

HOW MANY *DOXAI* ARE THERE IN PARMENIDES?

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I

In research generally, but also in matters of philosophical interpretation, progress is made by a *λύσις τῆς ἀπορίας*: the resolution of an aporia. What is the aporia in the case of *Doxa* in the poem of Parmenides? What is the contested issue there? In my view, this aporia arises from an insight into the tension created by two irreconcilable positions and attitudes adopted by the goddess. On the one hand, we have the programmatic announcement stated in B 10:

You shall know the generation of aether and all aetherial
signs and the destructive works of the splendid sun's
pure torch, and whence they came to be.

And you shall learn the wandering works of the round-faced moon
and her generation, and you shall also know the surrounding heaven,
whence it was born and how necessity led and fettered it
to hold the limits of the stars.

Cosmogony and cosmology, the generation and the current state of the cosmos are the two distinct themes addressed here in the divine narrative.¹ In a similar fashion, B 11 promises to describe

how earth and sun and moon
and the common aether and the heavenly milky way and Olympus
the outermost and the hot power of the stars strove eagerly
to come to be.

On the other hand, at the beginning of the *Doxa* section, the goddess calls her own speech 'deceitful' (B 8.52). As I see it, precisely this word, *ἀπατηλός*,

¹ On the meaning of *φύσις* as 'generation' as well as on the 'rigorously drawn parallelism' of cosmogony as 'generation' and cosmology as current 'works,' see Heinemann (1945), 90-91. According to Bicknell (1968, 631), fragment B 10 should immediately follow the Proem.

represents the great scandal of the poem. We need to comprehend this scandal, and, if possible, remove it. At first glance, the word 'deceitful' cannot be reconciled with the status of the goddess of truth, nor with the learning she promises (μάνθανε, B 8.52). Above all, this word does not fit at all with the 'apodictic'² tone of the programmatic announcements in B 10 and 11, which are then just as apodictically resolved in the goddess' detailed presentation. The real scandal will not be seen, however, if attention is paid only to the derisive ἀπατηλός while ignoring the following, extensive narrative of the goddess. One might then be led to discount *Doxa* as utterly 'false',³ and present an engaging interpretation of the entire poem by adopting and dogmatically applying the comfortable dichotomy 'true *Aletheia* vs. false *Doxa*'.⁴

The paucity of surviving fragments of the *Doxa* section certainly reinforces the tendency to overlook its importance. But how did it happen that, at least according to Diels (1897, 25-26), about 9/10ths of the material on *Aletheia* has survived, but only about 1/10th of the material on *Doxa*? I would recommend viewing the scant attention paid to *Doxa* as a *case of helplessness* without any parallel in the history of philosophy. From Plato to Heidegger (or if one prefers, to Guthrie), the history of philosophy has consistently been confronted with the above-mentioned duality of *Doxa* and has not known how to deal with it. The loss of so much material on *Doxa* has less to do with its lack of philosophical content than with the tradition's intuitive strategy of resolving the aporia by eliminating that duality. After the detailed passages of Parmenides' cosmogony and cosmology had been lost, *Doxa* could be restricted to a region of 'lies and deception'⁵ and then completely dismissed as philosophically uninteresting.

This massive attempt at marginalization has not, however, erased every trace of *Doxa*'s complexity. Fragments of the cosmogony (B 12-15, 17 and 18), and, above all, the quoted programmatic announcements in B 10 and B 11 are still the 'thorns in the flesh' of every attempt at leveling the meaning of *Doxa*. But also in the longest of the surviving fragments (B 8), eight verses after the word ἀπατηλός, the goddess announces that she will present to her adept the entire structure of the world as an εἰκῶς διάκοσμος (B 8.60). We should understand the participle εἰκῶς here not in the sense of the later combative practice of the sophists (their

² Reinhardt (1916), 25; Schwabl also stresses that what we encounter in *Doxa* is an 'almost dogmatic doctrine' (1968, 400).

³ As did, among many others, Jaap Mansfeld (1964), 122.

⁴ As most recently D. Sedley did (1999, 123): 'If the Way of truth is true, cosmology must be false.'

⁵ 'Lug und Trug': Reinhardt (1916), 6.

‘probable speeches’ – ἐοικόταες λόγοι), but rather in terms of the only two possible meanings available in Parmenides’ time: the word means ‘appearing’ and likewise ‘appropriate’ or ‘fitting.’⁶ The divine presentation is not convincing because of its rhetorical skillfulness, but acquires a binding character and is ‘fitting’ inasmuch as it does justice to the actually ‘appearing’ world structure.

We are not in a position to revoke retroactively the traditional oversight and to remedy the substantial loss of essential passages from Parmenides’ cosmogony and cosmology. But we can and must set the record straight: the fact, the *factum brutum* that *there really were* such passages, should not remain ignored. A ‘correction’ of this oversight does not take its bearings by the criterion of historical fidelity; we do not ‘correct’ the oversight because it discredits just a part of Parmenides’ philosophy, but because it distorts what is the heart of that philosophy: Parmenidean *Aletheia*.

II

The assertion of *Doxa*’s thoroughgoing falsity rests exclusively on the word ἀπατηλός. If the quite authoritative and ‘apodictic’ tone of the cosmogony and cosmology is contrasted with this word, the scandalous state of affairs arises: on the one hand deceptive words, on the other hand the proper and unsurpassable presentation of the world. Every serious attempt at interpreting Parmenides’ *Doxa* must first of all deal with this tension, and, using it as a basis, determine how the problem is to be posed. Of all previous interpreters, it was Uvo Hölscher who most directly confronted this problem. But when his interpretation finally defines *Doxa* as a ‘gray area’ between the illusory and the appropriate, between explication and deception, or even as a ‘half truth’ (Hölscher 1986, 103), he ultimately capitulates, in my view, to the hermeneutical difficulties that arise in attempting an all-inclusive account of *Doxa*’s status. Despite Hölscher’s work, the above-mentioned tension remains in an unmitigated form for interpreters.⁷ This is also the case for

⁶ The translation of the word with ‘probable,’ which lies at the basis of the older hypothetical interpretations, can be reconciled only with difficulty to the subsequent explanation of the divine intent: ‘so that no mortal view may ever surpass you’ (B 8.61). For in contrast to such unsurpassability, a merely ‘probable’ presentation implies a hierarchy of probability and could therefore in principle be superseded by an ‘even more probable’ account.

⁷ Sensitivity to the ‘puzzles’ posed by the *Doxa* section has recently been shown also by Curd (1998), 100-104. For his part, and with a refreshing straightforwardness, A. Hermann has reminded us that ‘if we dismiss *Doxa* as a fraud, there is nothing to stop us from invalidating it entirely, meaning we will have to equate it to that

the aporia we mentioned at the outset: does the *Doxa* contain a valid depiction of the world order, or does it rather offer – to quote Reinhardt again – ‘lies and deception’? My own suggestion is that the *Doxa* section contains *both*.

Now as far as the reference to ‘lies and deception’ is concerned, it should be understood in terms of Reinhardt’s own explication (1916, 25-26): ‘The falsity lies not in *what* she [the goddess] teaches, but rather in that *about which* she teaches; she brings truth about a delusion, she shows how it has arisen and why it had to arise.’ As follows, ‘false’ for Reinhardt is not the *Doxa* itself but rather its *initial* object: the erroneous ‘opinions of mortals, in which there is no true conviction.’ This programmatic announcement from B 1.30 is taken up again in 8.51: the adept must ‘learn mortal opinions’ by listening to the ‘deceitful ordering’ (κόσμον ἀπατηλόν, 8.52) of the divine words. This comprehension is characterized by a peculiar negativity: it is not an insight into the features of the world, but instead into a false epistemological stance. Clearly, not only ontology (in the *Aletheia* section) begins with Parmenides, but also epistemology as critique of knowledge (in the *Doxa* section).

Here as everywhere, however, the negativity of critique is philosophically productive only because it ultimately yields a positive result. The goddess’ rhetorically overstated description of her own words as ‘deceitful’ turns into the opposite; the very announcement of deception functions as a warning and performatively undermines error. Furthermore, since the divine speech has human deception as its object, since it reveals this deception and explains it, her speech simultaneously makes way for the second great theme in the *Doxa* section. Here it is no longer a matter of this or that world-view, but of the world itself: the goddess presents a cosmogony and cosmology in the traditional sense.

This duality, however, the conjunction (in Kantian terms) of ‘critique’ and ‘doctrine,’ means not only that *Doxa* cannot be false, but also that ‘the’ *Doxa* does not even exist – except in an exclusively extensional sense, which denotes the section of the poem beginning with B 8.50.⁸ This section treats of δοκεῖν: of a human ‘acceptance,’ ‘assumption’ or ‘consideration’⁹ that remains oriented to what is given in phenomena. This mode of human ‘accepting’ of phenomena, however,

which is not, or to nonexistence. [...] no scholar who supports this view has been able to explain why the account of Mortal Opinion is included in the Poem if it is so hopelessly deceptive’ (2004) 169, 173.

⁸ I will speak of *Doxa* in this sense only, denoting nothing but the *Doxa*-part of the poem.

⁹ Cf. Mourelatos’ excellent analysis of the ‘positive (though defeasible) sense’ of the so-called δοκ- words (1970), 194-202.

is refracted into a number of perspectives, each of which contains different possibilities of analysis and appraisal. In other words, the phrases ‘deceitful words’ and ‘world-arrangement’ (διάκοσμος) denote two different levels and aims of *Doxa*; it is important that these levels and aims not be conflated.

Now this duality is a duality only if each part is distinct from the other. If the *Doxa* pursues two (or more precisely, *at least* two) separate goals, we should correspondingly expect that these goals be separated clearly in the text. But there is no denying the point: the text does not draw any clear division. Three reasons might be offered for this lack:

- a. A clear divide was not handed down to us because it was contained in the lost *Doxa* section;
- b. Parmenides refused to draw the divide clearly;
- c. this divide never existed, for *Doxa* does not pursue two different aims.

The last reason would render the interpretation given here completely superfluous. I believe, however, that certain relevant details can be interpreted to support the assumption of a divide; the different goals of the *Doxa* would then indeed have to be investigated and made transparent.¹⁰

The first indication is this: the divine words’ ‘deceitful ordering’ is described without exception in the third person plural (B 8.53-59):

- [1] For they made up their minds to establish two forms for naming
 τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεῶν ἔστιν – wherein they have gone astray!
 And they distinguished contrariwise according to the appearance and
 established signs
 apart from one another: Here the aetherial fire of flame,
 gentle and very light, everywhere the same with itself
 but not with the other; and then again that other by itself,
 the opposite, obscure night – a dense and heavy appearance.

What immediately follows is then a change to the first person singular (B 8.60f.):

- [2a] All this appearing world-arrangement I declare to you appropriately,
 so that no mortal view may ever outstrip you.

The change of person is not trivial; rather, the personal pronoun ‘I’ (which is otherwise linguistically unnecessary) underscores significantly the character of

¹⁰ In view of the fact that only few fragments of *Doxa* have survived, a decision between (a) and (b) would seem impossible; and at any rate, no such decision is required for our interpretation.

revelation adhering to what follows. This formal change of perspective is then also mirrored in the content. The two ‘forms’ of light and night appear in [1] divided and isolated from one another, and this is highlighted several times. Expressions like ‘contrariwise’ (ἀντία), ‘apart from one another’ (χωρὶς ἀπ’ ἀλλήλων) and ‘opposite’ (τάντία) are given added weight by their position at the beginning of the verse, and in part they stem from the military domain.¹¹ The forms of light and night are unambiguously divided and strictly separated in human ‘suppositions’ (κατέθεντο); they mutually exclude and are at odds with each other.

To the contrary, the passage (B 9) following the announcement of the ‘appropriate world-arrangement’ is delivered in a completely different spirit:

[2b] Now since everything has been named light and night
 And what corresponds to their powers has been attributed to each thing,
 everything is full at the same time of light and invisible night
 – both equal, since Nothing partakes in neither.¹²

This fragment, though difficult, removes any doubt: both forms equally cooperate with one another and determine together the world order. This interweaving of the two forms was already implicit in the notion of διάκοσμος: this ‘through each another’ implied in δια- is an emergence of the concept of ‘mixture,’ which Parmenides was the first to develop, and which thoroughly determines the domain of ‘appropriate’ *Doxa*. We will soon see this more clearly.

With regard to the scandal mentioned at the outset, one thing might have become clear: the decisive restriction of the range and validity of the word ‘deceitful’ to the domain of the suppositions of mortals (as presented in B 8.53-59) not only frees the goddess once and for all from the reproach of deception and prevarication. At the same time, this limitation places ἀπατηλός in close proximity to the exclamation expressed two lines later (‘here they have gone astray’) and opens up a new perspective for our understanding of the subordinate relative clause τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεῶν ἐστίν. The grammar of this statement, which describes the relation of the two forms, has provoked a lasting controversy, and its meaning still remains obscure; moreover, we cannot even say whether the statement expresses a position of the goddess, or whether it belongs to the criticized system of human suppositions.¹³

¹¹ See Mourelatos (1970), 230-231.

¹² I translate μῆ/οὐκ ἐόν as ‘Non-Being’ and μηδέν as ‘Nothing’; both expressions have to be regarded as synonymous.

¹³ For an overview of the most prominent earlier interpretations, see: Tarán (1965), 217-221.

One is better advised, I think, to read the subordinate clause in 54a as a pointed (yet, regrettably, brusquely formulated) articulation of the mistake in deceptive human suppositions. Mortals posited *two*, but they posited them *separately* – and just this separation is their error. However, I meanwhile hold my earlier grammatical view of the clause¹⁴ to be a linguistically untenable over-interpretation, and instead now adopt what is probably the simplest reading:

‘a unity of which is not [deemed] necessary [to name].’

I also hold my earlier criticism of Schwabl to have been partly inaccurate, and I meanwhile find the translation offered by him quite appropriate: ‘of which a One (i.e. *one unified form* that encompasses both) is not necessary [to be named]’ (1968, 395). Schwabl was completely correct in his insight that the mistake of mortals lies in their inability to grasp and articulate the unity of light and night. But whereas Schwabl sees the unity that corrects that error in Being as a ‘unity of opposites’ of light and night, I would rather point at a unity within the divine *διάκοσμος* as the system of mixture of both forms.¹⁵ The ‘one’ or ‘unified’ form mortals cannot grasp is nothing other than the mixture of the *διάκοσμος*.

Human suppositions treat both forms in complete separation, with the result that the forms’ ‘unity is not necessary.’ The error consists in the irreconcilability and mutual exclusion of light and night.¹⁶ The possibility of composition,

¹⁴ See Thanassas (1997), 166-167: ‘of which the one should not be.’ With this revision, I take into account the critical considerations presented by Rechenauer (2001), 228-229.

¹⁵ As an anonymous reader observed, the error of mortals is an error by omission, which *can* be remedied; this will indeed be the case in the appropriate *Doxa*. The fact that mortals cannot grasp the unity of *διάκοσμος* does not mean that they do not have a sense for unity whatsoever; but as we will see below, this unity remains in their world-view always ‘contaminated’ with Non-Being. Schwabl was undoubtedly correct in his analysis that Being plays a role in *Doxa*. Further on I will try to show that the divine cosmology functions as guarantee for ascertaining Being and eliminating Non-Being in the world. But this cosmological epiphany of Being does not appear in *Doxa* directly in ontological terms (as Schwabl seems to suggest), but is only indirectly present there. Within the perspective of *Doxa*, the mortals’ mistake lies in having overlooked not Being *eo ipso*, but rather the *διάκοσμος* in the sense of mixture. The goddess does not appeal here to the unity of Being, but to that of the *διάκοσμος*; if the reverse were the case, then the rest of *Doxa*, including the appropriate cosmology, would be completely redundant.

¹⁶ Gallop (1984, 10 ff.) gives a similar reading, although he thinks it impossible to avoid the error and ultimately declares the entire cosmology from B 8.60 onwards as ‘false’ (21). Curd (1998, 104-110) also views ‘enantiomorphism’ as the

viewed as the $\mu\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\xi\iota\varsigma$ of both forms, eludes mortal beings. Lines B 8.53-59 thus help to understand ($\mu\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\alpha\nu\epsilon$) human opinions to the extent that these lines both present this primary supposition, and they criticize as 'erroneous' the mutual opposition of the two forms. By contrast, the appropriate divine *Doxa* introduced after B 8.60 demonstrates that each form requires the other, hence forming a relationship of complementarity and eliminating the error.¹⁷

III

The 'decision' to name both forms is not, as was once claimed, testimony of an 'original freedom' of the 'human spirit' that 'constitutes itself in freedom.'¹⁸ It suggests neither a premeditated action nor a (pre-) historical event, but rather an irreducible and essential trait, a given of human beings as such.¹⁹ The human 'decision' to name both forms has no historically specific place and time;²⁰ it highlights the 'posited' character of the criticized system, showing it to be a human construct, and thereby limiting its claim to validity. In B 8.52,

fundamental problem of *Doxa*, recognizing the dangers and inadequacies of this enantiomorphism: 'It is not plurality itself but opposition that is at the root of the problem.' (110) Curd concludes: 'If only Light and Night were genuine entities rather than interdefined opposites, Parmenides' cosmology would give an account of the world as experienced [...] that would pass tests based on the fundamental *krisis*, 'is or is not' (116). It is exactly what Curd presents here as impossible in the *modus Irrealis* that I hold to be an adequate description of the appropriate *Doxa*; this *Doxa* is indeed compatible with the truth of Being and able to pass all 'tests' for precisely the reasons Curd mentions.

¹⁷ Hölscher (1968, 107), on the other hand, thinks that the complementarity already appears in verse 54a – but then what would be the error? And is it indeed tenable to assert on the basis of 8.53-59 that both forms 'require one another,' although the passage only speaks of separation and mutual exclusion? Yet it does seem to me that Hölscher comes very close to a distinction of the different intentions formulated in the passages [1] and [2]. Earlier, Schwabl had also largely distinguished between 'erroneous opinions of mortals' and the 'presentation of a cosmology by the goddess herself' (1968, 399), but he did not pursue further this crucial distinction. Other interpretations that bear signs of such a distinction have recently been offered by Graham (1999, 168-9) and Leshner (1999, 240: 'a credible cosmology purged of the errors that have infected all previous mortal thinking, one fully consistent with the conception of 'what is' set out in fragments B2 to B8').

¹⁸ See Mansfeld (1964), 215-216.

¹⁹ Held (1980), 549 ff., holds a similar view.

²⁰ See Hölscher (1968), 112.

the goddess does not offer a passive account, but demands understanding and learning (μάνθανε) as an interpretation and *translation of a generally held world-view into Parmenidean categories*.²¹

But if we are confronted with a Parmenidean model for presenting and comprehending human ‘suppositions,’ then which are the ‘suppositions’ that are here presented, discussed, comprehended and criticized? And why are exactly light and night declared to be the pillars of this system? This opposition, of great importance both for traditional Greek poetry and for the ordinary world-view,²² becomes central for Parmenides presumably because human knowledge in the sense of δοκεῖν rests on sensation and especially on seeing.²³ Light and night are introduced precisely as conditions for seeing, and more generally as conditions of any perceptual knowledge. They exclude each other mutually because all things either present themselves in the light as something present, or they elude (sense-) knowledge in the night.

In this quasi transcendental function, and in the ‘division’ taking place ‘according to the appearance’ (δέμας), the two forms are not of equal value or of equal function. *Light here is a positive condition of knowledge, while night inhibits knowledge as a negative condition*. This interpretation can be confirmed through a detailed presentation of the forms and their ‘signs.’ In contrast to the

²¹ It is not impossible that this model of Parmenidean understanding of the deceptive *Doxa* was influenced by the Pythagorean mode of thinking in opposites. ‘Light’ and ‘darkness,’ for instance, are also included in the famous ‘table of opposites’ (see *Met.* 986^a20 ff.); this is doubtless a post-Parmenidean construct, but it brings into systematic order ideas that predate it. This influence should not, however, rehabilitate the doxographic-eristic interpretation of *Doxa*, nor should it seduce us into an understanding of Parmenides as a ‘dissident Pythagorean’ (as Cornford suggested in 1939, 28; so also Raven 1948, 21, 176 and *passim*, and more recently Coxon, 1986, 12-13, 19). Nor should this influence lead to a schematic view, devoid of evidence, of the entire epoch of early Greek history of philosophy as a continual battle between so-called Eleatics and Pythagoreans. The opposition of the two forms presumably is not connected in particular to Pythagoreanism, but more generally to the mode of thinking in oppositions that remains fundamental in early Greek world-view. This world-view is translated by the goddess into the scheme of the two forms, while the signs make possible a poetic and mythological presentation of the dualism. The traditionally polar opposition is ultimately transformed and surpassed by Parmenides by means of his concept of ‘mixture.’

²² See Bultmann (1948).

²³ The ancient Greek terms for ‘knowing’ already make clear the priority given to seeing. See Snell (1924).

signs of Being, which ‘are’ (B 8.2), the signs of both forms are ‘established’ by humans; moreover, they are posited ‘apart from one another’: ‘aetherial fire’ and its clearly positive properties of mildness and lightness are attributed to light, while the night, ‘dense and heavy,’ is ultimately called ἀδαής.²⁴

The initial *Doxa*, as posited by humans, is therefore deceptive because of its *implicit and unrecognized ontological implications*. These are a consequence of the role of night as source of lack of knowledge. While humans regard everything that presents itself within the light as knowable, everything invisible eludes their vision and thus their knowledge. The invisible remains overlooked and covered over, it is finally treated as non-being. τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεῶν ἐστίν: the unity of the two forms, according to which light and night would appear on equal footing in the world, is considered dispensable by mortals – and this is precisely their mistake.

Mortals surely do not *think* about Being and Non-Being; but they certainly practice a tacit and disguised ontology, in which Being and Non-Being are *illegitimately* represented by light and night, in a way that deprives Being and Non-Being of their ontological distinctness. Human beings thus do indeed make a division and a decision, but unfortunately they do so at the wrong place! While they are incapable of using *nous* to distinguish between Being and Non-Being, they draw the distinction ‘according to the appearance’: whatever stands in the light is *παρεόν* and exists, whatever stands in the night and eludes perception is an *ἀπεόν* and non-existent. Humans pursue in this way an ontologically perilous diremption of the world. They posit an illegitimate *caesura*, fall prey to a sensualistic fallacy, divide everything into present and absent, and treat the night implicitly as a representative of Non-Being, which thereby gains access into the world

IV

The assessment of the opposites within deceptive *Doxa*, and in particular the preeminence of light in that assessment, is abandoned in what now follows as the appropriate *Doxa*, in favor of an *equal ranking of both forms*. The forms, previously established as the content of human suppositions, are taken up affirmatively by the goddess. Their approval is acknowledged in the tense

²⁴ Especially this adjective unites in its three possible meanings the threefold deficiency of this form. Night is ‘unknowing,’ because it permits nothing to be seen; it is ‘unknown,’ because it eludes all knowledge (in this it is similar to Non-Being); and it is both of these because it is ‘without light,’ in complete separation from this form. That the forms are treated here as conditions of sense knowledge is also shown if we pay attention to a further meaning of *πυκινός*, namely ‘concealed.’

change from aorist (κατέθεντο) to the perfect (ὀνόμασται), and the forms finally gain the status of existing entities by the use of the present tense (ἐστί):

everything is full at the same time of light and invisible night
– both equal, since Nothing partakes in neither. (B 9.3f.)

This categorical assertion that ‘Nothing partakes in neither’ form presents the most important and crucial claim of the entire positive cosmology, for it rules out any interference by Non-Being in the cosmic process. The ‘invisible’ night is every bit as much as the light, and this undermines the ontological implications of the human understanding of night entertained above. We are now no longer led astray by perception, by the interplay of concealment and disconcealment. Both forms are instead understood as working together, as inextricably intertwined (ὄμοῦ, δια-).

The notion of *mixture* is here given philosophical formulation for the first time. This notion, which represents the kernel of the Parmenidean world approach, is fundamentally new over against the Milesians (who posit one single principle) and it will dominate later cosmologies. The two forms now no longer function as the conditions of erroneous human opinions, but rather as the material components of a *dynamically conceived unity-producing process*.²⁵ Eros, the ‘first of all gods,’ is ensuring the all-embracing predominance of this mixture by drawing all things together (B 13). The concept of mixture penetrates into Parmenides’ very language, when for instance the moon is described in a wonderful verse (B 14) as something ‘night-shining’ (νυκτιφάεζ).

As we noted before, little has been preserved of Parmenides’ presentation of the ‘genesis’ and the ‘works’ of the world; the indirect tradition also provides only spotty and sometimes contradictory material.²⁶ We have handed down to us, however, the conclusion of the ‘appropriate’ presentation (B 19):

In this way, according to *doxa*, these things were born and now are,
and hereafter, having grown up, they will reach their end.
For each of them humans established a distinctive name.

The divine narrative is structured here by means of the three-component temporality that was left aside as irrelevant in the *Aletheia* section (B 8.5). The singular form of the expression ‘according to *doxa*’ (κατὰ δόξαν) emphasizes

²⁵ This transformation of the role and function of the forms, however, does not become visible in the fragments that came down to us.

²⁶ The most important contributions to the reconstruction of Parmenides’ cosmogony and cosmology have been those by Reinhardt (1916, 10-32), Tarán (1965, 231-268), Hölscher (1986, 105-112), Laks (1990) and Bollack (1990).

the systematic integration of the diverse preceding explanations, while again drawing attention to the limits of this enterprise. Generation and corruption were indeed treated ‘appropriately,’ yet *merely* ‘according to *doxa*’: they should not again be allowed entry into *Aletheia*.²⁷

The *critique of perception* developed in B 16 is also founded upon the concept of mixture:

- [3] According each time to the mixture of the much-wandering limbs, emerges thought in humans; for [human thought] is the same with that which the nature of the limbs thinks, in each and all humans. For [human] thought is [result of] the preponderant.²⁸

The reference to the ‘much-wandering limbs’ seems again to address deceptive opinions, trying to explain their instability and their divergences as effects of the cosmic mixture. Every specific mixture of light and night in the phenomena is perceived differently because human beings possess ‘limbs’ each composed of a distinct mixture; the thought (*νόος*) that emerges out of them does not seek truth and Being, but ‘emerges’ (*παρέστηκεν*) as a result of humans being exposed, and giving themselves completely over to their perception and senses.²⁹

However, the consequences of treating both forms equally are revealed in a domain that we can only access through the indirect tradition. Theophrastus informs us that Parmenides attributes a capacity for perception to the dead: the living experience light, warmth, and sound, while the dead perceive the cold and the silence (A 46). Simplicius reports that the goddess of mixture ‘once sends the souls from the visible to the invisible, and once the other way around’ (introduction to B 13); Hades is hence *ἀειδήης*, an invisible place – but apparently

²⁷ Thus while the concept of generation is useful and even indispensable in the *Doxa* section, where the goddess deals with particular entities, its inclusion in the *Aletheia* section would be disastrous: generation would mean there nothing less than the generation of Being itself, which, given the ontologically fundamental distinction, could only have arisen out of Non-Being. Cosmological generation, to the contrary, is recognized within *Doxa* as an interplay between the two forms and their ‘powers,’ i.e. between cosmic principles that altogether incorporate Being; since ‘Nothing partakes in none’ of the two forms, this generation takes place ‘within’ Being, as a generation of *δοκούντα* that altogether *are* (see also n. 33 below).

²⁸ On the translation of this highly controversial fragment, see Mansfeld (1964), 187-188; on τὸ πλεόν as ‘the full’ in contrast to ‘the preponderant’ or ‘the more,’ see Tarán (1965), 256-258, and Laks (1990).

²⁹ The word *αἴσθησις* does not appear here, thus we should not attribute to Parmenides a distinct concept of ‘sensation’ (see Gadamer, 1991, 15); nevertheless,

not non-existent. The two forms and their respective shapes and powers thus create two distinct series of opposites: *light-life-warmth-sound-visibility* vs. *night-death-cold-silence-invisibility* (*Hades*). But although these series are conceived in everyday, deceptive opinions as irreconcilable oppositions, implicitly representing Being and Non-Being, Parmenides demonstrates that the second series also belongs to Being. The two series display no ontological distinction! The emphatic attribution of Being to both forms in B 9.4 and the ‘existential consequences’ of the ontological doctrine recognized by Hölscher both converge in this point: ‘Death exists no less than life. – There is no dying: that is, for human existence, the doctrine that states in physicalistic language: there is neither generation nor corruption’ (Hölscher 1968, 129).

V

Although the two ontological routes are called ‘the only ones’ in B 2, in B 6 yet another way is introduced:

[4a] This is necessary to say and to think: Being [ἔόν] is; for Being [εἶναι] is, whereas Nothing is not. This I bid you to consider.
 And first <I will convey>³⁰ you along this first route of inquiry, but then also along that, on which ignorant mortals wander, two-headed; for helplessness in the breasts guides their confused thought, and they are carried on, deaf and blind alike, dazed, hordes without judgment, for whom Being and Non-Being are considered the same and not the same, and for everything there is a backward-turning path.

This ‘third way’ does not at all contradict the assurance given in B 2, namely that there are ‘only’ two routes; for this ‘third’ way is not a real route at all, but a

Parmenides seems to have at his grasp a certain notion of sensation in contrast to which his concept of true ‘thought’ is clearly delineated. The senses are rejected here for the first time as sources of error that are *incapable of any true cognition whatsoever*. The eye is described in B 7 as ‘aimless’ because in all its ‘aims’ it overlooks *Being*, which alone should be sought after; hearing merely ‘echoes’ the blending and confusion of Being and Non-Being within language and reproduces it. Only *logos* can overcome these unreflective ‘habits,’ by exercising the ‘much-contesting’ – because (again according to Gadamer 1991, 27) ‘repeatedly necessary’ – refutations of the ever-present threat of Non-Being.

³⁰ Since the route mentioned in B 6.1-2 is obviously that of Being, the usual insertion of εἴργω (‘I hold you back,’ first in Diels (1897), 68 with reference to a supposed analogy to B 7.2) for the missing verb in B 6.3 is hardly tenable. Rather, a verb conveying a positive meaning is required; not a ‘holding back from’ but rather

presentation and critique of the inability of human beings to clearly and resolutely distinguish the ‘only’ two ontological routes. In this *ontological irresoluteness* Being and Non-Being are not grasped in their irreconcilable opposition, but are instead held to be ‘the same’ – for instance in everyday speech or even in the early cosmologies. Mortals are called ‘two-headed’: they are not led by their ‘head’ but by their ‘helpless breast,’ remaining thus distracted and unreflective. Their ontological insufficiency is considered ‘non-knowledge’ and lets them appear in opposition to the ‘knowing man’ of the Proem (εἰδὼς φῶς, B 1.3).

Human beings are ontologically ‘deaf’ and ‘blind,’ precisely because they hear and see a lot, i.e. because they give themselves over to sensation (B 7, 8.1-2a):

[4b] For never shall this prevail, nonbeings to be;
 but do hold back your thought from this route of inquiry.
 Nor let much-experienced habit force you along that other route,
 to ply an aimless eye and noisy ear
 and tongue, but judge by *logos* the much-contesting refutation
 presented by me.
 Sole the account still remains
 of the route, that Is.

Whereas in B 6 the third ‘non-path’ is opposed to the route of Being, in B 7 it is rejected together with the route of Non-Being. In B 6 the ontological consequences of ‘wandering’ are censured, while in B 7 the reasons for such ‘wandering’ are uncovered: sensation and language.³¹

Reinhardt’s ‘discovery’ of the so-called third way³² was of great importance for illuminating the structure of the poem and the argumentation of the goddess. It would nevertheless be hasty to allow the *Doxa* section of the poem to coincide unconditionally with the third way, as Reinhardt did (1916, 69). Surely, ‘the three ‘ways of inquiry’ are the natural result of a *single* question’ (1916, 65). This

a ‘leading toward’ the two paths mentioned here: the route of Being (indicating perhaps the discussion of the signs in B 8) and the ‘third way’ of mortals to be discussed in the rest of B 6. Cordero (1979), 24, and Nehamas (1981), 104-105, have argued for ἄρξει and ἄρξω respectively. I am not so far convinced by these proposals and would prefer to withhold judgment; my translation ‘I will convey’ stresses here simply the positive force of the missing verb, without indicating a specific supplementation. The current situation is a challenge for philologists to submit compelling proposals.

³¹ Language appears here not primarily as a source of error, but rather as a ‘continual support and confirmation’ of an original error arising from the judgment of the senses; see Buchheim (1994), 134.

³² See Reinhardt (1916), 36 and *passim*.

unity of the question, however, holds good only for the first part, in which the third path is revealed. The positive *Doxa* has nothing in common with this path – rather, it merely corrects the latter’s deep meaninglessness.

VI

In an earlier book on Parmenides (Thanassas 1997) I made a first attempt at drawing the distinction between false mortal views and valid divine *Doxa*. In his otherwise generous review of that monograph, Georg Rechenauer raised certain doubts about my interpretation of *Doxa*. The result of his criticism came down to the remark: ‘The Gordian knot has not been cut with one stroke’ (2001, 229). I acknowledge that the interpretation presented here would not put all of his (or others’) reservations to rest. In my opinion, the two most important reservations are these:

- a. The transition from deceptive to appropriate *Doxa* (in B 8.60?) is not clearly brought out and articulated.
- b. The forms’ shift in function remains unclear: in the deceptive *Doxa*, light and night are mutually exclusive conditions of sensible knowledge, while in the appropriate *Doxa* they are elementary constituents of the *διάκοσμος*.
On the other hand, the distinction between deceptive and appropriate

Doxa involves several advantages:

- a. It treats *ἀπατηλός* in terms of its only possible meaning, placing it in close connection to "*peplanemeno*" (2 verses later) and provides the contrasting concept to *εἰκῶς διάκοσμος*. At the same time, that differentiation restricts the domain of *ἀπατηλός* to deceptive *Doxa*, liberating thus the goddess from the accusation of lying.
- b. The content of the so-called third way (B 6, 7, 8.38-41) is made clear: it does not concern the positive, appropriate *Doxa*, but performs an ontological translation and criticism of the deceptive *Doxa* alone.
- c. The obvious differences in the terminology relating to the various aspects of *Doxa* can now be explained: on the one side division (*ἀντία, χωρὶς ἀπ’ ἀλλήλων*), on the other mixture (*ὁμοῦ, ἴσων ἀμφοτέρων, δια-*).
- d. The connection of *τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεῶν ἐστίν* to the deceptive *Doxa* explains what the error of mortals actually is: the complete separation and mutual exclusion of both forms.

Whether the reservations or the advantages prevail in the end – this is a matter of hermeneutical considerations to be undertaken by each interpreter and his or her critics. But I would like to make note of the following circumstance: it is not only important to cut through the Gordian knot, but

also and especially to comprehend it, i.e. to acknowledge the conceptual knot involved in the *aporia* described at the outset. The *Doxa* section, and in particular the opposition between ‘deceitful words’ and ‘appropriate’ presentation of the ‘world-arrangement’ poses an immense difficulty for any interpretation, one that can no longer be evaded. Progress would already be made if the interpretation presented here could contribute to recognizing (if not eliminating) this difficulty. If no solution can be found, then at least the *aporia* should be set forth as clearly as possible.

I would therefore propose that in view of the multiplicity of themes and intentions of the second part of the poem a differentiation of various distinct perspectives is unavoidable. *Doxa* is not a homogeneous unity, but rather a complex in which *several and distinct interests, intents and purposes* are pursued. My interpretation has tried to show four different aspects of it:

- [1] Understanding deceptive *Doxa* and revealing its error (B 8.53-59).
- [2] Presenting appropriate, positive *Doxa* which, by recourse to mixture rather than separation, furnishes a partial critique of human error and eliminates the ‘deceit’ (B 8.60ff.).
- [3] Introducing a genetic presentation of the deceptive opinions, whose divergence rests on the diversity within the perceptual apparatus (B 16).
- [4] Offering an ontological evaluation and condemnation of the deceptive *Doxa*, which is shown in the *Aletheia* section to be a third, impassable, ontologically impossible way (B 6, 7, 8.38-41).

Common to all these perspectives is the fact that their theme is phenomenality as such: the manifold of the world of appearance. They are not ‘false,’ but rather altogether true, for they fulfill in different ways the task of ‘learning’ and ‘understanding.’

However, the most important hermeneutical result of this differentiation points beyond *Doxa* and affects its relation to *Aletheia*. This relation is expressly addressed in the passages B 1.31f. and B 9.4. In the first passage, Being is introduced as the Being of what appears (*δοκούντα*).³³ This Being is not a transcendent object, it is not a world-negating hypostasis, but something to be thought and experienced within the world of appearances. Parmenides does not preach a two-world doctrine, but rather presents the one world in the light of two different modes of cognition. The *noetic* mode discovers Being everywhere,

³³ See Thanassas (1997), 36-41; my interpretation is based on the reading *πάντα περ ὄντα* and on the following translation of the last two lines of the Proem: ‘But nevertheless these you shall also come to understand as well, how appearing things should be accepted: all of them altogether as beings.’

the *doxastic* presents and criticizes the errors of the mortal image of the world in order to ultimately deliver a final portrayal of the appearing world. This portrayal is itself appropriate, because Non-Being has disappeared from it and everything is 'full' of the (existing, B 9.4) forms of light and of night.

On the basis of the four aspects distinguished above (in particular the distinction between deceptive and appropriate *Doxa*), it now seems possible to adequately describe the relation of *Doxa* to *Aletheia*. With respect to the deceptive opinions, their genesis and their ontological assessment (aspects 1, 3 and 4 above) the answer given long ago by Reinhardt still possesses validity: the goddess 'brings truth about the delusion' of mortals (1916, 25), and this truth does not compete with that of Being but is rather made possible by it. Yet, it would be fatal to place the appropriate description of the world-arrangement given in the positive *Doxa*-doctrine (aspect 2 above) into the domain of 'delusion.' Just as little is the appropriate *Doxa* a 'deduction' from the third way or a 'transposition' of the 'single fundamental form ['Being and Non-Being'] into spatial categories.'³⁴ Truth and positive *Doxa* are rather answers to two *independent* and *complementary* questions: truth is inquiry into the Being of what appears, while positive *Doxa* inquires into the mode of appearance itself.

The relation between appropriate *Doxa* and ontological *Aletheia* can be described in two respects, **without denying the independence** of each type of inquiry. In a first respect, the emphasis given to the absence of Non-Being in the divine *Doxa* (B 9.4) permits the assumption that *Aletheia* contains *constitutive moments of the appropriate Doxa*. The criterion for distinguishing *Doxa* into false and appropriate lies in their respective and unexpressed approach to Non-Being, and thus in their relation to the truth of Being.³⁵ False *Doxa* implicitly allows Non-Being to penetrate into the world; that this is false, however, can only be grasped if one already is in possession of the truth of Being. The compatibility with this truth is for the appropriate *Doxa* the only criterion of its foundation and the guarantee of its insuperability.

In a second respect, appropriate *Doxa* seems to satisfy a function similar to that of the Platonic ὁρθὴ δόξα or ἀληθῆς δόξα (and indeed to anticipate the Platonic view). For instance in the *Meno* (97B) the interlocutors are in agreement that in order to know which road leads to Larissa it is sufficient to

³⁴ Thus Reinhardt (1916), 71, 80-81.

³⁵ In this respect I agree with Curd's thesis that 'the problem and deception lie, apparently, not in the attempt to give a cosmological account, but in the ontological failings of this cosmology' (1998, 110). This holds, however, only for the erroneous *Doxa* presented in B 8.53-59.

possess a ‘correct *doxa*’ (and not necessarily a justified cognition in the sense of ἐπιστήμη). In the *Theaetetus* as well (despite its aporetic conclusion, in which the identification of ‘true *doxa*’ with knowledge is rejected) it is admitted that a judge in any case must make do with ‘true *doxa*’ rather than knowledge (201B–C). This reference does not intend to introduce an account of the status of *Doxa* in the Platonic corpus. Its purpose was rather to give greater plausibility to Parmenides’ use of appropriate *Doxa* by virtue of the analogy. Parmenidean *Doxa* is of considerable importance to the *Aletheia* as a whole. The truth of Being requires a cosmogony and cosmology protected from Non-Being: it requires descriptions of the world that present it as a whole filled with both forms, now on equal footing. In order to think Being as the Being of what appears (δοκοῦντα), it is necessary to determine these appearances and the way they appear. The appropriate *Doxa* opens up a way toward understanding *Aletheia* as an ontological truth that wholly affirms the world rather than seeking to flee it toward a nether world.

Parmenides’ poem and its division into *Aletheia* and *Doxa* cannot be understood without the concept of an appropriate or true *Doxa*. The appropriate *Doxa* brings about a twofold mediation: On the one hand, it transforms the truth of Being into spatial and temporal terms;³⁶ on the other hand it leads ‘common sense’ towards this truth. *Aletheia* and *Doxa*, Being and appearance cannot be reduced to one another; they retain their independence as complementary responses to two separate questions. Yet, ontology and cosmology – as distinct approaches for the Parmenidean strategy of ‘saving the phenomena’ – cannot be isolated from one another: they were not conceived independently from one another, but rather in view of one another.³⁷

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³⁶ Let us again underscore that what is ‘transformed’ is the truth of Being, and not the third way, as Reinhardt (1916, 71) thought.

³⁷ I would like to thank Michael McGettigan for the translation of this essay and the anonymous reader of *Rhizai* for his insightful and valuable comments. Previous accounts of my interpretation of *Doxa* have appeared in Thanassas (1997) and Thanassas (2005).

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