study, which engages the reader in a philosophical dialogue both with ancient thought and contemporary inquiries on being. The book uses both primary and secondary sources in a scholarly manner. Nevertheless, it goes beyond the systematic analysis of modern scholarship; it offers a provocative reevaluation of ancient ontology with philosophical rigor and honesty. Adluri challenges the common held monistic interpretations of an unmoved and timeless being in Parmenides and Plato. The book brings to light an existential reading of the Platonic and pre-Platonic ontology, and reveals the tragic fragility of our temporary existence and the necessity to return from the transcendence of *logos* to the mortality of *thumos*.

Giannis Stamatellos
University of Copenhagen
Center for Neoplatonic Virtue Ethics
giannis@hum.ku.dk