Chapter 6 deals with the underlying metaphor of light and darkness. In particular, it refers to O. 2 and to Pindar’s allegorical interpretation.

The results are followed by a complete bibliography, with few references omitted, an index locorum and an appendix with Pindaric epinicia containing the word charis (a) from a godly/abstract, subjective perspective, (b) from a godly/abstract, objective perspective, (c) from a poetical, subjective perspective, (d) from a human, subjective perspective and (e) from a human, objective perspective.

A. offers a survey of the eye and seeing in Pindaric poetry within the dichotomy of light/darkness. The one flaw is that it is very hard to understand which of these semantic fields, ‘eye and seeing’ or ‘light and darkness’, is predominant. It is disappointing, too, that there is a lack of any philosophical explanation regarding ‘the Eye and Seeing’. A. contextualises each poem by putting it in a genre-oriented perspective and by taking critical account of parallel passages and of the scholia, but there is no discussion about the passages on ‘the Eye and Seeing’ in the poems of Bacchylides (for example 3.79, 5.40, 71, 10.7, 11.22, 13.139, 17.16, 43, 72, 101, 109).

The major achievement of this book is its detailed philological analysis, which allows A. to provide new readings (cf. especially p. 198) and which shows his competence in Pindaric language. It is a useful and accurate philological contribution to modern Pindaric scholarship.

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PARMENIDES
doi:10.1017/S0009840X12000133

A. has accomplished something important in this book, bringing Parmenides into the contemporary continental philosophical dialogue without anachronism. In fact, it is by attending to those elements of the poem that may strike some readers as the most archaic that he finds Parmenides most responsive to living philosophical issues. A.’s book is not long, but it is taut, and this review will try to honour the sense of urgency that informs it by engaging straightaway with its key concerns.

The key to unlock the significance of Parmenides’ poem for A. is the encounter between the kouros and his Goddess, embodying the crucial philosophical moment of ‘the crossing of mortals and immortals’.

I stress philosophical, because there is no question here of theological reductionism; A.’s reading of Parmenides, though it emphasises the poem’s ‘initiatory’ dimension, is irreducible to that of, for example, Peter Kingsley, whose interpretation (In the Dark Places of Wisdom) of Parmenides’ journey as a mystical experience is criticised here. A. offers initiation instead as a paradigm to supersede the Heideggerian deconstruction of metaphysics, displacing the ‘history of being’ – itself the echo of Christian soteriology for which ‘the individual self is saved and death overcome in history’ (p. 132) – in the name of mortal singularity: ‘the mortal life must be understood from out of its own mortal span and not reduced to a particular within the horizon of a history’ (ibid.). This is a return to metaphysics,
but with mortal individuality restored (A. would say) to its position as archê. This concern with unique and unrepeatable individuality is expressed for A. in the concept of thumos as we find it in early Hellenic thinkers, before it is winnowed into a part or function of the soul determined as immortal psukhê. In Homer, memorably characterised as ‘the preeminent philosopher of mortality’ (p. 84), whereas ‘[i]t is the loss of psukhê that determines a man’s death’, it is ‘the thumos that experiences woe at this possibility’ (p. 23). Accordingly, Parmenides’ journey, going ‘as far as thumos might reach’ (fr. 1), is defined by mortal temporality, and his poem is philosophical, not eschatological or prophetic, by virtue of that very narrative frame that for a Kingsley places the poem in the category of mysticism.

A. refuses modern interpretations bracketing the Goddess’s second, cosmological speech, as well as that strain of ancient thought which fused the two speeches into a single doctrine – the most notable example of this latter tendency being Aristotle’s identification of the Being of the Goddess’s first speech with the Light/Fire/Warmth of the cosmology (Metaph 987a1–2, GC 318b6–7). For A., rather, ‘the poem presents two truths: divine and mortal truth’ (p. 78). Phusis is the site of the ‘crossing’ of mortals and immortals in as much as it is ‘better able to contain contrary, even contradictory characteristics within itself than logos’ (p. 72). In this sense, Aristotle’s reading would be correct just in so far as ‘the two routes of alêtheia … are fused into one in the mortal cosmology’ (ibid.).

But A. will acknowledge a continuum from cosmology to ontology only in one direction at a time, that is, either in the mortal’s constitution of metaphysics for him/herself, or in the deity’s constitution of phusis for Herself. In the latter, there is a simulacrum, so to speak, of the mortal side of the encounter: in the Goddess’s logos, ‘the way to her and the way back are equivalent’ (p. 67). When the Goddess states ‘no evil fate sent you forth to travel this road … but rather Themis (Right) and Dikê (Justice)’ (fr. 1), which is often taken as affirming that the kouros does not encounter her as a result of an untimely death, A. sees rather a substitution of the concrete individuality (thumos) of the kouros ‘with the most abstract and time-deficient entity: law … [T]he goddess in retelling his journey from Dikê ignores his own journey to Dikê. Her logos negates the youth’s journey and his individuality!’ (ibid.). There is in this way no genuine community of humans and Gods, only a ‘curiously doubled realm of mortals in immortal logos’ (ibid.). This is perhaps to undervalue the erôs of the Goddess and those in her realm toward the kouros, however, as denoted by the intimacy in their encounter: the Sun Maidens push back their veils (1.10), the Goddess takes the hand of the kouros in hers (1.22). A reading such as is performed here ought to give some greater weight to this intimacy, and consider its consequences.

We should dispense, accordingly, with ‘hubris’ as an issue in this encounter: by denying that a ‘bad fate’ (moira kakê) has sent him, A. would have it that the Goddess affirms that Parmenides ‘is not seeking to subvert his fate by confusing his mortal fate with that of the goddess’, that his journey is ‘not hubris, but divine inspiration’ (p. 62). This is not, however, the ancient conception of hubris, but the modern use of the term (see H. Lloyd-Jones, The Justice of Zeus). While it would be legitimate to question whether the kouros might not fare in this encounter as did Tithonus when he became the object of Eos’ love, there is no indication that self-assertion would be the problem. Rather, the problem posed by the encounter is untimeliness: immortality without youth, an undying logos at once personal and alienated. A. treats of this as the risk of technology, by which ‘man loses his basic mode of existence as thumos and is transformed into information: immortal
in the sense of being storable, retrievable, and controllable’ (p. 61) – the subject becomes ‘logical’ object. But there is a parallel ‘logicality’, namely *muthos*: ‘Myth preserves individuality through anecdote and focuses on the mortal life entangled in *phasis*’ (p. 19); and in the poem the Goddess, too, urges her *kouros* to ‘preserve [or, ‘convey’, *komisai*] the *muthon*’ (fr. 2.1). In the third part of his book, which treats of a debt to Parmenides in Plato’s *Phaedrus*, A. finds a properly philosophic *muthos* in Plato’s memorial of the mortal Socrates, where Socrates plays the role of a *pharmakos* or sacrifice in whom Plato embeds an immortal *logos* so that it should not suffer a Tithonic fate. But the individual also becomes information in narrative, through the proper name: ‘Proper names, though they may sometimes be unique, do not address individuals, any more than do social security numbers … They conceal living – and dying – individuals with symbols’ (p. 18). If the risk of metaphysics belongs to *muthoi* as well, however, by the same token, the promise A. finds in the sacrificial mythic *logos* may belong, at least in part, to metaphysics as well. In short, metaphysics may not belong irredeemably to the universal.

To arrive at such a resolution would require a more profound intervention in the received interpretation of the first speech of the Goddess, one proposed by P. Curd in *The Legacy of Parmenides*. A. is aware of Curd’s book, but never addresses her central claim that the referent of the first speech is not *all* being but *each* being, what she characterises as Parmenides’ ‘predicational monism’: ‘To be a genuine entity, a thing must be a predicational unity, with a single account of what it is; but it need not be the case that there exists only one such thing’ (Curd 2004, p. 66). Such a reading, by shifting the sense of what ‘unity’ means at the very inception of the tradition, could change dramatically what we typically imagine metaphysics to be. Under this interpretation, A. and other commentators could no longer infer from the poem’s first speech that ‘in the goddess’ realm, there is no individuality’ (p. 120). Instead, the problematic shifts to the positivity or negativity of characteristics (Curd’s problematic of ‘internal’ vs ‘external negation’), and the problematics of unity play out in each ‘one’, whether we speak of a soul or of a form – for a not dissimilar approach to Plato’s thought, see M.M. McCabe’s *Plato’s Individuals*. The ‘positive given-ness of an *aiōn* which is unsubsumable by metaphysical *logoi*’ (p. 172 n. 44) would become a primary positive datum for metaphysics itself; but the cost would be that metaphysics no longer legislate on what there is.¹

A. has staked out a distinctive position on Parmenides’ poem, and it is to be hoped that future writers on the subject will take it into account. More devoutly to be wished is that others who write on ancient philosophy will make the effort A. has to discover a voice in which to address issues of living philosophical concern through the careful reading of ancient thought.

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¹In private communication, A. states that his remark that there is no individuality in the Goddess’s realm applies to her *logos* only. A. recognises that such a distinction is required in order to sustain a real plurality of persons in the proem; but it is precisely in order to hold these terms apart that the poem’s talk about unity must be shifted from an ontological to a henological register.