

# What Heraclitus and Parmenides have in common on Reality and Deception

## *Lo que Heráclito y Parménides tienen en común acerca de la realidad y el engaño*

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Recibido: 07/10/2014

Aceptado: 09/04/2015

### **Abstract**

It is usually assumed that Heraclitus is, exclusively, the philosopher of flux, diversity and opposition while Parmenides puts the case for unity and changelessness. However, there is a significant common understanding of things (though in differing contexts), not simply an accidental similarity of understanding. Both philosophers, critically, distinguish two realms: on the one hand, there is the one, common realm, identical for all, which is grasped by the ‘*logos that is common*’ (Heraclitus) or the steady *nous* (Parmenides) that follows a right method in order to interpret the real. On the other hand, the realm of multiplicity seen and heard by the senses, when interpreted by ‘barbarian souls’, is not understood in its common unity. Analogously, when grasped by the wandering weak *nous* it does not comprehend the real’s basic unity. In this paper I attempt to defend the thesis that both thinkers claim that the *common logos* (to put it in Heraclitean terms) or the *steady intellect* (to say it with Parmenides) grasp and affirm the unity of the real.

*Keywords:* Heraclitus, Parmenides, reality, deception, intellect, *logos*, senses.

### **Resumen**

Suele pensarse que Heráclito es exclusivamente el filósofo del fluir, de la diversidad y de la oposición mientras que Parménides defiende la unidad inmóvil. Sin embargo, hay en ellos una significativa comprensión común de las cosas (aunque en diferentes contextos), y no solamente una analogía accidental de comprensión. Ambos filósofos distinguen dos ámbitos: por una parte, el ámbito único, común,

idéntico para todos, que puede ser captado por el *lógos común* o el *noûs* estable, que sigue un método correcto de interpretación de lo real. Por otra parte, el ámbito de la multiplicidad vista y oída por los sentidos, cuando es interpretado por ‘almas bárbaras’, no es comprendido en lo común y uno (Heráclito). Análogamente, cuando es captado por el *noûs errante, vagabundo* o débil, no se comprende la unidad básica de lo real (Parménides). En este artículo intento defender la tesis de que ambos pensadores no sólo comparten visiones epistemológicas, sino también una cierta descripción ontológica que se podría sintetizar diciendo que ambos afirman que el *lógos común* (para decirlo con Heráclito) o *el intelecto estable* (para decirlo con Parménides) captan y afirman la unidad de lo que es real.

*Palabras clave:* Heráclito, Parménides, realidad, engaño, intelecto, *lógos*, sentidos.

## I

It is usually assumed that ‘the two most philosophical Pre-Socratics propound the two most radically different philosophies: Heraclitus the philosopher of flux and Parmenides the philosopher of changelessness’<sup>1</sup>. As a consequence, it is also assumed that Heraclitus defends diversity and opposition while Parmenides puts the case for unity. In my view, both philosophers admit change and permanence, but in different ways, as they also admit unity and multiplicity, but in different ways.

In this paper I should like to start from the fact that both philosophers condemn deception as a kind of ignorance, an ignorance which consists in the incapacity to grasp that true wisdom is one and of one thing. The real is one for both philosophers. Though it is generally accepted that Heraclitus’ main claim consists in his defending the view that it is wise to agree that all things are one (B50), and on the other hand, it is well known that Parmenides asserts that being is one (8.6), these claims are generally viewed in their own contexts and have rarely been put together in a way which might allow us to reflect on their possible congruence. Nehamas’ and Robinson’s papers are good antecedents for this approach<sup>2</sup>. Heraclitus and

<sup>1</sup> Graham: 2002, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Robinson defends the view that both philosophers agreed on the following theses: 1. The only true object of knowledge can be the real as a whole; 2. The real-as-a-whole is co-extensive with the world, i.e. all that exists; 3. The real as a whole is eternal (Parmenides) or everlasting (Heraclitus) and unchanging; in respect of its parts it is subject to temporal process and change; 4. What the senses can tell us about the real in respect of its parts is not always reliable, but their role can still be a valuable one; 5. Reality, knowledge and a rational account go hand in hand; 6. The relationship between knowledge and the real is one of necessary interconnectedness (1989=2010, pp. 32-40). More recently, see Nehamas: 2002, pp. 45-64. I want to join them at questioning the general assumption that Heraclitus

Parmenides share not only epistemological views but also an ontological picture, as Nehamas claims,<sup>3</sup> which I should like to summarize by saying that both philosophers claim that ‘reason tells us that the real is one’.

According to Heraclitus, the work of thinking consists in grasping the one and common, i.e. what belongs to everything and relates all things. This grasping is usually assumed to require two processes: bringing together and separating. Due to the fact that in Heraclitus’ view what opposes also unites, these processes can be understood as being one and the same. The soul is a *logos* in us that increases itself when it meets *logos* in the totality of things, when it grasps their unity. However, ‘barbarian’ souls cannot do this, because their eyes and ears disperse the universe into multiple aspects, and in this way, when full of their ‘own’ learning, they remain separated from that with which they are in the most continuous contact: *logos*. And this way they remain in deception<sup>4</sup>.

Analogously, Parmenides’ uncritical tribes of mortals take being and not-being to be the same and not the same, due to a force of habit which distracts them as they pass along the route of much-experience following ‘an aimless eye and ringing ear’.

In this paper I should like to penetrate into the meaning of the similarity of these claims, in order to defend the view that what underlies them is a significant common understanding of things (though in differing contexts), not simply an accidental similarity of understanding. Both philosophers, critically, distinguish two realms: on the one hand, there is the one common realm, identical for all, which is grasped by a steady/divine intelligence that follows a right way or method; on the other hand, there is the realm of multiplicity seen and heard by the senses and interpreted by a wandering *nous*/popular *logos* which cannot grasp the real’s basic unity.

One might be tempted to suggest that, had they read each other’s work, Heraclitus would have agreed with Parmenides’ main claim that ‘there is only being’, and Parmenides would have agreed with Heraclitus’ main claim that ‘all things are one’. It could be objected that the agreement would be based on formal, external reasons: Parmenides would agree that ‘all things are one’ in the sense that ‘being is one’, and reciprocally, Heraclitus would have understood that the statement ‘there is only being’ means that ‘all things are one’. However, even though each philosopher would necessarily have interpreted the claim in his own concep-

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and Parmenides stand at opposite philosophical extremes and offer my own evidence that supports this view, while setting certain differences from their perspectives in section III.

<sup>3</sup> As Nehamas p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> Hülsz Piccone observes that the universal presence of *logos* is not incompatible with the epistemic isolation of the mass: ‘Heráclito habría procedido así: partiendo de un elaborado contraste entre el *lógos* y la negligencia humana, seguía con una exhortación a obedecer a la única ley divina, para concluir refrendando la paradójica ignorancia de los más ante la comunidad suprema del *lógos*’ (2011, p.142). On the other hand, the author defends the view that ‘el concepto heraclítico de *lógos* anticipa el contenido, estructura y función de la idea de la verdad, tal como ésta aparece en la tradición posterior (de Parménides a Platón y Aristóteles)’ (2011, p.148).

tual frame, they would have agreed on the basic essential unity of the real, despite its multiple appearances and the variousness of names for these. I shall try to show that the emphasis on ontological and epistemological unity is common to both philosophers, just as the privileged status of divine/eternal *logos* in its ability to grasp ‘the one’ is also a common feature of their different approaches, along with their dismissal of those who are unable to access this ‘one’.

## II

I shall now present the textual evidence in support of the case for the similarities between Heraclitus and Parmenides in the matter of reality and deception with regard to four aspects of the question: the subjects of knowledge (or ignorance), the faculties involved, the knowing cosmos and the real to be grasped.

### 1. The ‘subjects’ of knowledge/ignorance

Certainly Heraclitus is the one who knows and reveals his knowledge to the rest, most of whom do not really understand it. So he makes an epistemological attack on the ‘many’ from the start: although his account holds forever, men ever fail to comprehend, both before hearing it and once they have heard it; they are like the untried, without experience (B1). Not comprehending, they hear like the deaf and the saying ‘absent while present’ fits them well (B34). The evidence for popular deceptive discernment is abundant in Heraclitus<sup>5</sup>.

In an analogous way, Parmenides’ goddess warns his boy that the right route lies far from the beaten track of men, but he should learn all things, both the steadfast

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<sup>5</sup> The many live as if they had their own private wisdom (B2). Many people do not take thought of the things that they come across, and though they learn them, they do not have insight into them but only think they have (B17). They are people who do not know how to listen or how to speak (B19). In B104 Heraclitus wonders what discernment or intelligence they possess as they place their trust in popular bards and take the throng for their teacher, not realizing that the majority are bad and only a few are good. Analogously, in B57 Heraclitus condemns the many for their reliance on a poet who knew a great number of things but was lacking in fundamental insight, as he continually failed to recognize even that day and night are one (B106). In fact, much learning does not teach understanding (B40). The most highly esteemed (by the many) ‘knows’ and defends what *seems* to be so (B28a), but Justice will catch up with fabricators of falsehood and those who bear witness to them (B28b). Men are deceived in the recognition of what is obvious (B56). The unexpected is difficult to discover and unexpected (B18). They do not understand how, while differing from, it is in agreement with itself (B51). They are separated from that with which they are in the most continuous contact (B72). Human nature does not have right understanding; divine nature does (B78). Lack of confidence in *logos* escapes recognition (B86). A stupid person tends to become all worked up over every statement he hears (B87).

heart of persuasive truth which she will reveal to him and the beliefs of mortals in which there is no true trust (B1.27-30). Mortals knowing nothing wander around two-headed, for helplessness in their breasts guides their distracted wandering mind, as they are carried deaf and blind alike, uncritical tribes, by whom Being and not-being have been thought to be both the same and not the same (B6.4-9).

## 2. The 'faculties' involved

### a. *Logos/noos*

Heraclitus privileges *logos* and divine eternal thinking in the grasping of the real, and warns us not to make random conjectures in dealing with the most important matters (B47). Those who speak with intelligence must base themselves firmly on that which is common to all (B114)<sup>6</sup>. That the divine *logos* grasps the unity of the real is also indicated by the fact that to god all things are fair and just, whereas humans introduce differences, supposing that some things are unjust, other things just (B102).

Needless to say, Parmenides also privileges the firm steady *noos* as the faculty capable of argument and truth (B4.1) while the wandering mind ascribed to mortals at B6.6 suggests that *noos* is not an infallible grasp of reality or truth<sup>7</sup>. What makes the difference?

In the light of B 16 Verdenius<sup>8</sup> understands that the intellect of the wise man has a more constant structure through the wanderings of the members being guided in a definitive direction by the preponderance of the element of Light, and that this favourable condition is caused by a remarkable cooperation between human merit and divine grace. Unfortunately the meaning of B 16 is far from clear<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> For an analysis of the relationship between B 1, B2, B50 and B114, see Hülsz Piccone: 2011, p. 125. He also indicates: "La profundidad con la que el *lógos* 'cósmico' cala el alma misma sería el fundamento de la agudeza con que el pensamiento verdadero hace presa de lo real. Cuando Heráclito declara haberse indagado a sí mismo, queda implicado que lo que encuentra en su interior es el mismo *lógos* que rige todo el universo. Es importante insistir que *lógos* no parece designar nunca en los fragmentos (incluyendo B 45) la facultad cognitiva como tal, a la que se refiere en otros casos con palabras como *nóos* 'intelecto' o *phrén* 'pensamiento' (B40, B104, B114)" (2011, p.137).

<sup>7</sup> *Noein* appears in B2.2, B3, B6.1, B8.8, B8.34 and B8.36 while *noema* in B7.2, B8.34, B8.50 and B16.4.

<sup>8</sup> Verdenius: 1964, p. 28.

<sup>9</sup> See Cassin-Narcy:1987 for the history of the reception of this fragment. I have attempted to offer a plausible reading but obviously cannot claim to have disclosed its meaning (Bossi: 2010).

### b. Sense perception

With regard to the senses, Heraclitus holds in higher esteem whatsoever things are objects of sight, hearing and experience (B55), claiming specifically that eyes are more accurate witnesses than are the ears (B101). On the other hand, he takes sight as deceptive, compared to thinking, which is a sacred disease (B46). It seems to me that these opposing judgments on the senses can be reconciled if we take into account that the value of the testimony of the senses depends on the interpretation *logos* makes of it (in the light of B107): poor witnesses for people are eyes and ears if they possess barbarian souls: i.e., if they do not connect what they grasp and understand how everything is one.

Analogously, Parmenides' goddess warns the boy not to let habit force him, along this route of much-experience, to ply an aimless eye and a ringing ear and tongue, but judge by reasoning the much contested/contentious proof/argument/challenge that has been uttered by her (B7.3-6)<sup>10</sup>.

Verdenius<sup>11</sup> also compares Heraclitus' claim about the damp soul (like a drunkard who does not know where he goes) to Parmenides' wandering man<sup>12</sup>.

## 3. The 'knowing' cosmos

Stobaeus claims that for Heraclitus 'thinking (*phroneein*) is common to all (*pasi*)' (B113). *Pasi* can mean 'to all people' or 'to all things'<sup>13</sup>. According to Robinson<sup>14</sup>, Heraclitus was perhaps trying to indicate that all things in the world are in some sense 'aware'. The structure of the universe is supreme cognition (*gnome*) or universal *logos*<sup>15</sup>. Grasplings (*syllapsies*) capture wholes and not wholes, convergent divergent, consonant dissonant, as they go from all things to one and from one

<sup>10</sup> Long has observed that when we are thinking Being with Parmenides we are (*in*) Being, and at least momentarily lose our phenomenal identities as two-headed mortals (1996, p. 147, quoted by Nehamas).

<sup>11</sup> Verdenius: 1964, p. 29.

<sup>12</sup> The question about the reason why the world of plurality and change should be dismissed as mere illusion goes beyond the purpose and reach of this article. Sound hypotheses on this point can be found in Mourelatos: 1970=2008; O'Brien's commentary on the Poem in French (1987) and also in Gallop's Introduction to his book (1984).

<sup>13</sup> The ascription of thinking to all things is paralleled in Empedocles' 'know that all things have thought (*phronesis*) and a share of mind (*noema*)' (110.10 D-K).

<sup>14</sup> Robinson: 1987=1996, p. 155.

<sup>15</sup> Kahn observes that this stronger meaning makes it easier to understand how self-knowledge can lead to the knowledge of what is common to all, since the universal principle is understood precisely as *thinking*, the activity of an intelligent psyche (1979=1981, p. 119).

thing to all (B10)<sup>16</sup>. As Kahn<sup>17</sup> has indicated, “such pan-psychism gives a new dimension to the ambivalence of Heraclitus’ concept of ‘the wise’, oriented both towards the human and towards the cosmic”, and “fits with the doctrine of a limitless psyche”.

In a sense, this could be compared with Parmenides’ claim that ‘the full is thought’ (B16.4) which seems to imply an analogous pan-psychism.

On the other hand, it could also be compared with the much discussed incomplete single line given as fragment 3 that asserts a close relation between ‘thinking’ (in the sense of ‘grasping’) and ‘being’. Not only the placing and interpretation are controversial but it is not even certain that it is continuous with fragment 2. The history of the interpretation of this fragment has given rise to long debates on philological grounds. It can be translated as: ‘For the same thing can be thought as can be’ (Kirk-Raven, 1957); ‘For the same thing can be thought and can exist’ (Tarán, 1965); ‘Because the same thing is there for thinking and for being’ (Gallop, 1984); ‘For the same thing is there both to be thought of and to be’ (Schofield in Kirk-Raven-Schofield, 1986); ‘C’est en effet une seule et même chose que l’on pense et qui est’ (Frère 1987); ‘For there is the same thing for thought and for being’ (O’Brien, 1987). According to this last version *auto* is the subject of *einai* and the direct object of *noein*. In this line, either the fragment is related to B2.8 (Gallop<sup>18</sup>) or to B6.1 (O’Brien) to mean that it is impossible to ‘think’ without ‘thinking Being’.

If the fragment means that thinking requires an real object,<sup>19</sup> this does not imply that fictional objects like ‘unicorns’ are real just because they can be thought about, in the sense that they can ‘be imagined’. On the contrary, as it is well-known, *noein* means ‘grasping’ which indicates that it is a kind of intentional operation that captures its content as having a certain ‘being’. Some scholars emphasize this epistemological meaning and then the fragment can be translated as: ‘For ascertaining and

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<sup>16</sup> Kahn points out that “‘graspings’ may be understood here both in the physical and the cognitive sense, both as act and as object”, and so ‘will denote the pairwise structuring of reality and also the act of intelligence by which this structure is gathered together’. He adds that the neutral opposites give us a characterization of the view that ‘all things are one’. In cognitive terms, the final clause refers to ‘the alternating phases of synthesis and analysis’ which characterizes intelligence (1979=1981, pp. 281-286).

<sup>17</sup> Kahn: 1979=1981, p. 119.

<sup>18</sup> Gallop (1984, p. 8) writes: “And logically it provides an appropriate support for condemnation of reference to the non-existent. For if translated, as in the present version, ‘because the same thing is there for thinking and for being’, it may be taken to mean that any possible object of thought (‘what is for thinking’) is available or ‘is there’ to exist (‘is for being’). What can be thought of is ‘there’ to exist; hence, what is not there to exist cannot be thought of. Thinking requires an existent object”.

<sup>19</sup> Gallop (1984, p. 57) in note quotes Sparshott’s wondering: “Parmenides long ago said: ‘To be and to be thought about are one and the same’. Or did he say: ‘Only what can think can exist?’ Or even: ‘Thinking and Being are the same’? A certain crankiness in his venerable syntax, perhaps even in his venerable character, prevents us for ever being quite sure” (1972, p. 110).

being real are one and the same' (Robinson, 1975) in the sense that when one grasps something one is bound to grasping it as being something somehow. Other interpreters like Vlastos (1953), let the fragment close to an identification: 'Thinking and Being are the same thing'.

I find these difficult claims strikingly analogous to claims made by Heraclitus, whether one reads B3 as merely saying that Being is the only and necessary object of thinking (for there is no thinking or naming of non-being) - which implies the intelligibility of Being and the transparency of thinking, on the assumption that there is homogeneity between human mind and truth, or whether one takes B3 in a much stronger sense by assuming that Being is 'what-understands', as Robbiano<sup>20</sup> claims, arguing that as Being cannot lack anything it cannot lack *noein*, and concluding that to understand is the same as what causes the understanding (B8.34).

While it seems obvious to me that we cannot assume that Parmenides is maintaining that reality is mind-dependent, in an idealistic sense (such as Berkeley's *esse est percipi* or Descartes' *cogito*), it does not seem clear that a kind of universal awareness should be ruled out, if we take into account B16 as a whole<sup>21</sup>.

#### 4. The real to be grasped

According to Heraclitus, not after listening to him, but after listening to the account, one does wisely in agreeing that 'all things are one' (B50). Parmenides makes the goddess say that Being is whole and complete (B8.4); one and continuous (B8.6).

Heraclitus claims that the world is the same for all, and no god or man made it, but it always was, is and will be an ever-living fire, being kindled in measures and being put out in measures (B30). There is no world out of nothing.

Parmenides claims that Being neither was nor will be, because it is now (B8.6) and so he denies that it is generated. Analogously Heraclitus asserts that the common world was not created. It is evident to me that Nehamas is completely right at

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<sup>20</sup> Robbiano (2011, p. 222 and p. 225). She acknowledges the other possible way of interpreting this verse, namely, that *noein* is the same as the thought 'that-is' is not to be excluded; however, she is not willing to accept that the *only* purpose of these lines is to explain something about the *content* of understanding.

<sup>21</sup> Cassin, B. - Nancy, M., (1987) have shown that Aristotle, when interpreting B16, follows a sophistical model, in the sense that if being and thinking are one and the same, then it is enough to think of something to make it real. Perhaps the most sensible way to understand the pan-psychism implied in 16.4 is as a primitive expression of the fact that the cosmos has its own laws and so to speak 'knows' how to manage itself, whether we get to know it or not. This suggestion was made to me by Patricia Curd at the IAPS IV Conference in Thessaloniki (July 2014), where this paper was presented in its first version.



claiming that though ‘the two passages are grammatically opposed’ they are ‘philosophically harmonious’<sup>22</sup>.

Heraclitus is convinced that the wise is a single thing which knows the plan which steers ‘all things through all things’ (*panta dia panton*) (B41) and that as all things come to pass in accordance with eternal *logos* (B1) one must follow that which is common (B2). Wisdom and *logos* are again connected to the steering of the *totality*.

Lines I.31-32 in Parmenides’ poem are difficult to construct and interpret. The young boy should learn how the things which seem had to have genuine existence, being indeed the whole of things (*dia pantos panta per onta*)<sup>23</sup>. Mourelatos has indicated that ‘*per* makes us focus on the aspect of universal-and-total-being: *dia pantos panta onta*’<sup>24</sup>. Both Heraclitus and Parmenides seem to require the perspective of the totality to grasp the real.

### III

After offering the evidence I can collect to support the view that Heraclitus and Parmenides stand quite close on reality and deception, I would like to present some additional observations.

1. With regard to the view that according to Heraclitus ‘it is impossible for one thing to become another’ (Nehamas) or that Heraclitus’ real is unchanging (Robinson), I remain in the tradition: it changes while it remains the same<sup>25</sup>. If change itself is an unceasing process, variously named ‘fire’, ‘war’, ‘god’ and ‘one’, which maintains all opposites in balance both synchronically (the god is day night, winter summer, war peace, satiety hunger: B 67) and diachronically (the fire is kin-

<sup>22</sup> Nehamas: 2002, pp. 48-49.

<sup>23</sup> The better attested reading is *per onta*. Word-by-word translation: “how seeming things [or ‘opinions’] it were [or ‘it was’] required acceptably that they be altogether all passing [or ‘all indeed being’]” (see Mourelatos: 1970=2008, p. 194, note 1 for possible constructions, and chapter 8 for an analysis of the semantics implied as a basis for an explanation). Brague (1987) proposes *panth’ haper onta* but does not offer a translation while he makes *ta dokounta* the object of the opinions of the mortals.

<sup>24</sup> Mourelatos: 1970=2008, p. 214. What he proposes is that it would be ‘right and acceptable for seeming things to be simply by their being all of them altogether’, because opinions or seeming things ‘owe themselves to reality’, for ‘with reference to it are all things committed and with reference to it are all things named’ (2008, p. 219).

<sup>25</sup> Nehamas: 2002, p. 51. I agree with Nehamas that Heraclitus’ fire, understood as change, satisfies Parmenides’ signposts, as it is ungenerated, imperishable, whole, one, and indivisible, perfect and complete and that he turns out to be ‘more Parmenidean than Parmenides himself’ for ‘he is more of a monist than the great monist himself’.

dled in measures and extinguished in measures: B 30), as Nehamas acknowledges, what never changes is change itself<sup>26</sup>.

On the contrary, it seems to me that B67 shows with clarity that ‘the one *is* many’: God is day night, winter summer, war peace, satiety famine. It alters (*alloioutai*), and when mingled with perfumes, it gets named according to the pleasures of each one (B67). It is a single principle that manifests itself in a variety of forms. This means to me that Heraclitus’ account, though rational, cannot be ‘reduced’ to Parmenidean logic. The textual evidence is abundant<sup>27</sup>. Heraclitus regards contradiction itself as true reality. However, if life and death are the same, if the opposites unite and are identical, if there is no real absolute ‘what-is-not’ and change is only apparent, Nehamas might be right about ‘the identity of the real’ in the final analysis, but, I suggest, it is the identity of the opposites which remains in a dynamic perspective.

On the other hand, I agree with Nehamas<sup>28</sup> that Heraclitus cannot be included in the group of ‘mortals’ who believe that being and not-being are the same and not the same, but this is not just because nothing that is real can be generated out of anything else, but because his world-principle fully is.

Alternatively, Graham<sup>29</sup> argues that Heraclitus can become the disembodied voice of two-headed mortals, for, he argues, living and dead just are the human states that correspond to being and not-being, respectively, and Heraclitus pro-

<sup>26</sup> See Nehamas: 2002, p. 53.

<sup>27</sup> ‘While changing it rests’ (B84a). One cannot eliminate any of these two simultaneous aspects: change and rest, it changes but remains identical to itself. From the fact that change is the identity of fire, and identity is what remains the same, one cannot infer that fire does not really change, adopting a multiplicity of forms. In this respect, Parmenides and Heraclitus take different routes. For what opposes unites (B8). Hades and Dionysus are one and the same (B15). The bow’s name is ‘life’ but its job is death (B 48). We step and do not step into the same rivers; we are and we are not (B49a). An unapparent connection is stronger than one which is obvious (B54). The way of writing is straight and crooked (B59). Fire is need and satiety (B65). Those who are asleep are labourers of what happens in the universe (B75). Fire’s death is birth for air, and air’s death birth for water (B76). War is common, justice strife, all things come to be (and are ordained?) through strife (B80). The same...living and dead, and the waking and the sleeping, and young and old. For these transposed are those, and those transposed again are these (B88). The totality of things is an exchange for fire, and fire an exchange for all things, in the way goods are an exchange for gold, and gold for goods (B90). One cannot step twice into the same river, nor can one grasp any mortal substance in a stable condition, but it scatters and again gathers, it forms and dissolves, and approaches and departs (B91). In the case of a circle, beginning and end are common (B103). There is a back-turning connection, like that of a bow or lyre (B 51). Of all those whose accounts I have heard, none has gone so far as to know that which is wise, separated from all (B108). The fairest order in the world is a heap of random sweepings (B124). Cold things become warm, a warm thing becomes cold; a moist thing becomes dry, a parched thing becomes moist (B126).

<sup>28</sup> Nehamas: 2002, p. 56.

<sup>29</sup> Graham: 2002, pp. 40-43.

nounces them to be the same, because one turns into its opposite. But neither life nor death are comparable to being and not-being because they are neither absolute terms nor total realities, but depend on one another. What Heraclitus shows in B88 is that all these opposites are relative to one another. Nothing particular can correspond to Parmenides' Being, not even life. And death is something particular too: we can think about it and name it. Heraclitus is not confusing the opposites as if they were 'the same and not the same' but marking their relative reciprocal dependence.

2. With regard to Parmenides, on the one hand, Nehamas claims that his argument that 'everything is one' can mean 'either that there is only one thing that is or that 'everything that is' one thing; the second alternative is consistent with there being many real things, each of which is one'. He thinks that 'Parmenides' theory was vague and not clearly committed to either sort of monism'<sup>30</sup>.

In my view, only the first meaning can be ascribed to him with certainty. Being as a totality is necessarily one for it cannot be divided or distinguished from itself, as not being is not.

On the other hand, Nehamas also admits that 'the changing things of the Doxa are other than Being'<sup>31</sup>. And he finds that the second alternative ('everything that is' is one) is consistent with the plurality of the two principles required to make cosmology possible: Light and Night<sup>32</sup>.

Due to his double interpretation of the claim that 'everything is one' Nehamas thinks that, according to Parmenides, 'air cannot generate water, for example, because what it is to be air cannot come to be what it is to be water. Since what water is what air is not, the generation from water of air would imply that what air is what air is not—in general terms, that what-is is not'. Nothing that is ever changes into anything else: one is never many. Change is only apparent<sup>33</sup>.

Mortals regard change as the real, whereas Parmenides knows Being to be the ultimate principle, and change, measured by this principle, is a self-contradiction. When the goddess imparts to him a cosmology, she calls her exposition proper

<sup>30</sup> Nehamas: 2002, p. 51.

<sup>31</sup> Nehamas claims that *ta dokounta* are not, and that 'to think that they are is really to think that what-is-not is'. Accordingly, the doxa is deceptive because of the way its contents have been interpreted. Changing things appear to be real but that is merely appearance (2002, p. 59).

<sup>32</sup> 'It is wrong to name only one' at 8.54 means to Nehamas (2002, p. 62 following Coxon: 1986, p. 220) that the two Forms must be named. For both scholars the phrase is a general criticism of the Milesian philosophers who had derived the universe from a single Form. Nehamas believes that the Doxa is Parmenides' glory. Its dualism is a major contribution. In Parmenidean terms, two principles are needed to account for the sensible objects that manifest contrary differences in the world. This reading opposes Frère's view (1987) who takes the natural world of change and *doxa* as the 'manifestation' of Being, in the same tradition of Reinhardt. Robinson takes Being as the perspective of the totality.

<sup>33</sup> Nehamas: 2002, p. 52. I should like to express my thanks to Alexander Nehamas for discussing this paper with me, and for all his kindnesses while I was at Princeton University from April to June 2015.

(*eoikóta* 8.60): in accordance with facts as perceived by mortals. But she urges him to keep off it (6.4; 7.2) for it seems to place change on the plane of ‘what is’. The goddess calls her explanation *apatelós* (8.52): deceitful, not because it is arbitrary or false but because it offers a distorted view of the truth, as it gives changing reality the appearance of absolute reality. Thus Verdenius<sup>34</sup> observes that if Parmenides judges by the standard of Being, he will be able to see through the pretentious nature of change, and to take it for what it is: relative reality.

In my view, Parmenides and Heraclitus warn men not to take the perceptible world for the absolute one, but to accept as ultimate knowledge the Parmenidean perspective from Being or the Heraclitean fundamental unity of opposites, respectively.

If for Heraclitus change experienced by sense-perception is due to one and the same principle that gets many names, their respective views turn out to be much closer that we tend to suppose.

On the other hand, what characterizes the beliefs of mortals for whom change, coming-to-be and passing-away are real is the belief in the reality of what is not. The view of those Heraclitean deaf who do not ‘listen’ to the account of logos (and cannot interpret the data due to their incapacity to perceive the unity of the real) seems quite similar to the Parmenidean mortals who make confusing unjustified distinctions.

In conclusion, by gathering together these analogies I hope I have contributed somehow to call into question the assumption that Heraclitus and Parmenides stand at opposite philosophical extremes. Both philosophers strive to show the power of *logos/noos* to disclose the only real, beyond the apparent many. However, this can only be affirmed if we also respect the differences between them.

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<sup>34</sup> Verdenius: 1964, p. 59.

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