philosophies

IMPACT FACTOR 0.6

CITESCORE 1.3

Article

What Dawned First: Early Buddhist Philosophy on the Problem of Phenomenon and Origin in a Comparative Perspective

Federico Divino

MDPI

https://doi.org/10.3390/philosophies9050135

philosophies

MDPI

Article

What Dawned First: Early Buddhist Philosophy on the Problem of Phenomenon and Origin in a Comparative Perspective

Federico Divino

Department of Communication Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Antwerp, M, Sint-Jacobstraat 2, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium; federico.divino@uantwerpen.be or federico.divino@gmail.com

Abstract: This article explores the issues of phenomenon and genesis in Early Buddhist thought through a comparative analysis with the Eleatic tradition, aiming to enrich the understanding and dialogue between these philosophical and religious traditions. By examining the comparability of Buddhist thought and Parmenidean philosophy, the study challenges the notion that these traditions are fundamentally alien to each other. The focus is on the concept of genesis, not as creation from nothingness—rejected by both the Buddha and Parmenides—but as the manifestation of the world to the human observer. The article argues that the world reveals itself in particular forms and appearances, which are intimately linked to the phenomenon and its perception by humans. This process is not solely a domain of rigid logical propositions but can be expressed through mythological and religious narratives. The study posits that the poetic expressiveness found in archaic philosophies of both India and Greece provides a valid medium for engaging in philosophical discourse. By adopting this comparative and dialogical perspective, the article aims to generate new philosophical insights and inspire future philosophical inquiry. The reflection on phenomenon and genesis, framed through this comparative lens, highlights the nuanced ways in which different traditions address the nature of reality and human perception, ultimately advocating for a broader, more inclusive understanding of philosophy that transcends conventional boundaries.

Keywords: Buddhist philosophy; comparative philosophy; Parmenides; early Buddhism; ontology; phenomenology

Citation: Divino, F. What Dawned First: Early Buddhist Philosophy on the Problem of Phenomenon and Origin in a Comparative Perspective. *Philosophies* **2024**, *9*, 135. https://doi.org/10.3390/philosophies9050135

Academic Editor: Marcin J. Schroeder

Received: 28 June 2024
Revised: 21 August 2024
Accepted: 26 August 2024
Published: 28 August 2024

1. Introduction

> *atha sadevake loke samārake sabrahmake sassamaṇabrāhmaṇiyā pajāya sadevamanussāya appamāṇo uḷāro obhāso pātubhavati atikkammeva devānaṃ devānubhāvaṃ.*
>
> Then, in this world with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this people with their ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans, a magnificent radiance beyond measure appears, surpassing even the glory of the gods.
>
> [DN 14]

This article aims to reflect on the problem of phenomenon and genesis in Early Buddhist thought by adopting a comparative reading with the Eleatic tradition, with the conviction that comparative studies of philosophical and religious traditions (assuming the boundary between these two is as clear-cut and well-defined as we typically believe) can invigorate the debate and understanding of these traditions of thought. This approach envisions them in a dialogical perspective, thereby also producing new inspirations for future philosophy.

Specifically, in this work, I am interested in the problem of genesis not as a *creātiō ex nihilō*—a concept I believe is rejected by both the Buddha and Parmenides—but as something that pertains to the appearance of the world to the human witness. The world reveals itself in certain conformations and assumes certain appearances, thus posing a problem that is

eminently linked to the phenomenon and its reception by the witness, the human who perceives and processes the phenomenon in specific ways. These ways can also be described with a mythological, 'religious' slant, which is disregarded by those who believe that philosophy is solely a rigid presentation of logical propositions. However, it is my conviction that even in poetic expressiveness—the favored medium of archaic philosophies in both India and Greece—it is more than possible to engage in philosophy. Indeed, ancient philosophy, East and West, primarily employs the poetic medium for an expressiveness that would be difficult to achieve otherwise [1–6]. We will thus refer strictly to Early Buddhism, and for practical reasons, to the Pāli canon, which is sufficiently rich. There is no doubt that the most ancient vehicle of expression for Buddhist literature was poetry [7–9]. On the other hand, Parmenides "probably clothed his doctrine in verse-form, because this was the natural vehicle for the expression of a divine revelation and because he believed it to be a good medium of instruction for his pupils" [10] (p. 119).

Buddhism therein presents its own conception of genesis, perfectly embedded within its phenomenological framework, as well as within the historical–cultural context in which Buddhism operates, which cannot be ignored in the interpretation of this philosophy. Everything is functional to their ascetic aims, which pertain to both pragmatic goals such as the ultimate liberation from the condition of suffering, and political ones, such as the overcoming of an oppressive system of authority that was rejected by their conceptions.

As for Parmenides, his conception certainly reaches us in a more fragmented and scattered manner, given that we only have fragments of his poem, and the Eleatic tradition appears to be certainly close to Early Buddhism in philosophical aspects, but somewhat less so in pragmatic ones. We will see that we cannot even be sure of this, and that perhaps what Parmenides describes in his work, a veritable 'mystical' vision, resembles in several aspects the outcomes of an ascetic practice, prompting us to ask whether his thought was indeed the result of some form of discipline or exercise comparable to the meditation or ascetic practices of the Indian milieu from which Buddhism flourished.

We will observe that even a significant concept such as 'appearance', 'manifestation', and 'phenomenon', possesses a metaphorical and thus essentially poetic genesis, which has determined its history in the evolution of philosophical reasoning. This is what occurred, for example, with the metaphor of φαίνεσθαι ('to appear') in the Greek philosophical tradition. However, this idea of φαίνεσθαι, which puts light at the epicenter of 'creation' or as the ultimate nature of phenomena, can be found also in Buddhist thought.

This epithet is also applied to the Buddha. Specifically, it is used in the forms *pajjotakaro* ("illuminator", SN 8.8) and *pabhaṅkara* ("emanator of light", "beacon", Snp 5.19). This luminous metaphor appears on several occasions in the Pāli canon, invariably in relation to the figure of the Buddha or Buddhist doctrine: "Indeed, if there were no one to dispel the corruptions, as the wind disperses the clouds, darkness would envelop the entire world, and never again would humans shine brightly. The wise are the bearers of light. Thus it is, O great hero, that I think of you" (*no ce hi jātu puriso kilese, vāto yathā abbhaghanaṃ vihāne; tamovassa nivuto sabbaloko, na jotimantopi narā tapeyyuṃ; dhīrā ca pajjotakarā bhavanti, taṃ taṃ ahaṃ vīra tatheva maññe*, Snp 2.12).

Consider another example. In Iti 104, there is a description of those who faithfully follow the Buddhist teachings. These individuals are described as practitioners of contemplation (*bhāvanāpāripūriṃ*) and pursuers of wisdom (*paññākkhandho*), and of these individuals, or those who associate with them, luminous metaphors abound: "such mendicants are called 'teachers', 'leaders of the caravan', 'abandoners of conflicts', 'dispellers of darkness', 'bearers of light', 'luminaries', 'lamps', 'torch bearers', 'beacons', 'nobles', and 'clairvoyants'... they illuminate the true teaching, O radiant bearers of light, wise bearers of light, with clear vision, devoid of conflict" (*evarūpā ca te, bhikkhave, bhikkhū satthārotipi vuccanti, satthavāhātipi vuccanti, raṇañjahātipi vuccanti, tamonudātipi vuccanti, ālokakarātipi vuccanti, obhāsakarātipi vuccanti, pajjotakarātipi vuccanti, ukkādhārātipi vuccanti, pabhaṅkarātipi vuccanti, ariyātipi vuccanti, cakkhumantotipi vuccantī'ti… te jotayanti saddhammaṃ, bhāsayanti pabhaṅkarā; ālokakaraṇā dhīrā, cakkhumanto raṇañjahā*).

Being the witness of the world is not a concept that is easily expressed. Ancient thinkers who grasped its importance chose to articulate it through the *metaphor of light*, as only that upon which light falls can 'appear' and thus be witnessed. The Greek φαίνω has its roots in the Proto-Indo-European *b^heh_2- ('to shine'). From this primordial form, which is evidently connected to the concept of 'light', a plethora of possible derivatives have emerged. The Greek φῶς, φάος, firmly links the idea of φαίνεσθαι to that of 'light', as do the Sanskrit *bhās* ('to shine') and *bhāsa* ('light'). Even where terms not directly derived from this root are used, ancient thinkers often intended to convey messages related to appearance understood as 'that upon which light is cast', and thus the concepts of interest gravitate around this archetype: 'light', 'dawn', 'glow', 'brightness', 'illumination', 'day', and 'sun'. Naturally, the metaphorical device most suited to describing all these notions is that of fire. The sun is the fire that illuminates the world, casting it into light; fire emits light and thus has the capacity to 'unveil', to 'reveal' what was previously in shadow. Those who control fire possess a powerful means, capable of reproducing the effects of the sun even in its absence.

Therefore, a whole array of deities associated with light and the gift of light to humanity are revered as part of a specific category, that of the 'light-bringers'. At this point, the Latin adjective *lūcifer* ('light-bringer'), connected to the term *lūx*, *lūcis* ('light'), which also holds cardinal importance in the history of thought, must come to mind. Its reconstructed root is *leu̯k-, as seen in the Greek λευκός ('white') and the Sanskrit *rócate* ('to shine'), as well as another crucial term: *loká*. Although derived from the root of 'light', this term primarily signifies 'open space'. The reason is quite simple: it is possible that *loká* indicated the primordial idea of 'openness', a space upon which light is cast, revealed to appearance, but especially that by virtue of being revealed and made known, it is 'conquerable' by human will. Various pieces of evidence, particularly preserved in the mythological and ritual memory of Vedic texts, seem to confirm this interpretation. Notably, the association between the lighting of a flame to consecrate the conquest of a particular 'space' or 'world' is the most significant evidence supporting this. Indeed, *loká* also means 'world'. In particular, in Buddhism, it is used primarily with this other connotation. In Buddhist texts, we also observe the alternation of *loka* (world) and *āloka* (light), which is a fact not to be underestimated [11–15].

Returning to the term *lūcifer*, it appears as a direct calque of the Greek φωσφόρος, a term specifically associated with a series of deities revered for their luminous quality. However, the variant βόσπορος should interest us. This occurrence (βόσπορος is in all likelihood a Thracian corruption of the pronunciation φωσφόρος) [16] (p. 959), is applied to the Titan Prometheus.

> ἔσται δὲ θνητοῖς εἰσαεὶ λόγος μέγας
>
> τῆς σῆς πορείας, Βόσπορος δ᾽ ἐπώνυμος
>
> κεκλήσεται.
>
> And ever after among mankind there shall be great mention of your passing,
>
> and it shall be called after you the Light Bringer.
>
> [*Aeschylus, Προμηθεὺς Δεσμώτης*, vv. 732-4]

The sheer number of light metaphors in the Pāli texts is astonishing, clustering numerous expressions related to light, luminosity, brilliance, or radiance, which we find repeatedly in the canon. Almost all are official epithets of the Buddha, such as *tamonuda* ("dispeller of darkness"), *obhāsaka* ("the radiant one", related to *obhāsa*, "shining"), the aforementioned *pabhaṅkara* ("emanator of light", a term also used to denote the sun), and *pajjotakara* (literally "beacon"). Other truly fascinating terms include *ālokakaraṇā* ("light-giver") and *ukkādhāra* (literally "torch-bearer"). This last poetic metaphor inevitably recalls Prometheus, the symbol of the light-bearer (Βόσπορος), who in Hesiod's Theogony and Aeschylus's works is characterized by his favorable disposition towards humanity, to

whom he grants light, represented by the fire he steals from Zeus. We will return to this myth and its possible connections and parallels with parts of Indian literature later.

For now, let us remain within Buddhism, as it is necessary to introduce more solar or luminous epithets attributed to the Buddha to appreciate the importance and scope of this symbol. In Snp 5.18, the Buddha is called "kinsman of the sun" (*buddhenādiccabandhunā*). His family, the Sākiya clan, is indeed described as being of solar descent (*ādiccā nāma gottena sākiyā nāma jātiyā*), and this is reflected in various hymns directed to the Buddha, such as Snp 3.1 and 3.7, where we find the phrase *ādiccova virocasi* ("you shine like the sun").

There are also numerous references to experiences of immersion in light or luminous radiance, which are connected to contemplative practice or the figure of the Buddhas. This formula is expressed as *āloko udapādi* ("arising of light") and appears in numerous suttas, such as SN 56.11 in relation to contemplative practice (*pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi, ñāṇaṃ udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi*) but also in relation to the advent of the Buddha, described as "an immeasurable and magnificent light appeared in the world, surpassing the glory of the gods" (*appamāṇo ca uḷāro obhāso loke pāturahosi atikkamma devānaṃ devānubhāvanti*). Similarly, in meditation contexts, we find the same statement of SN 56.11 in similar or analogous formulations (… *ñāṇaṃ udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi* or *tathāgatānaṃ pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi, ñāṇaṃ udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi*) in SN 12.4, 12.10, 12.65, 36.25, 47.31, 51.9, and 56.12 and in more complete forms in DN 14, where we find further details:

> *atha sadevake loke samārake sabrahmake sassamaṇabrāhmaṇiyā pajāya sadevamanussāya* ***appamāṇo uḷāro obhāso pātubhavati*** *atikkammeva devānaṃ devānubhāvaṃ.*
>
> *yāpi tā lokantarikā aghā asaṃvutā andhakārā andhakāratimisā, yatthapime candimasūriyā evaṃmahiddhikā evaṃmahānubhāvā ābhāya nānubhonti, tatthapi appamāṇo uḷāro obhāso pātubhavati atikkammeva devānaṃ devānubhāvaṃ.*
>
> *yepi tattha sattā upapannā, tepi* ***tenobhāsena aññamaññaṃ sañjānanti***
>
> And then, in this space (or world, *loka*) with its gods, its lords of Death, and its Brahmas, this population, with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans, behold, **an immeasurable magnificent light appears**, surpassing the glory of the gods. Even in the inter-worldly space, unenclosed, void, dark, so utterly dark that even the light of the sun and moon, so powerful, so mighty, cannot hope to reach, behold, an immeasurable magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods.
>
> And the sentient beings born there recognize each other by virtue of that light.
>
> Another passage:
>
> *seyyathāpi, bhante, nikkujjitaṃ vā ukkujjeyya, paṭicchannaṃ vā vivareyya, mūḷhassa vā maggaṃ ācikkheyya,* ***andhakāre vā telapajjotaṃ dhāreyya****: 'cakkhumanto rūpāni dakkhantī'ti; evamevaṃ bhagavatā anekapariyāyena* ***dhammo pakāsito****.*
>
> Just as if one were straightening what is crooked, or revealing what is hidden, or pointing out the way to one who is lost, or **lighting a lamp in the darkness** so that those with clear vision can see what is there, the Buddha has **made the teaching clear** in many ways.

Other occurrences of light emersion (*āloko udapādi*) are found in DN 21, SN 12.4, 12.10, 12.65, 36.5, 47.31, 51.9, 56.11, and 56.12, undoubtedly linked to the attainment of true knowledge or the Buddhist teaching (*pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi, ñāṇaṃ udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi*).

2. On Buddhist Ontology

The topic of terminology consistently incites debates and discussions. When addressing 'ontology', the initial objection invariably questions whether Buddhists are concerned

with the concept of being at all, at least in the manner understood by the Greeks or by Parmenides. However, a close examination of their discourses suggests a significant likelihood that early Buddhism was deeply engaged with the nature of phenomena and the ultimate essence of things. Moreover, when liberated from the archaic and incorrect nihilistic interpretation, the concept of emptiness, or more precisely non-self (*anattā* in its most archaic articulation), can be more accurately understood as referring to the conventional and thus non-self-sufficient nature of nominal identities [17] (p. 517). The Buddhist portrayal is not of a world inherently ephemeral, but rather ephemeral due to the nominalism that underpins it. Beneath these mechanisms, which segment and organize the 'world' based on names and forms, lies being in its most immediate form. The text of paramount interest in this context is DN 27 (Aggañña sutta, where *aggañña* signifies "that which came first").

The distinctiveness of this text lies in presenting a 'genesis' of the world fundamentally opposed to the Vedic narrative, wherein the underlying rationale is a progressive decline of the true essence of sentient beings, precipitated by a process of reality segmentation: the division of the world into 'things', people into genders, and groups into social categories. In Vedic cosmology, which this text evidently opposes, everything is organized to justify social hierarchies. This discourse does not address castes, which emerged much later in Indian history [18], but pertains to the 'nature in itself' of certain social groups, such as the seers, who are ontologically superior to common humans, and warriors, who hold a prestigious position in society by virtue of their world-founding capabilities [19] (p. 169).

Far from being an exclusively political discourse, DN 27 also presents remarkable ontological considerations, upon which we must focus here. The Buddha, in this regard, embodies the principles he seeks to teach; these principles manifest in his body (*dhammakāyo*) just as he embodies the nature of Brahma (*brahmakāyo*), and the same applies to their essences (*dhammabhūto*, *brahmabhūto*).

There are two main phases in the creation of the world: an expansive and an implosive phase. During the expansion, beings progressively decline from their divine condition, which can be regained through ascetic practice. In the ideal state, sentient beings "are mostly headed for the realm of streaming radiance" (*yebhuyyena sattā ābhassarasaṃvattanikā honti*). The luminous metaphor is a crucial element to consider for the subsequent analysis of the ascetic nature of Buddhism and Parmenidism, and it is found in many other religious and philosophical currents [10,20]. Primordial beings possessed non-physical bodies, composed of mind, sustained by ecstasy, and, most importantly, emitting their own light (*manomayā pītibhakkhā sayaṃpabhā*).

The most significant ontological element emerges with the description of the beings' progressive decay, caused by factors making them more 'mundane', which we could identify as the gradual acquisition of impermanent identities and internal divisions. The primordial form of the world was indeed undifferentiated, akin to the dark and deep waters of the abyss (*tena samayena hoti andhakāro andhakāratimisā*). Water, in numerous philosophies, serves as a favored metaphor due to its indeterminate nature, and as we know, even in Thales, the mythical first Greek philosopher, water represents the ἀρχή precisely because of this property: "the identity and unity *of the totality* of the manifold" [21] (p. 142).

This amorphous world was devoid of sun and moon, stars and constellations, days and nights, months, years, seasons, and genders. All these elements constitute the basis of the dualism to which Buddhism is fundamentally opposed. Surprisingly, in an ostensibly mythological text, we find an ontological explanation for their rationale: the temporal division (sun and moon, the succession of days and nights, and their organization into months and years) is one of these divisive acts, which they seem to deny as mere illusions, and the same applies to gender division: "neither males nor females were conceivable" (*na itthipumā paññāyanti*).

Particularly interesting is that in this verse, the Buddha emphasizes the issue of conceivability (*paññāyanti*). This term refers to "evidence" from which a form of knowledge is constructed ($pa + \sqrt{ñā} + ya$). Thus, we can speak here of something akin to φαίνεσθαι.

The Buddha tells us that things like males and females did not appear, or "it is evident that there were no males and females".

Without conformation (a 'coming into shape together', from *confōrmātiō*, *fōrma*, not having a μορφή and thus, in Buddhist terms, a *rūpa*, an element at the head of the five aggregates), what can be said about the primordial world? The text states: "beings were known simply as 'beings'" (*sattā sattātveva saṅkhyaṃ gacchanti*). This is likely the most significant phrase we can find in the entire Pāli canon.

The etymological analysis is unequivocal: the Buddha speaks of *sattā*, beings in the most literal sense of the term: the Vedic *sattvá*, a term constructed by adding the suffix to form abstract nouns (*-tva*) to the root of the verb to be ($\sqrt{as}$-, with *sat* as its present participle), a verb that is factually and etymologically the same as the Greek ὤν through the common Proto-Indo-European root *$h_1$sónts*. Thus, the Buddha's discourse is ontological, if only for terminological reasons. If he intended to assert that beings ultimately do not exist, he would never have stated that they stand at the primordial origin of the universe. Instead, he asserts a nominalistic problem: they were known simply as 'beings' (*sattātveva saṅkhyaṃ gacchanti*). This is the crux of the entire discourse, even in view of a comparison with the Eleatic school.

In this article, I generally treat the terms "being" and "existent" or "existing" as synonyms, in order to avoid creating a conceptual division. Anything that 'is' and therefore "exists" can be defined as a being, that is, an existent, or "that which is". My aim is to avoid establishing an ontological hierarchy *à la* Heidegger, wherein a fluctuation between *Sein* and *das Seiende* is produced. The distinction proposed by Buddhism is not substantial but conceptual, and by emphasizing the conceptual, the deceptive nature of this distinction is highlighted. In our perception, "things" appear distinct from one another, yet, in this hypothetical myth of origin, before such conceptual distinction operated, beings "were simply known as 'beings'" (*sattātveva saṅkhyaṃ gacchanti*). Therefore, what occurs with the introduction of distinction is nominal in nature. Initially, beings "were simply known as..." (*saṅkhyaṃ gacchanti*), while later they will be known (named) differently: the intervention of the *nāma*/*rūpa* dichotomy does not thus create an ontological change but is a shift in our perception. Names, analysis, and the decomposition of phenomena into processes intervene. However, this isolation of 'things' into distinct identities gives us the impression that they are autonomous and self-sufficient. Later, with the intervention of the Abhidhamma, the concept of self-nature, or being in-itself (*sabhāva*), will be discussed. Yet, even here, while Buddhism will insist that things are not self-existent, and that they are empty of autonomous existence, this does not imply that they do not exist or are nothing. On the contrary, it merely signifies the impossibility of considering them as autonomous and self-sufficient. The Paṭisambhidāmagga will assert the emptiness (*sabhāvena suññaṃ*) of the five aggregates (cf. Suññakatha). Nevertheless, these elements that enable the perception of our identity must exist, or we would not perceive our, albeit illusory, identity. Being empty, illusory, and deceptive does not mean non-being. It only indicates that this existence is not autonomous, pointing to an indivisible unity of being, in contrast to our limiting perception, which tends to dissect, decompose, and perceive it as possessing 'parts' (*nāma-rūpa*s). The goal of Buddhist philosophical effort is a striving to transcend these perceptual limits through contemplative practice, reaching the final gnosis (*paññā*) of the thing-as-it-is (*yathābhūtaṃ*).

We must also compare the nature of the two philosophies. Both ancient Buddhism and Parmenides predominantly express themselves in verse, and poetry has both a technical practicality in the ancient world, associated with the transmissibility guaranteed by mnemonic techniques, and an expressive potential: it is indeed an expressive choice. In Parmenides, Verdenius attributes this choice to the initiatory nature of his teaching. Parmenides' work is undoubtedly a 'vision' to the extent that one must refer to the journey into the realm of Light as a "genuine religious experience" [10] (p. 120). The 'religiosity' in question does not diminish the importance of the philosophical message; on the contrary, it allows us to frame it even more clearly. What in Parmenides is configured

as a mystical-initiatory journey is, for the Buddha, an ascetic path. Beyond this superficially pragmatic difference, the two thinkers adopt surprisingly similar expressive modes, metaphors, and teachings.

3. Ways, Paths, and Light

Indeed, if it is true that the Buddhists employ the metaphor of light to convey the power of their teachings, it is also true that the metaphorical device of light was used even further back in the history of thought by institutions largely opposed by the Buddhists. These institutions had their roots firmly planted in the fertile soil of Indian thought when they entered into dialectical conflict with the Buddhists. Therefore, what had been said and thought until then cannot be ignored in our philosophical investigation. The Buddha's alignment with the lineage of sages who bear light and radiate luminosity (*bhāsayanti pabhaṅkarā ālokakaraṇā dhīrā*) is neither a foregone conclusion nor a matter deserving of little attention. If it is true that ultimate enlightenment, i.e., the comprehension of that totality as an indivisible whole, is also a 'phenomenological' fact involving light, the *āloko udapādi*, it is equally true that even in the perception of partiality, the luminous reveals itself (φαίνω), making things 'evident' (φαίνεται).

Let us now attempt to analyze the principal philosophical issues of the two systems of thought. As mentioned, these issues are articulated not necessarily through rigid logic (with one exception, which we will examine), but preferably through poetic metaphors. Boodin is confident that Parmenides employs a poetic language, even though it expresses rationalized philosophical aspects and is presented in a rigorous manner, at least concerning the reason of being and that which is [22]. The concept of "poet" should not be misunderstood here; I refer primarily to the poetic language and its polysemy when using this term, not to the profession of a poet. Parmenides offers us an authentic 'vision' through these metaphors, structuring it in the manner that is well-known to us: two paths, the path of light, which he 'saw' at the moment of his realization, and the dark path. More precisely, this refers to the antinomy between fire and night, and the path of day and the path of night (ἔνθα πύλαι νυκτός τε καὶ ἤματός εἰσι κελεύθων, *fr*. 1.11). Before these two paths, Parmenides learns: one is the path of truth, the other is impassable. It is evident that this is somehow connected to a mystical experience: "though the quest for Truth begins with a mere preponderance of light, it can only be completed in a state of mind which is free from any darkness whatever" [23] (p. 73).

Another fundamental aspect of Parmenides' vision is that the path of light or truth appears to bifurcate into two branches or aspects. This is perfectly expressed by Cornford [24], and it is a point to which we shall return. This dual path is revealed to Parmenides in a divine revelation, but in AN 10.146 we find the Buddha teaching his disciples using analogous metaphors, namely those of the path of light and darkness (*kaṇhamaggañca vo... dhammaṃ desessāmi sukkamaggañca...*):

> "I will teach you the Dhamma of the dark path and the bright path. [...]
>
> Wrong view, wrong thought, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, wrong immersion, wrong knowledge, and wrong liberation. This is what is called the dark path".

Conversely, what ranges from right view to right wisdom and liberation falls under the bright path. This philosophical articulation may seem very different from that of Parmenides, but we cannot help but notice the similarities:

1. Both propose two paths or ways; in both cases, one path is bright while the other is dark.
2. For the Buddhists, the path of light is connected to the correct practices for pursuing an ascetic life; for Parmenides, the path of day indicates Truth.
3. However, the connection lies in how both thinkers understand the path of light and how it is indeed tied to the Truth.

For Buddhists, there is no such thing as an impassable path. It is in the nature of things that anything possible can be done; otherwise, it is unfeasible (*aṭṭhānato*): that is what a Realized one knows for sure (*tathāgato ṭhānañca ṭhānato aṭṭhānañca aṭṭhānato yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti*, AN 10.21). The crux of their issue lies in how humans live: by following the dark path, they do not achieve liberation from conditions that lead them to live in suffering. On the other hand, the bright path is not only that of ascetic life but also of correct vision (*diṭṭhi*). There is, in fact, the established notion that one can live comfortably even in falsehood (*micchā*), believing in hearsay and misinterpreting the truth (*sacca*), as this path does not entail impassability but simply a miserable life. Pursuing factual truth, the "that-which-is" (*yathābhūta*), Buddhism asserts that liberation from suffering is also possible. For instance, it is part of the absolute that-which-is, known by the realized one (*yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti*), that the impossible is unfeasible (*aṭṭhānañca aṭṭhānato*).

Since the term *micchā* (and the compound *micchādiṭṭhi*) is indeed linked to opinions, hearsay, incomplete beliefs, acts of uncritical devotional faith, or commonplaces, an easy parallel can be drawn with δόξα, which, however, does not inhabit the path of darkness but seems to be that branch of the path of light of which Cornford spoke [24].

4. Names, Forms, and Opinions

The philosophies of Parmenides and the Buddha are fundamentally simple, both of which can be referenced to a logical structure that essentially describes the aporia of naming. Parmenides' philosophy can be divided into two parts: the fundamental assertion expressed in fragments 2.3 and 2.5, stating: "what is, cannot not be" (ἡ μὲν ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι) and "what is not, necessarily cannot be" (ἡ δ' ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς χρεών ἐστι μὴ εἶναι). These statements are part of the revelation the Goddess imparts to Parmenides regarding two paths. The path of what is not "I tell thee, is a completely unreliable path, for what is not, cannot be known, nor can it be expressed" (τὴν δή τοι φράζω παναπευθέα ἔμμεν ἀταρπόν· οὔτε γὰρ ἂν γνοίης τό γε μὴ ἐὸν-οὐ γὰρ ἀνυστόν-οὔτε φράσαις). Here, the nominalistic intent and the strong logical assertion become clear. Beyond the name, the concept "nothing", what this word intends to predicate—nonexistence—is in fact impossible [25] (p. 107). The path is unpassable because the possibility of nothingness is itself impossible: what is not, if it is not, would not even be pronounceable. Parmenides speaks of Necessity in the sense of a logical imperative, much like in Buddhism, where *avijjā* leads the masses to believe true what is *micchā*, the same occurs in the logical fallacy of naming.

It becomes evident, in relation to the first part of our analysis, that it is not being asserted here that the name itself, merely because it is conventional (and "empty", as Buddhists would say), does not exist. It describes an arbitrary attribution of identity that mortals confuse with the true identity of being, which would include its entirety, whereas the name is merely a partiality, and an arbitrary one at that. Therefore, it exists inevitably but is an artifact, leading to the consideration on thought: "it is necessary that what is thought and spoken is, for it is possible for it to be, as it is impossible for nothing to be" (χρὴ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ' ἐὸν ἔμμεναι· ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι, μηδὲν δ' οὐκ ἔστιν· τά σ' ἐγὼ φράζεσθαι ἄνωγα. πρώτης γάρ σ' ἀφ' ὁδοῦ ταύτης διζήσιος <εἴργω>, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' ἀπὸ τῆς, ἣν δὴ βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδὲν, *fr.* 6). In the following sections (6.5–9), Parmenides focuses on the blindness and deafness of those who believe in this fallacy, confusing what is with what is not. This forms the second part of our analysis, concerning the nature of names: "for it will never be proven that things that are not are, and thou restrain thy thought from this very way of inquiry" (οὐ γὰρ μήποτε τοῦτο δαμῇ εἶναι μὴ ἐόντα· ἀλλὰ σὺ τῆσδ' ἀφ' ὁδοῦ διζήσιος εἶργε νόημα, *fr.* 7.1-2). Finally, regarding what-is, Parmenides states: "nor is it divisible, for it is homogenous, and there is no more of it in one place than in another" (οὐδὲ διαιρετόν ἐστιν, ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἐστιν ὁμοῖον· οὐδέ τι τῇ μᾶλλον, τό κεν εἴργοι μιν συνέχεσθαι, 8.22-3) because "all is contiguous", being is continuous, what-is is not separated from nothing but is in contact with what-is (τῷ ξυνεχὲς πᾶν ἐστιν· ἐὸν γὰρ

ἐόντι πελάζει, 8.25). The Being is a Whole which is manifest in manifold *parts* [26]. Those parts are precisely what constitutes the main problem of philosophy.

Aristotle criticizes the Eleatic philosophy (*Φυσικής ἀκρόασις*, 1), particularly targeting Melissus and Parmenides, whom he judges as "moving from false premises" (καί γάρ ψεθδῆ λαμβάνουσι καὶ ἀσυλόγιστοί εἰσιν), and Melissus, in particular, for describing his thought in a coarse manner (φορτικός) [27–29]. Nonetheless, as Woodbury notes, the challenge of comprehending Parmenides' philosophy primarily lies in his conception of names. This aspect demonstrates a surprising convergence with Buddhist thought, wherein the phenomena of the world appear segmented and differentiated by consciousness into various forms, to which arbitrary names and impermanent identities are assigned, serving as descriptors of the world. This conception is so significant that it is also found in Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.7, which states that "in the beginning, indeed, the world was undivided. It was divided by name and form, so it is said: this thing has this name and this form" (*tad dhedhaṃ tarhy avyākṛtam āsīt; tan nāmarūpābhyām eva vyākriyatāsaunāmāyam idaṃrūpa iti; tad idam apy etarhi nāmarūpābhyām eva vyākriyate saunāmāyam idaṃrūpa iti*). This verse perfectly underscores the Buddhist notion of the name/form dichotomy (*nāma/rūpa*). Specifically regarding the concept of the name, Bronkhorst observes that we must acknowledge the function of this dichotomy as "the original division of the world into objects and their names" [30] (p. 19).

Returning to Parmenides, the issue of names (ὀνόματα) must be understood similarly. Names are not 'real' in the sense of describing entities that are genuinely autonomous and independent; rather, they are arbitrary divisions of being created by humans. These divisions are not even factual, since it is impossible to divide what-is, thereby making it become other than what-is. In this context, the fundamental unity of being is consistently reaffirmed.

> αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ πάντα φάος καὶ νὺξ ὀνόμασται
>
> καὶ τὰ κατὰ σφετέρας δυνάμεις ἐπὶ τοῖσί τε καὶ τοῖς,
>
> πᾶν πλέον ἐστὶν ὁμοῦ φάεος καὶ νυκτὸς ἀφάντου
>
> ἴσων ἀμφοτέρων, ἐπεὶ οὐδετέρῳ μέτα μηδέν.
>
> Now that everything has been named as light and night, and the things belonging to the power of each have been assigned to these things and to those, all things is full at once of light and obscure night; both equal, since neither has aught to do with the other.
>
> [*fr*. 9]

Names (ὀνόματα) should be viewed as internal epiphenomenal configurations pertaining to the sphere of δόξα, which encompasses imprecise, partial, ephemeral, incomplete, and reductive opinions about being. In fragment 16, we read that "thus, according to human opinion, things come into being and thus are in the present, and over time they believe that these things will grow until they perish; to each of these things, humans have assigned a name" (οὕτω τοι κατὰ δόξαν ἔφυ τάδε καί νυν ἔασι καὶ μετέπειτ' ἀπὸ τοῦδε τελευτήσουσι τραφέντα· τοῖς δ' ὄνομ' ἄνθρωποι κατέθεντ' ἐπίσημον ἑκάστῳ). Here, Parmenides criticizes the arbitrariness of names and their ephemeral nature, indicating that such designations correspond to a similarly distorted or partial conception of Being. This conception posits that individual things, mechanistically understood as autonomous and separable parts, can exist or not exist depending on the moment. This, according to Severino [21], p. 139, forms the basis of Aristotle's misunderstanding of Parmenides (τὸ ὂν εἶναι ἐξ ἀνάγκης **ὅτε** ἔστιν, i.e., the Being is *only* ***when*** *it is*, and it is not *when* it is not). This fragment is thus commented upon by Woodbury:

> The names that mortal men institute, although false and deceptive, are not mere fancies or illusions of the mind. They are accounts of the one real world, to the existence of which men's beliefs are at times committed. But men's convictions

are not steadfast, because they have accepted the authority of appearance (δόξα) and are held fast in the contradictions of the dualism to which this testifies.

[31] (p. 149)

Parmenides' conception of Being is renowned for its unity and immutability. According to him, Being is absolute, homogenous, and indivisible. It is impossible to encounter 'more being' or 'less being' in one place compared to another, as if Being were 'contained' or manifesting uniformly across all things. Although different entities, such as a stone and a tree, appear distinct, these differences are merely superficial manifestations of a single, unified Being. Parmenides asserts that there cannot be locations where Being is present to a greater or lesser extent. Consequently, his philosophy implies that Being is the foundational reality underlying everything, and every distinct entity, despite its apparent diversity, embodies or implies the entirety of Being.

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πεῖρας πύματον, τετελεσμένον ἐστί

πάντοθεν, εὐκύκλου σφαίρης ἐναλίγκιον ὄγκῳ,

μεσσόθεν ἰσοπαλὲς πάντῃ· τὸ γὰρ οὔτε τι μεῖζον

οὔτε τι βαιότερον πελέναι χρεόν ἐστι τῇ ἢ τῇ.

οὔτε γὰρ οὐκ ἐὸν ἔστι, τό κεν παύοι μιν ἱκνεῖσθαι

εἰς ὁμόν, οὔτ' ἐὸν ἔστιν ὅπως εἴη κεν ἐόντος

τῇ μᾶλλον τῇ δ' ἧσσον, ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἐστιν ἄσυλον·

οἷ γὰρ πάντοθεν ἶσον, ὁμῶς ἐν πείρασι κύρει.

Wherever its farthest boundary lies, Being is complete in every direction,

Equally balanced from the center in all directions,

Resembling the mass of a rounded sphere; for it cannot be greater

Nor smaller in one place than in another. For there is nothing

That is not, which could prevent it from extending equally,

nor is it possible for there to be more of it here and less there, since it is entirely inviolable.

Because it is equal in all directions, it is also equally confined within its limits.

[*fr.* 8.42-9]

Regarding a potential analogous Buddhist perspective, it should be noted that a point of convergence between the two schools of thought could undoubtedly be monism. However, these two forms of monism originate from fundamentally different aspects. Buddhism is unquestionably a philosophy that pursues non-dualism (*advaita*), thereby strongly believing that reality is ultimately singular and indivisible in its nature. This is evident from the Pāli suttas, which leave no room for doubt concerning the radical monism inherent in their vision. Parmenidean thought has been interpreted as "strictly a non dualism, or anti-dualism" by several commentators sometimes also engaging in a comparative dialogue with Indian philosophies [32–34].

Brown proposes an intriguing analysis of the Buddhist conception of reality that involves "holographic representation and fractal self-similarity", where "each point-instant is a microcosm of a phase in becoming, and each phase in becoming is a microcosm of the mental state" [35] (p. 273).

Nevertheless, this must be contextualized with practice, which is indispensable in Buddhism. It is only through contemplative practice that this monism becomes apparent; prior to reaching this stage of understanding, things deceptively appear to us as 'dualized' or 'dichotomized'. For example, in Snp 4.12, regarding those who persist in perceptual delusions, we read:

na heva saccāni bahūni nānā,

aññatra saññāya niccāni loke;

takkañca diṭṭhīsu pakappayitvā,

saccaṃ musāti dvayadhammamāhu.

No, there are not multiple different truths

which, beyond perception, persist in the world.

However, having established a reasoning based on multiple truths

they assert that there is a dual outcome: true and false.

The underlying view is that this 'dualistic' reasoning (*dvayadhammamāhu*) is founded, as the name itself suggests, on a 'divisive' act of organizing reality, which, once subjected to this vision, perceives things as dichotomized, of dual nature (*dvayanissito khvāyaṃ*). This genesis is described, for instance, in SN 12.25 where we read:

dvayanissito khvāyaṃ, kaccāna, loko yebhuyyena—atthitañceva natthitañca.

lokasamudayaṃ kho, kaccāna, yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya passato yā loke natthitā sā na hoti.

lokanirodhaṃ kho, kaccāna, yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya passato yā loke atthitā sā na hoti.

O Kaccāna, this world largely depends on the dualistic conceptions of existence and non-existence.

However, when you truly comprehend the truth regarding the origin of the world, O Kaccāna, you will be free from the conception of the non-existence of the world.

And when, O Kaccāna, you correctly understand the truth about the cessation of the world, you will be free from the conception of the existence of the world.

Here again, the Buddha emphasizes the strictly eidetic nature of the notions of existence and non-existence: these are not realities but conceptions, and importantly, such conceptions are conceivable, even in their aporia (as in the case of the notion of non-existence) only within the context of the 'world'. However, the world (*loka*) is not understood by Buddhists as the absolute truth, the reality in its pure being-such (*yathābhūtaṃ*), but rather as a mental construct, a reduction of this truth that is substantiated precisely on divisive and dualistic notions (*dvayanissito khvāyaṃ*). From such dualisms, the world delineates its boundaries and orders its 'things', but because these are regulated by conventions, though founded on truth, they do not appear incontrovertibly true. Here too, the Buddha seems to transcend the notions of 'true' and 'false' for the same dualistic reasons, yet simultaneously promotes the contemplative pursuit of an absolute 'suchness' (*yathābhūtaṃ*). This concept is made clearer in SN 22.90, where the problem of the origin and cessation of the world is explained to Channa (a variant of the name Kaccāna, indicating that this sutta is likely an extension or rewrite of SN 12.25) precisely starting from those cognitive mechanisms which, if nourished, sustain the world; if brought to cessation, they liberate the one who is usually unconsciously guided by such cognitive habituations. These mechanisms are form, sensation, perception, mental constructs, and consciousness, all labeled as impermanent factors (*rūpaṃ, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhārā, viññāṇaṃ... kho, āvuso channa, aniccaṃ*). As long as the impermanence of these factors is ignored, the one guided by them will not be the master of their own vision of reality. For this reason, Buddhism fundamentally relies on ascetic and contemplative practice, as it is not merely philosophical reasoning that can liberate from these mechanisms, but rather constant practice and ascetic discipline that, after understanding the problem, work to dismantle it.

Having thus understood the dualistic foundation of the world's problem in Buddhism, their conception of genesis becomes clearer. For instance, given that name and form, the signifier and the signified, are the condition for consciousness (*nāmarūpapaccayā viññāṇaṃ,*

viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ, DN 15), the assertion of the pursuit of 'unity' (*ekattaṃ*) through the ascetic life appears more sensible:

> *evameva kho, ānanda, bhikkhu amanasikaritvā gāmasaññaṃ, amanasikaritvā manussasaññaṃ, araññasaññaṃ paṭicca manasi karoti ekattaṃ.*
>
> Thus, a mendicant, ignoring the perceptions pertaining to the village and the perceptions of people, focuses on the perception of unity that dwells in the perception of the forest.

Note that in this discourse (MN 121), as in many others, the conflict between urban life and ascetic life is re-proposed through the village/forest dichotomy (*gāma*/*araññā*) [15,36]. The latter is fundamental as it is symbolically, but also concretely, the place where the ascetic withdraws to practice their exercise, while the city is seen as the place where the mundane and divisive order of conscious will is cast, and is rather the place where the normative orders, the 'signs' (*nimitta*) that govern the conscious system are reiterated by the society that, in fact, founded on that order, can only continue to impart it. This naturally implies the same caste division that in DN 27 and other discourses is rejected as false. Both the conceptual divisions of the 'things' of the world and the anthropological ones, such as those pertaining to social classes, are rejected. After various contemplative exercises, MN 121 culminates with the request to meditate on the dimension following that of unity attained in dwelling in neither-perception-nor-non-perception, that is, the unity achieved in dwelling in the dimension 'free of signs' (*animittaṃ cetosamādhiṃ paṭicca manasi karoti ekattaṃ*).

However, this discourse is not a defense of unity understood as the equality of all things. Diversity appears in the world, but it must be recognized as a manifestative mode, not a totality. There is thus a dual interpretative track: in its totality, truth is one, but in immersion in the phenomenology of things, it appears as diversity. Therefore, discourses like the one on the root of all things (MN 1) invite meditation on both 'unity as unity' (*ekattaṃ ekattato sañjānāti*) and 'diversity as diversity' (*nānattaṃ nānattato sañjānāti*). Ultimately, this incontrovertible truth must be implicit in everything; otherwise, it would not be reachable simply through contemplative practice. Anything, potentially, implies the absolute, once it is understood that the conception of an insurmountable separation between the witness and the witnessed, and the perceiver and the perceived, is the real problem to be transcended.

Therefore, what creates difference, at least to our perceptions, is the 'world' that frames a part of this being, namely the section we call 'world' and whose phenomena we experience. For Severino, these are 'circles of appearing' through which phenomenal chains enter and exit. We perceive them as long as they are within our 'circle', but the way we perceive them is also arbitrary because it is partial. Parmenides says about single 'things', the phenomena that progressively unveil and appear to us: "whatever of these things that are, *they are merely the names* that mortals have given them, believing those [names] are the true things", including "what becomes in being and then disappears, being and not being that change places and alter light and color" (τῷ πάντ' ὄνομ' ἔσται, ὅσσα βροτοὶ κατέθεντο πεποιθότες εἶναι ἀληθῆ, γίγνεσθαί τε καὶ ὄλλυσθαι, εἶναί τε καὶ οὐχί, καὶ τόπον ἀλλάσσειν διά τε χρόα φανὸν ἀμείβειν, *fr*. 8.38-41).

From the suttas of the Pāli canon, it is evident that the cognitive act in Buddhist philosophy is attributable to an essential associative factor: that between a particular reified cognitive form (*rūpa*), constituting the function of the Saussurean signified, and a nominal identity (*nāma*), i.e., the Saussurean signifier. The bifacial entity that associates nominal identity with cognitive form in a single idea is *nāmarūpa*, the linguistic sign. Buddhism conceives liberation as independence from the linguistic sign. In the sutta on right view (MN 9) we read:

> *yato kho, āvuso, ariyasāvako nāmarūpañca pajānāti, nāmarūpa-samudayañca pajānāti, nāmarūpanirodhañca pajānāti, nāmarūpanirodhagāminiṃ paṭipadañca pajānāti—*

katamaṃ panāvuso, nāmarūpaṃ, katamo nāmarūpasamudayo, katamo nāmarūpanirodho, katamā nāmarūpanirodhagāminī paṭipadā?

vedanā, saññā, cetanā, phasso, manasikāro—

idaṃ vuccatāvuso, nāmaṃ;

cattāri ca mahābhūtāni, catunnañca mahābhūtānaṃ upādāyarūpaṃ—

idaṃ vuccatāvuso, rūpaṃ.

iti idañca nāmaṃ idañca rūpaṃ—

idaṃ vuccatāvuso, nāmarūpaṃ.

viññāṇasamudayā nāmarūpasamudayo, viññāṇanirodhā nāmarūpanirodho, ayameva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo nāmarūpanirodhagāminī paṭipadā, seyyathidaṃ—

A noble disciple understands what names and forms are, what their origin is, their cessation, and what practices lead to their cessation. But what are name and form? What is their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation?

Sensation, perception, intention, contact, and attention;

This is called "name";

The four primary elements and the form derived from the four primary elements;

This is called "form".

Thus, this is name and this is form.

This (together) is called name-and-form.

Name and form arise from consciousness. Name and form cease when consciousness ceases. The practice leading to the cessation of name and form is simply the noble eightfold path.

These two terms, literally "name" (*nāma*) and "form" (*rūpa*), possess various possible connotations. The classical interpretation sees them as indicating mind and body, but I also consider the linguistic interpretation plausible, particularly evident in the Pāli canon, where *nāma* is used as a "nominal signifier" and *rūpa* as "formal signified". Both are mental coefficients, psychic data without any concrete referent, merely ideas referring to a supposed real entity, establishing a cognitive act of what in a logical sense is essentially emptiness. The practice of liberation, therefore, must lead to the cessation of such a logical act. What the Buddha calls 'cessation of name-and-form' in the Sutta on right view might be understood in the same sense in which Parmenides' Goddess warns against attributing nominal identities to things that 'are not', which are purely nominalistic and conventional.

Certainly, *rūpa* may also denote the body, but in its cognitive sense, it refers to the formal datum of an entity, the external aspect that indicates its perceived meaning. The context of its use determines the nuance that *rūpa* assumes, and in many suttas of the Pāli Canon, it is evident that it refers to one of the two aspects of what linguistics calls a 'sign'.

The cognitive mechanism described by ancient Buddhism follows approximately this scheme: take any cognitive organ, in this case, sight. From the vision (*cakkhu*) directed towards a "referent" object, the form (*rūpa*) of the same is extracted. According to the principle of cognitive association, which we derive from the works of Rosch and De Saussure, the vision of a given form is followed by its association with the "ideal form", or the prototypical form, which belongs to a *nāma*, that is, the signifier. The form (*rūpa*) that the eye sees is not the "true form" of the object, but rather, as cognitive psychology teaches us, a 'mental copy' processed by neural processes through vision. The true form is thus traced back to ideal concepts of forms associable with entities referable to already known signs. This process includes simplification: it is impossible to see the "true form" of an object in its entirety because observing it at the atomic level would reveal that no two objects are identical.

The linguistic–cognitive reduction to the binomial *nāmarūpa*, which is entirely idealized, is necessary for mutual understanding among people, enabling us to look at two chairs and define them both as "chairs", even though no two chairs can be exactly identical in every single detail; without this, we would experience a significantly aggravated version of the already severe hypermnesic syndrome.

In the Vipallāsasutta (AN 4.49), it is stated that there are four types (*cattārome*) of cognitive misunderstandings or perversions (in the sense of *pervertō*, to turn in the wrong direction), and they afflict semantics (*saññāvipallāsā*), cognition (*cittavipallāsā*), and the vision of things (*diṭṭhivipallāsā*). The four ambiguities are as follows:

(1) Believing as permanent what is impermanent (*anicce niccanti saññāvipallāso cittavipallāso diṭṭhivipallāso*);
(2) Mistaking discomfort for happiness (*dukkhe sukhanti saññāvipallāso cittavipallāso diṭṭhivipallāso*);
(3) Attributing an identity to things that are without self (*anattani attāti saññāvipallāso cittavipallāso diṭṭhivipallāso*);
(4) Believing beautiful what is ugly (*asubhe subhanti saññāvipallāso cittavipallāso diṭṭhivipallāso*).

The way Buddhist meditation intends to correct these misunderstandings is simple: by affirming the principle of evidence. What is impermanent cannot be permanent; what is discomfort cannot be happiness; what has no identity cannot have an identity; and what is unpleasant cannot be pleasant. These are the corrections to apply to the misunderstandings of semantics, cognition, and vision (*nasaññāvipallāsā nacittavipallāsā nadiṭṭhivipallāsā*): impermanence is impermanence (*anicce aniccanti*), discomfort is discomfort (*dukkhe dukkhanti*), non-self is non-self (*anattani anattāti*), and finally, the ugly is ugly (*asubhe asubhanti*). Finally, of those who continue to see permanence in impermanence, happiness in discomfort, identity in non-self, and beauty in ugliness, the text states the following:

> *te yogayuttā mārassa, ayogakkhemino janā; sattā gacchanti saṃsāraṃ, jātimaraṇagāmino.*
>
> *yadā ca buddhā lokasmiṃ, uppajjanti pabhaṅkarā; te imaṃ dhammaṃ pakāsenti, dukkhūpasamagāminaṃ.*
>
> *tesaṃ sutvāna sappaññā, sacittaṃ paccaladdhā te; aniccaṃ anic-cato dakkhuṃ, dukkhamaddakkhu dukkhato.*
>
> *anattani anattāti, asubhaṃ asubhataddasuṃ; sammādiṭṭhi-samādānā, sabbaṃ dukkhaṃ upaccagun ti.*
>
> Subjugated to the yoke of Māra [the personification of death], these people obtain nothing from the yoke. Sentient beings continue to wander, proceeding through birth and death. But when the Buddhas appear in the world, they bring Light. They shine with the light of this teaching that leads to the cessation of suffering. When a wise person hears them, they reclaim their mind, seeing impermanence as impermanence, suffering as suffering, non-self as non-self, and ugliness as ugliness. Correcting their vision, they rise and transcend suffering.

It is therefore evident that both the Buddha and Parmenides seek to emphasize how the multiplicity of being that manifests in appearance is determined not by the totality of names (which are possibly infinite), but rather by the transcendence of any name in the Whole. However, this does not imply that their nominal existence is a non-existence or a lesser form of existence. Names do exist, yet they are not objectively true, conveying a deceptive understanding of reality. What cognitive perception does is mediate the conception of existence, perceiving it as multiple manifestations, which are then organized into nameable and recallable entities upon appearing. This process also generates a cycle of interdependence between the observer and the observed, where each depends on and constantly modifies the other, without one being entirely generated by the other. The two aspects (observer and observed) are, in reality, relative manifestations of a single reality.

5. Perception, Knowledge, and Phenomena

There exists a relationship between being and thought, or rather it might be more precise to state that the aspects of being that manifest in mundanity, thereby constituting the theatre of phenomena, are to some extent dependent on thought. This crucial aspect, central to both philosophical perspectives, presents an element of comparability. The extent of this comparability remains uncertain, as opinions diverge, particularly in the case of Parmenides [31] (p. 156) and [37]. The issue in the latter case is to determine whether there is a coincidence between being and thought, or if, as previously mentioned, being is immutable, but the configurations of it that appear are prefigured by the thought inherent within it.

As for the Buddhist thought, it appears quite evident, given the mechanism of the five aggregates and their conception of the world, that it is indeed the entirety of human conceptions that shapes, or more precisely, prefigures the phenomenal theater. A separate study has been dedicated to the notion of the world (*loka*), demonstrating that the Buddhist idea of 'world' fundamentally coincides with the perceptual process [11]. This also elucidates why the 'end of the world', as presented in numerous suttas (such as SN 35.116, AN 4.45, and AN 4.23 among others), is equated with the cessation of the perceptual bundle (the six senses, including the mind, *mano*). Moreover, an explicit declaration is also present in Dhp 1.1:

> *manopubbaṅgamā dhammā,*
>
> *manoseṭṭhā manomayā*
>
> Thought shapes phenomena
>
> They are ruled by thought, made by thought.

According to Parmenides, as previously mentioned, the issue appears more complex, yet I am inclined to acknowledge a certain proximity to Buddhism. Thought is necessarily encompassed within being; within Parmenides' logic, nothing can exist outside of it. Even opinions, and erroneous views, which are misinterpretations of being, must necessarily be included and anticipated within being itself. This interpretation aligns, for instance, with that of Severino [21]. This does not imply, of course, any inconsistency within the perfect, immobile, and immutable being. Movement, along with the thought that renders it a φαινόμενον—that is, evident (φαίνω) and visible (illuminated, φάος)—is already incorporated within the totality of being. However, it appears sequential to us due to the very thought that is within being and thus implies it; it is neither separate nor independent (separable) from it.

> If everything, that is, thinks, and the only thing that is is, in fact, the One Being, then that Being can think of nothing but itself, so that it will indeed be both subject and object in experience. In Parmenides' strict monism this will also mean that the whole of Being thinks of the whole of itself, and not that some parts think of others, even if those think in return of them.
>
> [37] (p. 558)

Buddhism has never asserted the nonexistence of things [35] (p. 264). I acknowledge that some interpreters would indeed use the expression 'nonexistent' in relation to the problem of cognition in Buddhist philosophy [38]; nonetheless, I will articulate why I do not fundamentally agree with the use of this term. There is no nihilistic assertion nor an explicit declaration attributed to the Buddha suggesting that the things we perceive do not actually exist [39,40]. The Buddhist discourse is far more complex. Illusion (*māyā*) does not mean seeing what is not there: if something is seen, it evidently exists. However, illusion acts as a veil that interferes with the accurate interpretation of reality. The Buddha's goal is to remove this veil. Hence, the ultimate sphere of meditation is described as "neither-perception-nor-non-perception" (*nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana*), as it is the idea that reifies, the idea that attributes interpretations and leads to misunderstanding. While reification is the

process that transforms an idea into a strong concept (entity), identification is the desire to make one entity identical to another (*īdenticus facere*).

What we perceive as 'becoming' is actually an illusion. The Buddhist thought conceives becoming as the evidence of the impossibility of isolation of any entity: something "arises and perishes in relation to immediately antecedent and consequent events. Since every event depends on, or is conditioned by, these relations, and since every event itself is a relation, the event cannot be distinguished from the conditions that cause it" [35] (p. 265). Buddhist philosophy is rather a problem of "whole-to-part" relation [35] (p. 268).

Thus, the notion of nothingness is present as the idea of nothingness but not as a real possibility, leading to the paradox where "nothingness" exists, and therefore is not nothingness. Nothingness self-negates its own meaning: what nothingness wishes to actualize is unactualizable, thus "nothingness" exists as what we can call "nothingness", the idea of nothingness, and even the feeling of it as a possibility of annulment, but what is nonexistent cannot exist. It is clear that as long as we remain entangled in the trap of ideation, we will continue to confuse the truth of ideas with the truth of the absolute. Ideas exist and are true, this is indubitable, but it is incorrect to say that they coincide with the truth.

To understand the impossibility of nothingness, one must experience this absurdity. For this reason, before reaching the final sphere, which surpasses both ideation and non-ideation, the Buddha stated that meditation leads to the sphere of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*). This has confused many interpreters, who believed that this sphere is one of annulment, thereby confirming the absurd hypothesis of Buddhism as a nihilistic philosophy. In truth, there is no sphere of annulment, nor the possibility of destroying things. The Buddha has always spoken of the cessation (*nirodha*) of cognitive processes or the deconstruction of psychological models (such as the five aggregates), but never of the possibility of destroying what exists, nor that what exists does not really exist.

The *ākiñcaññāyatana* appears rather as a meditative dimension in which the possibility of nothingness is experienced, and since one subsequently reaches the "neither-perception-nor-non-perception" sphere, it seems evident that such an experience does not lead to an annulment of things, but rather, as usual, to a cessation of those cognitive mechanisms that distort the real essence of things themselves.

The Ākiñcaññāyatanapañhāsutta (SN 40.7) is the text dedicated to the issue of the sphere of nothingness. In this sutta, we read how the Buddha describes entering this meditative state: "It is when a mendicant, having completely gone beyond the sphere of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing', enters and remains in the sphere of nothingness". Let us carefully analyze this phrase. What does the Buddha mean by the assertion "there is nothing" (*natthi kiñcīti*)? This consideration, that nothing appears anymore as an "is" (*atthi*), and therefore "is not" (*n'atthi*) what seemingly was before, is a consequence, the Buddha says, of having "totally surpassed the sphere of infinite consciousness" (*sabbaso viññāṇañcāyatanaṃ samatikkamma*). We must remember, however, what consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is in Buddhism. It is, as we recall, a knowledge (*jñāṇa*) derived from separation (*vi-*). Consciousness is everything that organizes the world through discernment, it is what divides being into entities, and assigns nominal identities to formal meanings derived from this dissection. In the Mahānidānasutta (DN 15), it is stated that discernment (*viññāṇa*) is also an emergent property of the name-form (*nāmarūpa*) instance. This suggests that Buddhists conceive of discernment as closely related to the Saussurean semantic unity of signifier-signified (*nāma-rūpa*). Here, the term *rūpa* is to be understood as the more primordial form preceding the assigned meaning (*attha-paññatti*). Consequently, it becomes clear that the unity *nāma-rūpa*, as expressed by Buddhist thinkers, actually indicates a function wherein a *nām*ization occurs from an original and indistinct *rūpa* through the process of *vijānati*.

Furthermore, one arrives at the definition of *vedanā* as an aspect of experiencing (*vedeti*). This term is also connected to the idea of "knowing", but in an alternative form to the root *-jñā* that we have discussed thus far (which is etymologically linked to the Greek γνῶσις).

Consciousness is what creates the world we know with the identities of the things we see. Once consciousness is surpassed, the world also ceases. But this does not mean that everything ceases to exist: it simply no longer appears (*n'atthi*) as it did before. Thus, the Buddha urges mendicants to contemplate this dimension where nothing appears anymore.

In the Nevasaññānāsaññāyatanapañhāsutta (SN 40.8), which discusses the transcendence of semantic perception, the reason why it is not sufficient to bring everything out of the field of appearance is finally explained. Again, in the discourse on the root of all things (Mūlapariyāyasutta, MN 1), the Buddha gives a discourse that can help us understand what has been said so far:

> *idha, bhikkhave, assutavā puthujjano ariyānaṃ adassāvī ariyadhammassa akovido ariyadhamme avinīto, sappurisānaṃ adassāvī sappurisadhammassa akovido sappurisadhamme avinīto— pathaviṃ pathavito sañjānāti; pathaviṃ pathavito saññatvā pathaviṃ maññati, pathaviyā maññati, pathavito maññati, pathaviṃ meti maññati, pathaviṃ abhinandati.*
>
> *taṃ kissa hetu?*
>
> *'apariññātaṃ tassā'ti vadāmi.*
>
> Here, monks, an uneducated ordinary person who has not seen the noble ones, is unskilled in the teachings of the noble ones, undisciplined in the teachings of the noble ones, not having seen the true persons, unskilled in their teachings, undisciplined in the teachings of the true persons, perceives the earth as "earth". Having perceived the earth as "earth", they conceive the earth, they conceive in the earth, they conceive from the earth, they conceive "the earth is mine", and they delight in the earth.
>
> Why is that?
>
> Because, I say, they have not fully understood it.

Notice the powerful expression *saññatvā*, formed from the term indicating semantic conception (*saññā*) followed by the qualitative suffix *-tvā*. It is as if, in this case, one speaks of a semanticity of things: the one who sees the earth as "earth" brings forth the appearance of "earth" as a semantic element identified by their consciousness, the result of attributing a nominal identity "earth" to the formal (earth), from which the identification of earth as "earth" arises. Identification is the desire to make one entity identical to another (*īdenticus facere*), and this mechanism of *saññatvā* mentioned by the Buddha is precisely the conscious will to create an identity: that of the earth with "earth", but both are the result of discernment, that is, the cognitive separation of being into entities (cognitive reification).

The same discourse made for the earth is repeated for all other elements: water (*āpaṃ*), fire (*tejaṃ*), air (*vāyaṃ*), sentient beings (*bhūte*), deities (*deve*), the creator (*pajāpatiṃ*), the principle (*brahmaṃ*), radiant deities (*ābhassare*), deities full of glory (*subhakiṇhe*), deities abundant in fruits (*vehapphale*), the supreme being (*abhibhuṃ*), the dimension of infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatanaṃ*), and the dimension of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatanaṃ*) to provide a comprehensive picture of how cognitive reification works. The same discourse is then repeated for the sphere of nothingness. This discourse on identification in identification, repeated, not by chance, also for the sphere of nothingness, thus demonstrates that it is a discourse on the idea of nothingness, and absolutely not a nihilistic assertion of things! The so-called "sphere of nothingness" is not the condition in which being no longer is, but the sphere in which the idea of nothingness manifests. The Buddha says: "those", who do not know the teachings of the true persons, "perceive the dimension of nothingness as 'dimension of nothingness'" (*ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ ākiñcaññāyatanato sañjānāti*). What the Buddha is evidently affirming here is that the idea of nothingness is enough to allow a dimension in which nothingness is given to appear as a possibility: thus, the fool perceives nothingness as a real risk.

> *ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ ākiñcaññāyatanato saññatvā ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ maññati, ākiñcaññāyatanasmiṃ maññati, ākiñcaññāyatanato maññati, ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ meti maññati, ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ abhinandati. taṃ kissa hetu? 'apariññātaṃ tassā'ti vadāmi.*

> But if they identify with "nothing", they identify what pertains to nothing, they identify as "nothing", they identify [in the assertion] "I possess nothing", and they delight in nothing.
>
> Why does this happen? Because, I say, they have not fully understood.

The same discourse is repeated, of course, for the dimension of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṃ*) because, in order to never contradict this great teaching, the Buddha reminds us that the idea of a thing is not the thing itself (although, I would add, the 'idea' of the 'thing' is indeed something).

6. Concluding Remarks

The Buddha's and Parmenides' are two very different philosophies, belonging to geographically distant traditions of thought, although inserted in the same Indo-European cultural milieu. In this article, we have shown how they converge on common themes concerning the nature of truth, the position of the human being in the world linked to the problem of its perception, and possible solutions to this problem.

Numerous attempts have been made to translate the formulations of Parmenides and the Buddha into rigorous logical–analytical assertions [41–44]. However, I believe these attempts risk excessively narrowing the scope of these philosophical teachings, which extend beyond mere logic. Indeed, they highlight the limits of linguistic expressibility, with logic being a highly rigorous form of language. Therefore, logicalizing their teachings would be erroneous. For Parmenides, "nothingness" is the fundamental aporia (the name is pronounceable, but what it aims to describe is impossible), and thus it is also the ultimate insurmountable limit (πεῖρας πύματον). Similarly, for the Buddha, liberation lies in transcending the world itself (*loka*) as a collection of perceptions, and thus it cannot be merely described by language but must transcend it in the most radical way.

Interestingly, Parmenides' section on δόξα and the Buddhist myth of creation both describe a world that progressively acquires divisions, categories, and binarisms, which are identified as the evils of humanity for similar reasons. Although the world is organized, it is a reduction of being, a δόξα [45], or an incorrect vision. This applies to both simple and complex things.

Notably, Parmenides' reference to genders (δεξιτεροῖσιν μὲν κούρους, λαιοῖσι δὲ κούρας, *fr.* 17) is comparable to DN 27 (*itthiyā ca itthiliṅgaṃ pāturahosi purisassa ca purisaliṅgaṃ*, part 7 on the birth of genders or *Itthipurisaliṅgapātubhāva*). Furthermore, the division of all things into "day and night" corresponds to the primary division, the emergence of two opposite poles, A and non-A, from which everything descends: "they assigned to each an opposite substance, marking them as distinct from one another" (τἀντία δ' ἐκρίναντο δέμας καὶ σήματ' ἔθεντο χωρὶς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, *fr.* 8.55-6). These substances, basic distinctive principles, are precisely the luminous fire and the dark night (φλογὸς αἰθέριον πῦρ, … τἀντία νύκτ' ἀδαῆ), one being light and the other dense and coarse. In DN 27, the appearance of the sun and moon coincides not only with the arrival of day and night in temporal division and world organization but also with the progressive loss of the divine nature of sentient beings and their gradual acquisition of coarse, material, worldly bodies (*atha kho te, vāseṭṭha, sattā rasapathaviṃ hatthehi āluppakārakaṃ upakkamiṃsu paribhuñjituṃ; yato kho te, vāseṭṭha, sattā rasapathaviṃ hatthehi āluppakārakaṃ upakkamiṃsu paribhuñjituṃ; atha tesaṃ sattānaṃ sayaṃpabhā antaradhāyi; sayaṃpabhāya antarahitāya candimasūriyā pāturahesuṃ*).

To deconstruct even the psycho-cognitive apparatus, the Buddha repeats the same warning about identification for every aspect of the cognitive process: the seen (*diṭṭhaṃ*), the heard (*sutaṃ*), the thought (*mutaṃ*), and the conceived (*viññātaṃ*). Even great philosophical ideas, as ideas, risk diverting attention from the truth itself (the truth is not the idea of truth). Therefore, the Buddha warns against the idea of unity (*ekattaṃ*), as well as the idea of diversity (*nānattaṃ*), and the idea of totality (*sabbaṃ*). However, something changes when it comes to the supreme asceticism (*nibbānaṃ*). Nirvāṇa is conceived by the wise for what it is: "they directly perceive nirvāṇa as nirvāṇa" (*nibbānaṃ nibbānato abhijānāti*), which

implies that "they do not identify with nirvāṇa, they do not identify regarding *nirvāṇa*, they do not identify with the statement *'nirvāṇa* is mine' [or 'I possess/control *nirvāṇa'*], and they do not take pleasure in *nirvāṇa*" (*nibbānaṃ nibbānato abhiññāya nibbānaṃ na maññati, nibbānasmiṃ na maññati, nibbānato na maññati, nibbānaṃ meti na maññati, nibbānaṃ nābhinandati*). And why does this occur? Because "they have completely understood" (*pariññātaṃ tassā*). Having reached this condition, one perceives things as they are, without nihilistic cognitive mediation: "the Realized One, oh monks, the Perfect One, who is fully awakened, knows the earth as earth" (*tathāgatopi, bhikkhave, arahaṃ sammāsambuddho patha-viṃ pathavito abhijānāti*), and so on, the discourse is repeated for all the other elements mentioned earlier. The Buddha can know things as they are because he no longer identifies.

The term *nirvāṇa* was originally used to indicate the extinguishing of a fire or a lamp [46], while in Buddhist terminology, it is used to signify the extinction of cognitive whirlwinds that lead to liberation from distress. Nirvāṇa is like a deforestation of cognitive preconceptions, an eradication of mental obstacles.

Cessation (*nirodha*) is not the death of a thing but the cessation of the appearance of a phenomenon. A phenomenon that previously appeared due to certain conditions that caused it to manifest, when deprived of those co-causes, no longer appears, is no longer present, and is thus said to have ceased (*nirodha*). Neither the phenomenon as a conceivable thing nor the co-causes that determine its appearance can cease to exist, as they are parts of being, they simply are, and cessation does not imply their becoming non-being.

Ultimately, Parmenides' conception of light as a "fiery flame of a torch" (φλογὸς αἰθέριον πῦρ, *fr*. 8.56) is intricately connected to the notions of names and identities. Similar to Buddhist thought, Parmenides' work examines the semiosis of division [47] (p. 211) as a foundational act of cognitive existence. In Plato's Φαίδων (109a–c), a view of the world from above is described, which appears to evoke a form of shamanic flight [48]. Although the matter is controversial, if it is true, as some believe, that this passage was inspired by the verses of Parmenides, then it is possible that his ecstatic and luminous experiences were also the result of mystical engagement, as has been suggested [23] (p. 73).

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Abbreviations

Snp	Suttanipāta
Dhp	Dhammapada
Iti	Itivuttaka
DN	Dīghanikāya
MN	Majjhimanikāya
SN	Saṃyuttanikāya
AN	Aṅguttaranikāya

References

1. Shulman, E. Early Buddhist imagination: The Aṭṭhakavagga as Buddhist poetry. *J. Int. Assoc. Buddh. Stud.* **2012**, *35*, 363–411.
2. Gonda, J. *The Vision of Vedic Poets*; De Gruyter Mouton: The Hague, The Netherlands, 1963. [CrossRef]
3. Shaver, G.J.; Hofstadter, A. Martin Heidegger: Poetry, Language, Thought. *Boundary 2* **1973**, *1*, 742–749. [CrossRef]
4. West, M.L. *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*; Oxford University Press: Oxford, NY, USA, 2007.
5. Van Den Abbeele, G. As the World Turns: Heidegger and the Origin of Poetry. In *Philosophy and Poetry*; Ghosh, R., Ed.; Columbia University Press: New York, NY, USA, 2018; pp. 23–42. [CrossRef]
6. Most, G.W. What Ancient Quarrel between Philosophy and Poetry? In *Plato and the Poets*; Volume Plato and the Poets; Destrée, P., Herrmann, F.-G., Eds.; Brill: Leiden, The Netherlands, 2011; pp. 1–20. [CrossRef]

7. Norman, K.R. On Translating the Suttanipata. *Buddh. Stud. Rev.* **2004**, *21*, 69–84. [CrossRef]
8. Jayawickrama, N.A. Critical Analysis of the Sutta Nipata. *Buddh. Stud. Rev.* **1980**, *3*, 3–19. [CrossRef]
9. Divino, F. An Anthropological Outline of the Sutta Nipāta: The Contemplative Experience in Early Buddhist Poetry. *Religions* **2023**, *14*, 172. [CrossRef]
10. Verdenius, W.J. Parmenides' Conception of Light. *Mnemosyne* **1949**, *2*, 116–131. [CrossRef]
11. Divino, F. In This World or the Next: Investigation over the "End of the World" in Contemplative Practice through the Pāli Canon. *Ann. Sez. Orient.* **2023**, *83*, 99–129. [CrossRef]
12. Hamilton, S. The 'External World': Its Status and Relevance in the Pali Nikāyas. *Religion* **1999**, *29*, 73–90. [CrossRef]
13. Katz, N. Does the "Cessation of the World" Entail the Cessation of Emotions? *Buddh. Stud. Rev.* **1980**, *4*, 53–65. [CrossRef]
14. Friedlander, P.G. The Body and the World in Buddhism. In *Medicine, Religion, and the Body*; Coleman, E.B., White, K., Eds.; Brill: Leiden, The Netherlands, 2010; pp. 51–67. [CrossRef]
15. Divino, F.; Di Lenardo, A. The World and the Desert: A Comparative Perspective on the "Apocalypse" between Buddhism and Christianity. *Buddh.-Christ. Stud.* **2023**, *43*, 141–162. [CrossRef]
16. Focanti, L. Looking for an Identity. The Patria and the Greek Cities in Late Antique Roman Empire. *Rev. Belg. Philol. d'Histoire* **2018**, *96*, 947–968. [CrossRef]
17. Velez de Cea, A. Emptiness in the Pali Suttas and the Question of Nagarjuna's Orthodoxy. *Philos. East West* **2005**, *55*, 507–528. [CrossRef]
18. Fuller, C.J. British India or traditional India? An anthropological problem. *Ethnos* **1977**, *42*, 95–121. [CrossRef]
19. Wiltshire, M.G. *Ascetic Figures before and in Early Buddhism*; De Gruyter: Berlin, Germany, 1990. [CrossRef]
20. Haney, W.S. Metaphor and the Experience of Light. In *The Elemental Dialectic of Light and Darkness*; Springer: Dordrecht, The Netherlands, 1992; pp. 237–245. [CrossRef]
21. Severino, E. Ritornare a Parmenide. *Riv. Filos. Neo Scolast.* **1964**, *56*, 137–175.
22. Boodin, J.E. The Vision of Parmenides. *Philos. Rev.* **1943**, *52*, 578. [CrossRef]
23. Vlastos, G. Parmenides' Theory of Knowledge. *Trans. Proc. Am. Philol. Assoc.* **1946**, *77*, 66. [CrossRef]
24. Cornford, F.M. Parmenides' Two Ways. *Class. Q.* **1933**, *27*, 97–111. [CrossRef]
25. Severino, E. *Intorno al Senso del Nulla*; Adelphi: Milan, Italy, 2013.
26. Cherniss, H.F. Parmenides and the Parmenides of Plato. *Am. J. Philol.* **1932**, *53*, 122. [CrossRef]
27. Spangler, O.A. Aristotle's Criticism of Parmenides in Physics I. *Apeiron* **1979**, *13*, 92–103. [CrossRef]
28. Volpe, E. Struttura e significato della critica di Aristotele agli Eleati (Ph. I, 2-3). *Peitho-Examina Antiq.* **2016**, *1*, 149–165. [CrossRef]
29. Backman, J.; Center, P.D. Being Itself and the Being of Beings: Reading Aristotle's Critique of Parmenides (Physics 1.3) after Metaphysics. *Epoché J. Hist. Philos.* **2018**, *22*, 271–291. [CrossRef]
30. Bronkhorst, J. *Language and Reality: On an Episode in Indian Thought*; Brill: Leiden, The Netherlands, 2011. [CrossRef]
31. Woodbury, L. Parmenides on Names. *Harv. Stud. Class. Philol.* **1958**, *63*, 145–160. [CrossRef]
32. Mourelatos, A. The Hegeler Institute Some Alternatives in Interpreting Parmenides. *Monist* **1979**, *62*, 3–14. [CrossRef]
33. Robbiano, C. Can Words Carve a Jointless Reality? Parmenides and Śaṅkara. *J. World Philos.* **2018**, *3*, 31–43. [CrossRef]
34. Robbiano, C. Parmenides' and Śaṅkara's Nondual Being without Not-being. *Philos. East West* **2016**, *66*, 290–327. [CrossRef]
35. Brown, J.W. Microgenesis and Buddhism: The Concept of Momentariness. *Philos. East West* **1999**, *49*, 261. [CrossRef]
36. Visigalli, P. Charting 'Wilderness' (araṇya) in Brahmanical and Buddhist Texts. *Indo-Iran. J.* **2019**, *62*, 162–180. [CrossRef]
37. Phillips, E.D. Parmenides on Thought and Being. *Philos. Rev.* **1955**, *64*, 546. [CrossRef]
38. Yao, Z. *Nonexistent Objects in Buddhist Philosophy*; Bloomsbury Academic: London, UK, 2020.
39. Burton, D. Is Madhyamaka Buddhism really the middle way? Emptiness and the problem of nihilism. *Contemp. Buddhism* **2001**, *2*, 177–190. [CrossRef]
40. Divino, F. Dualism and Psychosemantics: Holography and Pansematism in Early Buddhist Philosophy. *Comp. Philos.* **2023**, *14*, 4–40. [CrossRef]
41. Kahn, C.H. The Thesis of Parmenides. *Rev. Metaphys.* **1969**, *22*, 700–724.
42. Ketchum, R.J. Parmenides on What There Is. *Can. J. Philos.* **1990**, *20*, 167–190. [CrossRef]
43. Andrés Bredlow, L. Parmenides and the Grammar of Being. *Class Philol.* **2011**, *106*, 283–298. [CrossRef]
44. Factor, R.L. What Is the "Logic" in Buddhist Logic? *Philos. East West* **1983**, *33*, 183. [CrossRef]
45. Mackenzie, M.M. Parmenides' Dilemma. *Phronesis* **1982**, *27*, 1–12. [CrossRef]
46. Johansson, R. *The Psychology of Nirvana*; George Allen and Unwin: London, UK, 1969.
47. Squarcini, F. Le colombe e gli avvoltoi Sull'economia politica delle 'ecologie religiose' del passato, in India e non solo. *Ann. Ca' Foscari. Ser. Orient.* **2018**, *54*, 205–238. [CrossRef]
48. Bremmer, J.N. Method and Madness in the Study of Greek Shamanism: The Case of Peter Kingsley. *ASDIWAL Rev. Genevoise d'Anthropologie d'Histoire Relig.* **2018**, *13*, 93–109. [CrossRef]