

THE SEARCH FOR CONTROL:
A STUDY OF THE ORIGINS OF THE THOUGHT
OF EMPEDOCLES AND HERACLITUS

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ABSTRACT

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By

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The question of the origins of Greek philosophy is one that has almost as many answers as it has persons giving those answers. This dissertation constitutes an attempt to provide a textual study of two of the pre-Socratic philosophers, with a view toward establishing one such answer.

Chapter One gives a brief sampling of the diversity of opinion on this subject. Some seven authors are examined and their views sketched and discussed: Bréhier, Windelband, Zeller, Guthrie, Copleston, Cornford, and Burnet. The idea is then advanced that one significant reason why the Greeks, rather than some other culture, originated philosophy might be the influence that Greek religion had on the thinkers of the pre-Socratic period.

With this in mind, Chapter Two engages in a somewhat protracted discussion of what is meant by the term "Greek religion." The term is limited, in this paper, to the Olympian pantheon, taken in a wide sense; in any event, the mystery religions are not discussed. The chapter divides into a series of topics: (1) who the gods were, (2) where the gods came from (in both a geographical and a psychological sense), (3) where the gods went, (4) what the gods demanded of men, and (5) what men demanded of the gods. The chapter concludes that the

fundamental purpose for which Greek religion was elaborated in the first place was to provide for man some sort of control over events in the universe; when it proved incapable of performing this task, it was gradually jettisoned. The question then becomes, can the philosophies of Empedocles and Heraclitus be seen as attempts to fill the same need, on a rational rather than an authoritarian basis?

Chapter Three is devoted to Empedocles, and is divided into three sections: (1) his life and works, (2) a general sketch of his doctrine, and (3) a careful textual examination of the Empedoclean fragments, with a view toward seeing whether Empedocles' thought can legitimately be viewed as such a search for cosmic control. This third section is conducted by means of posing a series of questions, and attempting to answer them on the basis of available textual evidence. The questions are as follows: (1) what did Empedocles think of the Olympian gods? (2) what did he think of gods and religion in general? (3) in what did Empedocles' "religion" consist? (4) to what extent is man capable of what Empedocles demands of him? (5) what is the inner dynamic that makes possible what Empedocles' "religion" promises man? The question is then posed explicitly as to whether there is here a conception of cosmic control; the answer is in the affirmative.

Chapter Four employs the same methodology as did Chapter Three; the difference is that the subject matter is now the fragments of Heraclitus. The conclusion of the chapter is that here too the notion of a search for cosmic control can be discerned, but on a somewhat more limited basis than in the case of Empedocles.

In both Chapter Three and Chapter Four, the author accepts without further ado the text as given in Diels, recognizing at the same time that the textual problem is a large one, particularly in the case of Heraclitus.

Chapter Five embraces a summary of the first four chapters, a prospectus of where further work could be done, and some remarks on the significance of the project. The author sees the project as not simply a question of the origins of Greek philosophy, but also as part of a larger question regarding the possibility or impossibility of legitimate interplay between the authoritarian and the rational modes of thought.

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CHAPTER ONE

DIVERGENT VIEWS

"Scinditur incertum studia in contraria vulgus."

--Vergil, Aeneid, II, 39.

Introductory

Few scholars quarrel any more with the idea that philosophy, as we know it in the West, got its start with the ancient Greeks. "The Greeks, then, stand as the uncontested original thinkers and scientists of Europe. They first sought knowledge for its own sake, and pursued knowledge in a scientific, free and unprejudiced spirit."¹

Yet, while the fact of the Greek origin of philosophy is now commonly acknowledged, the explanation of that fact presents some serious problems. One could pose these in two obviously allied, but hardly identical, questions: (1) why was it that the Greeks originated philosophy; and (2) why was it that the Greeks, rather than some other culture, originated philosophy? Is it, in other words, merely an accident of history that the Ionians and the Eleatics, and then the mainland Greeks, turned their minds to a rational explanation of the world around them--as if this achievement were something that could have been performed by any comparable culture, but merely happened to be achieved by this one? Or is there

something indigenous to the Greek character that brought this about: some cultural factor, perhaps, that was lacking in other civilizations?

The question could be broadened. One might ask, for instance, why it was that the sixth century of the pre-Christian era should have been the time when rational speculation of this type should have occurred. It will not do to hold that no civilization prior to that time had developed sufficiently to engage in this sort of pursuit; one has merely to consider the development of the Hebrews, for instance, in the eleventh century,² to say nothing of the near-Eastern cultures with which those Hebrews came into contact.³ It is, furthermore, commonplace in history books to point to the cultures that had developed in Egypt many centuries before the sixth century.

Yet the fact of the matter remains: it is in the sixth century, and in Greece, that the development of philosophy properly so called did, in fact, begin. And the question attending that fact also remains: why?

Proffered explanations are as numerous as writers on Greek philosophy. But the explanations tend to differ from one another, some being perhaps more plausible than others. The divergence makes at least one thing clear: the final answer to the question is not yet possessed.

It will be the aim of this first chapter to survey some of these explanations, and to attempt to see how adequate they are in divining the origins of the Greek genius. Two comments, however, must be made at the outset, both methodological in nature: first, no attempt is

intended at a complete survey of authors who have written on this subject. The reason for this will be obvious: the sheer plurality of these makes a comprehensive survey an impossibility in anything short of a very large book. Rather, what is envisioned is a sampling, admittedly limited in scope but hopefully representative of the diversity of opinion that exists on this question. Furthermore, a complete survey is not necessary to the purposes of this chapter, which aims rather at the more modest goal of establishing that there is, indeed, little agreement on the subject; to achieve this aim, a sampling will suffice. Second, the authors chosen fall into two groups: first, writers of general histories of Greek philosophy, including Bréhier, Windelband, Zeller, Guthrie, and Copleston; and second, two writers of somewhat more extended studies on the precise topic under discussion: Cornford and Burnet.⁴ The procedure to be followed in each case will be as follows: an exposition of the author's views on the subject, at varying length depending on the amount of space the author himself devotes to our question; following each exposition there will be a brief critique. The aim of this latter could perhaps find its focus in seeing which of the "two allied, but hardly identical questions"⁵ the author actually succeeds in answering.

Once this survey is completed, the positive side of this study can begin. It will attempt to trace in two of the pre-Socratic philosophers, Empedocles and Heraclitus, a factor which the present writer himself considers critical to their philosophical development.

Bréhier

The thesis that philosophy began with the Greeks did not always enjoy universal acceptance. Thus we find É. Bréhier⁶ saying:

Along with those who, with Aristotle, makes Thales in the sixth century the first philosopher, there were already historians in Greece tracing the origins of philosophy back beyond Hellenism, to the barbarians. Diogenes Laertius, in the preface to his Lives of the Philosophers, speaks of the legendary antiquity of philosophy among the Persians and Egyptians.⁷

Bréhier is here advocating the idea that the origins of Greek thought are to be found in the pre-Hellenic civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt. As he puts it:

It is impossible not to feel the kinship of thought between the well-known thesis of the first Greek philosopher, Thales, that all things are made of water and the beginning of the Poem of Creation, written some centuries earlier in Mesopotamia: "When the sky above was not named, and when the earth below had no name, from the primordial Apsu, their father, and from the tumultuous Tiamat, their mother of all, the waters mingled in one." Texts like this suffice at least to show that Thales was not the inventor of an original cosmogony. The cosmogonic images which he was perhaps the first to define had existed for long centuries. We suspect that the philosophy of the first physiologists of Ionia may be a new form of an extremely ancient line.⁸

Bréhier then continues with a number of considerations that are sociological in nature, and which will be examined in more detail when we come to consider the thesis of Cornford. But Bréhier's conclusion is worth noting, for the purposes of this study: "If such is the case, the first philosophical systems of Greece would not be original; they would only be the elaborated form of a much more ancient thinking."⁹

And thus the reasons for beginning the study of philosophy in sixth-century Greece are sheerly pragmatic ones:

If, in spite of these remarks, we make our history begin with Thales, it is not because we deny the long prehistory in which philosophical thought was developed; it is only for the practical reason that the epigraphic sources for the Mesopotamian civilizations are few in number and difficult to get at.¹⁰

Bréhier's work was written in the 1920's and the 1930's, when the "Oriental origins" theory was fashionable and when Lévy-Bruhl and others were at the height of their sociological popularity. Neither factor obtains very much today. Perhaps principally responsible for the demise of the "Oriental origins" theory is the work of E. Zeller and J. Burnet, which will be examined below (although from another aspect);¹¹ the responsibility for the fall of Lévy-Bruhl lies outside the scope of this dissertation. Nevertheless, Bréhier's thesis is noteworthy as an example of the extreme disagreement that has existed among scholars on the origins of Greek thought--a disagreement that will become increasingly obvious when we turn to other authors.

Windelband

Considerably prior to Bréhier, and therefore expressing an older point of view, is the work of Wilhelm Windelband.¹² In this classic work, Windelband enumerates a number of factors which he considers formative of the Greek genius. The critical development is, in his view, the growth in awareness of personal individuality, fostered by several economic and political factors. Thus, Greek trade was an important contributing element:

Over the entire Mediterranean, from the Black Sea to the Pillars of Hercules, the Greek colonies and trade centres were extended. Even Egypt opened its treasures to the enterprising Ionian spirit. . . . For here in Ionia of Asia Minor the riches of the

entire world were heaped together; here Oriental luxury, pomp, material pleasure held their public pageants; here began to awaken the sense of the beauty of living and the love of higher ideals, while rude customs still ruled upon the continent of Europe. The spirit became free from the pressure of daily need, and in its play created the works of noble leisure, of art, and of science.¹³

Prosperity also led to changes in political and social conditions:

the aristocratic class found themselves moved to the periphery of importance;¹⁴ and there arose a class of non-aristocrats, who strove, once they "took advantage of these democratic tendencies, and after destroying the power of the oligarchy, to set up monarchies and equalize, as far as possible, the interests of all classes. [The result was] tyranny based on democratic principles. . . ,"¹⁵ or, in other words, the rise to power of such men as Thrasybulus in Miletus, Polycrates in Samos, Pittacus in Lesbos, Periander in Corinth, Peisistratus in Athens, Gelon and Hiero in Syracuse.¹⁶ Such men "drew poets to them[selves]; they founded libraries; they supported every movement in art and science."¹⁷ The aristocrats, on the other hand, were forced to retire into private life, and this too had an impact: they adorned that private life "with the gifts of the Muses."¹⁸ And thus, "The reversed relations favored in many ways the unfolding and extending of intellectual interests."¹⁹

But the reversed relations of aristocrats and commoners were of more than economic importance, for "In the passion and excitement of internecine political conflict, the individual becomes conscious of his independence, and he 'girds up his loins' to assert his rights everywhere."²⁰ And one significant place where the individual began asserting his rights was the sphere of ethics; the upsurge of Gnomic

poetry, which occurs about this time, indicates as much. The content of this type of literary work was mainly sententious reflections upon moral principles; this is an important development, for

. . . any extended reflection upon maxims of moral judgment shows immediately that the validity of morality has been questioned in some way, that social consciousness has been unsettled, and that the individual in his growing independence has transcended the bounds authoritatively drawn by the universal consciousness.²¹

Individuals, in other words, go their own way in moral matters. The simple devotion to the conventions of the previous age had ceased, and social consciousness was profoundly disturbed.²²

Nor was this desire to think for oneself limited to the ethical sphere, of course.

While in this way, through political and social relations, the independence of individual judgment was educated first on its practical side, and the propensity was formed for expressing such judgment, it was an inevitable consequence that a similar emancipation of single individuals from the ordinary way of thinking should take place within the domain of theory. Independent judgment naturally appeared at this point, and formed its own views about the connection of things. Nevertheless this propensity could manifest itself only in a revision and reconstruction of those materials, which the individuals discovered partly in the intellectual treasures accumulated previously in the nation's practical life, and partly in the religious ideas.²³

Meantime, the fund of historical and geographical knowledge available to the Greek mind had increased considerably. Thus for instance:

The inventive, trade-driving Ionians undoubtedly had learned very much from the Orientals, with whom they had intercourse and of whom they were rivals. Among these, especially among the Egyptians, Phoenicians, and Assyrians, there existed knowledge that had been garnered through many centuries, and it is incredible that the Greeks should not have appropriated it whenever opportunity offered.²⁴

Without wishing to get into the very involved discussion on the extent to which the Oriental influence was decisive in moulding the Greek

character, a topic that would take us needlessly far afield, this at least can be said:

It would be denying the existence of the sun at noontide to refuse to acknowledge that the Greeks in great measure owe their information to contact with the barbarians. . . . The Greeks imported a large amount of information out of the Orient. This consisted in special facts of knowledge, particularly of a mathematical and astronomical kind, and consisted perhaps besides in certain mythological ideas. But with the recognition of this situation, which recognition in the long run is inevitable, one does not rob the Greeks in the least of their true originality. . . . They were the first to transmute this knowledge into a wisdom sought on account of itself. This spirit of science, like their original activity, resulted from emancipated and independent individual thought, to which Oriental civilization had not attained.²⁵

There was also a growth in the Greeks' knowledge of their own history, as transmitted from the old epic through the channels of theogonic and heroic poetry.²⁶ To these were added collections of saga and of the histories of the founding of cities, as they had been gathered by the logographers.

Of these there appeared, in the sixth century, Cadmus, Dionysius, and especially Hecateus of Miletus, with his *περίγησις*, in which history and geography are closely interwoven. In these men realistic considerations had taken the place of aesthetical, and their writings therefore have the prose rather than the poetic form.²⁷

It was, of course, inevitable that these social, economic, and informational changes should be reflected in Greek religious thought. These religious notions were in the liveliest fermentation about the times of the seventh and sixth centuries. Windelband sees the explanation for this fact in the great vitality which from the very beginnings had characterized the religious existence of the Greeks, owing to their unparalleled development:

Out of the early differentiation of originally common ideas, out of the captious formation of local cults within families, tribes, cities, and provinces, incidentally also out of the introduction

of distinctive foreign religious ceremonies, there grew up a rich, and, as it were, confusingly iridescent variety of religions.²⁸

In addition to the Olympian religion, stemming from epic poetry, there were also the older cults that had shut themselves up even more closely within the Mysteries. And, as civilization advanced, two directions manifested themselves in Greek thought: the first toward mythical explanation of nature, and the second toward ethical idealizing.²⁹

By way of summary, therefore, one might fairly say that Windelband advances a sort of sociological explanation of the Greek genius. It came about as a result of the dawning consciousness of the Greek individual as an individual, as opposed to a member of the herd or as a moment in the collective, community consciousness; this awareness of individuality was fostered by many factors (economic, political, intellectual), and manifested itself in numerous spheres (ethical, intellectual, religious).

There is, doubtless, much truth in Windelband's view. And yet it is not completely satisfying. For is it not the case that many civilizations have passed into a dawning consciousness of the individual as individual? Once again, one has but to look at the Hebrews for a counterargument: from the intense community consciousness that one finds in the older books of the Old Testament, the Israelites did, in fact, come to a similar increased individual consciousness, as is evidenced by the books of Job and Ecclesiasticus, and still later in the books of the Maccabees. Further, one finds a questioning of traditional mores and accepted beliefs in these same books. But one does not find a philosophy in any recognizable sense of the term.

Zeller

If Windelband tends toward the sociological in his explanation of the origins of Greek genius, Zeller³⁰ does not. For him, it is more a matter of the peculiar temperament that the Greeks possessed, seasoned here and there with factors from other cultures that entered their lives. At root, however, it is the "Apolline clarity of the Greek mind"³¹ that is the ultimate explanation, however much it may have been influenced, temporarily and to varying degrees, by other considerations. Thus:

Ionia in Asia Minor is the cradle of Greek philosophy. It was here, in the colonies on the other side of the Aegean Sea, where Homer's song first resounded, that Greek philosophy came into being. Both were the product of the Ionic mind. This is undeniable however great the chronological difference may be, and however far the cry from the Homeric hero to the Ionic thinker and researcher. Homer and philosophy--these are the two poles between which the world of Greek thought rotates.³²

The distinguishing characteristic of the Greek mentality is its rational character, its recurrent stress on the mind and its role in human affairs. And this is true from the beginnings of Greece right on through the remainder of its intellectual history.

Even Homer's language betrays the intellectual structure of the Greek mind. For even in the violent world of warrior heroes it is mind that is superior and not the will, for which there is actually no word. That a man's actions depend on the state of his knowledge was as axiomatic to the Homeric poets as it was to Socrates. They regarded what we call "character" as knowledge: a king "knows justice," a woman "knows chastity," the savage Cyclop "knows wantonness," the hate-filled Achilles "knows wrath like a lion."³³

This Greek intellectualism shows itself even in the realm of religion, at least in the early days of Greece: "The Apolline clarity of the Ionic mind, sifting and arranging, created out of the welter of

local cults the Olympian hierarchy, a model of the Ionic aristocracy with their king at the head, a point which was made by Herodotus. These human, all too human, gods are, with all the might that is theirs, more products of an artistic imagination than objects of serious worship."³⁴

A remarkable feature of the Greek rationalistic view of the world and of life, however, is their conception of death and of the transience of all things in this life:

Although naiveté has been with justice recognised as the most pronounced characteristic of the Homeric poems, we should not overlook the fact that they contain much reflection on the world and life. . . . More important is the deep feeling for the transience of all earthly things which animates the Homeric man and is all the stronger because for him life in the light of the sun is alone the true life, against which the shadowy existence of Hades is of little significance. The shortness of life and the suffering of earthly existence gives rise to a variety of observations on the lot of the "poor mortal." Sometimes we find moods of actual pessimism. . . .³⁵

This rationalistic strain, thus started with Homer, is continued in Hesiod, with certain modifications. Hesiod is, for instance, at pains to try to bring some order into the multitude of the gods by means of a genealogical arrangement.³⁶ But, while remaining within the pale of traditional ideas on the question of gods and men, nevertheless also does he engage in some rational speculation, first about cosmological matters³⁷ and then about ethics, the latter coming out most clearly in his myth of the five ages of the world. And he therefore ". . . with his serious and meditative mind and his intention to tell men the truth and improve them morally, stands on the border line between two epochs as the forerunner of speculative thought."³⁸

Having set up as the distinguishing characteristic of the early Greeks their rational bent, whether in the area of religious thought proper or in ethical speculation divorced from (or at least without much relation to) that religious thought, Zeller then goes on to take note of the phenomenon of the emancipation of the individual. His account of the factors influencing this development is much akin to that of Windelband: extension of territorial properties, the contact with other peoples and cultures that this entailed, the gradual ascendancy of a "prosperous and ambitious bourgeoisie"³⁹ against the aristocracy. Again in agreement with Windelband, he cites manifestations of this emancipation of the individual in the flowering of lyric poetry and of Gnomic. As an over-all generalization, "The individual became conscious of himself and his own strength and significance, burst the bonds of custom, and put the new in the place of the traditional."⁴⁰

Significantly, a new note and, in Zeller's view, one foreign to the Greek character, begins to be heard in the sphere of religious thought. Once the individual began to realize his own personal importance, "The old popular cults no longer satisfied the new strong emotions and the necessity for a personal relation between the individual man and his God made itself felt."⁴¹ Zeller attributes this felt need for interpersonal relationship with the divine to changes in Greek life that had occurred: insecurity of life and property, which the political revolutions had brought in their wake, could scarcely help re-enforcing the feeling of the transience of everything earthly noted above.⁴² But at this point a strange influence makes itself felt in the appearance of the mystery religions. These, Zeller

feels, were imported from the Orient, via Thrace, to supply for the deficiency of the Homeric cultic gods. For along with the transience of earthly things was felt the need to have relationships with the gods kept aright, with consequent fear of transgression. And, given transgression, the necessity for ritual purification and atonement made itself felt. Zeller cites as an example of this new tendency the summoning to Athens of Epimenides of Crete, in order to purify the city after its defilement by Cylon at the end of the seventh century.⁴³ In the wake of this development there enters into Greek thought an element of the irrational: a mysticism, a religious awe and fear, and--something completely foreign to the Greek mentality--a certain asceticism and disparagement of the body.

This development prepared the ground for a quite new religion, independent of the Olympian one: the Dionysian worship. Zeller gives a somewhat protracted account of what this involved;⁴⁴ perhaps, however, it will suffice for our purposes to notice one critical doctrine that enters in, that of the dichotomy of the eternal soul and the mortal body.⁴⁵ In Zeller's words,

The Orphic mystery religion is a complete reversal of the true Greek view of life, according to which the corporeal man is the real man and the soul merely a sort of strengthless shadowy image. In the Orphic philosophy on the other hand the eternal and indestructible is the soul, while the body is transient, unclean, and contemptible.⁴⁶

Whether or not this is, as Zeller contends, a "belief wholly foreign to the Greek nature"⁴⁷ (since almost the diametric opposite of the rationalistic Greek that Zeller envisions), and whether or not it is true to say that "the Greek mind in its maturity acquired an independence of thought that was strong enough to break unaided through

the shell of myth and to fashion a new picture of the world in the light of reason,"⁴⁸ it is certainly true that this Greek adventure into mysticism did manage to shake the authority of the Olympic religion and to change some of its forms. It may well be that

[the involvement in the mystery religions] may have worked like a ferment in the minds of the men of that time and thus far have given a new impulse to thought. The Greek of the sixth century B.C. who was no longer satisfied with the traditional religion had two courses open to him: that of rational thought and investigation, which the Ionic physicists followed, and that of religious mysticism, to which Orphicism pointed the way.⁴⁹

Thus we see that, for Zeller, the chief factor responsible for the Greek achievement was the innate rationalism of the Greek mind, spurred on by historical factors and by the introduction of the largely non-rational Orphic trend of thought to forge out new and more satisfactory answers to questions relating to death and man's security. In Zeller's own words,

Thus we find an explanation for the rise of Greek philosophy primarily in the peculiar gifts of the Greek people, in which understanding and imagination, rational and instinctive forces were united in a fruitful combination. The enthusiastic element, which was undeniably present in the Greek character, was tempered by a feeling for truth and clarity. Their passionate disposition was held in check by a sense of order and a love of moderation and restrained by law, . . . Their philosophy is their own peculiar creation which was bound to well up from the depths of their nature, as soon as the progress of mental development had brought them beyond the childhood stage of myth and the Logos boldly spread its pinions in quest of knowledge and truth.⁵⁰

The present writer confesses a certain sympathy for Zeller's view, for it does seem that he at least provides an answer to the question of why the Greeks, rather than some other culture, were the ones to develop philosophy. Windelband, on the other hand, seems to answer simply the question of why the Greeks did it, and leaves untouched the problem of whether some other group of people could have

accomplished the same task. Yet there remain serious problems with Zeller's view as well. How does one account for this rationalism of the Greeks, which Zeller seems largely to take as a datum? Perhaps the idea is that this was simply the peculiar gift of the Greeks, which no culture before them had possessed. But this is basically unsatisfactory. Could it not be possible that they were somehow forced to be rationalistic? However, before exploring this possibility, let us turn to another author.

Guthrie

For W. K. C. Guthrie,⁵¹ Greek philosophy, properly so called, began "when the conviction began to take shape in men's minds that the apparent chaos of events must conceal an underlying order, and that this order is the product of impersonal forces."⁵² Prior to this, it does not seem at all unreasonable to man that his world may be a baffling melange of conflicting events:

To the mind of a pre-philosophical man, there is no special difficulty in accounting for the apparently haphazard nature of much that goes on in the world. He knows that he himself is a creature of impulse and emotion, actuated not only by reason but by desires, love, hatred, high spirits, jealousy, vindictiveness. What more natural than that the ways of the world around him should have a similar explanation?⁵³

That is to say, what more natural than that there should be no underlying principle of order operative in the world, than that the world itself should be the product of sheer happenstance and chance?

Guthrie sees this pre-philosophical mentality expressed in religious polytheism:

He [pre-philosophical man] sees himself to be at the mercy of superior and incomprehensible forces, which sometimes seem to

act with little regard for consistency or justice. Doubtless they are the expression of beings like-minded with himself, only longer-lived and more powerful.⁵⁴

And thus it is that in Homeric times, everything has a personal explanation: not just such external and physical phenomena as rain, storms, thunder, sunshine, etc., but also human passions, outstanding prowess in battle, and so forth: all are the work of some god or goddess, to the pre-philosophic mind. And the reason for this is that

in this way human frailty provides for one of its most constant needs, the need for an excuse. Responsibility for impulsive action which is bound to be regretted when (in our significant expression) the doer "comes to himself" can be transferred from the agent to an external compulsion.⁵⁵

Philosophy, however, comes into being only when men come to realize that there is no assortment of personal, super-human beings who are responsible for man's actions and environment, that rather the cosmos is under the sway of impersonal, not personal, forces, and that underneath apparent disorder there is really order. Not that this is a natural conclusion that one would reach upon observation of the world around him. Quite the contrary:

We must recognize that in the prevailing state of knowledge the religious explanation would seem by far the most natural and probable. The world as our perceptions show it to us is chaotic and inconsistent. The freedom and responsibility of personal will, still more the unpredictable consequences of a clash of conflicting wills, account for its vagaries, on a superficial view, far better than the hypothesis of a single underlying order.⁵⁶

In this philosophic work of stripping away the anthropomorphic gods and superhuman beings, the early Greek philosophers did, indeed, find predecessors in the genealogies of the theologian and his idea of the dasmos, or distribution of provinces and functions among the

gods; but "The final stripping away of anthropomorphic imagery, with all its momentous consequences for the free development of speculation, was theirs [the philosophers'] alone."⁵⁷

Thus, the origin of philosophy, in Guthrie's view:

The birth of philosophy in Europe, then, consisted in the abandonment, at the level of conscious thought, of mythological solutions to problems concerning the origin and nature of the universe and the processes that go on within it. For religious faith there is substituted the faith that was and remains the basis of scientific thought with all its triumphs and all its limitations: that is, the faith that the visible world conceals a rational and intelligible order, that the causes of the natural world are to be sought within its boundaries, and that autonomous human reason is our sole and sufficient instrument for the search.⁵⁸

We might ask, however, how it was that men came to throw off the shackles of anthropomorphism. Guthrie's explanation centers around the circumstances in which the early philosophers lived. For instance, the considerable luxury of Miletus gave rise to leisure, almost to the point of luxuriousness, with accompanying materialistic outlook.⁵⁹ And, in such a situation, "[Miletus'] high standard of living was too obviously the product of human energy, resource, and initiative for it to acknowledge any great debt to the gods."⁶⁰ As for the gods themselves, Guthrie considers the saying of the poet Mimnermus as an appropriate expression of the esteem in which they were held: "'From the gods we know neither good nor evil.'"⁶¹

Another factor was that, once given this initial impulse to dispense with the gods in this materialistic culture that was Miletus, "Its development was facilitated by the fact that neither here nor in any other Greek state was freedom of thought inhibited by the demands of a theocratic form of society such as existed in the neighbouring Oriental countries."⁶²

Furthermore, the knowledge that the Greeks acquired was not perforce put to practical ends, as it was in neighboring cultures.

The torch of philosophy was not lit in Egypt, for they lacked the necessary spark, that love of truth and knowledge for their own sakes. . . . Philosophy (including pure science) can only be hampered by utilitarian motives, since it demands a greater degree of abstraction from the world of immediate experience, wider generalization and a freer movement of the reason in the sphere of pure concepts than submission to practical ends will allow.⁶³

It is perfectly true, in Guthrie's view, that the Greeks inherited a considerable amount of knowledge from their neighbors: Babylonian astronomy, Babylonian and Egyptian mathematics, Egyptian and Summarian metalwork, Asian textiles, to mention only some. But the Greeks added something that no one else had:

These peoples, then, were the neighbours and in some things the teachers of the Greeks; they were content when by trial and error they had evolved a technique that worked. They proceeded to make use of it, and felt no interest in the further question of why it worked, no doubt because the realm of causes was still governed by religious dogma instead of being open to the free debate of reason. Here lies the fundamental difference between them and the Greeks.⁶⁴

Back of this ability to ask "why," Guthrie sees a peculiar gift of the Greeks, that of abstract thought. Whereas the Egyptians had thought of geometry as a matter of individual rectangular or triangular fields, the Greeks lift it from the plane of the concrete and material and proceed to think about rectangles and triangles in themselves. In fact,

. . . their material embodiment ceases to be of any importance, and we have made the discovery which above all others stands to the especial credit of the Greeks: the discovery of form. . . . [This] marks the advance from percepts to concepts, from individual examples perceived by sight or touch to the universal notion which we conceive in our minds . . . in geometry, [for instance], no longer triangles but the nature of triangularity and the consequences which logically and necessarily flow from being a triangle.⁶⁵

Perhaps we can now summarize Guthrie's contribution, and reflect upon it. Philosophy began when men envisioned a unity at work in the world which was the result of an impersonal, directive force. This viewpoint replaced the older, polytheistic one, which made personal deities responsible for events in the world and saw no need for postulating an underlying unity. The shift in viewpoint was the product of wealth and leisure, which led to a materialistic viewpoint and consequent ignoring of the gods, added to the innate Greek curiosity about why things should be as they are and the Greek ability to engage in abstract thought.

What can be said about all this? First, that there is much here that is useful and unquestionably true. Doubtless the replacement of polytheism by rationalistic endeavor does mark the beginnings of philosophy. Unquestionably the gods of Olympus were held in little repute, generally speaking, in the centuries that followed Homer.⁶⁶ Certainly the conviction of unity as opposed to unquestioned plurality is a mark of philosophy in its early stages. But some questions remain unanswered. The disregard of the traditional Greek religion, which Guthrie rightly stresses, is not accounted for simply by wealth and materialism, in the present writer's view. If it were so, then it ought to follow that every wealthy civilization should be irreligious and, given the ability of abstract thought, ought also to be philosophical. Neither of these, it seems to me, is the case. To return to the counterexample proposed at a previous point in this chapter: the Hebrews were certainly a wealthy civilization on at least one occasion (the period wherein David and Solomon reigned). They were not,

however, irreligious. (Neither were they philosophical, though one would not expect them to be; the inability of the Israelites of that time to think in abstract terms is notorious.) Furthermore, the same argument ought to apply, debitis mutandis, to the civilization of Rome, which certainly was a wealthy civilization on more than one occasion and, however religious or irreligious they might have been, certainly originated precious little philosophy of lasting value, although Romans certainly were capable of considerable degrees of abstract thought (in the spheres of law and government, for instance).

Copleston

It is possible to handle Copleston's treatment⁶⁷ fairly briefly, since his remarks on our subject are few. Nevertheless, as will appear later, they appear to this writer to be cogent, if undeveloped.

Having remarked first on the rational character of the early Greeks and their contacts with foreign cultures,⁶⁸ Copleston then goes on to observe that one curious factor in the development of the Greek genius was the absence of any sort of "orthodoxy" in religious and ethical matters:

Moreover, owing to the character of the Greek religion, they were free from any priestly class that might have strong traditions and unreasoned doctrines of their own, tenaciously held and imparted only to a few, which might hamper the development of free science.⁶⁹

But there is more here than simply the absence of possible oppression of "free thinkers":

. . . one can agree . . . that Greek philosophy was from the first thought pursued in the spirit of free science. It may with some have tended to take the place of religion, both from the point of view of belief and conduct; yet this was due to the inadequacy of

Greek religion rather than to any mythological or mystical character in Greek philosophy.⁷⁰

And that, apart from a remark or two about the presence even in developed philosophy of some elements of the ancient myths,⁷¹ is about all that Copleston has to say on the subject. But these few remarks contain a real germ of inquiry. For the question occurs, just what was the relationship between Greek religion and Greek philosophy? Copleston remarks that the Greek religion was inadequate; in what ways, one wonders, is this true? And did this have any effect on the development of Greek rationalistic thought?

It will eventually be the thesis of this present writer that the inadequacy of the Greek religion was indeed a critical factor in the development of the peculiar genius of the Greeks. But before this can be developed, two other authors must be considered, for they too see significance in the role of Greek religion. Yet their theories will differ from what this study will eventually advocate.

Cornford

If Windelband's explanation of the origin of Greek genius has a sociological tinge, as has been suggested,⁷² that of Cornford is unabashedly sociological in its whole tenor.⁷³ Beginning with the consideration that the philosophical thought of the Greeks did not suddenly appear on the earth without antecedents or ancestry, Cornford remarks:

But, when we dwell upon this liberty of thought, we must not be misled into putting another construction upon it, and imagining that Thales or Anaximander was like Adam on the day of his creation, with no tradition behind him, no inherited scheme of things, opening his innocent eyes on a world of pure sense

impressions not as yet co-ordinated into any conceptual scheme.⁷⁴

Cornford's notion will be that the philosophic thought of the Greeks did indeed have its antecedents in their religious thought, and the latter found its roots in the Greeks' progression from herd consciousness to individual consciousness. But perhaps this is to state the matter too simply, and it will be better simply to follow the development of Cornford's argument.

Cornford attempts to trace the ancestry of several prominent Milesian themes, among them the nature (or φύσις) of things, God or Spirit, and Soul. It would take far too long to follow Cornford's development of all three of these themes; fortunately, it is not necessary to do so, as the pattern of argumentation is basically the same in all three. We will sketch out, then, only his views on the ancestry of φύσις; and even this will be limited to two aspects which φύσις was seen to possess: those of Destiny and of Law.

Noting, then, that the cosmology of Anaximander includes three factors, (1) a primary "stuff" or φύσις, (2) an order, disposition, or structure into which this "stuff" is distributed, and (3) the process by which this order arose,⁷⁵ Cornford sets out to discover the source of the second of these. His purpose:

The point we hope to bring out is that this scheme was not invented by Anaximander, but taken over by him from pre-scientific representation, and that this fact explains those of its characteristics which seem most obscure and gratuitous.⁷⁶

He notes that, for Anaximander, the secular process of birth and perishing is described in moral language; thus the passage of things back into the four elements is termed "making reparation" or "paying the penalty of injustice," and the inference is "that injustice was

committed in the very fact of their birth into separate existence."⁷⁷

Both Fate and Right have set the bounds of the original elemental order, and therefore the power presiding over the physical order is moral.⁷⁸ But this seems to involve a paradox: the order of our world is, precisely, disorder. How is this possible?

Cornford then traces this conception of order in the world back to the early religious representations in Homer and in Hesiod. In Anaximander, the elements are assigned to their provinces κατὰ τὸ χρεών--according to what is ordained; in this conception, Necessity and Right are united.⁷⁹ In Homer, something similar occurs: the gods themselves are subordinate to a remote power, which is both primary (i.e., older than the gods) and moral: Moira, or Destiny, which is not the creation of the gods and against which they cannot stand. Moira, however, is not a blind and senseless barrier of impossibility; rather, it is a moral decree that forms the boundary of right and wrong. The twin notions of Destiny and Right which Moira involves are hardly distinguished, although it does seem possible for man to go beyond what is Right (thereby inviting punishment) but not beyond Destiny. For gods and men alike there are certain destined bounds which normally and rightly circumscribe their power. It is just possible to exceed them, but only at the cost of provoking an instant nemesis. Thus what seems ironclad is not the question of physical impossibility (a notion which Cornford thinks is apparently absent in Homer), but rather the moral boundary.⁸⁰

Further investigation into the nature of Moira shows that at root the basic notion is one of "part" or "allotted portion": the

gods as well as men have their allotted portion or sphere, either a department of nature or a field of activity. The developed concept of Moira is simply a generalization of this. The original conception of Moira is a spatial one: there exists a system of provinces, co-existing side by side, with clearly marked boundaries, which are not to be transgressed without the penalty of nemesis.⁸¹

Turning to Hesiod, Cornford finds the same general conception of Moira, although with added dimensions as well: here there is a temporal notion added to the spatial one, in that the separation of the world into elemental provinces is older in time than the birth of the gods. Furthermore, the parcelling out of these provinces is an act of division, repulsion, strife.⁸² In Hesiod, the division of the world is into the four elements:

Here, then, we find, as a distinct stage in cosmogony, a division of the world into three portions ($\mu\omicron\lambda\epsilon\iota$), just as in Homer "all things were divided into three," and the three provinces were assigned to Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades. The starry heaven is for Zeus, the sea for Poseidon; for Hades remains either the "misty darkness"--that is, the air--or the earth, according as it is believed that the dead, whose lord he is, dwell in the western darkness beyond the sunset, or underground.⁸³

These elements, in Hesiod, have a status parallel to the gods in Homer: both have their appointed regions and departments, and both are subject to Moira. Cornford's summary of all this:

Thus far we have found a departmental ordering of the world established in religious representation long before it is affirmed by philosophy. Further, in religion and philosophy alike, this disposition is both primary and moral. The physical order is guarded by the same powers that punish moral transgression--those ministers of justice or Erinyes, the Moirai in their darkest aspect. . . . This conception of the primary world-order is taken over by Anaximander with its main outline unchanged, and, above all, its moral character unquestioningly retained. The mutual strife of the elements in their perpetual aggression is an "injustice"--an infringement of moral boundaries. So far the

philosophic representation is identical with the religious; where Anaximander innovates is in making the primary order partly the effect of a mechanical cause--the "eternal motion"--and in eliminating the gods, whose place is taken by the elements, out of which, according to Hesiod, the gods had arisen.⁸⁴

However, Cornford's thesis is not simply that philosophy superseded religion. More exactly, his idea is that religion itself is an interloper which had superseded something else, and that philosophy is in part a restoration of that earlier, more primitive force. For it is noticeable that Moira is impersonal: it is a moral power indeed, but not necessarily a benevolent one or one with any particular interest in the wishes of mankind. Foresight, purpose, etc., are not credited to Moira; rather, it is a blind, automatic force that leaves subordinate wills their free play, as long as they do not transgress their boundaries.⁸⁵ Except for its moral character, Moira is not a particularly religious conception, even though it is the ultimate force in the universe as seen by Greek polytheism. "It would be a conception of the same order as the notion of Natural Law, which has taken its place in modern thought."⁸⁶ Being impersonal, Moira was liable to be superseded by a more personal conception of how the universe was run: in other words, its position vis-à-vis the gods was likely to be reversed in men's minds.⁸⁷ And traces of exactly this process are found in Hesiod. Through such theological conceptions as the great oath of the gods, the role of the Styx in conferring the primacy upon Zeus, and others, this process, over a period of time, did in fact take place; in developed religious consciousness, the gods tend to become masters of Moira instead of vice-versa.⁸⁸

The process, then, from primitive religious consciousness up to

the time of Anaximander, is as follows:

We find, in fact, that the basis and framework of Greek polytheism is an older form of that very order of Destiny and Justice which is reaffirmed by nascent science in the cosmology of Anaximander. Out of the provinces of that dispensation, the personal powers which had taken shape within them have disappeared again. The gods have faded, and we are left with the elements from which Hesiod tells us that the gods arose. Seen against the background of the destined order, the life of the gods from first to last shows up as a mere episode. Nature--the living and self-moving stuff of all things that exist--and the primary forms in which her upswinging life is confined by the appointment of Destiny and Justice--these are older than the gods and they outlast them. The course of philosophy starts from the same point from which, centuries earlier, religion took its departure on the way that led to the last and fatal absurdities of complete anthropomorphism.⁸⁹

Cornford then embarks on an investigation of where the primitive concept of Moira itself came from. He admits that there are few enough facts on which to base the inquiry:

Hitherto we have been guided by survivals in Greek thought and linguistic usage, which gave us a sufficient basis for reconstruction. But at this point we must either fold our hands and rest content, like the Greeks themselves, in the contemplation of Moira as a final and inexplicable fact, or we must have recourse to our knowledge of other religious systems of a type indisputably more primitive than any recorded for us in Greek sources. We must boldly enter the domain of hypothesis, taking for our guide the comparative method.⁹⁰

The question, then, is this: granted for the moment that Anaximander stripped away the barnacles of polytheism which had collected on the earlier representation of Moira as a departmental ordering of the cosmos, where did this conception itself of the moral order of the world come from? Cornford's thesis is that it arises as a collective representation, meaning by this latter term, in the ideas of Lèvy-Bruhl, notions that are (1) common to members of a given social group, (2) transmitted from generation to generation, (3) imposed on the individuals within that group, and (4) awaken in the group's

members feelings of respect, awe, adoration, etc.⁹¹ These are not, however, dogmas or formulated creeds, but rather are inalienable and ineradicable frameworks of conception, apparatuses of concepts and categories within which we do our thinking. These frameworks are provided us by the societies in which we live, are embodied in the very language we use, are imbibed by us at our mothers' knee.⁹² Such collective representations, which in Cornford's view are the basic stuff of moralities and religions,⁹³ are imposed upon the individual at an early age, with sufficient emotional power to make them lasting and unquestioned:

Religions and moralities are epidemic now as they have always been. They are transmitted contagiously by herd suggestion, and each tends to spread over an area as is covered by a type of mentality homogeneous enough to absorb that particular mode of belief.⁹⁴

And the collective representation of the ordered universe itself: where did it come from? Cornford's hypothesis is direct: Moira came to be supreme in nature because it was first supreme in human society, which was seen to be continuous with nature.

We think we understand why positive laws of conduct are still enforced by these emotions. If we were called upon to maintain them, we should urge that, in the main, they correspond to practical interests at all times important for the existence or well-being of socialized humanity. But why should this same emotional sacntion ever have become attached to beliefs about the order and structure of non-human nature. . . ? When the question is thrown into this shape, the answer lies near at hand. It is this: Moira came to be supreme in Nature over all the subordinate wills of men and gods because she was first supreme in human society, which was continuous with Nature. Here, too, we find the ultimate reason why Destiny is moral: she defines the limits of mores, of social custom.⁹⁵

To put this in the concrete, Cornford believes that Moira came to be a collective representation simply because of tribal boundaries: it

was necessary for peace and, indeed, for the preservation of the group that its boundaries be clearly marked out from those of other tribes, and theirs from its. Within their own sphere, members of the tribe were free to operate and live; overstepping the bounds of the allotted geographical region, however, meant transgressing the territory of another group and brought with it retribution.⁹⁶

Two further quotations from Cornford's work will suffice to conclude this already over-long exposition of his theory.

Here at last we touch the bedrock. Behind philosophy lay religion; behind religion, as we now see, lies social custom--the structure and institutions of the human group. . . . Now it appears that Moira is simply a projection, or extension, of Νόμος [constitutional order] from the tribal group to the elemental grouping of the cosmos.⁹⁷

.....

We are now in a position to formulate the answer to our main question, as follows: Primitive beliefs about the nature of the world were sacred (religious or moral) beliefs, and the structure of the world was itself a moral or sacred order because, in certain early phases of social development, the structure and behavior of the world were held to be continuous with--a mere extension or projection of--the structure and behavior of human society.⁹⁸

In the pages in his book that follow, Cornford makes a similar analysis of the origins of the other major themes of Milesian thought, i.e., God and soul. We shall not follow him in these; the analyses take much the same form as that of Moira. But some sort of reflection and comment would seem to be called for in regard to the analysis that we have traced out.

First of all, it is certainly legitimate enough to suppose that Cornford is quite correct in supposing that one ought not approach the Milesians "as if Thales had suddenly dropped from the sky, and as he bumped the earth, ejaculated, 'Everything must be made of water!'"⁹⁹

As Cornford remarked on another occasion, "The philosophic Muse is not a motherless Athena."¹⁰⁰ Yet Cornford's tracing out of the ancestry of Greek thought makes the reader wonder whether what is really going on is not an instance of "post hoc ergo propter hoc," even supposing that the "hoc" in question is accurately delineated. From the fact that primitive peoples held rigid lines in their thinking about tribal boundaries (granted for the moment that they did so), does it follow that these ideas got projected upon the entire cosmos? Perhaps they did; but it is an understatement to say that this has not been demonstrated. And even supposing that such a projection did occur: is it established that primitive ideas like this have an innate sticking power such that they permeate the mentality of men who live centuries after the original tribe? Once again, perhaps they do. But this is scarcely established.

However, in all fairness, it must be recalled that Cornford himself termed his theory an hypothesis. But even this needs to be qualified to the extent of saying that it is an unproved hypothesis, however likely or unlikely it might strike individual scholars as being. Furthermore, it is only as accurate as the sociology that underlies it.

The present study, however, is not an exercise in sociology. And the point of the exposition of Cornford's theory is not to establish definitively whether he was right or wrong; it is rather merely to give another instance of the vast diversity of thought that exists on the subject of the origins of Greek philosophy. And on that basis, perhaps we may be permitted to leave Cornford's work as it stands and turn to the final author whom we shall consider in this chapter.

Burnet

In his study of the early Greek period,¹⁰¹ John Burnet remarks that the Greeks felt needs that a philosophy of nature and a philosophy of conduct could satisfy only after the traditional view of the world and the traditional rules of conduct had broken down. But the breakdown of the two was not a simultaneous process: "The ancestral maxims of conduct were not seriously questioned till the old view of nature had passed away; and, for this reason, the earliest philosophers busied themselves mainly with speculations about the world around them."¹⁰² Thus we have, it would seem, an ancient version of science vs. religion, with science winning the battle.

Observing that it is the Aegean civilization, rather than the later Achaian one, to which we really owe the Greek genius, Burnet contends that this older civilization must have had a tolerably consistent view of the world long ago, although we have as yet no idea of what that view might have been.¹⁰³ However, the Achaian invaders assisted the free development of the Greek genius by breaking up the powerful monarchies of earlier days and particularly by checking the growth of a superstition such as that which ultimately stifled Egypt and Babylon.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, the invaders brought with them the Olympian religion, even though this was to assume the artistic form and stamp of the older civilization.¹⁰⁵ This was significant, for

It [the Olympian religion] could not become oppressive to them as the old Aegean religion might very possibly have done. It was probably due to the Achaians that the Greeks never had a priestly class, and that may well have had something to do with the rise of free science among them.¹⁰⁶

Homer was an Aegean, and yet we find few remnants of the ancient

world-view in his epic; hence this must have been discarded at a fairly early date.¹⁰⁷ Yet there are traces of this older Aegean view in Hesiod, since he is the poet of the common people, among whom the older view had never died out.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, Hesiod too is affected by the Achaian influence; despite the savage tales he relates, the tales concern the Olympian gods, whom he is trying to systematize. And thus,

The Olympian pantheon took the place of the older gods in men's minds, and this was quite as much the doing of Hesiod as of Homer. The ordinary man would hardly recognize his gods in the humanized figures, detached from all local associations, which poetry had substituted for the older objects of worship. Such gods were incapable of satisfying the needs of the people.¹⁰⁹

Furthermore, Hesiod constructs a theogony in his poem--something that would not occur to a primitive man, who does not feel called upon to form an idea of the beginnings of things. Chaos and Eros, of whom Hesiod sings, are speculative figures, however much they may be blurred in his poem.¹¹⁰

One remarkable fact about the Ionians, thinks Burnet, is that they were much impressed with the transitoriness of things. There is a fundamental pessimism in their outlook on life which is a perfectly logical outcome for an overcivilized age with no definite religious convictions.¹¹¹ This had repercussions in their philosophy, for

. . . this sentiment always finds its best illustrations in the changes of the seasons, and the cycle of growth and decay is a far more striking phenomenon in Aegean lands than in the North, and takes still more clearly the form of a war of opposites, hot and cold, wet and dry. It is, accordingly, from that point of view that the early cosmologists regard the world. The opposition of day and night, summer and winter, with their suggestive parallelism in sleeping and waking, birth and death, are the outstanding features of the world as they saw it.¹¹²

This process of encroachment of opposites is described in terms

taken from human society, since in the early days the regularity and constancy of human life was far more clearly realized than the uniformity of nature.¹¹³ And so,

That is why the encroachment of one opposite on another was spoken of as an injustice (ἀδικία) and the due observance of a balance between them as justice (δίκη). The later word κόσμος is based on this notion too. It meant originally the discipline of an army, and next the ordered constitution of a state.¹¹⁴

However, this was not enough. The earliest cosmologists were not satisfied with the view of the world as a perpetual contest between opposites; they felt that these opposites must somehow have a common ground, from which they had issued and to which they must return once more. "They were in search of something more primary than the opposites, something which persisted though all changed, and ceased to exist in one form only to reappear in another."¹¹⁵ This common substance they termed φύσις (ἀρχή is an Aristotelian term, in Burnet's view).¹¹⁶

Now, if this is so, we can understand at once why the Ionians called science Περὶ φύσεως ἱστορίη. We shall see that the growing thought which may be traced through the successive representatives of any school is always that which concerns the primary substance, whereas the astronomical and other theories are, in the main, peculiar to the individual thinkers. The chief interest of all is the quest for what is abiding in the flux of things.¹¹⁷

In all this, however, there is no trace of theological speculation. "We have seen that there had been a complete break with the early Aegean religion, and that the Olympian polytheism never had a firm hold on the Ionian mind. It is therefore quite wrong to look for the origins of Ionian science in mythological ideas of any kind."¹¹⁸

At least, Burnet claims, this was the situation in Ionia, whatever may be said for the remainder of Greece. It was only after the

coming of the Achaians that the Greeks were able to establish their settlements on the coast of Asia Minor, and there was no traditional background there at all; Ionia was a country without a past.¹¹⁹ As for the fact that the Ionians called their primary substance θεός, Burnet says that this means no more and no less than the use of the epithets "ageless" and "deathless," which they also applied to it. This particular θεός was never worshipped, according to the custom that had come in of using θεός in a secular sense.¹²⁰

Burnet next faces the vexed and vexing question of Oriental influence on the early Greeks, and dismisses it rather abruptly. It is foolish, he says, to look for a Greek borrowing of Egyptian and Babylonian philosophy until it becomes established that these nations had a philosophy to begin with.¹²¹ Even when borrowings can be shown, as in the area of mathematics, Burnet claims an originality for the Greeks: the Egyptians may indeed have had λογιστική, but they certainly did not have anything like ἀριθμητική, or the scientific study of numbers.¹²² The same sort of criticism applies to the assertion that the Greeks borrowed from Babylonian astronomy. In addition to the fact that the early Ionians do not talk about the stars very much, there is the consideration that the Babylonians performed their astronomy for practical purposes, whereas Greek thought on the subject was speculative.¹²³ By way of summary of all this, Burnet says:

We may sum up all this by saying that the Greeks did not borrow either their philosophy or their science from the East. They did, however, get from Egypt certain rules of mensuration which, when generalized, gave birth to geometry; while from Babylon they learnt that the phenomena of the heavens recur in cycles. This piece of knowledge doubtless had a great deal to do with the rise of science; for to the Greek it suggested further questions such as no Babylonian ever dreamt of.¹²⁴

By way of a summary of Burnet's views on the origin of the Greek genius, then, we may say that he traces it first to a breakdown in the scientific view of the world that had been held in ancient times; this in turn led to a questioning of accepted views in other areas, such as ethics. In Ionia, there was a felt need to find something more stable and permanent underneath the apparent transitoriness of all things; having neither a set scientific view nor a set religious background from which to draw this stability, the Ionians proceeded to search for it by means of speculative reason, something for which they had a peculiar gift not found in other cultures of the time.

One wonders, however, whether the same comment that was applied to Cornford might not fit the case of Burnet. In his confidence that the earlier world-view of the Aegeans had faded from mind, there is a good deal asserted--but considerably less established. One thing that is not established is precisely whether or not there was this earlier world view. It will be remembered that even Burnet says that we can know very little of what it might have been--even granting its existence. Furthermore, Burnet's ordering of the rise of philosophic thought (scientific thought first, and only later ethical) seems less than certain. This fact will become more apparent as the present study proceeds. Perhaps it was, indeed, this way. But perhaps too there is a certain amount of retrojection of modern history, with its science-vs.-religion mentality, back into the past.

* * * * *

We have now come to the end of this brief sampling of opinion on the origins of the Greek genius. The explanations proposed have

differed from one another considerably; what one author has seen as critical may have been dismissed as unimportant by another. Yet the one point on which all would agree, it seems to the present writer, is that the question does not admit of a simple, uncomplicated answer. The origins of Greek genius, no less than that genius itself, are multi-faceted.

It is probably clear at this point that the present writer feels that one of these facets could stand careful scrutiny. This is the role that Greek religion played: how did it influence the pre-Socratics? The following chapters will attempt to study this question, on a scale, however, limited in two respects: first, it will confine itself to the Olympian religion, leaving aside the tremendously complicated (and better studied) contribution of the mystery religions. Secondly, it will attempt to trace the influence of this religion in only two of the pre-Socratics, Empedocles and Heraclitus. The reasons for these limitations are pragmatic; to attempt anything else is to undertake a far larger task than would be appropriate to a dissertation. Admittedly, an adequate investigation of the question would indeed require delving into the influence of the mystery religions, and would require tracing the influence of both religious strands in all the pre-Socratics. But this is a task for research in later years.

By way of preparation for examining the text of these two philosophers, it seems necessary first to devote some pages to the Olympian religion, to see in some degree what it was, what it taught, what it required of man. This will be the task of the following chapter.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

¹Frederick Copleston, S.J., A History of Philosophy (Westminster: The Newman Press, 1966), I, 16.

²Cf. Bernhard Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966), passim.

³Cf., for instance, the work of Mendenhall on the Hittite civilization (Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East [Pittsburgh, 1955]).

⁴The reader may well find himself distressed to discover omitted from these pages the theory, espoused to some degree by Gilbert Murray (Five Stages of Greek Religion [New York: Columbia University Press, 1925]) and to a greater extent by E. R. Dodds (The Greeks and the Irrational [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951]), on the link between the Greeks and the irrational element in man's life. To some extent, this omission is simply an instance of the general dictum, expressed in the text, that a complete enumeration of theories on the subject of the origins of Greek philosophy is neither possible nor necessary for the work of this study. Yet, another consideration is operative in the omission of the Murray-Dodds thesis: the author feels that any sort of fair evaluation of the theory must await the judgment of history on the whole question of the importance of the irrational factor in man's religious and ethical origins. The Murray-Dodds theory could, indeed, be presented; it could not, however, be judged. Consequently, in view of the aims of the chapter, I have preferred simply to omit it rather than risk being unfair to it.

⁵Cf. supra, p. 1.

⁶Emile Bréhier, The History of Philosophy, tr. Joseph Thomas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

⁷Ibid., I, 3.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., I, 4.

¹⁰Ibid., I, 5.

¹¹Cf. infra, pages 10ff and 30ff.

¹²W. Windelband, History of Ancient Philosophy, tr. Herbert Ernest Cushman (New York: Dover, 1956).

¹³Ibid., pp. 16-17.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., pp. 18-19.

²²Ibid., p. 19.

²³Ibid., p. 20.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 20-21.

²⁵Ibid., p. 22.

²⁶Ibid., p. 24.

²⁷Ibid., p. 25.

²⁸Ibid., p. 26.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Eduard Zeller, Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy, tr. L. R. Palmer (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1967).

³¹Ibid., p. 25.

³²Ibid., pp. 24-25.

³³Ibid., p. 25.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid., p. 26.

³⁶Ibid., p. 27.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid., p. 28.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 29.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid., p. 30.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 31ff. On this point, cf. also Zeller's A History of Greek Philosophy, tr. S. F. Alleyne (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1881), I, 59ff.

⁴⁵Zeller, Outlines, op.cit., p. 31.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 32.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 33.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 33-34.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 34.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 35-36. It will be noted that this study does not give an exposition of Zeller's refutation of the "Oriental origins" thesis mentioned above in connection with Bréhier. This is an omission at once deliberate and pragmatic: it would lead us very far astray from the point of this study, since it is a refutation of a theory and not a new theory itself; furthermore, the refutation is quite lengthy. It can be found in Outlines, op.cit., pp. 33f., and at even greater length in Zeller's History, op.cit., pp. 26ff.

⁵¹W. K. C. Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy (Cambridge: University Press, 1962).

⁵²Ibid., I, 26.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid., I, 27.

⁵⁶Ibid., I, 28.

⁵⁷Ibid., I, 29.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid., I, 30.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid., I, 31.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid., I, 35-36.

⁶⁵Ibid., I, 36-37.

⁶⁶One could cite an exception to Guthrie's contention, however, in the Oresteia of Aeschylus. Nevertheless, as an ut in pluribus sort of statement, Guthrie's words seem defensible enough.

⁶⁷Copleston, A History of Philosophy, op.cit.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 15.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 16.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 17.

⁷²Cf. supra, p. 9.

⁷³F. M. Cornford, From Religion to Philosophy (New York: Harper and Row, 1965).

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 2-3.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 9.

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 9-10.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 10.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 11.

⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 11-13.

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 14-17. Cornford cites as a primary locus for this interpretation of Moira the words of Poseidon in XV Iliad, where the sea god protests the interference of Zeus into his province.

⁸²Ibid., pp. 17ff.

⁸³Ibid., p. 17.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 19.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 20.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 21. It would be of no small interest to know precisely what Cornford's conception of Natural Law was.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 21-26.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 39.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 41, emphasis added. One might add that we are also entering the domain of French sociology of the early years of the present century, as represented, for example, by L. Lévy-Bruhl or E. Durkheim.

⁹¹Lévy-Bruhl, Fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures, 1910, quoted in Cornford, l.c., pp. 43-44.

⁹²Cornford, op.cit., p. 45.

⁹³Ibid., pp. 46f.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 49. This entertaining not apparently enjoys in Cornford's mind the status of what the Schoolmen might call a factum omnino evidens. Others might think that the "a" of the Latin substantive really ought to be an "i"; in any event, Cornford does not dally to bolster his assertion with evidence.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 51, emphasis present in the original.

⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 51ff.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 54.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 55, emphasis present in the original.

⁹⁹F. M. Cornford, Thucydides Mythistoricus, quoted by W. K. C. Guthrie in his introduction to Cornford's The Unwritten Philosophy and Other Essays (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), p. x.

¹⁰⁰Also quoted by Guthrie in Cornford's Unwritten Philosophy, op.cit., p. ix.

¹⁰¹John Burnet, Early Greek Philosophy (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1948).

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., pp. 2-3.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., pp. 4-5.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 6.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 7.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 8.

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 9.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 10.

¹¹⁷Ibid., pp. 11-12.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 13.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 14.

¹²⁰Ibid. It is at this point that Burnet takes cognizance of Cornford's study, which we have already seen. His comment: "He [Cornford] fails to realize how completely the old 'collective representations' had lost their hold in Ionia." (P. 14n.)

¹²¹Ibid., pp. 17-18. Lest this paragraph seem somewhat inconsistent with the earlier refusal to discuss this question of Oriental influence in any length (cf. supra, p. 38, note 50), it should be noted that Burnet's remarks that this paragraph contains are by no means his only thoughts on the subject. His full treatment of the question is nearly as long as that of Zeller, and for that same reason is not included here. However, the subject is such that at least something ought to be said on it in a survey like this; and Burnet's amputation of the whole question ad genua seems to fulfill this purpose.

¹²²Ibid., p. 19.

¹²³Ibid., pp. 21ff.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 24.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RELIGION OF THE GREEKS

"Heu nihil invitis fas quemquam fidere divis."

--Vergil, Aeneid, II, 402.

The title of this chapter is, in some ways, a misnomer. The inference could be made from it that the Greeks did possess a single, somewhat coherently structured religion; but the inference would be wrong on several counts. There is, for one thing, the difference between the Olympian religion and the mystery religions which has already been remarked elsewhere in this study.¹ Also, however, and more importantly, the Olympian religion itself is no simple, uncluttered phenomenon. Anyone at all familiar with Homer is aware of the welter of gods, goddesses, and semi-divine persons of one stature or another that carried on their various (and often mutually hostile) activities between snowy Olympus and earth. Upon analysis, the religion prevalent in Greece around the time of the pre-Socratics shows itself to be an amalgum of many factors.² The general picture which emerges is that of the Olympian religion acting as an interloper, coming into Greece with the advent of the Achaians, and becoming assimilated by (rather than itself superseding) the religious thought of the native population while at the same time profoundly influencing that native

thought. This process was not a smooth one; it will appear later in this chapter that a good deal of stretching and accommodating had to be done in order to eliminate at least the most glaring of the contradictions that arose.

The Gods: Who They Were

An unknown author once listed the names of the twelve major Olympian deities in two hexameters:

Juno, Vesta, Ceres, Diana, Minerva, Venus, Mars,
Mercurius, Jovis, Neptunus, Vulcanus, Apollo.³

The matter is, of course, considerably more complicated than that, for the major deities are only a part of the pantheon. The reader of Homer is acquainted with many other divine beings; in fact, he might well wish that a neat ordering of all the gods such as the hexameters achieve for the major ones could be accomplished. Homer, however, makes no such attempt to systematize the gods or their activities. Such questions as the relationship between the supremacy of Zeus and the domains of the other gods, for example, are simply not resolved. Perhaps the author or authors of the Iliad and the Odyssey felt no need to do so. However that may be, the fact is that for one trying to form a picture of religious thought in Greece in any sort of systematic fashion, Homer is not a particularly helpful source.

Hesiod, however, is another matter. In the Theogony we do, indeed, find an effort at systematization. Perhaps we can be forgiven if we omit the much-debated question why a need for that systematization made itself felt; interesting as it unquestionably is, this question is nevertheless not terribly pertinent to the main task of

this chapter. The objective of these pages is to attempt to glimpse the religious thought of the ordinary, but somewhat more intelligent, Greek in the seventh and sixth centuries of the pre-Christian era; for that purpose, the picture given in the Theogony is enough to start with.⁴

The Theogony attempts to show how the various deities were interrelated. It does this by means of a genealogy, showing how all the deities take their ultimate origin from Chaos, the Earth, and Eros.⁵ As the poem proceeds, however, it becomes obvious that Eros is relatively unimportant (in the sense that it has no offspring). Chaos gives birth to Darkness and Night, which in turn marry and generate Light and Day;⁶ Night, on its own, has a host of offspring, mostly abstractions.⁷ But it is Earth whose progeny are of the most interest, and it is on these that Hesiod spends the most time.

Hesiod's picture is a complex one, and it is difficult to present it in orderly form. The present writer has discovered by experience that a genealogical chart well-nigh defies construction; the intermarriages of different orders of divinities renders that project far too complicated to be useful. Thus in the pages that follow, tables are employed, taking as a focal point the offspring produced by various marriages. The tables are the present writer's own construction; the bracketed numbers in the right-hand margin of the tables refer to the line(s) of the Theogony justifying the insertion of a particular entry into the table. Each such bracketed number governs both the line in which it occurs and all successive lines until the next number appears. The ordering of the gods within each table is the order of their appearance in the poem.

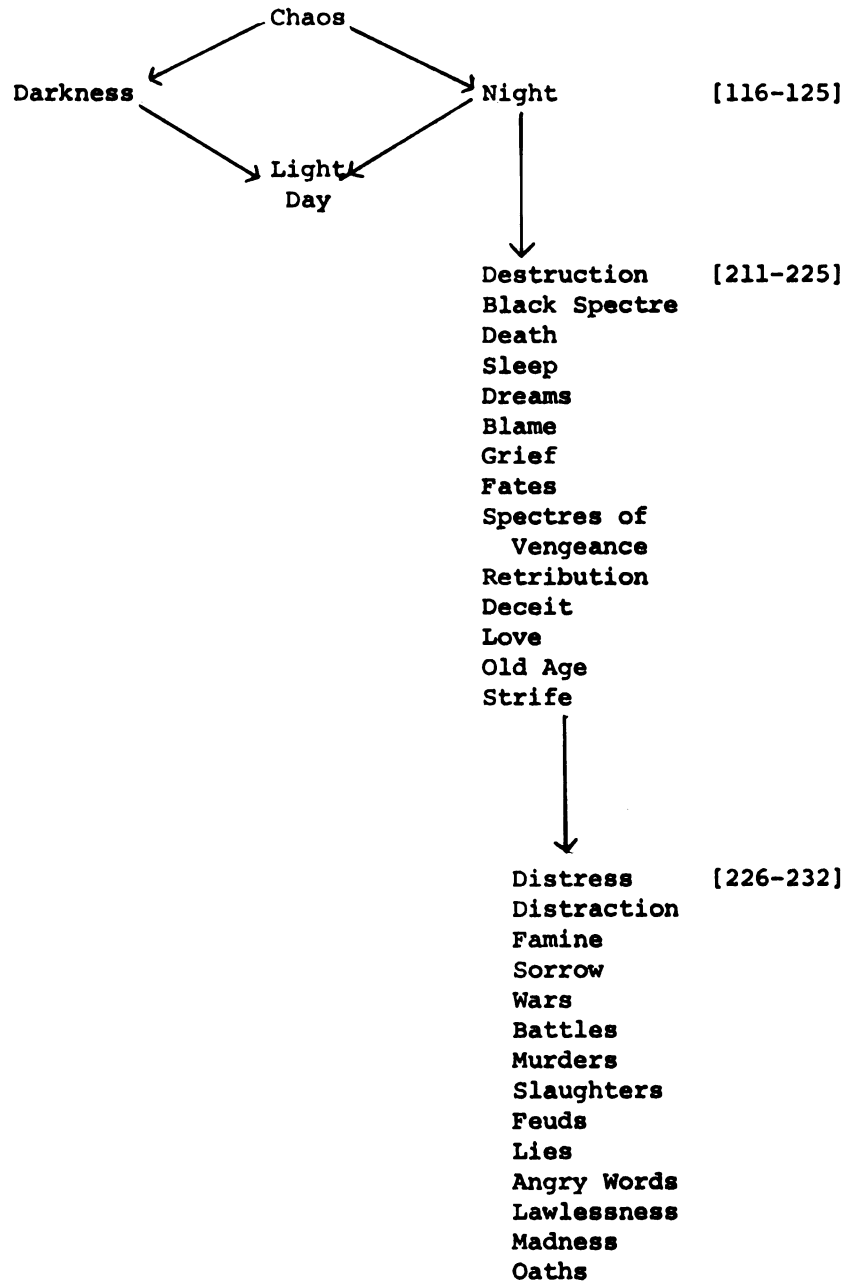
Table 1: The Offspring of Chaos⁸

Table 2: The Offspring of Earth

Earth's Consort	Offspring of the Union	
None	Sky	[129ff]
None	Mountains	[129ff]
None	Waters	[131ff]
Sky	THE TITANS:	[132ff]
	Ocean	
	Coeus	
	Crius	
	Hyperion	
	Iapetus	
	Thea	
	Rhea	
	Themis	
	Mnemosyne	
	Phoebe	
	Tethys	
	<u>Cronos</u>	
	Cyclopes: Thunderer, Lightener, Flash	
	Hundred-Arms: Cottus, Briareus, Gyes	
	Eryines	[184ff]
	Giants	
Ocean	Thaumas, Phorcys, Ceto, Eurybia	[237ff]
Tartarus	Typhoeus	[820ff]

Table 3: The Offspring of Sky

<u>Sky's Consort</u>	<u>Offspring of the Union</u>
Earth	The Titans (see above, Table 2)
None	Aphrodite (also called Cytherea or The Cyprian) [188ff]

Table 4: The Offspring of the Titans

Titan	Consort	Offspring of the Union	
Ocean	Tethys (Titan)	Sons (rivers):	Daughters (nymphs):
		Nile [337ff]	Peitho [346ff]
		Alpheus	Admete
		Eriadnus	Ianthe
		Strymon	Electra
		Maeander	Doris
		Ister	Prymno
		Phasis	Urania
		Rhesus	Hippo
		Achelōus	Clymene
		Nessus	Rhodea
		Rhodius	Callirrhoe
		Haliacmon	Zeuxo
		Heptaporus	Clytia
		Granicus	Idyia
		Aesepus	Pasithoe
		Simois	Plexaura
		Peneus	Galaxaura
		Hermus	Dione
		Caicus	Melobosis
		Sangarius	Thoë
		Ladon	Polydora
		Parthenius	Cerceis
		Euenus	Pluto
		Ardescus	Perseis
		Scamander	Ianira
		+30,000 un-	Acaste
		named others	Xanthe
		[367ff]	Petraea
			Menesto
			Europa
			Metis
			Eurynome
			Telesto
			Chryseis
			Asia
			Callipso
			Eudora
			Tyche
			Amphiro
			Ocyrrhoe
			Styx
			+30,000 un- [363ff]
			named others
Ocean	None	Nereus	[234f]

Table 4 (continued)

Ocean	Earth	Thaumas Phorcys Ceto Eurybia	[237ff]
Coeus	Phoebe (Titan)	Leto Asteria	[404ff]
Crius	Eurybia (daughter of Ocean & Earth)	Astraeus Pallas Perses	[375ff]
Hyperion	Thea (Titan)	Sun Moon Dawn	[371ff]
Iapetus	Clymene (Nymph)	Atlas Menoetius Prometheus Epimetheus	[507ff]
Thea	Hyperion (Titan)	Sun Moon Dawn	[371ff]
Rhea	Cronos (Titan)	THE OLYMPIANS: Hestia Demeter Hera Hades Poseidon <u>Zeus</u>	[453ff]
Themis	Zeus (Olympian)	The Hours: Good Order Justice Peace The Fates: Clotho (Spinner) Lachesis (Allotter) Atropos (Inflexible)	[901ff]
Mnemosyne	Zeus (Olympian)	The Nine Muses Clio Erato Eutrepe Polyhymnia Thalia Urania Melpomene Calliope Terpsichore	[75ff]

Table 4 (continued)

Phoebe	Coeus (Titan)	Leto Asteria	[404ff]
Tethys	Ocean (Titan)	Rivers & Nymphs; cf. p. 48.	
Cronos	Rhea (Titan)	The Olympians; cf. p. 49.	

Table 5: The Offspring of the Olympians

Olympian	Consort	Offspring of the Union	
Demeter	Zeus (Olympian)	Persephone	[912ff]
Demeter	Iasion (mortal)	Wealth	[969ff]
Hera	none	Hephaestus	[930ff]
Hera	Zeus (Olympian)	Hebe Ares Eileithya	[921ff]
Poseidon	Amphitrite (daughter of Nereus)	Triton	[930ff]
Zeus	Metis (Nymph)	Athena	[886ff; 924ff]
Zeus	Themis (Titan)	The Hours and The Fates; cf. Table 4	[901ff]
Zeus	Eurynome (Nymph)	The Graces: Aglaea (Pageantry) Euphrosyne (Happiness) Thalia (Festivity)	[907ff]
Zeus	Demeter (Olympian)	Persephone	[912ff]
Zeus	Mnemosyne (Titan)	The Nine Muses; cf. Table 4	[916ff]
Zeus	Leto	Apollo Artemis	[918ff]

Table 5 (continued)

Zeus	Hera (Olympian)	Hebe Ares Eileithyia	[921ff]
Zeus	Maia (daughter of Atlas)	Hermes	[938f]
Zeus	Semele (daughter of mortal Cadmus)	Dionysius	[940ff]
Zeus	Alcmene (mortal)	Heracles	[943f]

Table 6: The Offspring of the Nymphs

Nymph	Consort	Offspring of the Union	
Doris	Nereus	Fifty Daughters:	[240ff]
		Ploto	Doris
		Eucrante	Panopea
		Sao	Galatea
		Amphitrite	Hippothoë
		Eudora	Hipponoë
		Thetis	Cymodoce
		Galene	Cymo
		Glauce	Eione
		Cymothoë	Halimede
		Speo	Glaucanome
		Thoë	Pontoporea
		Halia	Leagora
		Pasithia	Euagora
		Erato	Laomedea
		Eunice	Polynoë
		Melite	Autonoë
		Eulimene	Lysianassa
		Agave	Euarne
		Doto	Psamathe
		Proto	Menippe
		Pherusa	Neso
		Dynamene	Eupompe
		Nesaea	Themisto
		Actaea	Pronoë
		Protomedea	Nemertes

Table 6 (continued)

Electra	Thaumas	Iris Harpies (Aello & Ocypete)	[265ff]
Clymene	Iapetus (Titan)	Atlas Menoetius Prometheus Epimetheus	[507ff]
Callirrhoë	Chrysaor (son of Medusa)	Geryon	[287ff]
Idyia	Aeëtes	Medea	[958ff]
Perseis	Sun	Circe Aeëtes	[956f]
Metis	Zeus (Olympian)	Athena; cf. Table 5	
Eurynome	Zeus (Olympian)	The Graces; cf. Table 5	
Styx	Pallas	Glory Victory Power Strength	[383ff]

Table 7: The Offspring of Other People⁹

Male Consort	Female Consort	Offspring of the Union	
Phocrys (son of Earth & Ocean)	Ceto (daughter of Earth & Ocean)	The Graiae (Pemphredo and Enyo)	[270ff]
		The Gorgons (Sthenno, Euryale, Medusa)	[274ff]
		Dragon	
-----	Medusa (Gorgon)	Chrysaor Pegasus	[280ff]
-----	Ceto	Snake Goddess	[295ff]
Typhaon	Snake Goddess	Orthus (Hound of Geryon Cerberus Hydra of Lerna)	[309ff]

Table 7 (continued)

-----	Hydra of Lerna	Chimaera	[319]
Orthus	Chimaera	Sphinx Nemean Lion	[326ff]
Astraeus (son of Eurybia & Titan Crius)	Dawn	The Violent Winds: Zephyr Boreas Notus The Stars	[378ff]
Perses (son of Titan Crius & Eurybia)	Asteria (daughter of Titans Coeus & Phoebe)	Hecate	[411]
Typhoeus (son of Earth & Tartarus)	-----	All other storm winds	[869ff]

The picture of the Greek gods, as presented in the Theogony, is therefore an extremely complicated one. But despite that fact, it is not the whole story. There are at least three other areas of Greek religious thought that must be mentioned, in addition to the Olympian gods properly so called. The reason for this will be apparent in the next section of this chapter.

Rose remarks that from the time of Hesiod onwards, "The number of powers to be revered was augmented by the widespread worship of 'the gentry' (heroēs), generally known to us as the hero cult."¹⁰ Though the word "hero" originally meant simply a man of good family or a gentleman, and though the notion of hero worship is absent from Homer, by the time that Hesiod was writing it becomes common enough.¹¹ And so we find Hesiod saying:

But when the earth had covered over this generation as well, Zeus, Cronos' Son, produced yet another, the fourth, upon fertile earth. This race was more just and more upright, a godly race of heroes who are termed demi-gods; it preceded our own on the face of boundless earth.

Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ καὶ τοῦτο γένος κατὰ γαῖ' ἐκάλυψεν,
 αὖτις ἔτ' ἄλλο τέταρον ἐπὶ χθονὶ κουλυβοτείρῃ
 Ζεὺς Κρονίδης κοίησε, δικαιοτέρον καὶ ἄρειον,
 ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων θεῖον γένος, οἳ καλέονται
 ἡμίθεοι, προτέρη γενεὴ κατ' ἀκείρονα γαῖαν.¹²

The cult of the heroes was a fairly widespread one as well:

At all events, historical Greece was full of the tombs, real or supposed, of such persons, and the cult given them differed from that of the chthonian gods only in being on the whole less important and more strictly local; a "hero" was not able, it would seem, to do either good or ill far from the spot where his bones lay.¹³

Secondly, there is question of the daimones, innumerable and invisible beings who do good or ill to mankind. Of these, Hesiod says,

A golden race of men with human speech did the immortals, those dwellers on Olympus, first make. These men lived in the time of Kronos, in the days when he ruled over heaven. They lived just like gods: carefree their hearts, long the distance between them and grievous toil. . . . Free spirits are they called as they live on earth: kindly deliverers from ill and guardians of mortal men, givers of wealth as they, wrapped in mist, mark just and evil deeds alike over all the earth.

Χρῦσεον μὲν πρῶτιστα γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων
 ἀθάνατοι κοίησαν Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες.
 οἳ μὲν ἐπὶ Κρόνον ἦσαν, ὅτ' οὐρανῷ ἐμβασίλευεν.
 ὥστε θεοὶ δ' ἔζων ἀκηδέα θυμὸν ἔχοντες
 νόσφιν ἄτερ τε κόνων καὶ οἴζυος. . . .
 τοὶ μὲν δαίμονες ἀγνοὶ ἐπιχθόνιοι καλέονται
 ἐσθλοί, ἀλεξίκακοι, φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων
 (οἳ ῥα φυλάσσουσιν τε δίκας καὶ σχέτλια ἔργα
 ἡέρα ἐσάμενοι πάντη φοιτῶντες ἐπ' αἶαν),
 κλουτοδόται.¹⁴

And so, "The plain man, then, in ancient Greece lived in a world full of all manner of supernatural powers, great and small, friendly or unfriendly. . . ."¹⁵ And, it might be added, he or his clan contributed not a few of them. For the third source of divinities was the clan

itself. As Rose notes,

The dead of the family or clan (genos) had not ceased to be members of it, and being senior members, they were entitled to respect and good usage. This is a different thing from the hero cult already described, although allied to it; it would seem that the care bestowed on the ghost of a father or mother did not differ essentially, in intention at least, from that given to the aged and infirm. Ghosts, in popular belief, continued to live vaguely in the nether world. . . . Wherever they might be, however, they had much the same wants as in life, food, drink, clothing, and water to wash in, for the Greeks were a very cleanly people. Hence foods and drinks were the commonest of offerings at graves.¹⁶

Furthermore, as a sort of joining of the family cult and the hero cult, there was the phenomenon of the "domestic hero," the sort of friendly ghost whose special job it was to take care of the individual family dwelling.¹⁷

Such, then, were the divinities of the Greeks, and they are numerous enough. The next logical question that might pose itself is, what function did all these various figures have in the life of the ordinary, educated Greek? How did he regard them? Did they have any significant role to play? Yet the answer to these questions itself depends on a further question, which will be the burden of the next section of this chapter: where did the gods come from--not genealogically, but rather in the consciousness of the Greeks?

The Gods: Where They Came From

The question of the origin of the Greek gods could be viewed in two further senses, even leaving out the family-tree approach of Hesiod. One might ask, for instance, which of the Olympian gods that Hesiod names are native Greek gods and which are imports from other countries. Or, one might ask the deeper question of why the Greeks

had gods at all--where did the gods come from in terms of the consciousness of the Greeks? Both of these questions deserve consideration.

Native Gods and Foreign Gods:

Into the early Minoan civilization came, with shattering abruptness, the Achaian invasion.¹⁸ But the effect on the native religion was not as disruptive as one might expect, for

Polytheism is tolerant, as a rule, and when its adherents learn of deities other than their own, one of three things happens. Either they adopt them and worship them side by side with those they know already, or they acknowledge them as the proper objects of the other people's cult, . . . or, finally, they identify the new powers with their own supernatural beings, perhaps adopting the foreign name as a title of the native god, or contenting themselves with saying that such a people worship one of the deities they know, but call him by a different name.¹⁹

And thus, to the cult of the Minoans were added further divinities.

The Minoan cult seems to have stressed goddesses rather than gods, and the majority of these were mother-goddesses.²⁰ An example of such a

goddess is the earth; the primitive conception is widespread enough that the earth, bearing as it does food plants of all kinds, is a sort of woman and vegetation is her offspring. Such a notion seems to have been a common heritage in the Mediterranean.²¹ The question of par-

thenogenesis on the part of Mother Earth seems to have differed in different locales: in some places there is the conception of Sky as a father, but in other areas "The Earth-Mother may be so important as to make the question of her husband or lover quite uninteresting."²²

In any case, most of the works of Cretan and Mycenaean art tend to concentrate on the female representation; there is rarely a trace of

a divine husband, though there is often enough question of a divine child.²³

When the invaders came in, the idea of a female goddess was at least no novelty; they themselves worshipped one such goddess-mother, Demeter.²⁴ Consequently, finding other goddesses did not surprise them. In the case of the great female goddess of Argos, for example, they simply recognized that here was another such goddess, whose name they did not happen to know. So they simply called her "Hera," which is apparently nothing more than the female form of the word heros: "Lady." From inscriptions we know that "Hera" was the patron of women and all that concerned them, from childhood to old age, and hence was a mother herself;

Therefore, to so logical a people as the invaders, it was clear that she must have a husband, and no husband august enough for her save their own great god Zeus. Thus it came about that the Greek divine family had at the head of it a husband and wife of entirely different origins. The proper and original consort of Zeus was pretty certainly an earth-goddess, which there is no proof that Hera ever was.²⁵

To take another example: Artemis seems originally to have been a mother-goddess whose proper domain was the realm of wild things: the uncultivated land and the creatures that inhabit it. She also had something to do with female parturition and female sudden death, in the original Minoan conception.²⁶ Obviously, such a goddess ought to be fertile. But she was not the great goddess that "Hera" was, and she did not have a consort. What were the Achaian invaders to make of this? Since in their thinking the gods and goddesses ought to behave like nobles, and since among the Achaian nobility chastity was a prized virtue of the female branch ("though their males might allow

themselves considerable liberty"),²⁷ it followed that this goddess must be a virgin, not a mother-goddess at all.

Similarly with Athena. Her name indicates a pre-Greek origin: the suffix -na belongs to the ancient tongue of the land rather than that of the invaders.²⁸ And the earliest traces we have of her indicate that she was associated with military strongholds such as the Acropolis, where the castles of the ancient Mycenaeans once stood. She is therefore a warlike individual, which initially seems odd in that classical Greek religion had a war god (rather than goddess), Ares. But it seems, at least in Rose's estimation, that she was once the patron of the ancient princes and their houses; when her worshippers passed from the scene, she remained. Since they had been warlike princes (everything we know about the early culture suggests that it was indeed a warlike one), it was only fitting that their patroness should also be somewhat bellicose. And bellicose she remained even into classical times.²⁹

Much the same sort of amalgamation took place in the instance of Aphrodite, a Cyprian mother-goddess who found herself displaced by Hera in the invaders' minds and thus relegated out of the realm of motherhood and into that of love.³⁰ And a similar account can be given of many of the other members of the pantheon. The table on the following page will indicate as much.

Table 8: The Amalgamated Pantheon³¹

Deity	Nationality	Original Function	New Function; Reason
Hera	native Minoan	mother-goddess of Argos	wife of Zeus; "Hera"; patron of women and all that concerned them
Artemis	native Minoan	mother-goddess of wild areas	subordinate to Hera; no consort and hence chaste, as a female noble ought to be
Athena	native Minoan	royal patroness	goddess of war and the things of war
Aphrodite	Cyprian	mother-goddess of Cyprus	after coming to Greece, displaced by Hera; functions diminished: love not motherhood
Zeus	Achaian	great god of the sky and associated phenomena; chief of the gods	father of the pantheon; has an intelligible Indo-European name; many marriages with native deities of the region
Poseidon	probably Achaian	god of water in general, of underground waters and underground phenomena; often husband of mother-goddesses because of fertilizing power of water	god of the sea, once Achaians acquired first-hand knowledge of the sea, became merchants, etc.; thus displaced native sea-gods Amphitrite and Nereus
Apollo	native Minoan	uncertain	god of herdsmen, of medicine (herdsmen must know this due to their lonely way of life), of music (same reason), of wolves
Ares	Thracian	god of warring Thracian factions	god of war, but little more than a supernatural cut-throat; his name is

Table 8 (continued)

			a common noun
Hephaistos non-Achaian	god of volcanic fires		god of craftsmen who use fires; Greece was comparatively industrialized in later times; prior to this, H is a god of craftsmanship in Homer. Became god of volcanoes when moved to Sicily. Somewhat a comic figure, for to the Greeks strangers were comic, however terrifying. Lamé; an ancient smith often was
Dionysius Phrygian	nature deity; worshipped by women in ecstatic worship		god of wine (Greeks had many nature deities already); god of ecstatic powers of wine; god of fertility (power of wine)
Hermes Arcadian	god of stone piles		god of roads and of those who use them in their occupations: heralds, merchants, robbers. Himself a herald and a robber. God of young men (which heralds usually were)

So much for the nationalities and transformation of nationalities of the members of the pantheon. But there remain the questions of the daimones, the heroes, and the other elements which, pre-scinding from the members of the pantheon, went to make up Greek religious thought. Where did they come from? For that matter, where,

in a deeper sense, did the members of that pantheon themselves come from?

The Developing Religious Consciousness of the Greeks:

The remote origins of any religious thought are apt to be shrouded in the mists of time, and this is as true of the Greeks as of any other culture. There are no records to give an investigator a clear, precise picture of how it is that man comes to acknowledge a divinity of one kind or other. There are, to be sure, hints in the cultural remains that survive a given race of men; such are the inscriptions, sherds, and the like, of Greece. But they are only hints. Considerable disagreement can therefore be expected on the subject, and the best that can be achieved is only a theory. And, it has been said, for every theory there are several counter-theories.

In any event: for the purposes of this study, I have adopted the viewpoint of M. P. Nilsson, whose book on the history of Greek religion³² strikes me as being remarkably sane. There are some reservations that I would wish to make on that theory,³³ but on the whole I would tend to subscribe to it once those reservations are taken into account. The theory can be sketched fairly much as follows.

The religion of the early Minoan-Mycenaean age was at least partly a mythology.

This leads us to the fundamental question: What is mythology? As we read it in a modern or ancient handbook it is divided into two parts: divine and heroic myths. But in reality the border line does not fall where the divisions would suggest, but rather within the domain of the divine myths themselves. The divine mythology consists of two parts, separate in principle, but connected by a thousand interwoven threads. The one is of sacral and religious origin, the other of mythical.³⁴

By the mythical representation of a god, Nilsson means a description of that god's nature, activity, and sphere of action, as also the forms of his epiphanies and his attributes.³⁵ This is to be distinguished from all other beliefs about the god, which take their rise from religious motives.³⁶ However, though the two strands can be distinguished mentally, in fact they are always joined together; mythology is thus a combination of mythical and religious elements.

Back of the mythical elements, however, stands the folk tale.³⁷ In the latter, two definite tendencies can be distinguished, the "inventive" and the aetiological.³⁸ The "inventive" stories in folk lore "are invented in the sense that, unlike the aetiological tale, they have no definite end in view, but are related merely for the pleasure of telling tales."³⁹ Among the inventive folk tales, a number of motifs can be distinguished; Nilsson discusses adventure motifs, the motif of hero-vs.-enemy, that of the hero in quest of the hand of the fair princess, and others. We need not follow his discussion of all of these. But worth noting is his observation that Greek myths, in their developed form, lack the element of magic almost entirely. "Just as the Greek gods, unlike those of many other peoples, are not concerned with magic, so the Greek myth, unlike the folk tale, has no magical ingredients."⁴⁰ The folk tale, to be sure, had such motifs; the myth, as it developed in Greece, did not. "And so we miss the witch who is so common in our own folk-tales. There are two exceptions, Medea and Circe, but significantly enough they are foreign women."⁴¹ The reason that the magic is eliminated is the Greek rationalistic tendency, which Nilsson sees as the peculiar gift of

the Greeks.⁴² Similarly, although the notion of the taboo is found commonly in folk lore, it is much more rare in developed Greek myth.⁴³

The second tendency in folk lore is the aetiological: to account for a given practice, or custom, or natural phenomenon, a story is invented, the end product of which is the event in question. For instance, to explain the practice in one cultic sacrifice of giving to Zeus the inferior part of the sacrificial animal, the story of Prometheus' deception of Zeus is invented.⁴⁴ Or, to explain a peculiar stone formation, a tale is invented wherein a human being, in one or other dire circumstance, has been transformed into stone; his or her physical posture at the time is that which the particular stone under consideration has to this day.⁴⁵

To summarize: back of the Greek religion of the seventh and sixth centuries stands, at least in part, the religion of the Minoan and Mycenaean cultures. This latter was, again at least in part, a mythology, in somewhat developed form; it consisted of mythical elements and specifically religious ones. Back of these constitutive mythical elements stands the folk tale, of which there are two distinguishable varieties, the inventive and the aetiological. Or, to start the process at the other end: we begin with the folk tale and its two tendencies. To this are added specifically religious considerations, and we have a mythology, which formed an important (if not exclusive) part of Mycenaean-Minoan religious thought. To this we add the consistently rationalistic character of the Greeks, and the end product is the de-magicked, de-tabooized classical mythology which formed an important part of classical Greek religion.

Two elements in the preceding account, however, are thus far unsatisfactory. What are the "specifically religious elements" that are added to the mythical factor to result in Minoan-Mycenaean mythology? And why is it that, in either inventive or aetiological folk tale, a divine framework, rather than something else, was adopted? Nilsson's theory on these points is basically that several primitive notions (chiefly those of mana or dynamism, animism, taboo, and magic) developed into that framework, eventually culminating either in the personalized pantheon or in the more impersonal notion of daimones and their ilk. This must be explored at some length.

Among most peoples there is a belief in "power" (mana), which penetrates everything. . . . Among primitive peoples "power" is also a force in itself: it exists before and independently of gods or spirits. It is merely "power," and whether it is good or evil depends upon how it comes into contact with man. Man must beware of it and proceed cautiously in regard to it, for if it can help, it can also harm.⁴⁶

Rose's ideas on this may make the notion clearer.

[Dynamism, or mana-ism] is the notion, generally vague and hardly expressed in any definite words, that there exists a kind of power, not necessarily belonging to any particular sort of being, but most likely to be found in the possession either of a noteworthy man or woman, or of something which is not human at all, but more potent than mankind, a god, a spirit, a beast or bird. . . . It may manifest itself in quite unlikely forms, dwelling, for example, in a stick or a stone which is fancied to have peculiar properties, in magic regalia, or in forms of words, or ritual gestures. . . . It works . . . to effect everything which is beyond the ordinary power of men, outside the common processes of nature. . . . When one has got it he can use it and direct it.⁴⁷

In addition to the concept of mana, there is the idea of animism, i.e., the attitude of mind wherein everything is conceived of as alive. For example,

To man at an early stage of his development, . . . it seemed perfectly obvious that a river was alive, for it behaved in many ways

like a man or a beast. Like them it moved, and like them it uttered sounds; it might work harm or good, and at times it did strange and unaccountable things, such as disappearing underground to rise again farther on, or vanishing in summer to reappear in winter. Furthermore, rivers are not all alike, since some flow swiftly, others slowly, some have clear and some muddy water, and so forth. The conclusion was obvious, given the very limited knowledge of nature then available: a river was a very powerful living being, possessed of much mana, either the body or habitation of someone greater than man--this was the usual Greek way of regarding it--or in some other and mysterious fashion having a life and a will of its own, and so much power that it was well to treat it with respect and avoid making it angry.⁴⁸

Very closely associated with animism and dynamism is the notion of taboo, meaning that which is either sacred or accursed.⁴⁹ Taboo ideas abound in the mind of primitive man, but "They accumulate more than elsewhere about the critical points of human life, about birth, death, and marriage, when man is more exposed than at other times to the attacks of 'power' or 'the powers.'"⁵⁰ Hence there is need for protection against such forces or powers, and these protections take various forms, such as the use of certain herbs (supposed to have certain powers themselves) and purifications (for the evil force that threatens is conceived after the fashion of a plague that is communicated to everyone who comes into contact with it: hence the need of the mother in childbirth--as also the child--to be purified, the need for those who are present at another's death to undergo purifications, all to rid themselves of the mysterious miasma that is present on those occasions). It is but a short step from taboo, as so conceived, to the notion of ritual purity and impurity⁵¹ and, since all men are born, die, or otherwise participate in situations which involve defilement, to the need of purification.

The final primitive notion is that of magic: thus the notion of

the magic circle appears, within the borders of which no evil power can pass.⁵² Magic differs from the purifications noted above only in that it is a sort of opus operatum rather than opus operans: it is seen as efficacious in itself, without much reference to the benevolence of the particular power whose influence man is trying to avert.⁵³ However, since there is question of powers that can work good as well as evil, the practice of magic extends to the acquisition of favors from the powers as well; thus we have such things as rain magic, fertility magic (on the agricultural level and the human level both), and so forth.⁵⁴

Such are the primitive ideas that are found in early societies, in Nilsson's view. But what constitutes the passage to the gods? Nilsson's explanation is as follows:

The gap between "power" and "the powers" is not great--no greater than the difference between the singular and the plural of the word. Yet we feel at once the change of sense when the word is put into the plural. The undivided, homogeneous stream of power, which is ever breaking forth and expressing itself in individual manifestations, is split up into centres of power. Man projects his own consciousness and volitional ego into the world about him; he must do so, for it is only by way of analogy that he can attain to any knowledge of that which lies behind phenomena, whether real or imagined, and the first analogy is his own being. Hence he ascribes to the powers feeling, will, and purpose.⁵⁵

Yet this is putting the matter too summarily, and perhaps it would be better to trace the stages. From the unitary notion of power, conceived of as some one thing residing in a multitude of objects and manifesting itself in many ways, it is a relatively short step to a plurality of powers: the multiplicity, present in objects and manifestations, accrues to the powers themselves. Furthermore, since it is in the nature of the powers that they perform actions which are

above the capabilities of man--indeed, that they are able to influence the lives of men for good or for ill, and that at will--it follows that the powers possess an ontological status above the human. This means in turn that they possess whatever humans possess, and more besides. Hence we have personal attributes assigned to the powers.

As Nilsson pictures the process,

The belief in daimones peoples the world with spirits. They live in the deserts, among the mountains, in the forest, in stones, in trees, in water, in rivers and springs; they are the occasion of everything that concerns man, they send fruitfulness and dearth, good fortune and disease. It is they who have given rise to the old saying that "fear created the gods." For man is much more strongly roused to a consciousness of the interference of higher powers in his life when misfortunes come upon him than when things are taking their normal course. As a consequence of this conception, the object of the earliest cult is by one means or another to keep the powers at a distance from life; it is apotropaic, a warding-off of evil. . . . Magic, in its primitive stage, has [another] function: by magical rites men try to secure for themselves and for others fertility and prosperity: magic serves the individual and social good.⁵⁶

Nilsson traces the origin of the Demeter and the Hermes cults along these lines by way of illustration.⁵⁷

The further question comes up as to how a single god originated from, say, many examples of the cycle of nature in agriculture. Why, in other words, did not the individualization process continue down to the extreme of having one daimon for each manifestation of power? Sometimes it did. For instance, in the Hermaic stone heap, it both could and did happen that the end result would be, not one god, but a multitude of local gods.⁵⁸ But it also happened that, because of some striking similarity in timing or in the particular form that a manifestation of power took that all the manifestations became combined into one. Thus, a harvest cycle and the processes it involves are the

same, relatively speaking, wherever one goes; hence unity is a more impressive feature of this manifestation of power than is diversity, and the result is Demeter, one goddess rather than a multitude of Demeteresses.⁵⁹

So, as far as the developed and personalized gods of nature and of things pertaining to affairs on earth went,

The needs of man created the gods, and the cult is an expression of his need. A god is a daimon which has acquired importance and a fixed form through the cult. From among a crowd of similar beings the cult chooses one as its object, and this becomes a single god. But the belief in numerous daimones lives on, and if both the single divinity and the group of daimones are present to the mind together, the latter acquire a leader. Thus we have Pan and the Panes, Silenus and the Sileni, . . .⁶⁰

The powers, however, lived in places other than earth. They also peopled the heavenly phenomena. Such were the powers that lived, for instance, in the sun and the stars. But these, although they had their gods and goddesses, nevertheless were never very important in the Greek cult. Much more critical were the powers that inhabited the phenomena that posed a more imminent danger to mankind, e.g., the god who ruled over such things as storms, or rain, or thunder. It must be borne in mind that rain is a terribly important consideration in Greece: on it depends the fertility of the fields, and on the latter, owing to the peculiar geographical situation that Greece has, depended the sustaining of life itself. Now, one cannot localize storms and thunder. They pertain to the entire land, are shared by all the people alike. Hence the sort of deity which grew up in connection with celestial phenomena of this sort tended to be universal right from the start,⁶¹ in contrast to some of the nature gods who emerged into individuality from among the herd of localized powers.

But whether it starts from earth or sky, the process of divine individualization does not simply cease with the emergence of definite individuals. For once the individuals emerge (or once they are present at all, in the case of the gods of the celestial phenomena), there is the tendency to fit them into a hierarchy, at least incipiently.

In Greece the great deities grew at the expense of the Nature spirits and local gods. They even made the former their followers and retainers. Artemis was surrounded by mountain- and forest-nymphs, Poseidon by sea-nymphs, Dionysius by Sileni and satyrs. . . . The greater gods usurped the functions of the less, appropriating their names as epithets, or made them their servants and subordinates.⁶²

It seems, therefore, that although the gods have arisen out of the daimones and the daimones have arisen out of the milieu of magic and taboo, the appearance of one stage does not mean the complete disappearance of the previous one. This is true in another sense, too. For even after the full-blown gods had appeared, magic still persisted; it merely changed its home. It now migrated into the rites wherein the gods were honored.

Thus the weather-magic passed into the cult of Zeus, purifications and the curing of diseases into that of Apollo, rites of fertility into those of Demeter and Dionysius, and the annual bonfires into that of Artemis. This is how the gods acquired the greater part of their rites and festivals, which were originally pre-deistic.⁶³

Obviously, the aura of magic and the notion of man's somehow being able to be a part of the divine did nothing to diminish the authority of the gods or the esteem in which they were held by men. That there should be gods was definitely to the advantage of man, especially when man could, to put the matter crudely, put the gods to work for him by his cultic acts.

This, then, is the origin of the gods, in Nilsson's view:

"[A view of the Greek pantheon] must be based on the proposition that man's needs create the gods, and that beginning with the gods of nature he rises to those which are an expression of the higher functions of his life."⁶⁴ From dynamism, animism, taboo, and magic, man progresses to powers, then to personalized and individual powers; remnants of the various stages remain, however, and interpenetrate later stages.

Yet this view of the gods is not that of the Greeks of the seventh and sixth centuries; it belongs, rather, to an age antecedent to Homer, at whose hands men's views of the gods underwent a transformation that was to be of profound significance for philosophy and, indeed, for the gods themselves. It will be the task of the next section of this chapter to sketch that transformation, and then to try to go on somewhat and see, to the limited extent that is possible, just what view men held of the gods during the seventh and sixth centuries themselves.

The Gods: Where They Went

The reader who, with the foregoing background in mind, takes up the Iliad or the Odyssey senses at once an abrupt change.⁶⁵ The names are familiar, indeed: Zeus, Athena, Poseidon, and all the other characters are there. But they are a far cry from Nilsson's mana-become-daimones-become-gods. For one thing, their activities are at once seen in conflict. To put no fine point on it, they are wrangling among themselves, often enough. For instance, we find Father Zeus saying to Ares,

"You turncoat," he said, "don't come to me and whine. There is nothing you enjoy so much as quarreling and fighting; which is why I hate you more than any god on Olympus."

 μή τί μοι, ἄλλοπρόσαλλε, παρεζόμενος μινύριζε·
 ἔχθιστος δέ μοί ἐσσι θεῶν οἳ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν,
 αἰεὶ γάρ τοι ἔρις τε φίλη πόλεμός τε μάχαι τε.⁶⁶

Things get so bad that Zeus has to call a council on Olympus and threaten the gods and goddesses to make them behave themselves.

"If I find any god taking an independent course and going to the Trojans' or the Danaans' help, he shall be thrashed ignominiously and packed off to Olympus. Or I will seize him and hurl him down into the gloom of Tartarus. . . ."

 ὅν δ' ἄν ἐγὼν ἀπάνευθε θεῶν ἐθέλοντα νοήσω
 ἐλθόντι ἢ Τρώεσσιν ἀρηγέμεν ἢ Δαναοῖσι,
 πληγεῖς οὐ κατὰ κόσμον ἐλεύσεται Οὐλυμπόνδε.
 ἢ μιν ἐλὼν ῥίψω ἐς Τάρταρον ἡερδεντα, . . .⁶⁷

This, perhaps, is not so bad; it might just be an extension of the gods' role as protectors of men and procurers of men's needs. After all, men come into conflict; therefore it is not unusual that their protectors should also. Yet there is something else here. It is not so much what Homer has the gods doing; rather, it is how he writes of them that is different. For in the original conception, at least as Nilsson saw it, the gods had developed out of awesome powers and, however much they might be able to be turned to the service of man, were themselves awesome figures. But this is most emphatically not the case in Homer. The awe is gone, though lip service is paid to it. One does not outwardly berate the gods, for the gods can still harm. And one does request things of the gods, for they can do good. But one is certainly not afraid of the gods. For that matter, one does not have a particularly high regard for them. After all, why should man respect the gods, who are little more than glorified human beings,

differing from their mortal counterparts only in that they are more powerful and are immortal? They certainly have all the disreputable characteristics that are to be found in mortals: they scheme, they plot, they cheat, they deceive, they rebel against Zeus. They have love lives which would be questionable even when measured against the standard of human morality: witness the illicit affair between Aphrodite and Ares and the vengeance of Hephaistos.

The reason for this is the tendency to anthropomorphism, or the visualizing of the gods after the model of humans, which seems to be a fairly common tendency among developing cultures.⁶⁸ Among the Greeks, however, it enjoyed one characteristic not found elsewhere: it was relentlessly consistent. "In this consistent anthropomorphism lies a genuine Greek rationalism. The gods are anthropomorphic, they resemble man, and consequently they are neither more nor less than man-like."⁶⁹

Furthermore, in the passage from the earlier view to the Homeric one, there is involved the transition from cult to poetry. This is significant, for in the cult there is rarely occasion to juxtapose the deities, a process which is pregnant with problems.

[The relative position of the gods] was of less importance in the cult, where the god who is being worshipped at that moment has an almost exclusive preponderance. Man directs his attention to one particular god, and the others are not immediately present to the mind. In the cult, therefore, there can scarcely be any question of relative superiority or inferiority among the gods. It is quite different in poetry, where the gods appear alongside of one another upon the same plane and as patrons of opposite camps. Here the consequences of anthropomorphism appear, which were concealed in the cult. The world of the gods is equipped with every human frailty.⁷⁰

And once the gods are juxtaposed, there is question of a divine

society. Now, just as man projects his own personal characteristics onto the daimones, making them into personal beings modeled upon himself, so also on the social level: the society of the gods tends to get modeled upon the social structure prevalent among the people doing the anthropomorphising. And so,

The divine community is a copy of the conditions of the age of chivalry. The seat of the gods is, therefore, an acropolis with its royal stronghold, Olympus. . . . There Zeus sits when he wishes to be alone, as he sat before; there he summons the council of the gods. Lower down lies the city of the gods, and all other buildings in it are outshone by Zeus's palace, the floor of which is laid with plates of gold. There the gods sit upon their thrones and drink wine like the Phaeacian princes at the house of Alcinoös . . . Life goes on [among the gods] much as in some royal house in which there is constant entertaining. Zeus rules like Agamemnon over a troop of wilful and refractory vassals, each of whom is pursuing his own designs. . . . Like every noble family, the Olympians have their genealogical tree.⁷¹

In other words, the gods have become, in Homer, a sort of glorified group of Achaian nobles, whose concern for the οἱ πολλοί (except in the case of certain adopted favorites) is practically nil.⁷² The suspicion is inescapable that much the same relationship existed between the ordinary man and the gods as pertained between the ordinary man and the nobleman: one of tolerance, of a sort of outward conformity (for the nobleman could do the commoner good or ill), but certainly nothing like the inward awe that had characterized the relationship between primitive man and daimon or possessor of mana.

Yet even this needs qualification, for "ordinary man" in the preceding paragraph would have to be understood with reference to the ordinary man who knew the Iliad and the Odyssey or else had some sort of connection with the nobility. Doubtless there were such as these latter; baronial entourages could be large affairs among the Greeks

as they were later to be among the medievals. But just as there were commoners who were also members of the households of nobility, so also there must have been commoners--and very likely the majority of them--whose contact with the nobility was slight. That would mean, in turn, that their contact with the noble-ized gods and goddesses was proportionately slight. What we would expect, therefore, is a cleavage of sorts. Some men, those connected with the Achaian nobility in one way or other, would continue the anthropomorphising process in terms of the social structure with which they were acquainted. But others, and these the majority, very likely would not do so. Their mentality would continue to be largely what it was, despite their knowledge of Homer; ordinary people are notoriously conservative in their religious views, and there is no reason to expect that it was otherwise in ancient Greece. Hence we would expect to find, in an account of Greek religion in the Homeric period, the Olympian pantheon, indeed, conceived after the fashion of an Achaian barony; but there would also be earlier, persistent strains of daimones, localized gods, vaguely personalized gods of the home and hearth, and the like. And in fact this is what we do find.

Homer, then, would represent not so much a simple continuation of the anthropomorphic process along the lines of the social structure, as an alternate path that Greek thought took. But one alternate implies another, and the other would be the older strain. Such, indeed, is the view of Nilsson (although the reasoning involved in the preceding paragraph is not his): "Homer represents not a leap, but a break, in the development; the post-Homeric period joins on where the

pre-Homeric period had ended."⁷³ Perhaps the best indication that this is accurate lies in the fact that Hesiod felt it necessary to account, in his catalogue of the divinities, for items quite other than (and on a quite different plane from) the Olympian divinities. A glance at the offspring of Night, for instance,⁷⁴ will show that the abstractions listed there have a completely different status from the Titans and their rambunctious offspring; many of the abstractions are simply personifications of nature powers.

However, whether in the Homeric vein or in the older conception, the issue of the gods on the social plane had been raised, and that was a decisive event. In earlier times, man thought of his gods with reference to his needs, primarily; and this tends to be a self-centered sort of thing. The gods, if Nilsson's view is adequate, are projections of the human individual, intended to satisfy his needs. But the critical point here is that they are projections of the individual, not the clan. As long as thought of the gods remains on this level, the naive sort of personalization will do well enough. But when the question is raised of the social group, then inevitably the question of the relationship of individuals within that social group will also be raised. And therefore the question of the relationship of the gods among themselves will be raised. But there is more to this than merely the establishment of some sort of satisfactory divine pecking order. That is a speculative question, and a Greek peasant might well not have concerned himself with it. But there are different kinds of relationships of individuals within the social group, and perhaps one of the most important of these is the question of

justice between two individuals. Justice is an obvious human social need; what sort of response will it find in the realm of the divine? Man clearly cannot guarantee that he will always get justice in dealing with his fellow-men; hence we have another instance of a need above the capabilities of most men. And it is reasonable to suppose that man, following his earlier practice, will turn to the gods as the source of that justice. Whether or not they will be able to support that burden is a question that we shall see at a later point in this chapter. But the point is brought in here simply to indicate that the Homeric period, while perhaps not a homogeneous outgrowth of Greek religious thought, was nevertheless quite critical to the growth of that thought. Perhaps, as Nilsson says, the post-Homeric period did join on where the pre-Homeric one ended.⁷⁵ But it would be difficult to imagine that the issue that the Homeric period raised did not have profound influence on that post-Homeric period. The status of the gods as the providers of human wants would never more be the same, for now the question had been raised to a quite different level.

Much the same sort of problem was occurring on the strictly Homeric level, incidentally. For once the social question is raised, insuperable difficulties arise for anyone who would consistently anthropomorphise. These difficulties center around the divine attributes of omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. Once again, these are difficulties that will be taken up in a later subsection of this chapter; but it should be noted here that it is only when the anthropomorphism is relatively complete, i.e., is made to include man considered as a social being as well as a needy individual, that the

problems arise--with what will turn out to be disastrous consequences for the Olympian pantheon.

Such, then, is the picture of the realm of the gods as it is given in one of the two major sources of the religious thought of the early Greeks. We also find, however, that it is not simply accepted wholesale. The concept of the gods as simply glorified Achaian nobles was "a bit much," and Hesiod sets about toning down the implications as much as he can. Thus the opening lines of the Works and Days are devoted to restoring the lustre of Zeus's tarnished image:

Muses of Pieria, you who glorify others in song, come here and tell of Zeus; sing the praises of your father. It is through him, through the will of great Zeus, that mortal men are obscure or famous, known or unknown. Easily does he make someone strong, easily does he bring the strong man crashing down; easily does he humble the proud man and exalt the humble; easily does he, even Zeus who thunders on high and dwells far aloft, straighten the crooked and humiliate the scornful.

 Μοῦσαι Πιερίηθεν ἀοιδῆσιν κλείουσαι
 δεῦτε, Δί' ἐννέπετε, σφέτερον πατέρ' ὑμνεῖουσαι·
 ὄντε διὰ βροτοῖ ἀνδρες ὁμῶς ἄφατοί τε φατοί τε,
 ῥητοί τ' ἄρρητοί τε Διὸς μεγάλοιο ἔκητι.
 ῥέα μὲν γὰρ βριάδει, ῥέα δὲ βριάοντα χαλέπτει,
 ῥεῖτα δέ τ' ἰθὺναι σκολιὸν καὶ ἀγήνορα κάρφει
 Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης, ὃς ὑπέρτατα δῶματα ναίει.⁷⁶

Later on, the judgment of Zeus is appealed to as a standard for human justice; that judgment is true and perfect.⁷⁷ Prometheus' audacity and apparent success in deceiving Zeus turn out to be not so wise after all;⁷⁸ nevertheless Zeus does not allow his anger to exceed all bounds: the lid is replaced on Pandora's box "by the design of aegis-bearing Zeus the cloud-gatherer (αἰγιδόχου βουλῆσι Διὸς νεφεληγερέταο)"⁷⁹ before Hope escapes. The point of Zeus's supremacy has been made, and Zeus sees nothing to be gained by belaboring it: "Thus in no way is it possible to escape the mind of Zeus (οὕτως οὔτι πῃ ἔστι

Διὸς νόον ἐξαλέσθαι)." ⁸⁰ Woe betide mortals if they do not serve the gods; they cannot afford to ignore the divine, for that is how the second race of men, the ἀργύρεον γένος, came to their dire end: "because they gave no honor to the blessed gods who dwell on Olympus (οὐνεκα τιμὰς οὐκ ἔδιδον μακάρεσσι θεοῖς, οἳ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν)." ⁸¹ Mankind, however, does not seem to have profited by the experience, for the present race is the worst of the lot; Hesiod wishes that he had been born either before his own time or else after it. As far as the present crop of men is concerned, "Harsh will be the troubles that the gods will visit upon them (χαλεπὰς δὲ θεοὶ δώσουσι μερίμνας)," ⁸² among which Hesiod includes domestic strife, injustice, exaltation of brute force, envy, and the like. ⁸³ Injustice especially, however, will merit the direst retribution from Zeus, ⁸⁴ and violence and cruelty will merit similar requital. ⁸⁵ Nor ought man think that, since he is but one man among so many, he can practice evil unnoticed; Zeus has thirty thousand spirits watching over the deeds of men. ⁸⁶

Much more of the same theme runs through the remainder of the poem. In general, it can be said that Hesiod is concerned with restoring to the gods' reputation a certain moral quality: they have concern for goodness and evildoing, rewarding the former and punishing the latter. Whether they themselves practice what they preach, however, is discreetly passed over in silence.

Such, then, are the two major sources of the view of the gods that reached down into seventh- and sixth-century Greece. Of the other literary remains of the time, little need be said, save perhaps to notice the tendency that occurs in the so-called Homeric hymns to

juxtapose the sacred and the ridiculous:

The Hymn to Hermes is entirely different. It is certainly not lacking in zest and humor; and compared with the hymns to Demeter and Apollo, it has something of the effect of the "satyr play" which, later on, was to accompany the performance of the tragic trilogies at Athens. . . .

For, as Apollo seized him, he sent forth an omen, a hard-worked belly-serf, a rude messenger, and sneezed directly after. And when Apollo heard it, he dropped Hermes on the ground. (294-8.)

Here we are closer to the kind of humor that Aristophanes delighted in than to the religious gravity of the Hymn to Demeter. Again and again we shall find Greek writers mixing the profane and the sacred, sheer buffoonery and seriousness, in precisely the same way.⁸⁷

And yet, for an account of Greek religious thought, what we have seen thus far is incomplete. We have seen who the gods were, where they came from, and what happened to them from the time of their origins to the seventh and sixth centuries. There remain two other areas. Some idea has been given of what the gods did; the next question would be, what did they demand in return? And the correlate of that question might be, what did man demand of the gods as a result of the divine demand? To these two topics the remaining sections of this chapter will devote themselves.

The Gods: What They Demanded of Men

Perhaps the best way to see what the Greeks considered to be demanded of themselves by the gods is to view their festivals. This can be done fairly expeditiously, since the Greek ecclesiastical calendar, so to speak, was a good bit simpler than its Christian counterpart of later days (which, in the current year [1969], requires a fairly substantial volume of 259 pages merely to list the feasts involved). Furthermore, Rose's comment at the end of his description of

the Greek festivals is instructive:

This, in outline and with the omission of a number of festivals which were merely commemorative of events in Athenian history, or were brought in by foreigners with the permission of the Athenian government, or finally are so obscure and difficult. . . , was the ecclesiastical year of the Greek community which we know best, or rather of which we are, in this and other respects, least ignorant.⁸⁸

In the table which follows (the present writer's own construction), the division is according to the months of the Greek year.

Table 9: The Greek Ecclesiastical Calendar⁸⁹

1. Month of Hekatombion (midsummer: approximately July):
 - a. Feast of Hekatombia: 7th day (?); in honor of Apollo; sacrifice of hekatombs; little else known.
 - b. Feast of the Kronia: 12th day; in honor of Kronos; a harvest festival.
 - c. Feast of the Panathenaia: 28th day; in honor of Athena; songs, dances, sacrifices, bestowal of new mantle on statue of Athena.
2. Month of Metageitnion:
 - a. Feast of Metageitnia: some connection with relationships between neighbors; sacrifices to Apollo; little else known.
 - b. Feast of Eleusinia: biennial; in honor of Demeter and Kore; athletic events; reference to the fertility of the fields.
3. Month of Boedromion ("Helpers"):
 - a. Feast of Boedromia: 7th day; in honor of Apollo; little else known.
 - b. Eleusinian Mysteries: 15th through 22nd days; sacred dances and pantomimes; re-enactment of the myth of Kore, daughter of Demeter; probably originally a magic fertility rite for the fields.
4. Month of Pyanopsion:
 - a. Feast of Proerosia: 5th day; asking blessing on husbandmen.
 - b. Feast of Pyanopsia: 7th day; in honor of Apollo; a feast of porridge was offered to Apollo to stimulate the crops.
 - c. Feast of Thesmophoria: 11th to 13th days; a fertility feast for the fields; female participants only.
5. Month of Maimakterion:
 - a. Feast of Maimakteria: in honor of Zeus; purpose was to ward off damage from the autumn storms.
6. Month of Poseidon:
 - a. Feast of Poseidea: 8th day; little known.

Table 9 (continued)

- b. Feast of the Haloa: 26th day; festival of Demeter; fertility magic is prominent; Poseidon also honored under his older role of fertility god.
- 7. Month of Gamelion:
 - a. Feast of Gamelia: commemorates the marriage of Zeus and Hera and that of Sky and Earth.
 - b. Feast of Lenaia: 12th to 14th days; feast of Dionysius; an urban celebration; use of drama.
- 8. Month of Anthesterion:
 - a. Feast of Anthesteria: 11th to 13th days; a spring festival; a festival of flowers; a wine festival, including the libation of the first pourings of the new wine; a festival in honor of the dead.
 - b. Feast of Diasia: 23rd day; in honor of Zeus Meilichios; greatest of the Zeus feasts; involved a holocaust; a gloomy feast; title "Meilichios" is a euphemism.
- 9. Month of Elaphebolion:
 - a. Feast of Elaphebolia: in honor of Artemis; festival of stags.
 - b. Urban Dionysia: 8th to 13th days; in honor of Dionysius; major occasion for the celebration of drama.
- 10. Month of Munichion:
 - a. Feast of Munichia: 16th day; a festival of Artemis; little known.
- 11. Month of Thargelion:
 - a. Feast of Thargelia: 6th and 7th days; purification feast; in honor of Apollo; selection of one man and one woman to act as scapegoats to carry off the miasmata of the people.
 - b. Feast of Kallynteria and Plynteria ("housecleaning" and "clothes washing," respectively): 24th and 25th days; the temple of Athena and the statue's coverings were cleansed by the women.
- 12. Month of Skirophorion:
 - a. Feast of the Skira: fertility feast; burying of fertility symbols.
 - b. Feast of Dipolieia: 14th day; feast of Zeus Polieus, god of the city and the citadel; ritual slaying of sacred ox and judicial trial and condemnation of the instrument used in the slaying.

Even a casual perusal of the table will reveal the predominance of agricultural and fertility feasts. How much of this was religion and how much was magic it is impossible to say,⁹⁰ but the point is the same in either case: one demand that the gods made was that man give heed to them when it came to crop growing. The far-reaching importance of this appears when one considers how basic to life itself in ancient Greece was the success or failure of the crop. Indeed, it is not too much to say that life simply depended, unqualifiedly, on this: if the crop was good, life was good; if the crop failed, life was harsh and not infrequently extinguished.⁹¹ But this means that the gods demanded due recognition, whether magically or religiously, for the maintenance of life itself.

When the gods did allow the continuance of life, there were certain conditions attached. For while the gods might not inflict the extreme punishment of starvation, they were quite capable of making life fairly miserable if provoked. We see a realization of this fact reflected in the rise of the phenomenon which Nilsson terms "legalism":

Legalism is the attempt to win the grace and favour of the gods by fulfilling their commandments. In some religions, as those of Judaea and Persia, legalism developed into a ritual law, whose commands and prohibitions are binding on human life down to minute details. The sound good sense of the Greeks kept them from going to any such extreme, but they went part of the way.⁹²

Instances of legalism of this sort occur as early as Hesiod. Thus, it is only after praying to Zeus Chthonios and to Demeter that one ought to begin plowing.⁹³ There are certain days or seasons that are lucky for a given project, others that are the reverse; Hesiod's advice is brief and to the point: "But you, Perses, be mindful of the

proper times for all works (Τύνη δ', ὃ Πέρση, ἔργων μεμνημένος εἶναι ὠραίων πάντων)." ⁹⁴ A libation to Zeus or any other god ought not be poured with unwashed hands, lest the god, far from hearing the prayers of the pourer, spit them back at him. ⁹⁵ So also, the private needs of the body ought not be attended to in public, for "The nights belong to the blessed (μακάρων τοι νύκτες ἔασιν)." ⁹⁶ There is even a proper time for procreation: it should be done after a festival of the gods, rather than after some profaning activity like a burial. ⁹⁷ There are certain rubrics to be observed when crossing a river, violation or neglect of which brings the wrath of the gods. ⁹⁸ And there are many more such pieces of advice, the observance of which, feels Hesiod, will bring the blessing of the gods and the disregard of which will incur their hatred. The gods, of course, were notorious for doing something about their hatreds.

Nor was Hesiod the only one to plump for religious legalism of this sort.

There is a supplement to Hesiod's Works and Days which, however, is not much later than the poem itself; it shows how far it was possible to go in imposing a set of rules on the business of life. It . . . deals with the days of the month--a list of lucky and unlucky days which, revised with the help of astrology, was long authoritative. The first, last, fourth, and seventh days are holy, but the fifth is to be avoided; the sixteenth is not good for plants, but it is for men; it is not lucky for a girl either to be born on that day or to be married, and so on. ⁹⁹

It might be wondered just how much of all this really pertained to Greek religion, properly so called. Sometimes explicit references to the anger of the gods are made; just as often, however, it is simply lucky or unlucky to do something, or to do it on a given date. But the question is somewhat of an academic one. It is highly unlikely

that the Greek peasant, at least, made the distinction. After all, if he got whatever it was that he wanted, he was fortunate (or "lucky," if you will), and this meant that the gods were pleased with him. If he did not, i.e., if he was unfortunate or unlucky, it could only mean that the gods were displeased. And, since it is obviously better to get what one wants than not to get it, it paid to make sure that the gods were pleased with one continuously.

One way to make sure that the gods would not be pleased with one, however, was to be unjust. This is a theme that runs throughout the Works and Days of Hesiod, and even a casual reading of the poem will indicate as much. For example, the basic plaint on which the whole work is based, the unjust acts of Perseus, shows that this was uppermost in Hesiod's mind.¹⁰⁰ Zeus is, after all, the avenger of injustice and the rewarder of justice,¹⁰¹ and it is useless to hide evil deeds from him, for his thirty thousand watchful spirits attend to the doings of men.¹⁰² The upshot is that, in great deeds or small, "An evil plan is most evil of all for the planner (ἡ δὲ κακὴ βουλὴ τῷ βουλευσάντι κακίστη)." ¹⁰³

The comparison is sometimes made¹⁰⁴ between Hesiod and the Hebrew prophet Amos:

Both quiver with a passion for justice, but there is a great difference between their expressions of it. Hesiod's Zeus is not Amos' Yahweh, the jealous god whose very nature is justice and whose wrath smites and punishes the unjust. Zeus had long been, and still is in Hesiod, the champion of justice; his eyes see everything and notice everything; he fixes a penalty for the haughty who commit wickedness and shameful deeds, but since Zeus sat enthroned in the far distance, the result is that his intervention lacks the force and obviousness which characterize that of Amos' Yahweh. He sends out watchers who move invisibly about the earth and observe the doings of mankind. When anyone commits injustice, Zeus' daughter Dike, the goddess of justice, sits

beside him and complains of the unrighteousness of men, weeping for the evil doings of men who wrong her. To Amos justice is the very kernel of the divine activity, to Hesiod it is the foundation on which human society rests, given and protected by Zeus. For Amos, justice belongs to the sphere of the deity, for Hesiod, to the human sphere, although it is under divine protection.¹⁰⁵

The comparison is instructive, and I shall return to it again later on in this chapter;¹⁰⁶ for now, however, it is worth bearing in mind that "justice" to a Greek refers primarily to what later ages will call "retributive justice,"¹⁰⁷ the retribution which avenges wrongdoing (or, the other side of the coin, the blessings which reward righteousness). It is not so much a question of the good or evil deed considered in itself, but rather the divine action that is consequent upon it, that is the decisive factor in the Greek notion of justice.

The gods, then, have thus far demanded acknowledgment of their sway over human life itself (witness the large number of sacrifices that constitute the bulk of the Greek religious calendar), and acknowledgment of their influence over the conduct of that life as well, and also righteousness on the part of men, lest men be visited with divine justice. They have demanded, in homely language, that men pay attention to them, and that men avoid wrongdoing. And they have demanded that this be a continuous, life-long process.

Men, however, are notorious in their inability to stay on the straight and narrow path for any great length of time. Given that fact, another demand of the gods becomes clear: should man become involved in wrongdoing, it behooves him to purge himself of it as expeditiously as possible lest the drastic punishment of nemesis enter the picture. And so it is that we find the curious ceremony of the scapegoat in the Thaegeia festival.

Something else follows from this. For if man is to avoid wrongdoing, and if man is inept at avoiding it, it follows that some sort of divine guidance will be in order. And divine guidance there was, in the form of oracles, most notably at Delphi, where advice on purification from wrongdoing was prolific in the early days of Greece.¹⁰⁸ As the oracle developed, advice began to be given on all sorts of other topics as well.

He [Apollo] was the divine authority to which recourse was had for regulating or, when necessary, reforming a cult. He gave recognition to new gods and heroes (we may say that he canonized the latter), and to alterations in established worships. He regulated the cults of settlers who were going out to found a city in foreign parts. He sanctioned regulations for festivals, with which the introduction of an ordered calendar, which he favoured, was closely connected, for the hundreds of Greek names of months (they varied from one state to the next) are almost with exception derived from festivals celebrated in them. He extended his activity from sacral to civil law. . . . States had recourse to him and asked for his sanction for the laws which their legislators had recorded or given, and Apollo thus gave the civil law his support by right of his divine authority.¹⁰⁹

Perhaps the best summation of Apollo's oracular advice is contained in the inscription found on the temple at Delphi: γνῶθι σεαυτόν: know yourself, i.e., know what you are--a man and nothing more. Know that you are not a god, and do not attempt to act like a god. Know rather that you are a human. And, correlative with this, know that other men are humans as well, and that you must act toward them as one human toward another, and not as a god toward a human.¹¹⁰

To their primary demands of acknowledgement of their sway over life and the conduct of life, the gods now demand righteousness, or, should wrongdoing occur, purification from it. They also demand that the position of gods vis-à-vis men be rigidly maintained, that man should not seek to become a god either in his dealings with the gods

or with other men. Nor is this merely an idle demand. It is enforced with threats of nemesis.

We must turn, now, in the next section of this chapter, to see what "demands," so to speak, men made of the gods: what did the Greek seek from his gods? What did he expect to find in them? And, most critically, were the gods able to deliver what was expected?

The Men: What They Demanded of the Gods

We can perhaps begin this section by recalling something that was said above: the gods expected men to practice righteousness and avoid wrongdoing, and the latter demand was backed up by the threat of divine retribution. But there is another side to divine retribution: if that is the correlative of wrongdoing, it ought to follow, in the eyes of the logical Greeks, that there should be a correlative of righteousness as well. In other words, the upright man should prosper in his life. Furthermore, if man sought the counsel of the gods at one of the oracles, and if that counsel was given, then by following that counsel man ought to prosper. Or, to put the matter even more fundamentally, if man's needs create the gods, as Nilsson has contended, then what is to be said if those needs are not met? What if the gods fail, or appear to fail, and man does not prosper? Obviously, something is standing in the way, and it can only be injustice. But what if man is doing all he can to be upright, is following the advice of the oracles, is diligently maintaining his place as a man and not trying to be a god, and nevertheless is still suffering ill? Empirically, the doctrine that the just man prospers and the unjust man

suffers simply does not work out on either count: the just man is often afflicted, and the unjust man seems often to prosper in direct proportion to his wickedness.

One of two things must happen at this point. Either the entire idea of the gods and their sway over human life will be rejected, or else some sort of modification will have to be introduced into the doctrine. The first alternative seems not to have been taken by very many in Greece, at least in the early days. There is the interesting case of Xenophanes, in the early fifth century,¹¹¹ but this seems to be rare. The usual course is for the somewhat simplistic doctrine to be amended. This can take one of several directions. There is the idea that the just man is suffering for the transgressions of his ancestors; this is fairly common, but it hinges on the conception of clan solidarity and cannot survive an emerging notion of the individual as individual. Another modification that is possible is to place man's final vindication in some sort of life after death. That this option was tried is obvious by a contrast of the conception of the realm of the dead in Homer and the more developed notion that one finds in, say, the transmigration doctrine of the Pythagoreans. This notion of life after death reaches a climax when the claim is made that, indeed, the sufferings of the just man occur in an inconsiderable, trivial portion of his existence, and that vindication holds sway over a much larger span of that existence. Or, a combination of these notions is possible: the just man could be suffering for a transgression that he committed in some earlier phase of his existence.

Another problem that the logical Greeks could see with the divine scheme of things was this: why is it that a given act is unrighteous for a man, whereas a god could perform that same act with impunity? Thus for instance: it is wrong for a man to abscond with his neighbor's wife, but the gods have few if any inhibitions about doing just this--witness the variegated love lives of Zeus. This is, at root, a complaint about the whole peculiar sort of moral goings-on that abound among the Olympians as they appear in Homer, a complaint whose point grows all the sharper the closer the gods come to being simply super-humans. It seems the height of injustice that there should be a double standard, one for men and quite another for gods. Justice (whether commutative or retributive) becomes an arbitrary, irrational thing if this is the case.

The solutions to this problem also take different directions.

The earliest of them is that found in Hesiod.

For we find . . . a tendency to correct the existing myths in the interests of morality or theology. It is Hesiod who tells the story of how Prometheus befooled Zeus; it is also Hesiod who spoils it by saying that Zeus was not really deceived at all, but only pretended to be. Hesiod's fellow-countryman, Pindar, can be very critical of myths. A story was told how Tantalus, to test the gods' omniscience, served up to them the flesh of his own son Pelops. One of them ate a little of it without recognizing it, and ever afterwards Pelops had, though miraculously restored to life, one shoulder of ivory and not of flesh. To Pindar this is both incredible and impious. Pelops was snatched up alive to heaven by Poseidon, who loved him for his beauty, and the tale that he had been murdered by his father was nothing but slander. As to his ivory shoulder, he had had that from his birth.¹¹²

The first approach, therefore, is to correct the myths in the interests of edification. Another approach is simply to deny the validity of any of the disedifying myths:

Years later, Euripides, who was a radical in religious matters as in many others, put into the mouth of one of his characters the bold statement, "If the gods do aught base, they are no gods." Pindar would rather have said that they were gods, therefore they do nothing base, whatever lying fables men may tell of them.¹¹³

However, it takes considerable ingenuity to correct myths, and it is too much to expect that the ordinary Greek engaged in much of this. It is much more likely that this simply became an unresolved, and festering, problem. It takes considerable hardihood, on the other hand, simply to deny all the offensive myths. If one is to be consistent about this, he will have to deny a large number of them, and this leaves very little religious base from which to operate.

To these problems, i.e., the sufferings of the just man and the disedifying character of the myths, is added yet another difficulty. For what happens when the gods prove themselves incapable of performing the functions expected of them? When, for example, a city is under the divine protection of one or other god or goddess, and lo, that city is one day successfully stormed and burned, what is to be said for the divine power that was supposed to be protecting it? Similarly, when all the due sacrifices have been made and all the proper formalities observed in order to insure a good crop, and then blight hits the fields and the population of a town comes near starvation, what happened to the god? One can, of course, say that there is some hidden miasma among the citizenry. But when this sort of thing happens regularly, that explanation begins to strain credulity beyond the breaking point. When the disaster is on a large scale, of course, the impact is all the greater.

Theoretical problems, moreover, presented themselves to the more

reflective type Greek. The question of omnipresence, for example, gave birth to problems that seemed to contradict divine omnipotence. Thus in the Iliad we have Thetis' power to intercede for her son limited by the fact that she cannot have immediate access to Zeus: he and the other gods have gone to Ethiopia for a banquet.¹¹⁴ The other gods take advantage of Poseidon's absence to victimize him somewhat in sanctioning the return of Odysseus.¹¹⁵ Similarly with regard to divine omniscience: in the example just cited, Poseidon does not know about Odysseus' return until he sees the latter's ship out on the sea.¹¹⁶ Menelaus and his troop capture Proteus unawares and unsuspecting.¹¹⁷ And finally, the same thing is true in regard to omnipotence: even Poseidon cannot save Odysseus from Charybdis;¹¹⁸ it avails the Cyclops not at all to cry out to Poseidon over the loss of his eye, for the god can do nothing about it.¹¹⁹ All these--and numerous others like them--are disturbing, particularly when added to the lack of morality and other anomalies in the world of the gods which we have already noted.

The Men and the Gods: Some Reflections

It is time to reflect on what has been sketched out in this long chapter, and to draw some conclusions about the Greeks, their gods, and the problems that both had with each other. What I wish to suggest here--and it is a notion fundamental to this dissertation--is simply this: Greek religion was basically an authoritarian one. Certain things were to be done because the gods said so. But by way of enforcing this, certain threats were made. The threats,

however, had corollaries, and those corollaries were capable of being empirically tested. In a word, the gods failed the test. They failed it on a number of scores, but perhaps the situation could be put thus: having failed to do what they were supposed to do, the gods found themselves in a position wherein the basic premise of their supremacy--the γυνῶσι σεαυτῶν they imposed on man--could not stand logical scrutiny because of serious internal contradictions. The gods themselves were not (commutatively) just. Nor were they subject to retributive justice, without which commutative justice, in an authoritarian framework, is at best meaningless and at worst irrational. Any attempts to ameliorate the situation proved to be more palliatives than cures.

There is, indeed, a certain parallel between the Greeks and the Hebrews in regard to the notion of the sufferings of the just man. The Hebrews too started out with the notion that (retributive) justice requires that the evil man should suffer and that the good should prosper; this is the tenor of many of the early books of the Old Testament. Moreover, the Hebrew religion, like the Greek one, was an authoritarian one. However, at this point the parallel fails, since the internal contradiction did not develop in the Yahwistic religion. The command was, indeed, to be holy because Yahweh was holy. But the difference was precisely that: Yahweh was holy, and therefore his credibility was not to be questioned. The result was that the Hebrews were able to work out, within the authoritarian framework, some sort of satisfactory concept of life after death (the process is seen at work in the writings of Qoheleth and in the book of Job, and it

reaches a considerably higher stage in the books of the Maccabees). The Greeks did not, for the internal inconsistency necessitated rejecting the framework itself.

Yet, given a rejection of the Olympians, where was the Greek to turn? Some turned to the mystery religions:

There was always a possibility that in times of discontent some of them might also tamper with the traditional hierarchy of the gods. It is not, therefore, surprising that by about the sixth century or earlier we hear of religious innovations.¹²⁰

In the mystery religions, a number of answers might be found, more or less satisfactory. Others, however, and among these some very serious thinkers, opted in another direction, with immense consequences for the history of human thought. For if the γνῶθι σεαυτόν had to be rejected in one of its meanings, there still remained the germ of something viable in it: know that you are a man, and that you are not a god--since there are no gods. And therefore the question must be: what does it mean to be a man? The question will have to be answered in sheerly human terms; there are no others, for the authority structure has passed away. Nor can help be sought in vestiges of religion, even when that religion itself is rejected, for the good reason that Greek religion was not a "teaching" religion, one with fixed creed and doctrine. Once the gods were discredited, nothing remained for rational thought to use as a starting point. This too is a difference between the Greek and the Hebrew religions, for the Hebrews did indeed have definite creeds and beliefs. For the Hebrews and, indeed, for the Christian faith after them, the question was how to determine the relationship between the authoritarian and the speculative modes of thought--a question, incidentally, not definitively decided until the

time of Nicea in the fourth century of the Christian era. But for the Greeks, there was no question of reconciling the two. The speculative mode simply replaced, rather than augmented, the authoritarian one, both because of the contradictions inherent in the Greek authoritarian structure and because there was no dogmatic content in Greek religion to which the speculative mode could attach itself. And thus the rational or speculative mode went off on its own in Greece--with, as has been remarked, incalculably immense consequences for the history of Western thought.

Obviously, the process of the rejection of the authority structure has been streamlined considerably in these pages. I do not suggest that all this came about rapidly, or that the entire train of thought that I have sketched out occurred to any one individual at any assignable point of time. Yet it is my contention that something like this must have been the over-all effect produced by multiple disillusionment with the divine.

Finally, before this excessively long chapter comes to a close, some attention should be paid to how the theory detailed in the above paragraphs ties in with the opinions of the different authors given in the first chapter of this study. If there is any merit in the theory, after all, one side benefit from it ought to be the unification of at least some of the discordant notes that we have seen in explanations of the origins of the Greek genius.

I shall omit Bréhier; since he considers the origins of Greek thought to be non-Greek, it will be obvious enough that his work and the theory I have sketched are simply incompatible.

Windelband, it will be remembered, held the critical factor to be the growth in awareness of personal individuality, fostered by a number of economic and political factors. Granted; but the question is, in what regard is this developing consciousness important? Many peoples have advanced from clan consciousness to individual consciousness, but they have not originated philosophies. It is rather that when the individual becomes conscious of himself as an individual, he simultaneously realizes that he must be held responsible for his own deeds only, rather than those of his ancestors or of other members of the clan. Therefore an explanation of personal misfortune based on collective consciousness must fail and hence must be replaced. In the case of the Greeks, the rejection of the divine authority structure and the lack of dogmatic content in the Olympian religion successfully obviated any possibility of replacing this rejected explanation with another one drawn from religious sources. In this they differed from other ancient peoples.

That the theory propounded by the present study is compatible with Zeller's view will be obvious enough. The "Apolline clarity of the Greek mind" was precisely what the Greeks had left--and all they had left--to formulate answers to the questions that the Olympian religion left blank. That clarity of mind was also, very probably, the driving force that led to their success in doing so. They were an inquisitive and clear-thinking people, and that meant that they would not be satisfied with cloudy, inconsistent, or contradictory answers. It is also that clarity of mind that saw the flaws in the Olympian scheme of things. Thus, both their peculiar gift of rationality and

the field upon which they were forced to exercise that gift distinguished them from other ancient peoples.

Guthrie's idea of a basic underlying order is one that certainly is not contradicted by anything that this study has stated. But on the other hand, neither is its agreement with it immediately apparent. Certainly philosophy did begin, in both views, when anthropomorphic polytheism was rejected. But the reasons for this rejection differ in the two views. I have already indicated that I do not consider the idea of increased wealth as a sufficient reason for this to be adequate. Many peoples, once again, have acquired considerable wealth down through the ages; but precious few of them have originated philosophies.

Copleston's remark about the absence of any "orthodoxy" in Greek religion fits in with the ideas that I have advanced, I think. Obviously there was no orthodoxy; there was nothing to be orthodox about.

With Cornford, I have some agreement and some disagreement. I do, indeed, think that the work of the first philosophers was to strip away the encrustation of Greek religious thought. I would not, however, wish to follow him in his analysis of the source of that religious thought for reasons that I have already stated.¹²¹ Basically, it will be remembered that Cornford's notion views philosophy as a later development of certain primitive convictions, imbibed non-critically during adolescence. Again, I think that this remains to be established and, prior to proof, can reasonably enough be disregarded.

With Burnet, the question is posed quite explicitly: which came first, science or ethics? He opts quite definitely for science,

remarking that polytheism was not rejected and a reasoned ethics worked out until the older cosmologies were undermined. I am not satisfied with this, I admit, for reasons that I have given above.¹²² I find myself wondering if it were not the other way around, and that the search for stability amid change in the physical universe were not simply a reflection of the search for stability in the moral order, once authoritarian polytheism had been rejected. For while it is a fact that the early Ionian cosmologists did turn their energies to finding an underlying, unchanging substratum for the physical universe, that fact is hardly self-explanatory. In fact, it is inexplicable, if one opts for the science-then-ethics view. The only option then is simply to accept the fact that one fine day this group of men began to wonder about physical change, without much good reason for doing so. If on the other hand the sequence is reversed, and one sees in the Ionians an effort to find stability in the physical world as a ground for stability in the moral world (since that ground could no longer be sought in the supernatural world), then the pattern becomes a good deal more intelligible.

However, the test of a theory is how well it works out in the writings of the men to whom the theory is supposed to apply. Consequently, the following two chapters of this study will be devoted to an examination of the extant writings of Empedocles and Heraclitus, with a view toward seeing whether or not that theory can be borne out.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

¹Cf. supra, p. 35.

²H. J. Rose, Ancient Greek Religion (New York: Hutchinson's University Library, 1946), pp. 18ff.

³Quoted in Paul F. Distler, S.J., Vergil and Vergiliana (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1966), p. 310.

⁴At first blush, it might seem that a considerable obstacle stands in the way of this study: there is no universally agreed-upon text of the Theogony. Granted; there is not, and there seems to be no way to separate out to everyone's complete satisfaction what Hesiod himself wrote and what is an interpolation. Fortunately, however, "The text which has come down to us contains extensive interpolations which were inserted at a time so close to Hesiod's as to make them almost indistinguishable from Hesiod's own work." (Quotation taken from Norman O. Brown, tr., Hesiod: Theogony [New York: Library of Liberal Arts, 1953], p. 7; emphasis added.) Since it is the religious milieu of Hesiod's time that is our primary concern, the textual problems, vexing as they are to the scholar of Hesiod himself, need not concern us.

⁵Hesiod, Theogony, LL. 116ff.

⁶Ibid., LL. 124ff.

⁷Ibid., LL. 211ff.

⁸The English rendering of the names in the tables is that of Brown, op.cit. I do not, however, follow him in translating Xóος as "The Void." The fact that some of the names in the tables are translated and some merely transliterated is also due to Brown.

One might wonder about the source of Hesiod's genealogies. Part of them can be identified as coming from Homer (Iliad, XVIII, 40ff: the daughters of Nereus, for example); the others could either be his own constructions or could stem from a now-lost source.

⁹I omit from this table much of the material found in lines 956-1022 of the poem, not so much because of their doubtful authenticity but rather because they deal exclusively with the unions of divine personages and mortals. The offspring of these unions thus lie somewhat outside the scope of interest of this study.

¹⁰Rose, op.cit., p. 27.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Hesiod, Works and Days, LL. 156-160. The text is that of Evelyn-White (1914); the translation is the present author's.

¹³Rose, op.cit., p. 28.

¹⁴Hesiod, Works and Days, LL. 109-126; my translation.

¹⁵Rose, op.cit., p. 28.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁸The view of history adopted here is the traditional one that the Minoans suffered an invasion from the mainland, a view expressed by (among others) J. B. Bury, A History of Greece (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963), pp. 44ff. There are, to be sure, other and more recent views of what happened. But this still seems to be the dominant view, at least as present; and the present writer feels that it would be out of place for him to enter into argument about a question wherein the opinion of professional historians is divided.

¹⁹Rose, op.cit., pp. 18f.

²⁰Ibid., p. 47.

²¹Ibid., pp. 47f.

²²Ibid., p. 48.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., p. 50. Evidence that Demeter was Greek (i.e., Achaian) rests on linguistic considerations: the last two syllables of the name are simply the Greek word for "mother," and the first perhaps a by-word for "spelt" (Rose, op.cit., p. 50).

²⁵Ibid., pp. 50f.

²⁶This is somewhat inferential from the (later) fact that Artemis is certainly the bringer of death to women in Homer (cf. Iliad, VI, 428; XIX, 59; XXIV, 602-609; Odyssey, XI, 172; XVIII, 202).

²⁷Rose, op.cit., p. 51.

²⁸Ibid., p. 52.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 52f.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 53f.

³¹ The information for the table is distilled from Rose, op.cit., pp. 50-62.

³² Martin P. Nilsson, A History of Greek Religion, second edition (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1964).

³³ Perhaps the greatest such reservation is that Nilsson puts the theory forth as something which applies to religions in general, without much distinction. Thus for instance, in one place we find the following illuminating (if illegitimate) transfer:

This tendency to exalt one among a number of similar beings to a position of supremacy was so ingrained that it has left an example dating from the time of transition to the Christian faith. The Lycian "wild gods" are represented as twelve similar figures; to them a thirteenth was added as their ruler, and he was placed in the middle and was somewhat larger in size, but was in other respects just like the rest. (Pp. 112f.)

But Nilsson's evidence is largely drawn from Greek sources, and the implied principle that all religions work the same way is one which is hardly self-evident. I should think, therefore, that the scope of the evidence ought to determine the scope of the conclusions--which means that, as far as a study of the origins of Greek religious thought goes, Nilsson's evidence is pertinent and his conclusions warranted; when the Greek evidence is extended to cover conclusions from other areas, however, it ceases to be scholarly and becomes either opinion or prejudice.

³⁴ Nilsson, op.cit., p. 45.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Nilsson is not completely clear at this point in the book just what these "religious motives" are supposed to be. Presumably he is referring to man's needs, fears, desires, etc., which he will discuss at a point in his book later than the one we are now considering.

³⁷ Nilsson, op.cit., p. 48.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 48. The term "inventive" is Nilsson's.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 52.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 52f.

⁴² Ibid., p. 52.

⁴³ Ibid. There are exceptions, e.g., Psyche's prohibition against looking at her bridegroom in daylight.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 62.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 66.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 81f.

⁴⁷Rose, op.cit., pp. 20f.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 21f.

⁴⁹Nilsson, op.cit., p. 82.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 83.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 87f.

⁵³Ibid., p. 88.

⁵⁴Rose, op.cit., pp. 90ff.

⁵⁵Nilsson, op.cit., p. 104.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 106.

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 108f.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 111.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 110.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 112.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 113.

⁶²Ibid., p. 115.

⁶³Ibid., p. 117.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 118.

⁶⁵In the pages which follow, the discerning reader will perhaps experience a sense of dissatisfaction in that no thorough accounting of the Homeric view of the origins of the gods is presented (as is done for Hesiod); nor is much attempt made at a systematic delineation of the views which Homer had of the gods themselves and their activities. It is a dissatisfaction which the author shares. However, several considerations militated against such a presentation. For one thing, Homer is not systematic in his presentation of the gods; they are not the focal point of his story. Quite the opposite; the gods tend to be brought into the story for the sake of the men in the story.

Thus a systematic presentation of Homer's thoughts on the Olympian divinities is something that would have to be constructed by bringing together elements from all the books of the Iliad and the Odyssey--an enterprise whose length would border on the prohibitive. By way of a brief characterization, however, one might say that the gods in Homer are not the absolute and perfect beings that we in the Judaeo-Christian tradition expect them to be. Plato, it is true, thought that the god(s) was (were) perfect and hence forbade the poets from having a place in his republic; it is also true that the role of the gods in the Eumenides of Aeschylus is certainly satisfying and perhaps inspiring. But in Homer, the gods are merely interesting and not a model for human conduct; they are if anything worse, not better, than men. They lie to and otherwise deceive both one another and men. They provide a change of tone, sometimes similar to that of comic relief (as, for example, in the Hephaistos story [Iliad, I, 571ff]). Perhaps above all they are useful for indicating human motivation (as when Zeus causes panic among the Greeks [Iliad, VIII, 77ff], or, when Achilles is about to kill Agamemnon, Athena appears to him and bids him desist [Iliad, I, 188ff]). Nor should it be forgotten that the Olympian gods that Homer depicts do not represent the whole of Greek religion. Thus we see Furies (in, for example, the Eumenides of Aeschylus), Fates (in Sophocles' Oedipus Rex), and Necessity (in Aeschylus' Prometheus); there are also, as has been mentioned, the mystery religions. In this latter connection, a classic study is that of L. R. Farnell, The Cults of the Greek States (five volumes; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896-1909)--a work which in this present study is presumed rather than summarized.

Another reason why a thorough account of the religion in Homer's day is not given is that, in the present writer's view, it is not really demanded by the work of the thesis. The reader will note that the point at issue is simply that there is a drastic change between Homer's gods and the earlier, soul-searingly terrifying divinities portrayed by Nilsson and Rose. For this, the recollections of the thoughtful reader who is basically familiar with Homer will perhaps suffice.

Should the reader wish a somewhat detailed accounting of the gods in Homer, however, he may consult the work of E. T. Owen, The Story of the Iliad (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966).

⁶⁶ Homer, Iliad, V, 889-891. The text is that of Murray (1924), the translation that of E. V. Rieu, in the Penguin Classics Edition (p. 116).

⁶⁷ Ibid., VIII, 10-13; Rieu translation.

⁶⁸ Nilsson, op.cit., p. 143.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 144.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 145f.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 146-148.

⁷²This suggests the relevance of an earlier section of this chapter: not only did the Achaian invaders bring along their own deities, whose functions and personalities merged and became fused with those of the native gods, but they also brought their own manner of conceiving divinity. This too becomes melded with the native one, with far-reaching consequences. This notion was suggested earlier, in connection with the transformation undergone by Artemis (supra, pp. 57f); its full ramifications become clear now.

⁷³Nilsson, op.cit., p. 136.

⁷⁴Cf. Table 1, supra, p. 46.

⁷⁵Nilsson, op.cit., p. 136.

⁷⁶Hesiod, Works and Days, op.cit., LL. 1-8; my translation.

⁷⁷Ibid., L. 36.

⁷⁸Ibid., LL. 55ff.

⁷⁹Ibid., L. 99; my translation.

⁸⁰Ibid., L. 105; my translation.

⁸¹Ibid., LL. 138-139; my translation.

⁸²Ibid., L. 178; my translation.

⁸³Ibid., LL. 182ff.

⁸⁴Ibid., LL. 229ff.

⁸⁵Ibid., LL. 238ff.

⁸⁶Ibid., LL. 252f.

⁸⁷Robert Flacelière, A Literary History of Greece (New York: New American Library, 1968), pp. 89f.

⁸⁸H. J. Rose, Religion in Greece and Rome (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), p. 89.

⁸⁹Ibid., pp. 67-89.

⁹⁰Cf. ibid., p. 73n:

The difference between magic and religion is essentially that the former is supposed to be effective in itself, the words, actions, and so forth, of the magician having power to compel, if necessary, both nature and the gods governing it to obey him. The religious attitude is more dependent, involving petitions to whatever beings are believed in to do what the worshipper wants, and not trying to force them to agree.

⁹¹Cf. James Conway, S.J., Introduction to the History of Greek Philosophy, unpublished ms (New York: Fordham University, n.d.), p. 13.

⁹²Martin P. Nilsson, Greek Piety, tr. H. J. Rose (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), pp. 30ff.

⁹³Hesiod, Works and Days, op.cit., LL. 465f.

⁹⁴Ibid., LL. 641f; my translation.

⁹⁵Ibid., LL. 724-726.

⁹⁶Ibid., L. 730; my translation.

⁹⁷Ibid., LL. 735f.

⁹⁸Ibid., LL. 737-739.

⁹⁹Nilsson, Greek Piety, op.cit., p. 32.

¹⁰⁰Cf. LL. 212ff et alibi passim.

¹⁰¹Hesiod, Works and Days, op.cit., LL. 225ff.

¹⁰²Ibid., LL. 252ff.

¹⁰³Ibid., L. 266; my translation.

¹⁰⁴e.g., in Nilsson, Greek Piety, op.cit., pp. 34f.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Cf. infra, p. 92.

¹⁰⁷Nilsson, Greek Piety, op.cit., p. 35.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., pp. 42ff.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 46.

¹¹⁰Ibid., pp. 47ff.

¹¹¹Rose, Ancient Greek Religion, op.cit., p. 98.

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 99.

¹¹⁴Cf. Nilsson, History, op.cit., p. 149.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 150.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 151.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Rose, Religion in Greece and Rome, op.cit., p. 93. The innovations that Rose has in mind are those of Orphism.

¹²¹Cf. supra, p. 29.

¹²²Cf. supra, p. 34.

¹²³There are some interesting corollaries to this theory. One would be that the early cosmologists were not as far from the mainstream of later Greek thought as is sometimes supposed: the same ethics-leading-to-metaphysics pattern would appear in their work as is visible in Plato or Plotinus. Then too, it would no longer be quite as accurate to say, as is commonly done, that the Sophists and Socrates, in their quite different ways, shifted the direction of philosophy from cosmology to the study of man. What would have been shifted, in this theory, is the explicit matters treated, but not the underlying rationale. However, such corollaries are fit topics for full-blown treatments themselves, and therefore cannot be more than simply mentioned in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

EMPEDOCLES OF AKRAGAS

ὄλβιος, ὃς θεῶν πραπίδων ἐκτίσατο πλοῦτον,
δειλὸς δ', ὧι σκοτέεσσα θεῶν πέρι δόξα μέμηλεν.

--Empedocles, Fragment 132.

Perhaps the best way to begin this chapter is by adverting to a caution voiced by one historian of ancient philosophy:

Even where the [source] material is abundant, as with Plato and Aristotle, it has afforded ground for widely varying interpretations. If for these two philosophers there were available only such meager fragments as are now extant for so many other Greek philosophers, one can readily imagine how far from what is now known any reconstruction of their thought would be. Try, for instance, to figure out a reconstruction of Plato's doctrine of Ideas based upon the account of Diogenes Laertius (III, 10-15)! One can therefore realize the caution that is necessary in reconstructing more ancient doctrines from the fragments and reports handed down. The safest procedure is to keep as closely as possible to the wording of the fragments. The texts themselves remain immortal, while interpretations of them change.¹

One of the "more ancient doctrines" to which Owens refers in this passage is that of Empedocles. And Owens' caution will determine both the order of topics in this chapter and how those topics are treated. We will speak first of Empedocles' life and works, then of the general drift of his thought (as it can be pieced together from the fragments); and finally we will consider certain special questions that are of particular interest to the general subject matter of this paper, attempting to formulate answers to those questions

on the basis of the fragments.

Life and Works

Disagreement is the keynote when one speaks of details of Empedocles' life. "No sufficiently established facts are known about the life of Empedocles."² However, certain details are traditionally accepted by most. His floruit date is put around 450 B.C., though this is a somewhat disputed point.³ The exact dates of his birth and death are unknown; he is mentioned as visiting Thurii soon after its foundation, which would make him alive in 444 B.C.⁴ His age at death is variously given: some opt for seventy-seven,⁵ others for ninety-nine.⁶ His life seems to have been a favorite theme for apocryphal biographical tales, centering mostly around his political activities or his death.⁷ Thus for instance, he is supposed to have had strong democratic tendencies, preventing a tyranny at Akragas and helping the citizenry establish a democratic form of government;⁸ he brought about the dissolution of an otherwise-unknown oligarchic association called "The Thousand," and perhaps it was for that feat that he himself was offered the kingship (which he refused).⁹ On his death, there is the tale of how he supposedly leaped into Mt. Etna, in order that his body might not be found and therefore that he might be declared a god, in accordance with his claims in life.¹⁰ Other ways in which he is supposed to have perished include hanging from a high crag, drowning at sea, and falling out of a wagon.¹¹

Of the sort of person he was, of his interests and activities, the sources have little enough to say. His claim to be a god and to

receive divine homage from other men¹² evoked from Burnet the following comment: "The truth is, Empedocles was not a mere statesman; he had a good deal of the 'medicine-man' about him."¹³ He engaged in activities which were looked upon as sorceries,¹⁴ and promised the ability to do likewise as a reward for ardent discipleship.¹⁵ We know from the considerable number of biological references in his work that he was interested in natural science, particularly human anatomy; for instance, there are fragments dealing with human bones,¹⁶ the human spine,¹⁷ blood and flesh,¹⁸ the ear,¹⁹ breathing,²⁰ and smell,²¹ to name only some. He had a certain religious interest: his claim to be a god has already been noted, but there lies behind this his doctrine on transmigration and reincarnation of the soul.²² That he had a low opinion of existing religions can be inferred from his strictures on sacrifice.²³ However, that there was a certain kinship between his religious thought and that of others of the day comes out in his notions about diet and abstinence,²⁴ as also in the motif of purification from sin or fault.²⁵

Perhaps we can let Freeman tie all this together:

To sum up: we know no definite facts about the life of Empedocles, as all anecdotes are embroideries on remarks, often misunderstood, in his own poems. All that we know of his life, character, and work must be derived from the surviving fragments, especially the apostrophies to his pupil, and the address to his fellow citizens. These show him as a man interested only in natural science, especially medicine, and in a certain religious doctrine; who scorned the everyday affairs of men; and who believed that knowledge would give power over nature, while purity as he conceived it would lead straight to apotheosis and heavenly bliss. He attained to great fame, being admired by his fellow citizens, with whom he was on very friendly terms, and also by inhabitants of other cities. He travelled to some extent, but whether he ever left Sicily is uncertain. On his travels, he was particularly welcome because of his medical knowledge, which led many to regard him as a seer, or even a god. His death occurred

away from Acragas, the place and manner of it being unknown.²⁶

Of his works, our knowledge is scarcely better. We know that he wrote two poems, one with the common enough title *Περὶ φύσεως* ("On Nature") and the other entitled *Καθαρμοί* ("Purifications").²⁷ He is thus the second of the Greek philosophers to put forth his ideas in verse, if we exempt the satirist Xenophanes from consideration.²⁸ The sources (Diogenes and Soudas)²⁹ tell us that the two poems together totaled some five thousand verses, and it is a matter of some debate as to how many lines each of the two contained by itself. Aristotle has a few unfavorable comments on Empedocles' Sicilian style; the Stagirite thinks that Empedocles has little in common with Homer except metre, and that he is in fact not a poet but a scientist; furthermore, thinks Aristotle, poetry is an unsuitable vehicle for the expression of philosophical thought.³⁰ Empedocles had, we are told, written other works as well: a treatise on medicine is mentioned, as also certain other prose and verse works; of these, nothing remains.³¹ As Parmenides before him, he employed the epic metre in the writings that we have.³²

Empedocles' Doctrine

It is important at the outset to realize the purpose of this section. The aim here is not to give a complete, systematic account of Empedocles' thought. This has already been done, far more competently than the present author could present it, in such works as Burnet and Zeller, to name only two; and there seems to be no useful purpose to be served by attempting to duplicate their efforts. The

aim here is simply to present the general trend of his thought on some important questions, to the degree that that can be pieced together from the available fragments. This in itself has the sole purpose of providing a matrix or background, against which certain queries can be put to Empedocles' doctrine, in an attempt to arrive at a deeper understanding of it. Thus there will be whole areas of his thought which I shall present only very summarily if at all--things like his biological thoughts, to cite one large area. Some background is needed for the work of this paper, but that background need not be a complete exposition.

Empedocles can be presented under two aspects, that of a synthesizer of what has gone before and that of an innovator in his own right.

Empedocles as Synthesizer

Thales, it will be remembered, opted for water (or, more properly, "the moist") as the basic Urstoff of all reality,³³ Anaximenes for air.³⁴ Anaximander had chosen τὸ ἀέριον for his candidate,³⁵ and had added a primitive sort of explanation of how all things came from the basic Urstoff in his notion of "separating out."³⁶ The Pythagoreans had contributed the notion of the universe as a cosmic harmony and, more importantly, as a moment in an ever-recurring cycle:

According to the Pythagoreans, the evolution of the world was not in a straight line but was accomplished in great cycles. The stars and the universe return periodically to their orbits, and the clock of the world runs ever on, from eternity to eternity. This eternal regress, this everlasting return of all things, extends to even the minutest particles. "I will again stand before you with staff in hand and will again teach you," Pythagoras is supposed to have said.³⁷

Heraclitus, while stressing the importance of change, had proposed fire as his candidate for the Urstoff, which fire acted more or less like an immanent law directing the process of change. He also held for a doctrine of cyclic return of all things in his doctrine of the so-called "upward" and "downward" paths. Of Heraclitus we shall see much more, however, in the next chapter of this study, where his doctrine will be examined in detail; hence we can here pass on directly to his almost deliberate antithesis, Parmenides.

Far from admitting his Ephesian predecessor's notions on change, Parmenides denies the very reality of change, or rather, holds that nothing that is really real does change.³⁸ To make this intelligible, he introduces his doctrines of the "Way of Opinion" and the "Way of Truth" (two of the major divisions of his entire poem). Once again, the exact status of these "Ways" is a matter of dispute;³⁹ but at least this much is clear enough, that philosophic truth does not necessarily lie in the direction that the common man might expect. Sense knowledge, indeed, comes in for some harsh comments.⁴⁰ True being turns out to be a whole, simple and indivisible, continuous.⁴¹ It is motionless; there is no non-being into which it could move.⁴² True being is spherical in form, equidistant in every direction from the center.⁴³ Paradoxically, both Heraclitus and Parmenides distrust the senses, but for quite different reasons: the former, in that they tend to give an illusion of permanence (to the detriment of all-important change), the latter, in that they tend to give an illusion of change (to the detriment of all-important permanence).

Into this milieu moves Empedocles. To the Ionian-Heraclitean

question of the primary Urstoff of reality, he gives the following answer:

Four roots there are of all things; learn of them first, then: bright Zeus, life-giving Hera, Aidoneus, and Nestis, who with her tears gives moisture to a mortal spring.

τέσσαρα γὰρ πάντων ῥιζώματα πρῶτον ἄκουε·
 Ζεὺς ἀγρῆς Ἥρη τε φερέσβιος ἥδ' Ἀιδωνεύς⁴⁴
 Νῆστις θ', ἣ δακρυόις τέγγει κρούνωμα βρότειον.

There is not, therefore, one primary element to be sought, but rather four: earth, air, fire, and water. Empedocles represents these four mythologically, a fact which has been a source of difficulty to interpreters ever since. Thus,

It is characteristic of Empedocles that he should present the "four roots" at their first appearance in mythological guise. Nestis is certainly water, but even in antiquity there was a difference of opinion concerning the other three.⁴⁵

Freeman's solution can be adopted, since the matter is of little enough concern for the purposes of this study (insofar as the controversy turns upon which proper name goes with which element, rather than upon the nature of the elements themselves):

They [ancient commentators] were also in doubt as to which name applied to which element: Nestis was obviously water, but was Aidoneus earth or air, Hera earth or air, Zeus air or fire? Aetius is probably recording the correct interpretation, that is, that Zeus and Hera are fire and air (Aether), reigning as they do in the heavens, and that Aidoneus, god of the underworld, is earth. Aidoneus' association with Demeter and Persephone, so closely related to earth, makes this almost certain; and he would then be coupled to the to us unknown Nestis, probably a local water-goddess, as a lower deity. The names were of little importance to Empedocles; elsewhere he calls fire Hephaestus.⁴⁶

In any event, there are four basic elements. These are ἀγένητα--uncreated,⁴⁷ and what men foolishly call "becoming" or "passing away" is simply a mixture or the dissolution of a mixture of these four elements:

Something else will I tell you: there is no [such thing as] birth of any mortal man, nor any end in baneful death; there is only a mingling and an exchange of things previously mingled. This is what is termed "birth" among men.

 ἄλλο δέ τοι ἐρέω· φύσις οὐδενός ἐστι πάντων
 θνητῶν, οὐδέ τις οὐλομένου θανάτοιο τελευτή,
 ἀλλὰ μόνον μίξις τε διάλλαξις τε μιγέντων
 ἐστὶ, φύσις δ' ἐπὶ τοῖς ὀνομάζεται ἀνθρώποισιν.

.....

But when [the four elements], mingled together in the shape of a man, come forth into the light, or else in the shape of the race of wild beasts or of plants or birds, then men say that they have come into being. When, however, they have been separated out, men call these occasions baneful death. They do not call them what Right [demands]; nevertheless, I too, in accord with their custom, shall speak in the same way.

 οἱ δ' ὅτε μὲν κατὰ φῶτα μιγέντ' εἰς αἰθέρ' ἵ(κωνται)
 ἢ κατὰ θηρῶν ἀγροτέρων γένος ἢ κατὰ θάμνων
 ἢ κατ' οἰωνῶν, τότε μὲν τὸ (λέγουσι) γενέσθαι.
 εὔτε δ' ἀποκρινθῶσι, τὰ δ' αὖ δυσδαίμονα πότμον·
 ἢ θέμις (οὐ) καλέουσι, νόμῳ δ' ἐπέρημι καὶ αὐτός.⁴⁸

Consequently, absolute becoming or annihilation is impossible; there is rather simply a question of spatial location of the four elements:

Fools! They have no foresighted thoughts, who fondly think that something which did not previously exist has come into being, or else that something has perished and been utterly destroyed.

 νήπιοι· οὐ γάρ σφιν δολιχόφρονές εἰσι μέριμναι,
 οἳ δὲ γίγνεσθαι πάρος οὐκ ἔδον ἐλπίζουσιν
 ἢ τι καταθνήσκειν τε καὶ ἐξόλλυσθαι πάντη.

.....

That something should come into being that previously did not exist is unthinkable; and that something which exists should be destroyed completely is impossible and unbelievable. For it will always be where someone once put it.

 ἔκ τε γὰρ οὐδὰμ' ἐόντος ἀμήχανόν ἐστι γενέσθαι
 καὶ τ' ἐδὼν ἐξαπολέσθαι ἀνήνυστον καὶ ἄπυστον.
 αἰεὶ γὰρ τῇ ἐσται, ὅπῃ κέ τις αἰὲν ἐρείδῃ.⁴⁹

Thus it would seem that Parmenides was only half right in his evaluation of sense knowledge and the masses: there is such a thing

as change, and in this Parmenides was wrong; but change is not what it seems to be. Rather, it is merely the association or dissolution of the four elements, and to that extent the "Way of Truth" is correct. It is, of course, quite true that sense knowledge is impoverished and that men get only a partial view of reality;⁵⁰ yet the senses do have some value.⁵¹ An illustration of such a partial view might be seen in the fact that the Ionians and Heraclitus had opted for one particular element for their Urstoff, whereas in point of fact all four are equal:

All these are equal, and are of the same age in their genesis; but each rules over the others in its own honor, and besides, each has its own character. Each holds sway in the revolving course of time.

 ταῦτα γὰρ ἴσα τε πάντα καὶ ἡλικα γένναν ἔασι,
 τιμῆς δ' ἄλλης ἄλλο μέδει, πάρα δ' ἦθος ἐκάστωι,
 ἐν δὲ μέρει κρατέουσι περιπλομένοιο χρόνοιο.⁵²

In that regard, Anaximander had a point: it is not any one of the elements that is primary. But, instead of going out of the ambitus of the elements to τὸ ἄπειρον, he would have been better advised to seek the solution in the sum of the elements taken together.

The Pythagoreans, too, had a point, as did Heraclitus. There is a cyclic process involved in history. And it is a process involving the four elements. But it involves more than that; and for this, Empedocles emerges much more in his role as innovator rather than as synthesizer.

Empedocles as Innovator

The notion of a basic Urstoff is therefore hardly new with Empedocles, though his shift from monism to pluralism in holding for four primary elements instead of one could certainly be said to be so. Neither is the notion of a world cycle a new contribution; the Pythagoreans entertained that notion, as did Heraclitus (as we shall see). But perhaps Empedocles' greatest piece of originality lay in his recognition that the fact of change in the universe is not adequately explained simply by isolating the element or elements that is or are involved in change. The elements, he saw, are what change, i.e., are the subject of the change. But the further question must be answered, what brings about the change? In Aristotelian terms, Empedocles saw the need for an efficient cause.

Yet it is at least arguable that Heraclitus had seen the same need; his notion of an intelligent fire which directed the cosmic process is easily interpreted as a step in the direction of providing for that need. We shall see more of this in the fourth chapter of this study. Yet Empedocles will make much the same observation vis-à-vis Heraclitus' fire that Anaximander did with reference to Thales' water: just as water (or "the moist") is itself involved in the process of change and therefore cannot be the substrate responsible for that process, so also any one of the elements involved in change cannot be the agent directing the change. There is need for an efficient, directing cause; in this Empedocles will agree with Heraclitus. But this efficient cause (Empedocles does not, obviously, call it by that name) must be external to the process of change,

cannot be itself involved in it. This is the insight that will mark Empedocles as innovator. To be sure, it is an insight that he will grasp only imperfectly; the influence of his predecessors is strong, and there are places where he will seem to have his external agent entering into the cosmic process. But there are also places wherein that agent is fairly clearly outside the process, not itself being a part of change but rather directing it ab extra. As Burnet puts it,

Naturally, Aristotle is puzzled by this characteristic of what he regarded as efficient causes. "The Love of Empedocles," he says, "is both an efficient cause, for it brings things together, and a material cause, for it is a part of the mixture." And Theophrastus expressed the same idea by saying that Empedocles sometimes gave an efficient power to Love and Strife, and sometimes put them on a level with the other four.⁵³

There are two such external agents in Empedocles' thought, and he describes them in mythological terms:

And these [the elements] in no wise cease at any time to change, all of them now coming together into one under the direction of Love, now being moved apart, each from the other, under the bane of Hate.

καὶ ταῦτ' ἀλλάσσοντα διαμπερὲς οὐδ' ἀμὰ λήγει,
ἄλλοτε μὲν φιλότῃτι συνερχόμεν' εἰς ἓν ἅπαντα,
ἄλλοτε δ' αὖ δόχ' ἕκαστα φορεύμενα Νείκος ἔχθει. ⁵⁴

Love and Hate, then, are the forces influencing the elements in their ceaseless mutations.

What sort of process is it that Love and Hate direct? It is perhaps best envisioned as a constantly repeated passage from unity to diversity and then back to unity:

For they themselves [the elements] exist as such; but, running through one another, they become men and the types of other animals, now coming together under Love to form one cosmic whole, now each moving apart in its own way under Hate's bane, until such time as they grow together into the one whole and are all under its sway.

αὐτὰ γὰρ ἔστιν ταῦτα, δι' ἀλλήλων δὲ θέοντα
 γίγοντ(αι) ἄνθρωποι τε καὶ ἄλλων ἔθνεα θηρῶν
 ἄλλοτε μὲν φιλότῃτι συνερχόμεν' εἰς ἓνα κόσμον,
 ἄλλοτε δ' αὖ δόχ' ἕκαστα φορούμενα Νείκεος ἔχθει,
 εἰσόκεν ἔν συμφύντα τὸ πᾶν ὑπένερθε γένηται.⁵⁵

When the universe is under the direction of Love, there is no diversity to be found:

Then there is discerned neither the swift limbs of the Sun nor the shaggy might of Earth nor the sea; wrapped fast in such an impenetrable concealment of Harmony does the rounded sphere exult alone in its circularity.

 ἔνθ' οὕτ' Ἡελίοιο διείδεται ὥκέα γυῖα
 οὐδὲ μὲν οὐδ' αἴης λάσιον μένος οὐδὲ θάλασσα·
 οὕτως Ἀρμονίης πυκινῶι κρύφωι ἐστήρικται
 Σφαῖρος κυκλοτερῆς μονίῃι περιηγεί γαίῳν.⁵⁶

Articulation of any sort, at this stage, is unknown: there is no strife or war;⁵⁷ the sphere is a perfect one, with all points equidistant from the center;⁵⁸ reality possesses the strictest sort of unity.⁵⁹

However, this stage is destined not to last; Hate has its appointed time, too.

But when vast Hate is nourished in (its) limbs, and breaks forth to take the honor due it because the time is fulfilled, that time which for both [Love and Hate] is established by a broad oath. . .

 αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ μέγα Νεῖκος ἐνιμμελέεσσιν ἐθρέφθη
 ἐς τιμᾶς τ' ἀνόρουσε τελειομένοιο χρόνοιο,
 ὅς σφιν ἀμοιβαῖος πλατέος παρ' ἐλήλαται ὄρκου, . . .⁶⁰

And with the ascent of Hate, diversity appears in all forms: the production of a multitude of men,⁶¹ the articulation of parts of individual men,⁶² the production of trees, beasts, birds, fish, and even the gods themselves.⁶³

Yet neither is the dominion of Hate a permanent one; eventually it too is banished to the outermost edge of the sphere in its turn,⁶⁴

and the process of unification begins once more. Burnet summarizes all this as follows:

It will be clear from what has been said that we must distinguish four periods in the cycle. First we have the Sphere, in which all the elements are mixed together by Love. Secondly, there is the period when Love is passing out and Strife coming in, when, therefore, the elements are partially separated and partially combined. Thirdly comes the complete separation of the elements, when Love is outside the world, and Strife has given free play to the attraction of like for like. Lastly we have the period when Love is bringing the elements together again, and Strife is passing out. This brings us back to the Sphere, and the cycle begins afresh.⁶⁵

Of the nature of Love and Hate, what they are in themselves and without reference to their function, Empedocles has little to say, directly (though this is a question that will occupy us once more in the third section of this chapter). Hate is said to be "hostile" or "unfriendly,"⁶⁶ but this is said from the viewpoint of the elements, which Hate affects. Love, similarly, is termed "joyful,"⁶⁷ or "affectionate."⁶⁸ Both Love and Hate perform their function in subservience to Fate (ἐν μέρει αἵσης),⁶⁹ the latter operating in terms of a broad oath (πλατέος παρ' ὅρκου).⁷⁰ Love and Hate therefore are not supreme in the universe, whatever be their exact relation to Fate. Love and Hate are, however, eternal:

As they were before, so shall they be; nor will it ever come about, I think, that unspeakable time shall be bereft of the two of them.

ἦι γὰρ καὶ πάρος ἔσκε, καὶ ἔσσεται, οὐδέ ποτ' οἶω,
τούτων ἀμφοτέρων κενεώσεται ἄσπετος αἰών.⁷¹

They always were and always will be. Their successive ascendancy suggests that neither can be considered all-powerful.

Thus, Love and Hate are not supreme, are not independent; they are, on the other hand, eternal. But other than these somewhat jejune

facts, Empedocles has nothing to say as to what they are in themselves. Are they personal forces? At times, it seems so: Hate is said to be "Nourished" (ἐθρεφέθη);⁷² Love is held blameless.⁷³ But whether they are personal or merely personified is something which is not at all clear from the text as we have it.

They are, however, not incorporeal.

The Love and Strife of Empedocles are no incorporeal forces. They are active, indeed, but they are still corporeal. At the time, this was inevitable; nothing corporeal had yet been dreamt of, . . . The fragments leave no room for doubt that they were thought of as spatial and corporeal. All the six are called "equal." Love is said to be "equal in length and breadth" to the others, and Strife is described as equal to each of them in weight (fr. 17).⁷⁴

Such, then, is the view of Empedocles as synthesizer and as innovator in the lengthening search for an explanation of the fundamental fact of change in the universe. Perhaps we can turn to Matson for a brief summary of all this:

Empedocles's picture of the world is briefly this: There is not one basic stuff but four "roots of all things," earth, air, fire, and water, of which all changing and perishing particulars are mixtures in various proportions. Besides the roots there are two forces: Affection, which mingles the roots, and Strife, which tends to separate them. The cosmic process recurs in cycles. At one time, the reign of Affection, the world is a sphere consisting of all the roots thoroughly mixed together, only the force of Strife being outside. But Strife enters and begins the work of separation. At its completion, the reign of Strife, the four roots exist in their pure states, apart from each other in a sphere now having earth at its core covered by successive layers of water, air, and fire. Then Affection begins to take over once more, to complete the cycle of existence and initiate another turn.⁷⁵

There are many other facets to Empedocles' thought, but perhaps this brief summary presentation will enable us to get on with the business of posing some questions that will bear on the main point of this study. It is the author's belief that the answers to those questions,

to the extent that they can be formulated on the basis of the extant fragments, may show us a depth in Empedocles' thought to which a summary presentation like this does less than full justice.

The "Why" of Empedocles

It will be helpful to have a correct perspective on the section of this chapter which follows. The thesis has been intimated earlier⁷⁶ that the root concern of the early Greek philosophers was an ethical one, and that at least one major reason why their thought took the direction it did was that their Olympian religion had failed to provide them with satisfactory answers. It is now time to put the over-all task of this study into its proper focus. It is not the work of this dissertation to attempt to establish this general claim concerning the origins of Greek philosophy in globo; for that, one would need very many very large volumes. Rather, the statement on the origins of philosophy as thus far enunciated functions as an over-all guide, determining the thesis that is proper to this study, rather than as a thesis to be itself proved herein. The claim that this study is intended to make is a more limited one: Empedocles and Heraclitus had ethics as their root concern, and one major reason why these two men turned to philosophy was that the traditional religion had failed them. The enterprise is thus not to establish the general claim, but rather to see whether that general claim can be verified of these two men.

Perhaps this can be clarified by analogy. When one proposes an hypothesis designed to explain some phenomenon in the area of the

physical sciences, it is permissible and even obligatory to treat the hypothesis as provisionally true (granting its initial reasonableness), and then set about studying particular instances to see whether the hypothesis receives support or refutation from them. Debitis mutandis, this study is functioning as such an investigation of two particular instances. It is the author's belief that these instances will support the general theory. To pursue the analogy a bit further, physical sciences attempt to put an hypothesis to as many tests as possible, with the aim of further strengthening it, or of further weakening it, or of destroying it altogether. Similarly, it is the author's hope to put his general theory to numerous tests in the future, with much the same aim. But, just as one would not expect the entire scope of test cases to be presented within a single study in the physical sciences, neither can this be expected in the present work. There are very many pre-Socratic philosophers, each of whom requires considerable scrutiny. This is therefore a legitimate task, but a task for the future. In any event, however, the point should be made here that, at any stage of the process, the methodology is not first to establish the general theory, and then set about applying it to particular instances. Rather, the methodology is, given the provisional theory, to examine the particular instances with the precise aim of strengthening or weakening the theory.

With this in mind, we can now turn to a rather close examination of Empedocles. We shall find that he has nothing to say, directly, that would help or hinder the theory. But this is what one would expect. If he were clear and precise on this topic, we certainly should

never find the welter of diverse scholarly opinion that we saw in the first chapter of this study. No; support or refutation will have to be eked out of the text in somewhat roundabout fashion. The easiest way to do this, it seems to the author, will be to propose a series of questions, and see what answers to them can legitimately be constructed out of the Empedoclean fragments.

We might ask first, What did Empedocles think of the Olympian gods? (The term "Olympian" is used here in the wide sense to designate any member of the Homeric-Hesiodic pantheon.) The first reference we find to gods at all in the *Περὶ φύσεως* comes in the invocation at the beginning of the poem:

But, O gods, turn away [from me] their madness of speech, and
channel forth a pure spring from my holy lips.

ἀλλὰ θεοὶ τῶν μὲν μανίην ἀποτρέψατε γλώσσης,
ἐκ δ' ὁσίων στομάτων καθαρὴν ὀχετεύσατε πηγὴν.⁷⁷

Little, however, can be made of this. Empedocles is writing in verse, and the invocation of the gods in one form or other at the beginning of a Greek poem is a familiar enough device. Hence this has the earmarks of a literary convention, and I would be unwilling to make much depend on it. Perhaps, of course, he did mean more by it; but this cannot be assumed. The same comment could be made with reference to his invocation of the Muse, which immediately follows his address to the gods.⁷⁸ The Muse is again mentioned in the next fragment that we have, wherein Empedocles refers to her testimony as trustworthy ("ὥς δὲ παρ' ἡμετέρας κέλεται πιστώματα Μούσης");⁷⁹ again, however, how much of this is simply literary convention it is impossible to say.

The names of some of the Olympians occur in the following

fragment (quoted earlier in this paper⁸⁰ in connection with the four elements):

Four roots there are of all things; learn of them first, then: bright Zeus, life-giving Hera, Aidoneus, and Nestis, who with her tears gives moisture to a mortal spring.

τέσσαρα γὰρ πάντων ῥιζώματα πρῶτον ἄκουε·
 Ζεὺς ἀγρῆς Ἥρη τε φερέσβιος ἡδ' Ἀιδωνεύς⁸¹
 Νῆστις θ', ἣ δακρύοις τέγγει κρούνωμα βρότελον.

But, interestingly enough, these Olympians are identified with the four roots of things, i.e., with earth, air, fire, and water.⁸² However this identification is to be understood, there is here no question of divine beings, as that term would normally be understood.

Empedocles sharpens his views of the Olympians vis-à-vis the four elements somewhat in this fragment:

From these [elements] comes everything that was and is and will be . . . , even the long-lived gods, most renowned in honor.

ἐκ τούτων γὰρ πάνθ' ὅσα τ' ἦν ὅσα τ' ἔστι καὶ ἔσται . . . ,
 καὶ τε θεοὶ δολιχαίνωνες τιμῇσι φέριστοι.⁸³

The gods, then, come from the elements, just as does everything else. It is noteworthy that Empedocles does not restrict his comment to the gods of the pantheon; the assertion is made that from the four elements come θεοί, simply so taken. One cannot say, therefore, that in Empedocles' view the gods always were and always will be; they come and go, just like every other manifestation of differentiation. In part, this is not terribly significant, since the Greeks in general did not believe that the gods always were--as Hesiod's genealogy makes abundantly clear. The notion of their passing away, however, is something novel. What is very significant, however, is that the gods themselves are involved in the process of unification or dissolution

of the four elements. They do not direct that process; they are part of it. But that means that their role of governing the universe is attenuated almost to the vanishing point, and with it their right to make demands on men. One wonders just why the gods should be, indeed, "τιμῆσι φέριστοι." It is difficult to avoid the impression that, since the pantheonic gods were by and large simply men on a somewhat grander scale--a fact that the second chapter of this study undertook to demonstrate--Empedocles simply treats them accordingly in his cosmological scheme.

I shall pass over here the numerous references to Love and Hate, reserving treatment of them to a later point in this chapter. It is interesting to note in passing, however, that Empedocles frequently refers to Love as "Aphrodite," one of the Olympians (in the narrow sense).⁸⁴

When we next hear of the Olympians, they are back in their familiar role as personifications of the elements. Thus, we find earth receiving parts of glowing Nestis and twice as many parts of Hephaestus;⁸⁵ a recipe for the construction of blood and flesh occurs in another fragment, where we are told that earth, Hephaestus, moisture, and Aether join together in more or less equal proportions to produce the desired result.⁸⁶

In the *Περὶ Φύσεως*, therefore, the Olympians are either identified poetically with the elements, or, when Empedocles is speaking somewhat more plainly, are themselves the results of the mingling together of the elements. And, as we have seen, as such they differ little enough from man. Certainly they are not viewed as having much

claim on man's allegiance or, for that matter, on his intelligence.

In the Καθαρμοί, another and, at first sight, a disparate view of the gods appears. In the opening fragment, during his address to the citizens of Akragas, Empedocles refers to himself as a god:

O friends, greetings! No longer as a man but as an immortal god, honored by all, do I wander in your midst.

ὦ φίλοι, . . .
χαίρετ'. ἐγὼ δ' ὑμῖν θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός
κωλεῖμαι μετὰ πᾶσι τετιμένος, . . .⁸⁷

In what sense this is true is something that will be discussed below; the thing to be noticed here, however, is that in some sense Empedocles, once a mortal, now claims divinity.

We learn how Empedocles views his passage from humanity to divinity in the following fragment:

There is an edict of Necessity, an ancient divine decree, timeless, ratified with broad oaths: whenever someone sins and defiles his limbs by murder, or, under Hatred, sinfully swears a false oath, howsoever much be he a divine being sharing in the blessed life, for three times ten thousand years must he wander apart from the blessed, being born during that time into all manner of mortal forms, forms which exchange difficult paths of life in turn.

ἔστιν Ἀνάγκης χρῆμα, θεῶν ψήφισμα παλαιόν,
αἰδῖον, πλατέεσσι κατεσφρηγισμένον ὅρκοις.
ἔυτέ τις ἀμπλακίησι φόνωι φίλα γυῖα μίηνῃ,
(Νεῖκετ' θ') ὅς κ(ε) ἐπίορκον ἀμαρτήσας ἐπομόσσει,
δαίμονες οἷτε μακράϊωνος λελάχασι βλοιο,
τρεῖς μιν μυρίας ὥρας ἀπὸ μακάρων ἀλάλησθαι,
φουμένους παντοῖα διὰ χρόνου εἶδεα θνητῶν
ἀργαλέας βιότοιο μεταλλάσσοντα κελεύθους.⁸⁸

This is the famous transmigration doctrine, which has raised considerable discussion as to whether it represents a shift in Empedocles' thought or possibly even a contradiction in his views,⁸⁹ or else constitutes a flat-out dualism in his thought between the realm of matter and the realm of spirit.⁹⁰ Its consistency (or lack thereof) with the

remainder of his system is something that, again, we shall discuss later; for the moment, it is enough to observe that there is a transmigration doctrine contained in his thought and that, in some as yet undetermined sense, it is possible for some men to become gods--whatever this latter term is taken to mean.

A number of abstractions that Hesiod lists recur in Empedocles when he is recounting his transmigration travels: Murder, Wrath, Diseases,⁹¹ Discord, Harmony,⁹² and so forth. It is worth observing that, however the transmigration doctrine be interpreted, these figures possess a lower status than the realm from which Empedocles claims to have fallen. Once again, the gods have been demoted considerably.

As a generalized answer to the first question, then, we may say that the gods of the pantheon are not regarded by Empedocles as being supreme or as having any valid claim on men. The gods themselves are as much involved in the cosmic process as are men and all other things; their lack of direction of the whole process is critical here. Nowhere are the Olympians as a class put in a governing position; the sole exception to this is Aphrodite, who is identified poetically with Love, one of the moving forces. But the Aphrodite of Empedocles has nothing in common with the Aphrodite of Homer and Hesiod except the name, as we shall see.

The second question that could be posed is closely allied to the first one. In view of the downgrading which he accords the Olympians, what does Empedocles think of religion and gods in general?

First, he is clear on one fact:

Blessed is he who has acquired the riches of divine understanding; unhappy however he whose concern for it provides (only) an excessively opaque view of the gods, and that but an opinion.

ὀλβιος, ὃς θεῶν πραπίδων ἐκτίσαστο πλοῦτου,
δειλὸς δ', ὃν σκοτίζουσα θεῶν πέρι δόξα μέμηλεν. ⁹³

It pays, therefore, for man to be clear in his ideas on the gods. And the first thing to be noted about them (or him) is this:

It is impossible to bring (the god) within easy reach with our eyes, or to take hold of him with our hands, wherein lie the greatest routes of learning for men's minds.

οὐκ ἔστιν πελάσασθαι ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσι ἐφικτόν
ἡμετέροις ἢ χερσὶ λαβεῖν, ἥϊκέρ τε μεγίστη
κείθευς ἀνθρώποισιν ἀμαξίτῳ εἰς φρένα πίπτει. ⁹⁴

The reason for this is that the divinity, properly conceived, is not anthropomorphic. He has no physical members or organs, but rather is a quite different sort:

For he is not well supplied with a human head upon his limbs, nor do two shoots dart forth from his back; no feet has he, no swift knees, no hairy genitalia. Mind is he, holy, unspeakable: mind alone, occupying the entire universe with swift thoughts.

οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀνδρομέῃ κεφαλῇ κατὰ γυῖα κέκασται,
οὐ μὲν ἀπαὶ νώτοιο δύο κλάδοι αἰσσονται,
οὐ πόδες, οὐ θοὰ γούνα, οὐ μήδεα λαχνήεντα,
ἀλλὰ φρήν ἱερὴ καὶ ἀθέσφατος ἔπλετο μοῦνον,
φρονεῖσι κόσμον ἅπαντα καταΐσσουσα θοῇσιν. ⁹⁵

Since the divinity is not physical, there is no need for sacrifice, ⁹⁶ which produces only ill-effects upon the sacrificers. ⁹⁷

Hence, by implication (since the Greek religion consisted largely in sacrifice, and since the Greek gods themselves are shown above to be helpless when it comes to regulating the things that go on in the universe anyway), the religion held heretofore is to be rejected.

However, what of this divinity to which Empedocles refers? What can be said about him? We have just seen that he (or it; Empedocles

uses the masculine article, but that does not necessarily denote personality) is incorporeal, is mind, and that it is pervasive of the universe. That is all that Empedocles tells us about his divinity in the *Καθαρμοί*, but there are further clues in the *Περὶ Φύσεως*. Thus, in one fragment we find a repetition of the denial of possession of material, bodily organs. The fragment is this:

Nor do two shoots dart forth from his back; no feet has he,
no swift knees, no hairy genitals; but (it? he?) is a sphere,
equal to itself in all directions.

οὐ γὰρ ἀπὸ νώτοιο δύο κλάδοι αἴσσονται,
οὐ πόδες, οὐ θοὰ γοῦν(α), οὐ μήδεα γεννῆεντα,
ἀλλὰ σφαῖρος ἔην καὶ (πάντοθεν) ἴσος ἐαυτῷ.⁹⁸

There is no possessive genitive with νώτοιο in this fragment, nor anything like a dative of reference to point out to whom or what the description in the first two lines is intended to apply. Nor is the subject of ἔην stated (I am taking σφαῖρος as predicative). But the similarity of description between this fragment and the one quoted on the preceding page leaves little doubt about the matter: both fragments are speaking of the same subject, i.e., the divinity. The present fragment gives us some further information about that divinity: this non-corporeal being is a sphere, equidistant in all directions with reference to itself. Empedocles tells us elsewhere that this sphere is completely eternal (ἀπείρων) and exists in solitude.⁹⁹ It is, however, precisely this sphere whose solitary splendor is interrupted by the opposing actions of Love and Hate:¹⁰⁰ when the sphere is dominated by the influence of Love, there is no articulation and hence complete unity;¹⁰¹ there is nothing there but the sphere itself. But when the influence of Hate begins to make itself felt,¹⁰²

articulation begins: the limbs of the god (are first formed and then) tremble,¹⁰³ and eventually there are formed all the things of the world.¹⁰⁴

In other words, Empedocles' "god" turns out to be the whole of reality, considered, however, under its unitive aspect. The god is the sphere, and the sphere is properly god only when it is united, alone, in solitary, circular splendor.¹⁰⁵

There is, then, a god of sorts for Empedocles; thus our second question finds its answer. But it brings in its train a third question: since the Greek gods are replaced by this one, by what is Greek religion to be replaced? Or, in other words, what can be said of Empedocles' religion? The transmigration doctrine gives us a clue as to the nature and characteristics of that religion.

The first characteristic would seem to be a negative one. This religion is not intended for everybody. That much is clear enough from Empedocles' reference to the divine spirit who pollutes himself with bloodshed:¹⁰⁶ the fate of such a spirit is descent into all sorts of mortal existences--the implication being that mortality is a lower, undesirable state, one wherein the life of the blessed is unknown, and that not merely on a wide scale but on a universal one. It is not as if no human ever enters upon Empedocles' religion, however. Empedocles himself did: he is "no longer a mortal (οὐκέτι θνητός)." ¹⁰⁷ And it must be possible for other men to do likewise; else, what would be the sense in Empedocles' almost evangelistic preaching of his transmigration doctrine (in whatever way, once again, this is to be understood)? Not all men do, in point of fact, accept

this, however. It is very difficult for them to do so, says Empedocles, and it is as unwelcome as it is difficult.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, some do achieve its goals: they find themselves ascending in stature through various honorable offices on earth and eventually maturing as "gods most honorable."¹⁰⁹

But what is the nature of this religion in itself? What is it that constitutes the life of the blessed? The answer comes in Empedocles' description of his earlier fall from the status of the blessed:

Of such am I myself now, an exile from the divine and a wanderer, having put my trust in raging hatred.

τῶν καὶ ἐγὼ νῦν εἰμι, φυχὰς θεόθεν καὶ ἀλήτης,
 Νείκεϊ μαινομένωι πίσυνος.¹¹⁰

It is because he has put his trust in hate that he has fallen from the state of the blessed; the reverse, therefore, must be that wherein the life of the blessed consists: Love. And when Love reigns supreme, as we have seen, then all is gathered into the single unity of the god-sphere.

In other words, the transmigration doctrine states that when Empedocles entrusted himself to Hate, he fell away from the realm of the blessed into the world of mortals, where there exist all manner of ills, including the abstractions noted above, as also such things as growth and decay, rest and waking, movement and repose, silence and speech, defilement,¹¹¹ and myriad other unlovely items. But this is to say that in turning from Love to Hate, he passed (or was ejected) from the state of unity (the blessedness of the god-sphere) to the state of multiplicity. And this is nothing more than a restatement of

his cosmological principles. Or, to put matters the other way, his cosmology turns out to be a restatement of his transmigration doctrine: in brief, his philosophy is his religion. From that, it follows that true religion for man consists in philosophy. This would give a considerably deeper and sharper meaning to his statement that the god is "mind."¹¹²

If religion is in reality philosophy, the next question to be posed would be this: what capabilities does man have in this regard? What can he do, and what results can come of his efforts?

The Parmenidean rejection of the senses must first be dealt with. Let it be admitted plainly, then, that the path to knowledge is a thorny one. The sense organs are limited (στεινωποί)¹¹³ to begin with, and the men who use them do not help matters when they get the idea that they have achieved a complete grasp of the whole ("τὸ δ' ὅλον [πᾶς] εὐχεται εὐρεῖν")¹¹⁴ whereas in fact they have looked at only a small segment of reality ("παῦρον δὲ ζωῆς ἰδίου μέρους ἀθρήσαντες").¹¹⁵ However, with instruction and care, they can learn a great deal.¹¹⁶ For the senses, although limited, are trustworthy:

Nor deny credence to any of the other limbs, wherever there is a path to knowledge.

μήτε τι τῶν ἄλλων, ὅποσσι πόρος ἐστὶ νοῆσαι
γυῖων πίστιν ἔρυκε, . . .¹¹⁷

For that matter, all the senses are equally trustworthy.¹¹⁸ Man can learn, provided that he does not place a higher value on what he sees than on what he hears.¹¹⁹ Thus, if he listens, he can come to knowledge: "ἀλλ' ἄγε μύθων κλυθι· μάθη γάρ τοι φρένας αὖξει."¹²⁰ The account that will be proposed by Empedocles is clear, certain;

therefore the hearer should place his confidence in it: "ἀλλὰ τορῶς
ταῦτα' ἴσθι." ¹²¹

Not only does man have the root ability to engage in this work; he is also free to do so. That Empedocles thought that this was the case is clear enough; witness his repeated summonses to man to listen and learn (e.g., in the very first fragment that we have, addressed to Pausanias). ¹²² It is true that many men and perhaps the majority of them do not do so; Empedocles recognizes this. ¹²³ But it does not follow from this that they cannot; indeed, Empedocles' promises of cosmic control, which we shall see shortly, indicate the contrary: these promises are in the nature of inducements. ¹²⁴ For that matter, the whole effort of Empedocles points the same way: why attempt to teach men to be disciples if they are not free to do so in the first place?

Man therefore has both the equipment and the freedom to pursue the religion which is philosophy. What results may be expected from his diligence?

For one thing, lasting knowledge can be acquired. ¹²⁵ Furthermore, some measure of control can be achieved against the process of change in human life: "φάρμακα δ' ὅσσα γεγᾶσι κακῶν καὶ γήραος ἄλκαρ πέσσει." ¹²⁶ And more: some control is possible over the forces of nature that cause destruction in man's environment:

You shall halt the force of the unresting winds which rush over the earth and destroy the tilled fields with their blast.

παύσεις δ' ἀκαμάτων ἀνέμων μένος οἳ τ' ἐπὶ γαῖαν
ὀρνύμενοι πνοιαῖσι καταφθινύθουσιν ἀρούρας. ¹²⁷

Furthermore, damage once caused can be reversed: for instance,

"You shall lead back from Hades the spirit of a dead man (ἄξεις δ' ἐξ Ἀΐδαο καταφθιμένου μένος ἀνδρός)." ¹²⁸ The man who is proficient in Empedocles' knowledge will achieve a certain immunity from the many ills and types of destruction that beset mortal men. ¹²⁹

Thus the path is open. By knowledge alone man can, albeit with difficulty, arrive at a state wherein he is in control of the forces of destruction: he can check them or reverse them at will. ¹³⁰ And so the direction of the universe, once proper to the gods, has now passed (at least in principle) to man. This is the meaning, it seems to the author, of Empedocles' statement (quoted above, page 125) that he has become a god.

The final question that ought to be posed is this: we have seen that man can somehow control the forces of Hate, to some degree. What, precisely, is the mechanism behind this? Admitting that he can do so, the question is just how does he do it? What is the dynamism that makes this state of affairs possible?

The real key to this question, it seems to the author, lies in the nature of Love and Hate. A central text for this is that fragment wherein Empedocles is discussing, within the context of the transmigration doctrine, how it happened that he was forced to wander in a world of discord and multiplicity. He tells us fairly clearly how it happened:

Of such am I myself now, an exile from the divine and a wanderer, having put my trust in raging Hatred.

τῶν καὶ ἐγὼ νῦν εἰμι, φυγὰς θεόθεν καὶ ἀλήτης,
 Νείκεϊ μαινομένωι πίσυρος. ¹³¹

This much we have seen before. But in what did this "having confidence

in Hate" consist? In the same thing that the 'Ανδύκης χρῆμα proscribed: either bloodshed or a false oath.¹³² But both of these are personal acts, productive by their very nature of death or deception, and, in either case, of disunity. In other words, it is not an allegiance to a cosmic power of some sort or other that was the cause of the disunification, and hence of Empedocles' exile from the realm of the blessed; it was rather his own personal hatred that caused all this. For the acts which this hatred inspired are ipso facto disruptive, dis-unifying. Empedocles' exile was not so much a matter of punishment for an evil deed as the logical consequence of that deed. It is significant that the decree which forbade such acts is 'Ανδύκης χρῆμα, not Μοίρας: given the deed, the exile must follow. There can be no question of reprieve, in the very nature of the case.

If this is correct, then it is easy enough to see how man can control the results of Hatred and Love: he controls them because he controls their cause, and he controls their cause because that cause is not an impersonal (let alone a mythological) motive force at work in the universe, but rather is man's own personal feelings, passions, decisions. And therefore while in one sense it is correct to say that Love and Hate are the moving, directive forces of the universe, in another sense it can be said that man himself controls--or can control--what happens in the universe. Man has no need of gods; man himself can be a god.

It is now time to summarize and synthesize this section, and to attempt to see what support it does or does not provide for the thesis underlying this study. In the summary paragraphs which follow, I shall re-pose the important questions once again, and supply brief

answers to them, distinguishing as I do so those answers which have definite textual support and those which are inferential.

First: what did Empedocles think of the Olympian gods?

Clearly, not much (inferential). They are simply a part of the cosmic process, themselves formed of the four elements (textual). That process is directed by Love and Hate (textual), not the gods (inferential). Sacrifices are to be eliminated (textual); hence the gods are not to be worshipped (inferential). After all, why worship them, since they do not control things and since their benevolent control of things was a very large part of Greek religion (inferential)? For that matter, man may himself become a god, as Empedocles did, i.e., a member of the company of the blessed (textual). The Olympian gods are located, in the transmigration doctrine and in the cosmological scheme, on a plane inferior to that of the blessed or to that of Love and Hate (textual). Hence the gods have no valid claim on men (inferential).

Next: if the gods are false, what of gods and religion in general? Empedocles has a religion, no question of that. The transmigration doctrine shows as much (textual). But his god is not anthropomorphic (textual), and hence has no need of traditional worship (textual). Empedocles' god is mind (textual), and is pervasive of the universe (textual). However, the "god" of the transmigration doctrine is also the sphere of the cosmological scheme (textual and inferential). As such, it is completely unified; there is no articulation or diversity within it (textual). But total unity like this is the product of Love (textual).

Third: since there is such a thing as religion, in what does true religion consist, for Empedocles? It is quasi-exclusive (textual); it is difficult (textual); it is deifying, i.e., unifying (textual); it consists in Love (inferential). The religion and the philosophy of Empedocles are one; this is the meaning of saying that the god is "mind" (inferential).

Fourth: can man achieve this? Yes, albeit with difficulty (textual). And if he does, it promises him control of the forces of change in the universe and in human life (textual). Even death itself can be reversed (textual).

Finally: what makes this possible? The fact that the directive force of the universe is man's personal love and hate. These are not impersonal cosmic forces extrinsic to man (inferential). Man is free to do this (inferential), although it is no easy process (textual).

So much for the summary. Is Empedocles' system a product of dissatisfaction with the pantheonic gods? I would argue that it is. The whole point of the system is the control of cosmic events by man--the exact antithesis of the Olympian theory, wherein man precisely could not control events and had to turn to divine help. The common Homeric image of the gods as super-humans is reflected in Empedocles' making the gods part and parcel of the cosmic process and denying them any sort of directive role in that process, assigning that role rather to Love and Hate. But Love and Hate turn out to be under the control of man, not the gods. The gods are unnecessary, since they cannot control the process; hence they are quietly "swept under the rug." The gods' lack of control is, I should think, simply a recognition of

the experiential fact that they have become, in Greek religion, impotent. That they do not and cannot control events is a conclusion that Greek religion itself had come close to making, as we saw in the second chapter of this study; Empedocles merely says why this is so.

The ethical character of the system seems clear enough. The entire cosmic scheme has been elaborated not for the sake of explaining the universe, as a sort of speculative venture, but rather with the aim of showing man how he can control it. And man's control is contingent upon his conduct--whether he directs his actions by Love or by Hate. Far from being a mythology (let alone a wild-west medicine show), the system of Empedocles is a moral system of a high order.

It is time now to turn from Akragas to Ephesus, and examine the work of ὁ Ἡρακλείδης: Heraclitus. The aim of the fourth chapter will be the same as that of the third: a search for confirmation or for weakening of the general theory on the origins of Greek thought that has guided these pages. Since the aim is the same, the methodology of the chapter will also be identical with that used in our examination of Empedocles: a brief section on his life and works, then a short exposition of the general drift of Heraclitus' thought, and finally the posing of a series of questions to his system.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

¹ Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R., A History of Ancient Western Philosophy (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959), p. viii.

² Ibid., p. 103.

³ Kathleen Freeman, Companion to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 172. For another view regarding an earlier date, cf. Owens, op.cit., pp. 417-419.

⁴ Freeman, op.cit., p. 172. The original source for this is Hermann Diels, Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker (Berlin: Weidmannsche, 1906), 21A1, par. 52; this book will hereafter be referred to by the abbreviation D. The later edition of Diels by Kranz will be referred to as DK.

It will be remembered that the system of citations commonly employed in reference to Diels' work runs as follows: each of the philosophers treated by Diels is assigned an arbitrary number (that assigned to Empedocles is 21), and that number is commonly the first member in a reference. Diels divides his work on each philosopher into two major segments, usually: section A deals with the life and works of the philosopher under question, section B with the extant fragments themselves. The notation "A" or "B" is thus placed after the identification number of each philosopher to indicate which segment of Diels' treatment is in question. Finally, following this, the appropriate paragraph or section number within the segment is indicated. Thus, in the reference to Empedocles given in the first paragraph of this footnote, "21" means Empedocles, "A" means the first major segment of Diels' treatment, and "1" is the relevant subsection within that segment. By further convention, whenever there is question of a large number of citations from one philosopher, the identification number is omitted; hence the reference above could have been written as simply A1, par. 52.

⁵ DK, A1, par. 52.

⁶ DK, A1, par. 73 and 74.

⁷ G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, The Pre-Socratic Philosophers (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), p. 321.

⁸ DK, A1, par. 72 and 73.

⁹ Burnet, Early Greek Philosophy, op.cit., p. 199; the tale is recounted by Diogenes Laertius in his Lives, viii, 63 and 68.

¹⁰ Burnet, op.cit., p. 202.

¹¹ DK, A1, par. 73 and 74.

¹² D, B112.

¹³ Burnet, op.cit., p. 199. As this chapter proceeds, it will become apparent to the reader that I think that there is a good deal more to Empedocles than a wild-west fraud.

¹⁴ D, B111.

¹⁵ D, B110-111.

¹⁶ D, B96.

¹⁷ D, B97.

¹⁸ D, B98.

¹⁹ D, B99.

²⁰ D, B100.

²¹ D, B101.

²² D, B112-115 and 117-123.

²³ D, B128 and 136-138.

²⁴ D, B139-141.

²⁵ D, B143-147.

²⁶ Freeman, op.cit., pp. 177-178. It will shortly become apparent that I disagree somewhat with Freeman in some of the details of her summation. Nevertheless, by and large it is acceptable enough for our purposes.

²⁷ D, pages 173ff and 205ff.

²⁸ Burnet, op.cit., p. 203. The first philosophical poet was Parmenides.

²⁹ Cf. Burnet, op. et loc. cit.

³⁰ Cited in Freeman, op.cit., p. 179.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 178f.

³² Something should be said at this point about the text. It will be noted that I simply accept the text as given in Diels, and do not enter into a discussion of the difficulties that attend his reading. The reason is not that I am unaware of those difficulties, but rather that the establishment of a critical text is a major undertaking of no mean proportions, and an undertaking that would not be directly pertinent to the purposes of this paper. The text question is a valid and important one, indeed; but it is not the question of this study. The same comment applies to the ordering of the fragments within the two poems.

³³ D, 1B1-3.

³⁴ D, 3B3.

³⁵ D, 2A1.

³⁶ D, 2A9, 10, 16.

³⁷ Johannes Hirschberger, The History of Philosophy, tr. A. N. Fuerst (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1958), I, 16-17.

³⁸ D, 18B8, vv. 3-4.

³⁹ Cf. the discussion in Freeman, op.cit., pp. 141ff.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ D, 18B8, vv. 22-25.

⁴² Ibid., vv. 26-31.

⁴³ Ibid., vv. 42-49.

⁴⁴ D, 21B6. Translations of the fragments of Empedocles throughout this chapter are the responsibility of the author.

⁴⁵ Kirk and Raven, op.cit., pp. 324f.

⁴⁶ Freeman, op.cit., p. 181.

⁴⁷ D, B7.

⁴⁸ D, B8-9.

⁴⁹ D, B11-12.

⁵⁰ D, B2.

⁵¹ D, B3.

⁵² D, B17, vv. 27-29.

⁵³Burnet, op.cit., p. 232.

⁵⁴D, B17, vv. 6-8.

⁵⁵D, B26, vv. 3-7.

⁵⁶D, B27.

⁵⁷D, B27a.

⁵⁸D, B29.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰D, B30.

⁶¹D, B20.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³D, B21.

⁶⁴D, B35.

⁶⁵Burnet, op.cit., p. 234.

⁶⁶D, B17.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸D, B22.

⁶⁹D, B26, v. 2.

⁷⁰D, B30.

⁷¹D, B16.

⁷²D, B30.

⁷³D, B35.

⁷⁴Burnet, op.cit., p. 232.

⁷⁵Wallace I. Matson, A History of Philosophy (Cincinnati: American Book Company, 1968), p. 38. Matson's occasional summaries are useful, however much I would hesitate to recommend other elements in his book.

⁷⁶Cf. supra, pp. 91ff.

⁷⁷D, B4, vv. 1-2.

⁷⁸D, B4, vv. 3ff.

⁷⁹D, B5.

⁸⁰Cf. supra, p. 112.

⁸¹D, B6.

⁸²Cf. supra, p. 112, for a note on the controversy as to which Olympian represented which element.

⁸³D, B21, vv. 9 and 12.

⁸⁴D, B22 and 86, apud alia.

⁸⁵D, B96.

⁸⁶D, B98.

⁸⁷D, B112, vv. 1, 4-5.

⁸⁸D, B115, vv. 1-8.

⁸⁹Burnet, op.cit., p. 250.

⁹⁰Zeller, Outlines, op.cit., pp. 74-75.

⁹¹D, B121.

⁹²D, B122.

⁹³D, B132.

⁹⁴D, B133.

⁹⁵D, B134, vv. 1-5.

⁹⁶D, B136.

⁹⁷D, B128, 136, 137.

⁹⁸D, B29.

⁹⁹D, B28.

¹⁰⁰D, B35.

¹⁰¹D, B27.

¹⁰²D, B30.

¹⁰³D, B31.

¹⁰⁴D, B21.

¹⁰⁵D, B28; cf. also the reference to the god's "trembling" under the influence of Hate in D, B31.

¹⁰⁶D, B115.

¹⁰⁷D, B112, v. 4.

¹⁰⁸D, B114.

¹⁰⁹D, B146.

¹¹⁰D, B115, vv. 13-14.

¹¹¹D, B123.

¹¹²D, B134, v. 4.

¹¹³D, B2, v. 1.

¹¹⁴D, B2, v. 6.

¹¹⁵Ibid., v. 3.

¹¹⁶Ibid., vv. 8-9; cf. also B1: σὺ δὲ κλύθι.

¹¹⁷D, B4, vv. 12-13.

¹¹⁸Ibid., vv. 10-11.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰D, B17, v. 14; cf. also ibid., vv. 25-26.

¹²¹D, B23, v. 11.

¹²²D, B1.

¹²³D, B113.

¹²⁴D, B110 and 111.

¹²⁵D, B110, v. 3.

¹²⁶D, B111, vv. 1-2.

¹²⁷D, B111, vv. 3-4.

¹²⁸D, B111, v. 9.

¹²⁹D, B113.

¹³⁰ It might be objected that Empedocles makes no such general promises as I am attributing to him, but rather simply promises his disciple power over certain specified phenomena of nature. On sheerly textual grounds, this is true enough. But the correct conclusion from this is simply that we do not have all of the text and hence do not know whether or not Empedocles made other explicit promises. Hence we are obliged to look at the kind of power that this one instance involves; the question of the number of such powers is insoluble on textual grounds. The power to which reference is extant is a power over nature, and there seems to be no good reason to suppose that Empedocles limited his promise to this one particular power over nature. Still, if the point be insisted upon, it can be granted without weakening the essential argument: man would still have a power, albeit a strictly circumscribed one, over at least one of Harte's results. And that is enough.

¹³¹ D, B115, vv. 13-14.

¹³² Ibid., vv. 3-4.

CHAPTER FOUR

HERACLITUS OF EPHEBUS

ἦθος γὰρ ἀνθρώπειον μὲν οὐκ ἔχει γνῶμας, θεῶν δὲ ἔχει.

--Heraclitus, Fragment 78.

Life and Works

As in the case of Empedocles, we know very little about the life of Heraclitus; and what few scraps of information we do have are largely legend. His traditional floruit date is ca 500 B.C.; Diogenes tells us that he was in his prime in the sixty-ninth Olympiad (504/3 - 501/0 B.C.).¹ Burnet notes that Heraclitus refers in Fragment 16 to Pythagoras and Xenophanes in the past tense, and is referred to himself by Parmenides;² these references help fix the date of Heraclitus as being a generation or so after Pythagoras and Xenophanes and a generation or so before Parmenides.³ Diogenes reports that he died around the age of sixty.⁴

Tales abound about his life. We can let a secondary source give us an accounting of these:

The tradition regarding his life and death is most unsatisfactory, for it is all obviously an attempt to dramatize his writings. From these, one thing emerged clearly for the anecdotists: his "pride," as they called it; that is, his low opinion of his fellows. Thus we get a number of anecdotes based on this idea: he refused to take part in politics, because he disapproved of the Ephesian constitution, and retired, first to the temple of Artemis, then to the mountains, where he ate grass. He preferred

to play knuckle-bones in the temple with the children, rather than be a politician. He withdrew from his position of Basileus, an office hereditary in his family and carrying with it certain marks of honor, in favor of his brother. He had no teacher (although some wished to connect him with Hippasus, others with Xenophanes) but learnt everything by self-investigation. Though contemptuous of his fellow-citizens, he was not more partial to others: he refused with scorn an invitation from King Dareius to visit his court, and even preferred unpopularity at home to life in Athens. These tales are clearly based on his character as it emerges from his writings: his many expressions of contempt for others, his condemnation of the Ephesians for their expulsion of Hermodorus, his views on tyranny and so forth.⁵

It is therefore a case of "When facts fail, creative imagination sup-
plies." Burnet gives us an idea of how this works in some specific
instances:

Heraklitos said (fr. 68) that it is death to souls to become water; and we are told accordingly that he died of dropsy. He said (fr. 114) that the Ephesians should leave their city to their children, and (fr. 79) that Time was a child playing draughts. We are therefore told that he refused to take any part in public life, and went to play with the children in the temple of Artemis. He said (fr. 85) that corpses were more fit to be cast out than dung; and we are told that he covered himself with dung when attacked with dropsy. Lastly, he is said to have argued at great length with doctors because of fr. 58 ["Physicians who cut, burn, stab, and rack the sick, demand a fee for it which they do not deserve to get."].⁶

The tales of his death are similar fabrications. Diogenes re-
ports: Heraclitus retired to the mountains and ate grass, thereby [!] incurring dropsy;⁷ since the doctors were unable to cure him, he resorted to a home remedy of dung plaster in an effort to steam the moisture out of himself with heat (without success; he died).⁸ Other tales have him dying at the hands of (or, perhaps more properly, the teeth of) ravenous dogs.⁹ All these stories are of approximately equal historical value. There are, to be sure, other stories of his life and activities (e.g., the famous episode of the barley drink, indicative of the Ephesians' dependence on their high standard of

living), or the one about the gods in the stove;¹⁰ but there seems little point in pursuing them. In sum,

Thus we can be sure of nothing in his life, which seems to have been devoted to thought, and not to have included even any travels. He was probably an aristocrat by birth, and as he lived at Ephesus, not at Miletus, his originality was not tempered by too close contact with fellow-workers. The rest is unknown.¹¹

As for Heraclitus' writings, he is said to have written one work, and this seems to have impressed ancient commentators mostly by its obscurity. There is a story to the effect that Socrates, having read through the book, gave his opinion of it as follows:

What I understood was excellent, and I suppose that what I didn't was too. But one would need a Delian diver [to get to the bottom of it.]

 ὃ μὲν συνῆκα, γενναῖα· οἷμαι δὲ καὶ ὃ μὴ συνῆκα· κλὴν Δηλίου
 γέ τινος δεῖται κολυμβητοῦ.¹²

Heraclitus does write in an oracular style; there is no disputing that. Burnet's explanation of this fact will do as well as any (although it is not uncontested):

In the first place, it was the manner of the time. The stirring events of the age, and the influence of the religious revival, give something of a prophetic tone to all the leaders of thought. Pindar and Aeschylus have it too. It was also an age of great individualities, and these are apt to be solitary and disdainful. Heraclitus at least was so. If men cared to dig for the gold they might find it (fr. 8); if not, they must be content with straw (fr. 51). This seems to have been the view of Theophrastus, who said the headstrong temperament of Heraclitus sometimes led him into incompleteness and inconsistencies of statement.¹³

The book is divided, most probably by later commentators,¹⁴ into three sections, treating of metaphysical, political, and theological questions respectively. But the divisions are not hard and fast; "The subject matter is too closely interwoven for that."¹⁵ We have left to us only approximately one hundred twenty-six fragments,¹⁶ the

arrangement of which is a matter of some dispute. I shall, in this chapter as in the last, simply follow the order of the fragments as given in Diels. Nevertheless, it is good to be aware that the authorities on the subject differ. Thus,

In his edition, Diels has given up all attempt to arrange the fragments according to subject. . . . I think, too, that he overestimates the difficulty of an approximate arrangement, and makes too much of the view that the style of Heraklitos was "aphoristic." That it was so, is an important and valuable remark; but it does not follow that Heraklitos wrote like Nietzsche. For a Greek, however prophetic in his tone, there must always be a distinction between an aphoristic and an incoherent style.¹⁷

Heraclitus' Doctrine

Once again, as in the preceding chapter, this section will not attempt a thoroughgoing exposition of all of Heraclitus' thought, but rather only those aspects of it which form a necessary background for the work of this chapter. The basic task of this section is therefore to set the stage for the third section.

A natural if somewhat partial view of Heraclitus would have him carrying on the work of his Ionian predecessors in the search for a basic Urstoff underlying change. Perhaps this will do for a start, for he does indeed have a basic Urstoff. It will soon appear, however, that the conception involved is a good bit more subtle than it might seem at first.

First of all, then, there is the appalling fact of change to contend with. There is a constant strife at work in the universe:

You have to realize that war is the common property of all things, and that strife is justice, and that everything comes about in accord with strife and necessity.

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔδοντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔρην, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔρην καὶ χρεώμενα [χρέων?] ¹⁸

This strife, the conflict that is change, extends all the way down to the minutiae of our lives--to such an extent that it is not possible for a man to step twice into the same river, for instance (since by the time that he takes the second step, the river will have changed and therefore he will not be stepping into the same river).¹⁹ Change is a fact of our lives, whether living or dead, awake or asleep, young or old: the living become the dead, the awake become the sleeping, the young become the old.²⁰ Yet more: the dead become the living, the sleeping become the awake, the old become the young.²¹

Ought one, therefore, seek for a basis of solidarity in an Urstoff, as the Ionians did? To be sure, there is such an Urstoff: however myriad be the things of our experience, the fact remains that

This universe . . . always was, is, and will be everlasting fire, kindled in measure and quenched in measure.

κόσμον τόνδε . . . ἦν ἀεὶ καὶ ἔστιν καὶ ἔσται πῦρ αἰεζῶν,
ἀπτόμενον μέτρα καὶ ἀποσβεννύμενον μέτρα.²²

Not that the world around us deceives us, and seems to be other things while really being fire; the fire is "kindled in measure and quenched in measure,"²³ and in a definite order: it first becomes sea, then earth and water.²⁴

But what of this fire itself--what can be said of it? We wonder first of all whether Heraclitus' fire is intended to be material fire, the sort of thing of which we have experience; he does not tell us. What it is, he does not say; of what it does, he gives some indications. For one thing, it steers the cosmos: "τὰ δὲ πάντα οἰακίζει Κεραυνός."²⁵ It changes into all things, and all things change into it:

There is an exchange: all things [exchange for] fire and fire for all things, just as goods for gold and gold for goods.

πυρός τε ἀνταμοιβή τὰ πάντα καὶ πῦρ ἀπάντων ὅκωσπερ χρυσοῦ χρήματα καὶ χρημάτων χρυσός.²⁶

There is no escape from this process:

For he [Heraclitus] says that fire, coming upon all things, will judge and seize them.

πάντα γάρ, φησί, τὸ πῦρ ἐπελθὼν κρινεῖ καὶ καταλήφεται.²⁷

Furthermore, the sun, which according to the tradition of the summarizers is a bowl of fire,²⁸ is in charge of the Seasons, and the Seasons bring all things.²⁹

The process of fire's change to all things and all things' change to fire can be seen as two movements of a single cyclic process; these two movements have traditionally been called the Upward and the Downward Paths. In the doxographical account, we read:

He called change the upward and the downward path [the terms themselves are found in the fragments that we have; cf. D, B60], and held that the world comes into being in virtue of this. When fire is condensed it becomes moist, and when compressed it turns to water; water, being congealed, turns to earth, and this he calls the downward path. And, again, the earth is in turn liquified, and from it water arises, and from that everything else; for he refers almost everything to the evaporation from the sea. This is the path upwards.³⁰

The two moments, however, are really one: "The path up and down is one and the same (ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω μία ὡυτή)."³¹

At this point we begin to see that we have here, not an attempt at somehow establishing stability amid the evident fact of change, but rather something quite different, something a good deal more radical. Heraclitus is affirming, in effect, that the former enterprise is witless; reality itself is change. It is not some stable element underlying change. For if all things are at root fire, and if the fire

itself is always and ceaselessly engaged in traversing the Upward or Downward Path (never are we told that the process ceases, or terminates in some sort of cosmic conflagration),³² the implication is strong that there is no stable element underlying change, that change itself is the important factor, is true reality. A further hint in this direction is provided by a bit of speculation about something which Heraclitus himself does not tell us, i.e., why he chose fire as his Urstoff:

All this made it necessary for him to seek out a new primary substance. He wanted . . . something which of its own nature would pass into everything else, while everything else would pass in turn into it. This he found in Fire, and it is easy to see why, if we consider the phenomenon of combustion. The quantity of fire in a flame burning steadily appears to remain the same, the flame seems to be what we call a "thing." And yet the substance of it is continually changing. It is always passing away in smoke, and its place is always being taken by fresh matter from the fuel that feeds it. If we regard the world as an "ever-living fire" (fr. 20 [Bywater]), we can understand how it is always becoming all things, while all things are always returning to it.³³

Thus we have here no mere repetition of the Ionian search. Yet, as Freeman remarks,

If, however, Heraclitus is to be counted as a metaphysician and not a nihilist in philosophy, there must be something, some one unchanging reality to which he directs us. This cannot be, as it was for the Milesians, his material substrate; for Fire itself changes, and of its essential nature. It is actually no more at rest than the Cosmos born from it, for the process of change is eternal. . . . Is it, then, perhaps the eternal process of change that is the unchanging element in his system? This would not be of much help, for we should be confined to acknowledging this and then giving up all attempt at further investigation. Knowledge in any real sense would still be impossible, and obviously Heraclitus did not think this, as his own speculations prove.³⁴

Precisely what this "unchanging reality" is begins to appear when Heraclitus is talking about his fire, in a fragment already quoted in part: the fire which is all things is said to be "enkindled in

measure and extinguished in measure."³⁵ But the notion of μέτρα makes us pause. There is, after all, nothing in fire itself which would suggest a notion of rational bounds set for the fire--and that is precisely what "measure" does suggest. What we have here is a fire with a certain amount of direction imposed upon its activity, a fire the activity of which is directed by rule or law. There is, we are told explicitly, a directive purpose involved here:

[Heraclitus says that] there is one wisdom: to know the purpose which has directed all things through all things.

 εἶναι γὰρ ἓν τὸ σοφόν, ἐπίστασθαι γνῶμην, ὅτι ἐκυβέρνησε πάντα διὰ πάντων.³⁶

This purpose, or law, is universal, common to all;³⁷ all things come into being in accordance with this law.³⁸ If one views the world from the standpoint of this law, he will see that all things are one.³⁹ It is this one law which stands behind the strife and war that characterize the universe, therefore, since all things come about through strife⁴⁰ but in accordance with the law.⁴¹

What Heraclitus is doing, therefore, is this: he is suggesting that all things change, and that there is nothing to be sought by way of an unchanging substrate. There is, indeed, a substrate, fire. But that, by its very nature, is perhaps the least stable of the elements, and certainly is not an unchanging substrate. The search is misdirected; one ought not seek for stability behind change, but rather for the reason or law directing the change. One should not implicitly deny the importance of change by seeking something that does not change; one should rather affirm the importance of change and seek to understand the "why" of it, to whatever extent that proves possible:

"Hence it is necessary to follow after that which is common (δὲ δέῃ
 ἔκασθαι τῷ κοινῷ)." ⁴² It is in this sense, I think, that one must
 understand Heraclitus' exhortation to his readers to listen, not to
 him, but to the law. ⁴³

In this connection, an observation of Freeman's is worth noting:

Heraclitus never speaks of this Logos as a material thing; when
 he describes it, it is as something knowable, that is, as a Law.
 He does not, however, separate it from his substrate Fire; he
 says, "The thunderbolt steers all things," so that we can say,
 with Hippolytus, that the Fire is "intelligent" [D, B64], that is,
 that wisdom is the property of the Fire. But it is not "in" the
 Fire in a material sense; it is the Law in the nature of the
 Fire, and the movements of the Fire are subject to it. The Logos
 is nowhere described as material in the way in which Empedocles' Love and Hate, or Anaxagoras' Mind, are described. ⁴⁴

We might next ask, given the fact that all things come from Fire
 in accordance with measure, what is the path that this process takes?
 What are the mutations involved, the end product of which is, say, a
 stone or a stick?

We are told that the following are the changes of fire:

First, sea; but half of sea is earth, and half water spout. . . .
 The sea is poured out and measured according to the same measure
 as there pertained before it became earth.

 πρῶτον θάλασσα, θαλάσσης δὲ τὸ μὲν ἡμῖν γῆ, τὸ δὲ ἡμῖν
 κρηστήρ. . . . θάλασσα διαχέεται καὶ μετρέεται εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν
 λόγον, ὁμοῖος πρόσθεν ἦν ἢ γενέσθαι γῆ. ⁴⁵

Perhaps, however, since this part of the cosmology is not all that
 critical to the purposes of this paper, we can simply accept an inter-
 pretation of this passage:

From [fire's] region appears to come rain, which ultimately
 nourishes the sea, and is itself replenished (for fire "consumes"
 moisture) by the moist evaporation ascending from the sea. Sea,
 as Anaximenes had shown, turns into earth, and earth at other
 times and places changes to water. Thus sea and earth are what
 cosmic or aitherial fire "turns to." Changes between the three
 world-masses [i.e., between earth, fire, and sea] are going on

simultaneously in such a way that the total of each always remains the same. If a quantity of earth dissolves into sea, an equivalent quantity of sea in other parts is condensing into earth, and so with changes between sea and "burner" (fire). . . . The Logos or proportion remains the same--again it is the measure and regularity of change, this time of large-scale cosmological change, that is stressed.⁴⁶

It is, therefore, a question of step-by-step transmutation of one element into another, either in the Downward Path of fire's becoming other things, or else in the Upward one of other things' becoming fire. It is not a leap; all things are done μέτρα. One can, however, consider this process of continual change on two levels: within a given individual being, there is this continual process of change going on; simultaneous with this, however, the same thing could be said for the universe. The ordered change can thus be seen either microscopically or macroscopically. In either case, it is the same process:

Nothing, not even the most stable-seeming and solid substance, is really at rest. It has the double movement: the oscillation of the opposites within itself, and the movement of the Whole, either towards or away from the source.⁴⁷

In this movement, seen from either perspective, the particular being existing at any one time is maintained in being precisely by the strife of opposites within itself: its existence is, precisely, a tension between given opposites, and when this tension is resolved in favor of one of the conflicting elements, the being changes to another being, a different one, wherein a different tension pertains between different warring opposites.⁴⁸

So much for sticks and stones. What, however, of man--or, since Heraclitus expresses little interest in the body as such in the fragments we have, what of man's soul?

The information he provides us is scanty enough. We are told that souls are vaporized from the wet⁴⁹--i.e., they are part of the upward process, the passage from water back to the rarer elements. Souls, therefore, are tending toward fire. It is death for a soul to become water, Heraclitus affirms;⁵⁰ it might delight in doing so, but it is to its own peril,⁵¹ and a dry soul is the wisest and the best.⁵² The soul has its own Logos or law,⁵³ which is so profound as to be inscrutable,⁵⁴ but seems to be capable of increase as the soul's need for it increases.⁵⁵ Souls, we are further told, have the sense of smell left to them in Hades;⁵⁶ their role in Hades is to function as watchful guardians of the living and the dead.⁵⁷

This is the data that Heraclitus gives us. What, precisely, are we to make of it?

Some of the fragments can be put together coherently, at least. It would seem that it is soul's duty to strive to become fire, for one thing. It is the soul's destruction for it to become wet, and yet it originated from the wet; hence retrogression to its original state seems prohibited, and the upward dynamic must continue. That this is a constantly ongoing process seems indicated by the fact that the soul's law can grow to meet the soul's needs; moreover, since the best soul is not only dry (ξηρόν) but bright as well (αύρον),⁵⁸ the suggestion is there that the best soul is a dry soul that has become bright, i.e., become fire (αύρον is often used in Greek to describe the rays of the sun). It is, therefore, the law of soul that soul should strive to do, on its own level, what the entire universe is doing, viz., become fire.

The fragments dealing with the soul's fate after the death of the body, however, are another matter. There is obviously some sort of afterlife, as the references to the souls in Hades make clear. In that afterlife, moreover,

There await men, after they have died, things which they are not looking for or even imagine.

 ἀνθρώπους μένει ἀποθανόντας ἄσσα οὐκ ἔλπονται οὐδὲ δοκέουσιν.⁵⁹

Gods and men alike honor those slain in war,⁶⁰ and the more magnificent the death that men undergo, the greater their reward.⁶¹ But in what this honor and this reward consist, Heraclitus does not say. We can infer that it will have to do with something on the level of soul rather than that of the body, for after death a corpse is a more fitting object of rejection than is excrement.⁶² On the other hand, since all things are tending toward fire in Heraclitus' over-all cosmology, it is at least puzzling to speak of any sort of personal immortality of soul. This, however, is something that we will have to explore at greater length in the third section of this chapter.

The "Why" of Heraclitus

We shall employ the same methodology here as in the corresponding section of this paper's third chapter: a series of questions, answers to which will be constructed from the extant fragments of Heraclitus' work.

First, then, what did Heraclitus think of the Olympian gods? He is clear enough on that point:

And to those statues of theirs, men pray in much the same manner [and with the same effectiveness] that one might have in conversing with buildings--being totally ignorant as they are as to

what gods and heroes might be.

καὶ τοῖς ἀγάλμασι δὲ τουτέοισιν εὐχονται ὁκοῖον εἴ τις δόμοισι
λεσχηνεύοιτο οὐ τι γινώσκων θεοὺς οὐδ' ἥρωας οἵτινές εἰσι.⁶³

The comparison with what we might call "talking with a brick wall" bears, strictly, on prayers to statues, rather than prayers to gods; nevertheless, the inference can be made that prayers to the gods themselves is equally ineffective. No normal Greek ever thought that a statue of a god that he might possess was that god, as the accounting of Greek religion in this paper's second chapter made clear. Prayers to the gods, then, are a waste of time. So are the rites that commonly attend those prayers:

[Men] purify themselves by staining themselves with blood--to no avail; it is just as if one were to want to wash off mud by walking into other mud. A man would be thought to be out of his mind, if any other man noticed him acting in that way.

καθαίρονται δ' ἄλλως αἵματι μαινόμενοι οἶον εἴ τις εἰς πηλὸν ἐμβὰς πηλῷ ἀπονέζοιτο. μαίνεσθαι δ' ἂν δοκοίη, εἴ τις αὐτὸν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιφράσαιτο οὕτω κοίεοντα.⁶⁴

Some of the rites, indeed, are worse than simply foolishness:

To those who roam at night, to magicians, to frenzied men, to Lenaeae women, to the initiated: to such, what happens after death brings terrifying tidings; to them the fire brings prophecy. For the mysteries that are esteemed among men initiate them into unholiness.

νυκτικῶλοις, μάγοις, βάκχοις, λήναις, μύσταις. τοῦτοις ἀπειλεῖ τὰ μετὰ θάνατον, τοῦτοις μαντεύεται τὸ πῦρ. τὰ γὰρ νομιζόμενα κατ' ἀνθρώπους μυστήρια ἀνιερωστὶ μυεῦνται.⁶⁵

Worse yet, some rites are more than just unholy foolishness. Some of them are downright shameful, and it is only the intention of the ritual that gives it any redeeming value at all:

If it were not in Dionysius' honor that they hold their procession and sing their hymn to the genitalia, they would be acting most shamelessly. Hades, however, is much the same thing as Dionysius, in whose honor they rave and celebrate the Lenaeae festival.

εἰ μὴ γὰρ Διονύῳσι πομπὴν ἐποιοῦντο καὶ ὕμνεον αἶσμα αἰδοίοισιν,
 ἀναιδέστατα εἰργασί' ἄν. ὡς δὲ Ἀῖδης καὶ Διόνυσος, ὅτεωι
 μαίνονται καὶ ληναίζουσιν.⁶⁶

Much current religion, therefore, is idiocy, unholy, and even shameful. Why? The basic reason is this:

This universe, the same for all, was made by no god or man;
 rather, it always was, is, and will be everburning fire, enkindled
 in measure and extinguished in measure.

 κόσμον τόνδε, τὸν αὐτὸν ἀπάντων, οὔτε τις θεῶν οὔτε ἀνθρώπων
 ἐποίησεν, ἀλλ' ἦν ἀεὶ καὶ ἔστιν καὶ ἔσται πῦρ αἰζῶν, ἀπτόμενον
 μέτρα καὶ ἀποσβεννύμενον μέτρα.⁶⁷

The gods did not create the universe. Neither do they control it:
 that, as we have seen, is the work of fire, acting in accord with its
 immanent μέτρον. For if the gods did not control the fire in the
 creation of the universe, why assume that they do so after that crea-
 tion is completed? Since the gods are unnecessary in the beginning
 of the universe, there is no reason to suppose that they have any say
 in the matter once that universe is under way. And, if the gods do
 not control the cosmos, religion is useless; once again, the basic
 purpose of Greek religion was precisely to effect some sort of control
 of events through the gods. Heraclitus is now claiming that such con-
 trol is not within the power of the gods.

Chapter Two made it clear that the twin literary sources of the
 Olympian gods were Homer and Hesiod. It is instructive, therefore, to
 see what Heraclitus has to say about these two poets, for his comments
 reflect not merely personally upon Homer and Hesiod, but upon what
 they had to say (about the gods, among other things) as well:

Knowing many things does not teach one to be wise; if it did, it
 would have taught Hesiod and Pythagoras.

 πολυμαθίη νόον ἔχειν οὐ διδάσκει. Ἡσίοδον γὰρ ἄν ἐδίδαξε καὶ
 Πυθαγόρην. . . .⁶⁸

.
 [Heraclitus] thought Homer deserved to be thrown out of the lists and given a beating, and the same for Archilochus.

 τὸν δὲ Ὅμηρον ἔφασκεν ἄξιον ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶνων ἐκβάλλεσθαι καὶ
 ῥαπίζεσθαι καὶ Ἀρχίλοχον ὁμοίως.⁶⁹

Elsewhere, Heraclitus says, with blunt directness, that Homer and Hesiod simply did not know what they were doing.⁷⁰

Moreover, it seems in the last analysis that there is not much difference between the status of an immortal (a god) and a mortal:

The immortals are mortal, the mortals are immortal, each living the others' death and dying the others' life.

 ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον,
 τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες.⁷¹

The reason for this is that gods and men alike have a common origin in strife:

War is father of all things, of all things king; it shows forth some as gods, others as men; some it makes slaves and others free.

 Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεὺς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν
 θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς
 δὲ ἐλευθέρους.⁷²

However, not all the traditional religion is unqualifiedly bad, in Heraclitus' view. He has a certain measure of respect for the Delphic oracle:

According to Heraclitus, the Sibyl, speaking out with prophetic mouth her cheerless and unbeautified and unincensed message, reaches out over a thousand years with her voice, through (the power of) the god.

 Σίβυλλα δὲ μαινομένῳ στόματι καθ' Ἡράκλειτον ἀγέλαστα καὶ
 ἀκαλλώπιστα καὶ ἀμύριστα φθεγγομένη χιλίων ἐτῶν ἐξικνεῖται
 τῇ φωνῇ διὰ τὸν θεόν.⁷³

And the oracle is not deceptive:

The lord, whose place of prophecy is located at Delphi, neither

speaks clearly nor completely conceals, but rather gives indications.

 ὁ ἄναξ, οὐ τὸ μαντεῖόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς, οὔτε λέγει οὔτε
 κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει.⁷⁴

Apollo, it seems, has more to commend himself than do the other gods, in Heraclitus' view. He does not say why, and we are left to speculate on the point. It does seem safe enough to say, however, that the main difference between religion at Delphi and religion at very many other places lay in the fact that at Delphi there was a fairly heavy stress put on man's reason rather than his emotions--at least in the practical order. To be sure, there were the usual oracular trappings (the tripod, the smoke, and so forth), but the reason why the oracle enjoyed such spectacular success was that the priests who ran it had access to a considerable amount of information from a number of sources. Delphi was a crossroads of sorts, to which people from many areas came, each bringing certain bits of information regarding his or her homeland--all of which the priests collected, thereby providing themselves with a store of facts on the basis of which they could provide some shrewd answers to questions that devotees put to the oracle.⁷⁵ Furthermore, the well-known cryptic nature of the oracle's responses put a premium on intellectual acumen on the part of the recipient of the oracle's answer. For reasons which will become clear when we get further along in this section of the present chapter, Heraclitus would be sympathetic to such an intellectualistic approach.

In summary, therefore, the answer to the first question we posed is this: very much of the cult of the Olympian gods is foolishness or worse, since the gods are powerless to accomplish the main purpose of

religion. Gods and men alike are under the power of strife (or, in more familiar terms, fire), and really do not differ very much from one another. Yet there is a valuable element in at least one phase of Greek religion.

To turn, then, to the next question: granting that the current gods and religions are less than satisfactory, what can be said of the notion of divinity and religion in general, in Heraclitus' view?

To begin with, it is clear that Heraclitus does not jettison the idea of divinity completely, however widespread be the misconceptions that people may have of it; the fragments that we have already examined concerning the Delphic oracle show as much. Furthermore, there are several fragments wherein he speaks of the divine in terms of at least approval, if not praise. Thus for instance, he says:

The god is day-night, winter-summer, war-peace, surfeit-hunger . . . [the god] changes just like [fire], whenever it is mixed in with incense, and he is named according to each one's pleasure.

ὁ θεὸς ἡμέρη εὐφρόνη, χειμὼν θέρος, πόλεμος εἰρήνη, κόρος λιμός . . . ἀλλοιοῦται δὲ ὅκωσπερ (πῦρ), ὅπῃσιν συμμιγῇ θυώμασιν, ὀνομάζεται καθ' ἡδονὴν ἐκάστου.⁷⁶

In other words, there is such a thing as the divine, and it consists in opposition of one sort or other--more accurately, in a tension of opposites. Men, however, by their religious ceremonies, can and do create all sorts of confusion as to the nature of the divine.

This divinity which is opposition has understanding:

The human race does not have any means of knowing, but the divine does.

ἦθος γὰρ ἀνθρώπειον μὲν οὐχ ἔχει γνῶμας, θεῶν δὲ ἔχει.⁷⁷

And this intelligent opposition-divinity surpasses mankind:

Man has been called foolish by the divine in the same fashion that a child would be by a grown man.

ἀνὴρ νήπιος ἤκουσε πρὸς δαίμονες ὅκωσπερ παῖς πρὸς ἀνδρός.⁷⁸

It is, however, no mean feat for man to recognize this divinity:

But many things about the gods, thinks Heraclitus, escape being understood because of lack of belief.

ἀλλὰ τῶν μὲν θεῶν τὰ πολλά, καθ' Ἡράκλειτον, ἀπιστίη δια-
φθγγάνει μὴ γινώσκεισθαι.⁷⁹

In the divinity, moreover, the tension between good and evil that plagues man's understanding finds resolution:

To the god, all things are beautiful and good and just; but men consider some things unjust and some things just.

τῷ μὲν θεῷ καλὰ πάντα καὶ ἀγαθὰ καὶ δίκαια, ἄνθρωποι δὲ ἃ μὲν
ἀδίκαια ὑπειλήφασιν ἃ δὲ δίκαια.⁸⁰

And finally, the divine is a model for the human, particularly for human law:

Anyone who speaks wisely must find his strength in that which is shared by all, just as a city does on law, and much more so. For all human law is nourished by one divine law, the power of which extends just as far as it wishes, and which is enough for everything, and which is superior.

ξὺν νόμῳ λέγοντας ἰσχυρίζεσθαι χρὴ τῷ ξυνῷ πάντων, ὅκωσπερ νόμῳ πόλις, καὶ πολὺ ἰσχυροτέρως. τρέφονται γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἀνθρώπειοι νόμοι ὑπὸ ἐνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ· κρατεῖ γὰρ τοσοῦτον ὁκόσμον ἐθέλει καὶ ἀξαρκεῖ πᾶσι καὶ περιγίνεται.⁸¹

The divine law, therefore, controls everything, and human laws ought to be based on it.

There is, then, a god, of some sort. Does man have any obligations toward this divine being? Or, in other words, is there such a thing as religion? Obviously, yes. From the fact that human law ought to be based on divine law, it follows immediately that man must

know the divine law; else how can he base his laws on it? Furthermore, man, we are told, must base not merely his laws on the divine law, but his strength on the divine strength. The requirement of basing human law on divine law is put forth in the fragment quoted above as an illustration of a general principle: as the city on law. However, the general principle itself is left unstated, and we are left to draw the parallel by ourselves.

Therefore: there is a god, and there is a religion. Hence our second question, the "An est?" question, finds its answer. The third question is the correlative "Quid est?" one: what is Heraclitus' god, and in what does religion consist, in his view?

We know some phases of the answer already, for we have seen that Heraclitus holds that his god is intelligent, is a tension of opposites, surpasses mankind, and is a model for man. Now, we are told that there is a law which governs the entire universe, and is common to all things;⁸² one single thing "which has directed all things through all things (ὅτι ἐκυβέρνησε πάντα διὰ πάντων)."⁸³ However, since human nature has no means of understanding but the divine nature does,⁸⁴ it follows that this single, directive purpose is on the level of the divine. Furthermore, again since human nature lacks understanding but the divine nature does not, it follows that wisdom is also on the level of the divine. Wisdom, however, is one: "That which alone is wise is one (ἐν τὸ σοφὸν μόνον)."⁸⁵ Hence, on the level of the divine are found both the attribute of unitary wisdom and the activity of directing the universe.

The divine law steers the universe, therefore. But the universe

. . . always was, is, and will be everburning fire, enkindled in measure and extinguished in measure.

. . . ἦν αἰεὶ καὶ ἔστιν καὶ ἔσται πῦρ αἰεζῶν, ἀπτόμενον μέτρα καὶ ἀποσβεννύμενον μέτρα.⁸⁶

It follows that the divine wisdom, directing the universe, is doing so by means of the μέτρον that is the characteristic of the fiery Urstoff. The divine law, or the Logos, as Heraclitus frequently calls it, is not identified with the fire, but rather is the directive force behind that fire's activities. Yet neither should one think of the Logos as being totally separated from the fire; we are told, after all, that "The lightning flash directs everything (τὰ δὲ πάντα οἶα-κίζει κεραυνός)."⁸⁷ Once again, Freeman's observation is useful:

Heraclitus never speaks of this Logos as a material thing; when he describes it, it is as something knowable, that is, as a Law. He does not, however, separate it from his substrate Fire; he says "The Thunderbolt steers all things," so that we can say, with Hippolytus, that the Fire is "intelligent," that is, that Wisdom is a property of the Fire. But it is not "in" the Fire in a material sense; it is the Law in the nature of the Fire, and the movements of the Fire are subject to it.⁸⁸

One might say, in the terminology of a later age, that the Logos is immanent to the fire, or is the immanent law directing its activities.

The close association of the Logos with the fire throws some light on Heraclitus' statement that the divine nature is a tension of opposites, for the essence of fire is the transmutation of one thing into another: fire is neither the unburned material nor the burned material, but rather the process whereby the one becomes the other. It is the midpoint in the change, without being either terminus. It is the struggle between these two termini, the tension between them; and fire exists only as long as this tension exists. Once this tension is resolved in favor of either unburned material or ashes, the

fire goes out. Mutatis mutandis, the same could be said for any other variety of change. And the Logos is the directing force behind the activity of the fire, hence behind its nature. It is possible, therefore, to conceive of the Logos, as immanent in the fire, as being precisely that tension between opposites that Heraclitus envisions in fragment 67, cited some paragraphs back.⁸⁹ Hence Heraclitus can speak approvingly of his Logos in this role:

That which is in opposition is in concord, and out of things that differ there comes a most excellent harmony, and all things come about through strife.

τὸ ἀντίξουν συμφέρον καὶ ἐκ τῶν διαφερόντων καλλίστην ἁρμονίαν
καὶ πάντα κατ' ἔριν γίνεσθαι.⁹⁰

.

They do not understand how that which is different is in agreement with itself; harmony is a turning back upon itself, like that of a bow and a lyre.

οὐ ξυνιᾶσιν ὅπως διαφερόμενον ἑωυτῷ ὁμολογέει· παλίντροπος
ἁρμονίη ὅκωσπερ τόξου καὶ λύρης.⁹¹

We are further told that in the Logos, all is justice, beauty, and goodness; it is only men who think that the contrary obtains in certain cases,⁹² presumably, once again, since intelligence and wisdom are lacking at the human level and it is only at the status of the divine that the full picture can be seen.

A caution is needed at this point, however. "But we are not entitled to suppose that Heraclitus regarded the One, Fire, as a personal God, any more than Thales or Anaximenes regarded Water or Air as a personal God: Heraclitus was a pantheist, . . ."⁹³ Our modern tendency to place a relationship of implication between intelligence and personality did not hold in Heraclitus' day.

So much for Heraclitus' god. What of man's duties toward that god, or, what of religion?

Perhaps a good way of seeing what man should do is to investigate Heraclitus' strictures about the majority of mankind, who fail to do what they should. The reverse will then indicate what they should be doing.

In the very first fragment that we have, Heraclitus complains that, although he is setting out the law of the universe,

. . . men are always devoid of understanding, both before they hear and after they have heard for the first time.

. . . ἀεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον.⁹⁴

Man's first obligation, then, must be to strive to understand the law of the universe. The majority of mankind are unaware of what they are doing,⁹⁵ and consequently are like the deaf: they are "not present even when they are present (παρεόντας ἀπεῖναι)."⁹⁶

Yet it is not a speculative sort of knowledge of the law of the universe that Heraclitus has in mind:

Hence it is necessary to follow the [common, that is the] universal [law].

οὐδὲ δεῖ ἔπεσθαι τῷ [ξυνῶνι, τουτέστι τῷ] κοινῶνι.⁹⁷

One must follow the law; one cannot disregard it, and form a world view of his own.⁹⁸ This is not an easy process, nor is it one that is commonly achieved:

For many people do not understand things like this when they encounter them, nor do they come to understand them after learning about them, although they seem to themselves (to do so).

οὐ γὰρ φρονέουσι τοιαῦτα πολλοί, ὁκδοῖς ἐγκυρεῦσιν, οὐδὲ μαθόντες γινώσκουσιν, ἑωυτοῖσι δὲ δοκέουσι.⁹⁹

Even after one has come to an understanding of the law of the universe, he must continue to work at it, it seems.

To come to a knowledge of the law of the universe, and to follow it: what could this mean? We recall that the "law of the universe" refers to the fact that all things are in flux, that all things are at root fire in one or other moment of the Upward or Downward Paths, and that the entire process is under the direction of Logos. What it would mean to come to a knowledge of these facts is intelligible enough; but what could it mean to follow that law?

We get some clues in Heraclitus' specific prescriptions. He tells us that man must not allow his soul to become wet through pleasure.¹⁰⁰ We know, however, that man's soul came from the wet and is en route, so to speak, to becoming fire.¹⁰¹ This could only mean that man's duty is to further the cosmic process: he must make sure that his soul, which is after all the important part of him (cf. the references to corpses as "dung"¹⁰²), continues on its way to the fiery state. He must not do anything that would retard the progress of his soul towards that state; thus we have the prohibitions against drink, which would make the soul wet,¹⁰³ and against pleasure.¹⁰⁴ A man must have character; that for him is "fulfillment."¹⁰⁵ All men can come to a knowledge of themselves and to the level of intellectual activity¹⁰⁶ --meaning that they can come to a knowledge of their role in the universe.

Coming to a knowledge of the law of the universe is wisdom, on the human level:

For one thing is wisdom: to know the understanding which has guided all things through all things.

εἶναι γὰρ ἐν τὸ σοφόν, ἐπίστασθαι γνώμην, ὅτι ἐκυβέρνησε
πάντα διὰ πάντων.¹⁰⁷

Practically speaking, how does one set about achieving this? It takes work: "For it is necessary for wise men to be searchers into very many things (χρὴ γὰρ εὔ μάλα πολλῶν ἱστορας φιλοσόφους ἄνδρας εἶναι)."¹⁰⁸

One must, first and foremost, listen:

[Heraclitus says that] when men have listened, not to me but to the Word, it is the part of wisdom to agree that all things are one.

οὐκ ἔμοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστὶ ἐν
πάντα εἶναι.¹⁰⁹

One must act as one who is awake and recognizes that there is "but one universe, common [to all] (ἓνα καὶ κοινὸν κόσμον εἶναι)."¹¹⁰ One must be attentive, therefore: eyes and ears must be attuned to the universe as a whole. It is by this path, rather than by "guess[ing] rashly about very important matters (μὴ εἰκῇ περὶ τῶν μεγίστων συμβαλλόμεθα),"¹¹¹ that one will attain the goal.

In a word,

. . . wisdom consists in speaking the truth and in acting with understanding according to nature.

. . . σοφίῃ ἀληθεῖα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας.¹¹²

Acting according to nature, however, means doing whatever one can to make sure that the soul attains the status of fire, and refraining from doing anything that might hinder it from that goal. "The greatest virtue is to be wise (τὸ φρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μεγίστη)."¹¹³

It is only when we realize the intellectualistic tenor of Heraclitus' system that the prohibitions on sense pleasures--as well as his profound contempt for the vast majority of mankind--become logical. For the vast majority of mankind do not operate

intellectually, at least predominantly so. Most people are content simply with going about their day-to-day business, enjoying their day-to-day pleasures. They do not, unlike Heraclitus, "seek the meaning of themselves"; they cannot say, as he did, "ἐδίκησάμην ἐμεωυτόν"¹¹⁴ --nor, indeed, are they particularly interested in doing so. But this means that they do not arrive at wisdom:

Poor witnesses for mankind are the eyes and the ears when men have uncivilized souls.

κακοὶ μάρτυρες ἀνθρώποισιν ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ ὤτα βαρβάρους ψυχὰς
ἐχόντων.¹¹⁵

In other words, the root of wisdom, or religion, lies in a strictly intellectual recognition of how the universe is constituted and run, and in a persistent effort to hold in strict check anything that might dampen down and hinder the activities of reason. In the light of this, the fact that this is not a doctrine that would appeal to the masses becomes somewhat of an obviosity. (Also in the light of this, the intellectualistic tenor goes a good way toward explaining Heraclitus' benevolence toward the Delphic oracle.¹¹⁶)

What can man expect to get out of this sort of religion? What hopes has he for his future? Heraclitus is somewhat terse on the point. Initially, man gains fame in this present life:

The best men choose one thing in preference to all others, namely a deathless reputation among men. But the majority simply glut themselves, like cattle.

αἰρεῖσθαι γὰρ ἐν ἀντίᾳ πάντων οἱ ἄριστοι, κλέος ἀέναντον θνητῶν,
οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ κεκόρηται ὅκωσπερ κτήνηα.¹¹⁷

After death, as we have seen, something awaits man, too:

There await men, after they have died, things which they are not looking for or even imagine.

ἀνθρώπους μένει ἀποθανόντας ἄσσα οὐκ ἔλπονται οὐδὲ δοκέουσιν.¹¹⁸

But precisely what these things are that await men, Heraclitus does not say.

This seems like little enough incentive for even the best of men to adopt Heraclitus' Word. Furthermore, there is another, and a somewhat more far-reaching problem that presents itself: the universe, under the direction of Logos, is going to go right on doing what it is doing, independently of whether or not man co-operates with it. For that matter, man is going to co-operate with the universe in this regard as the universe pursues its upward route to the fiery state, whether he wants to or not. What, then, is the point of exhorting him to do so? The cosmic system operates with necessity, and the precise point of an exhortatory ethical system in this (or any other) necessitarian structure is not at all clear. It looks very much as if Heraclitus is saying, "You will co-operate in the universe whether you want to or not; therefore co-operate willingly." And the problem with that, of course, is that in such a context the adverb "willingly" is evacuated of all meaning.

I suggest that the real dynamic at work here is the same one that was operative in the Olympian religion, i.e., that of control. The real punch of Heraclitus' system lies in the fact that, by the heavy stress on the cultivation of man's reason, Heraclitus is suggesting that man can somehow share in the control of the universe that is the function of the divine reason. This, however, would involve some sort of identification of man's reason with the divine reason; and the question then becomes, can such an identification be justified

from the text?

A direct justification is not forthcoming. Nevertheless, there are places in the text from which a tolerably strong argument in that direction can be constructed. We are told, for instance, that man must base his strength

. . . on that which is shared by all, just as a city does on law, and much more so. For all human law is nourished by one divine one.

 . . . ἰσχυρίζεσθαι χρὴ τῷ ξυνῶι πάντων, ὅκωσπερ νόμῳι πόλις,
 καὶ πολὺ ἰσχυροτέρως. τρέφονται γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἀνθρώπειοι νόμοι
 ὑπὸ ἐνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ.¹¹⁹

The argument is elliptical, and it will pay us to fill it out. The first three steps in the argument are given: (1) man must base his strength on that which is shared by all; (2) in just the same fashion as a city bases its strength on law; (3) but even much more so, for human law is nourished by divine law. The fourth step is omitted, but it would go something like this: (4) therefore man's strength is divinely nourished by its basis too. The relationship between human law and divine law ought not be missed: there is a very close connection between the two. What is this connection? The verb is significant: τρέφονται. This verb is commonly used in Greek to denote the imparting of physical sustenance from mother to child, and the suggestion presents itself that the relationship between the two types of law is a close one indeed. However, I would not want to claim too much for this, as the verb is capable of other meanings as well. Nevertheless, it is curious that that particular verb should be used, rather than something like, say, μιμοῦνται.

However, whatever be the precise relationship between human and

divine law, our real interest is in the relationship between man's strength and its basis. Now, we have been told that the soul has its own Logos, which is capable of increase according to the soul's requirements;¹²⁰ and we have seen that it is the task of soul to strive to attain fiery status. Presumably, therefore, it is the function of this soul-Logos to direct this process as well. But this process is precisely the image, on a small scale, of the cosmic-Logos' task. Adding this fact together with the fourth step of the elliptical argument, we can conclude that there is a close relationship between soul-Logos and cosmic-Logos, a relationship expressed by the curious verb τρέφονται, and that the two have the same function, in the one case on a microcosmic level and in the other on a macrocosmic one.

There is another fragment concerning the soul, wherein Heraclitus says that

You could not discover in your travels the boundaries of the soul, even if you traverse the entire route; its Logos is too profound for that.

 ψυχῆς πείρατα ἴδν οὐκ ἂν ἐξεύροιο, πᾶσαν ἐπιπορευόμενος ὁδόν·
 οὕτω βαθὺν λόγον ἔχει.¹²¹

Why, we ask ourselves, is the soul-Logos so impenetrable? Why, for that matter, does the soul even have its own Logos--nothing else in the universe has one of its own. For that matter, the soul-Logos is a curious affair: it has precisely the same function as cosmic-Logos. Now, cosmic-Logos seems to do a competent enough job on running the remainder of the universe; why is it necessary for soul to have a Logos of its own to do exactly the same job that cosmic-Logos does well everywhere else? Why indeed--unless soul-Logos is cosmic-Logos, but operating on a particular scale? Both Logoi possess identity of

function and identity of at least one characteristic (profundity); the suggestion is strong that they simply possess identity, period, and that the only difference between the two is the sphere of operation.

If this is true, many interesting things follow. If man can, by controlling his own activities, control his own soul, he can be in attunement with the Logos of that soul. And if the soul-Logos is identified with the cosmic one, or at least if it bears a close relationship to it, man can be in attunement with the entire cosmos. Not that man can control the cosmos in the sense of directing it at will; the restriction of the soul-Logos' field of activity that Heraclitus proposes seems to rule that out. It seems rather that, from that viewpoint, the cosmos controls man. However, man can be said to be controlling his own destiny: he can consciously strive to bring about the situation wherein whatever happens to him in the cosmic process happens, in effect, by his own choice. And that is, in a remarkable way, a sort of control over the cosmos itself: the cosmos is no longer something threatening, something irrational, something which can affect man's life without his having any say about it. Rather, it is a factor in his life that he has assented to and consciously striven for, and which he can accept on those terms. In a weird sort of fashion, man has achieved the security that he has sought.

And thus the third question that we have posed to Heraclitus finds its answer; we have seen what his god and his religion were. In the process of constructing answers to these queries, however, we

have at the same time formulated for this chapter an answer to the fourth question that was put to Empedocles in the third chapter, i.e., whether or not man can achieve what Heraclitus proposes. We have seen that he can, albeit with difficulty. For that matter, we have also found for this chapter an answer to the final question that could be asked, i.e., the question as to why all this is possible. For, as we have seen, the whole enterprise is possible because of the close relationship (whether of identity or of something else) that pertains between cosmic-Logos and soul-Logos.

It is therefore time to summarize once more, to re-pose these questions and provide brief answers to them. As in Chapter Three, I shall distinguish those answers which have definite textual support from those which are inferential.

What, then, did Heraclitus think of the Olympian gods? Very little (textual); praying to them is about as effective as holding a conversation with a house (textual). Furthermore, most of the rites used to honor the gods are shameful or worse (textual). Worse yet, their cult is useless, for they did not make the cosmos (textual), nor do they run it (inferential), and hence the basic purpose of religion is something that the gods cannot fulfill (inferential). The Olympian gods seem to differ very little from the men whose gods they are (textual). Nevertheless, the Delphic oracle and its associated ceremonies are not without some merit (textual), perhaps because of their stress on the intellectual (inferential).

Next: if the gods and current religion are, for the most part, a waste of time or worse, then what of divinity and religion in

general? Heraclitus does have a "god" of some sort; he has a definite conception of the divine (textual). The divine, whatever be its nature, does surpass the human (textual). Furthermore, man does have some obligations toward the divine, at least the obligation of knowledge (textual and inferential).

Thirdly: granted that there is some sort of divine and some sort of religion, in what do both consist? Heraclitus' "god" is, essentially, a tension of opposites (textual), which possesses an understanding (textual) which surpasses the human type of understanding (textual). In the divinity, all the paradoxes which man perceives in a conception of divinity are resolved (textual); this divinity is a model for man (textual); the divine law controls everything (textual). Wisdom is located on the level of the divine (textual). From the level of the divine comes the $\mu\epsilon\tau\rho\nu$ which controls the fiery Urstoff (inferential). On the level of the divine, all is justice, beauty, and goodness (textual). Of man's duties toward this divine Logos, Heraclitus places primacy on effort toward understanding the Logos (textual), and on man's attempting to follow that Logos (textual). This involves a denial of sense pleasure (textual), which would hinder the soul from its upward path to the status of the fiery (textual and inferential); consequent upon this is the need for modification in man's activities in such wise that the intellectual level retains unhindered primacy (textual and inferential). Man attains to a knowledge of the Logos that directs the universe through hard work (textual), principally by attentive listening (textual); this knowledge of the Logos is wisdom (textual), which is one (textual).

Wisdom, however, leads man to act according to nature and to pay heed thereto (textual), which means, in the practical order, doing all that he can to help his soul on its progress to fiery status (inferential). The man who attains wisdom achieves fame in this present life (textual), and after death attains to some sort of reward (textual).

Fourth: can man do this? Yes, though it is not easy (textual). If he succeeds, he attains not only to an intellectual knowledge of how the cosmos works but to a certain measure of control, not indeed of the universe (textual), but at least of his own personal destiny as an element in that universe.

Finally: why is this possible? The control over one's own destiny is possible because the Logos that governs man's individual soul has the same function vis-à-vis individual soul that the over-all Logos has for the entire cosmos (textual), because the soul-Logos has an extremely close relationship with the cosmic-Logos (textual), and because the soul-Logos may well be identical with the cosmic-Logos (inferential). Hence, by following the soul-Logos, as either closely associated with or identified with the cosmic-Logos, man has control over his own destiny to the extent that he becomes a willing co-operator with that Logos (inferential).

So much for the summary. The big questions remain: is all this a product of dissatisfaction with the Olympian gods, and is it at root an ethical system?

To take the latter question first, there seems little question about the ethical character of the system. Whenever Heraclitus speaks of man, it is practically always with reference to something that man ought to do, or else to chastise him for doing something that he ought

not do. It is clearly a program of life that he is proposing.

Furthermore, I think that Heraclitus' thought was a product of dissatisfaction with the Olympian scheme of things. That he was dissatisfied with the Olympians is clear enough; his remarks on sacrifices, on prayers to the gods (or, more exactly, to their statues), and his stinging comments on the Dionysiac rites leave no doubt on that score. But we should notice why he is dissatisfied with them. It comes through quite clearly in the fragments that we have examined that his dissatisfaction is rooted in the fact that the Olympians do not control the universe, that they have no say in its direction. In a word, they do not control the universe, and therefore are useless and ought to be dismissed with a certain contempt. Nevertheless, not all the Olympians are so treated; the Delphic oracle retains honor, and that fact is consistent enough if one reflects on the intellectualistic character of that oracle. For Heraclitus thinks that control of the universe--to the extent that this is possible at all--comes through intellectualistic means: man, freely striving to understand the Logos that is behind the fiery Urstoff, also freely strives to attune himself to it, and thereby to control his own fate. Heraclitus does not, to be sure, propose the idea that man can control the entire universe; this will be the great contribution of Empedocles, as we have seen in the last chapter. But he does propose that man can govern his own lot--which, in the last analysis, was what the Greek religion was trying to do.

And thus we come to the end of this study of Heraclitus. In doing so, we also come to the end of the substantive part of this

dissertation, for the task that this study set itself has been accomplished. The final chapter can therefore devote itself to a summary of what has been seen, a preview of further work that could be done, and some reflections on the significance of both.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

- ¹ Burnet, op.cit., p. 130.
- ² Ibid.; Burnet's reference to "Fragment 16" refers to the Bywater arrangement of the fragments.
- ³ Ibid.; cf. also Freeman, op.cit., p. 104.
- ⁴ D, 12A1, par. 3.
- ⁵ Freeman, op.cit., pp. 104ff.
- ⁶ Burnet, op.cit., p. 131n4 and p. 137; Burnet's translation; Bywater arrangement and numbering of the fragments throughout the entire quote.
- ⁷ D, A1, par. 3.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ D, A1, par. 5.
- ¹⁰ D, A3b and A9.
- ¹¹ Freeman, op.cit., pp. 105f.
- ¹² D, A4. Translations throughout the chapter are the work of the author, unless the contrary is expressly indicated.
- ¹³ Burnet, op.cit., p. 132. For another view, cf. Freeman, op.cit., pp. 106f; for a somewhat more sanguine (if somewhat more glib) account of this and other res Heraclitiae, cf. Bréhier, op.cit., I, 48ff.
- ¹⁴ Bréhier disagrees; op.cit., I, 48.
- ¹⁵ Freeman, op.cit., p. 106.
- ¹⁶ D, pp. 61ff.
- ¹⁷ Burnet, op.cit., p. 132n5. Freeman disagrees: op.cit., p. 108n1.
- ¹⁸ D, B80.

¹⁹D, B49a; cf. also D, B12.

²⁰D, B88.

²¹Ibid.

²²D, B30.

²³Ibid.

²⁴D, B31.

²⁵D, B64.

²⁶D, B90.

²⁷D, B66.

²⁸D, A1, par. 10.

²⁹D, B100.

³⁰Diogenes Laertius, quoted in and translated by Burnet, l.c., p. 147.

³¹D, B60.

³²Cf. the discussion on this point in Burnet, l.c., pp. 158ff.

³³Ibid., p. 145.

³⁴Freeman, l.c., p. 115.

³⁵D, B30.

³⁶D, B41.

³⁷D, B2.

³⁸D, B1.

³⁹D, B50.

⁴⁰D, B80

⁴¹D, B1.

⁴²D, B2.

⁴³D, B50.

⁴⁴Freeman, l.c., pp. 116f. Chapter Three of this present study

makes it clear that I would take issue with Freeman on the material nature of Love and Hate in Empedocles.

⁴⁵D, B31.

⁴⁶Kirk and Raven, op.cit., p. 201.

⁴⁷Freeman, op.cit., p. 115.

⁴⁸D. A1, par. 7; A8; cf. also B51 and B8.

⁴⁹D, B12; cf. also B36.

⁵⁰D, B36.

⁵¹D, B77.

⁵²D, B118.

⁵³D, B45.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵D, B115.

⁵⁶D, B98.

⁵⁷D, B63.

⁵⁸D, B118.

⁵⁹D, B27.

⁶⁰D, B24.

⁶¹D, B25.

⁶²D, B96.

⁶³D, B5.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵D, B14.

⁶⁶D, B15. The translation makes no attempt to reproduce the Greek pun on αἰδοφόισιν and 'Αἶδης.

⁶⁷D, B30.

⁶⁸D, B40.

⁶⁹D, B42.

⁷⁰D, B56 and B106, inter alia.

⁷¹D, B62.

⁷²D, B53.

⁷³D, B92.

⁷⁴D, B93.

⁷⁵Cf. C. M. Bowra, The Greek Experience (New York: World Publishing Company, 1957), pp. 60f.

⁷⁶D, B67.

⁷⁷D, B78.

⁷⁸D, B79; cf. also B83.

⁷⁹D, B86.

⁸⁰D, B102.

⁸¹D, B114.

⁸²D, B2.

⁸³D, B41.

⁸⁴D, B78.

⁸⁵D, B32.

⁸⁶D, B30.

⁸⁷D, B64.

⁸⁸Freeman, op.cit., pp. 116f.

⁸⁹Cf. supra, p. 161.

⁹⁰D, B8.

⁹¹D, B51.

⁹²D, B102.

⁹³Copleston, op.cit., I, 43.

⁹⁴D, B1.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ D, B34.

⁹⁷ D, B2.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ D, B17.

¹⁰⁰ D, B77.

¹⁰¹ Cf. supra, p. 155.

¹⁰² D, B96.

¹⁰³ D, B117; the obvious physical pun of "drink = wet" is hardly what is intended here.

¹⁰⁴ D, B77.

¹⁰⁵ D, B119.

¹⁰⁶ D, B116.

¹⁰⁷ D, B41.

¹⁰⁸ D, B35.

¹⁰⁹ D, B50.

¹¹⁰ D, B89.

¹¹¹ D, B47.

¹¹² D, B112.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ D, B101.

¹¹⁵ D, B107.

¹¹⁶ Cf. supra, pp. 159f.

¹¹⁷ D, B29.

¹¹⁸ D, B27.

¹¹⁹ D, B114.

¹²⁰ D, B115.

¹²¹ D, B45.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, PROSPECTS, AND SIGNIFICANCE

"Quo res summa loco, Panthu? Quam prendimus arcem?"

--Vergil, Aeneid, II, 322.

Summary

Few scholars deny that philosophy got its start in the West with the Greeks. To the question of why the Greeks did what they did in this area, however, answers diverge widely. Chapter One attempted a brief sampling of some of these answers. Bréhier, somewhat extra chorum canens, denies the Greek origin of philosophy, and makes their contribution rather a development of Mesopotamian and Egyptian thought; the sole reason for beginning the study of philosophical development with the Greeks is a pragmatic one: the sources are available among the Greeks, whereas they are not in the case of the earlier civilizations. Windelband admits the Greek origins of philosophy, and places the responsibility for these on the dawning consciousness of the early Greek as an individual. This development in turn was due to a number of quasi-sociological factors (economic, political, intellectual), and manifested itself in a number of spheres (ethical, religious, intellectual), of which philosophy was but one. Zeller has a simpler suggestion: the Greek achievement was due to the peculiar

Greek temperament, particularly to the "Apolline clarity of the Greek mind," with its highly rationalistic approach to the world in general. Zeller too, however, takes note of the phenomenon of the development of the individual's consciousness of himself as individual, as opposed to a moment in a collective "herd consciousness." He further comments on the role of the Dionysiac religious rites as a catalyst, forcing the Greeks to forge out intellectual answers to questions of life and death so as to supply for the inadequacies of traditional answers to these questions.

Guthrie, however, sees the cause of the rise of philosophy to lie in the growing scientific conviction that the cosmos conceals an underlying order, which latter can be uncovered and mastered. Such a shift in viewpoint was occasioned by the increased growth and leisure which the Greek city-states enjoyed, an economic fact that left little sympathy for the view that the gods controlled all. Added to this somewhat materialistic outlook were the innate Greek curiosity and their peculiar ability to engage in abstract thought. Copleston remarks that the crucial factor was the absence of any sort of religious orthodoxy that might have hindered the free exercise of thought on religious matters, to say nothing of the general inadequacy of the Greek religion.

Cornford thinks that philosophy succeeded religion, indeed, but furthermore that religion itself had been a sort of interloper, usurping the primitive conviction of order in the universe--a conviction itself simply the projection, onto the full scale of the cosmos, of early tribal boundary assignments. And finally, Burnet thinks that

philosophy emerged as the victor in a primitive version of the science-vs.-religion debate: a breakdown occurred in the scientific view of the world that had held sway since ancient times, and this led to the search for a new scientific view--a quest that spilled over into quite other areas as well.

Chapter One, therefore, has demonstrated clearly enough that there is little agreement among scholars as to the real reason for the rise of the Greeks as philosophy's progenitors. It has also indicated that perhaps one would be misadvised to seek for a single cause of that rise; it could well be that we are dealing with a complex phenomenon that is the result of very many factors indeed.

Nevertheless, it is the author's conviction that one factor in particular had an importance that was significant in the extreme. The failure on the part of the Greek religion to provide man with a workable, coherent set of answers to questions which every man, Greek or not, must inevitably ask himself--questions regarding his own status in the universe, his eventual destiny and how he is to set about pursuing that destiny, and others--this failure, it seems to me, forced the admittedly rationalistic Greeks to turn to other sources for answers. In a word, Greek religion had failed, and was therefore replaced.

However, to say that Greek religion had failed is one thing, and to explain in what that failure consisted is quite another. The latter requires a reasonably adequate grasp of just what is meant by the term "Greek religion." Chapter Two undertook this exposition. However, the reservation was made immediately that there would be

question, in this chapter, only of the Olympian religion, as opposed to the mysteries. The reservation is unabashedly pragmatic: the attempt to explore the mystery religions would take far more time and space than their importance would warrant, in view of their complexity and their relatively small number of adherents among the Greeks. And thus, without denying the importance of the mysteries, Chapter Two put them to one side for investigation at some future date--with, however, the candid admission that a perfectly thorough performance of the task at hand would, indeed, require their consideration.

Chapter Two contained some five sections: (1) Who were the gods? This question is answered in part by a series of tables, constructed by the author, based mostly on Hesiod's Theogony. In the tables, an attempt is made to state, not only the names of the gods in the pantheon, but also their parentage. Yet, even when the tables are considered, there remain other divinities, heroes, daimones, and domestic heroes, to be taken into account.

(2) Where did the gods come from? This question can be read in one of two senses, either as an inquiry about the geographic origins of the various divinities (which gods came with which peoples from which countries), or as an inquiry into what might be called the psychological origins of the gods (where the gods came from in the consciousness of man). A table attempted to summarize the answer to the former notion, showing the amalgamated pantheon. As for the latter inquiry, the theory of Nilsson suggested that at root the gods came into being as an instrument whereby man could control, to some degree, the universe around him. The primitive ideas of animism,

dynamism, and magic were explored, and their passage into the idea of divinity indicated. In general, Nilsson opts for the idea that the needs of man created the gods, and that beginning with the gods of nature, man rises to those which form an expression of the higher functions of his life.

(3) Where did the gods go? It is a disturbing fact that the gods that one meets in Homer, for example, are a far cry from the mana-become-daimones (et al)-become gods. There is little awe, little respect in how Homer writes of the gods, and we wonder what has happened. The answer lies in the fact that the gods have taken on the status of glorified human beings, with appropriately magnified virtues but, unfortunately, appropriately magnified vices as well. The gods have become anthropomorphic, and the results are disastrous. One reason for this is that the gods have come to be viewed after the model of the Achaian nobles; the invaders, it seems, brought not only their own gods but their mode of conceiving the gods. However, there is something else here as well. In Homer, we have passed from cult to poetry, which means that the gods have now been juxtaposed and compared with one another. Again, the consequences are dramatic, for the divine society is also conceived along anthropomorphic lines. However much Hesiod and others may try to perform a re-dignifying process on the gods, the decisive issue has been raised: given the fact that the gods are now on the social plane, what of their social relationships with one another--in particular, what of justice on the divine level? Moreover, once the gods are juxtaposed, insuperable difficulties present themselves when each of the divinities, or at least the major

divinities, is endowed with omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence; here polytheism encounters problems that monotheism, by the very nature of the case, does not.

(4) What did the gods demand of man? In other words, in what did Greek religion consist? The Greek "ecclesiastical calendar" gives the answer. The lion's share of it was sacrificial: the gods demanded recognition, as a condition for their active benevolence in man's regard. The gods also demanded justice on the part of men. And they demanded both of these on a long-term, lifelong basis. Given failure in either of these, the gods demanded expiation on the part of man.

(5) What did men demand of the gods? In a word, men demanded that the gods should "practice what they preached" in the matter of justice: if men did what they were supposed to, then the gods ought to reward men accordingly; conversely, if men engaged in wrongdoing, then punishment ought to be in order. But herein lay the seeds of the gods' own destruction. What happened when men did what they were supposed to, and nevertheless good men were not rewarded, did not prosper, and evil men were not punished, did prosper? One of two things must happen: either the doctrine of the gods will be totally rejected, or the somewhat simplistic doctrine of justice's producing prosperity (and the reverse) will be modified. The latter course seems to have been followed at first: the just man suffers for the transgressions of his ancestors, or the just man is vindicated after death, or something of the sort. But this type of solution can survive only so long, and then the grim alternate presents itself.

Furthermore, the gods were inconsistent: men found themselves wondering why a given act could be unjust for a man, but just for a god. The gods seem to operate on a double standard; but if that is the case, justice becomes an irrational and somewhat arbitrary sort of thing. Once again, one of two things must happen: either the stories of the gods' injustices must be purged as being lying fabrications of men, or else the divine duplicity becomes a festering, unresolved problem. Then there is the problem of the gods' proving incapable of fulfilling their functions--as, for example, when a city that a god was supposed to protect succumbed to attack. Credulity begins to be strained at this, particularly when instances of such happenings multiply.

In brief, Chapter Two indicated, among other things, that Greek religion was an authoritarian one, wherein certain things were to be done because the gods said so. By way of enforcing this, certain threats (of Nemesis and of lesser ills) were made. But these threats had corollaries, and those corollaries were capable of being empirically tested. Bluntly, the gods failed the test, and that on a number of scores. This, in turn, laid their basic premise of supremacy open to objection because of serious internal contradictions: the gods were not just in a commutative sense, and they were not subject to retributive justice. Attempts to rectify the situation proved futile, and the Greeks were faced with the question of where to turn next. Some sought the mystery religions, but others sought what was later to be called philosophy: the speculative mode of thought replaced the authoritarian one.

Chapters One and Two formed a very long but, I think, very necessary introduction to the work that is proper to this dissertation. I have no intention of proving in these pages the thesis that the failure of Greek religion was the (or even a) decisive factor in the development of Greek philosophy, simply so taken. I do, indeed, believe this. But to establish it would take volumes, for it would require a careful examination of all of the fragments of all of the pre-Socratic philosophers of any significance. This, I fear, would be considerably more than ought to be attempted in any doctoral dissertation, even if it were completely possible--which, owing to the paucity of extant fragments of many of the pre-Socratics, it is not. No; the dissertation proper aims at a much more limited objective: it attempts to show that in the case of two of the pre-Socratics, it is demonstrable that their work can be viewed as ethical (rather than primarily scientific) in tenor, and that it comes about as at least a partial result of dissatisfaction with the Olympian religion.

With this in mind, Chapter Three focuses on Empedocles. After two preliminary sections on his life/works and on a general exposition of significant portions of his thought, the chapter poses five questions to the Empedoclean fragments: (1) What did Empedocles think of the Olympian gods? Very little; themselves formed of the four elements, they are simply a part of the cosmic process, and have no directive role in it. They are not to be worshipped, since they do not and cannot perform this directive role. The cosmic process is rather governed by the action of Love and Hate, both of which are envisioned as superior in status to the gods. Indeed, man himself can

become a god. (2) If the Olympian gods are false, what of gods and religion in general? Empedocles has a god, which, however, is not anthropomorphic and has no need of traditional worship. His god is mind. But it is also the sphere of Empedocles' cosmological scheme. That there is such a thing as religion, the transmigration doctrine makes clear. (3) In what does religion consist? It consists, at root, in Empedocles' philosophy: a deification of man, consisting basically in love. (4) Is man capable of the end that Empedocles sets before him? Yes, although not without difficulty. But success in this means control over the forces of change in the universe. (5) What makes this possible? The fact that the Love and Hate which direct the universe are not impersonal forces, but rather are man's own love and hate. The control of the cosmos is therefore within man's capability.

These five questions asked and answered, there remain two others: (a) Is Empedocles' system basically an ethical one? Clearly, yes. It is a program of life, an exposition of how man ought to live. (b) Is the system a result of dissatisfaction with the Olympian gods? Once again, yes. It will be recalled that the precise reason why the traditional gods were rejected was that they do not control the universe, and therefore could not achieve the purpose for which they had arisen in the first place. Empedocles' system is, simply put, a replacement for this. It offers man a way wherein he can, indeed, control the universe.

Chapter Four operates in parallel fashion to Chapter Three. After initial sections on the life/works of Heraclitus and on a

general exposition of his system, similar questions are put to the Heraclitean fragments: (1) What did he think of the Olympian gods? Very little. Prayer to them is useless; their rites are shameful or worse. Furthermore, their cult is useless, since they did not make the universe and do not control it. They also differ very little from the men whose gods they are. Still, there is some merit in the Delphic oracle, possibly because of its intellectualistic tenor. (2) What, then, of gods and religion in general? Heraclitus does have a definite conception of the divine which, whatever its nature, surpasses the human. Man has some obligations toward the divine. (3) In what do Heraclitus' "god" and his religion consist? His "god" is a tension of opposites, possessing an understanding that surpasses the human. In this tension of opposites, all paradoxes are resolved. The divine, a model for man, controls everything; on the level of the divine is located wisdom. From the level of the divine issues the metron which controls the fiery Urstoff. The divine is the region of justice, beauty, and goodness. As for religion, this consists mostly in an attempt at understanding the Logos and in attempting to follow that Logos. This involves a singleminded sort of effort wherein everything that could distract from the central aim must be eliminated; the intellectual level must have unchallenged primacy. Man comes to a knowledge of the Logos through hard work, particularly by attentive listening. But this knowledge of the Logos is unitary wisdom, and wisdom leads man to act according to nature and to pay heed thereto--meaning, on the practical level, that man must do all he can to help his soul progress to fiery status. (4) Is this possible?

Yes, although with difficulty. If successful in this, man achieves some sort of control, not of the cosmos, but of his own personal destiny. (5) Why is this possible? This control is possible because the Logos that governs man's individual soul has the same function as the cosmic-Logos and has a close relationship--possibly one of identity--thereto. Hence by controlling the one he controls (in the sense explained) the other.

And once again, the questions asked and answered, there remain: (a) Is Heraclitus' system an ethical one? Of this there seems little doubt. (b) Is the system a product of dissatisfaction with the Olympian scheme of things? I would argue that it is, simply because of the fact that it, like Empedocles' system, is an attempt at securing some sort of control over the events of man's existence--a control that Heraclitus avers is impossible to the gods. Yet intellectualistic religion, even traditional religion (the Delphic oracle) retains honor.

Future Prospects

Were this project to be extended beyond its present limits, to which other pre-Socratic philosophers ought it address itself? Ideally, of course, to all of them. However, like most ideals, this is impossible for a number of reasons. The fact that the project consists, essentially, in textual examination rules out the vast majority of potential subjects; there are very few of the early Greeks of whose writings we possess enough to make such a study possible. And even among these few, there are even fewer of whom it can be said with

anything like certainty that the writings we possess are indeed theirs. The field is, to say the very least, quite limited.

Nevertheless, there are some of the pre-Socratics that would be fit subjects for a continuation of this dissertation. Among these I would single out two whom I would be inclined to take next: Parmenides and Anaxagoras.

The reader is aware that, in the argument of this paper, both Empedocles and Heraclitus opted for some sort of control of the universe on the part of man. Empedocles' idea was that man could control the cosmos by means of his own personal love and hatred; Heraclitus', that man could control his own destiny, to some extent, by intellectualistic means. Now, the floruit dates of Parmenides and Anaxagoras occur, chronologically, in between those of Empedocles and Heraclitus; and it would be fascinating to see whether or not Parmenides and Anaxagoras could legitimately be viewed as stemming from Heraclitus and leading to Empedocles. For if the intermediate two could be shown to have as a prime concern man's control over the universe, in one sense or other, then some highly significant results might emerge. If one considers Parmenides' heavy stress on the "Way of Truth"--which, whatever be said of the "Way of Opinion," was certainly intellectualistic enough--and Anaxagoras' doctrine of Nous, and if he weds these with the notion of control, the following sequence emerges: Heraclitus, partial control (i.e., control of personal destiny) through intellectualistic means; Parmenides, control (to what extent?) by intellectualistic means; Anaxagoras, control (again, to what extent?) by Nous; Empedocles, complete control by means of voluntary exercise

of love and hate--i.e., by intellectualistic means plus other factors.

Obviously, some careful textual work would have to be done to determine whether or not the notion of control can be found in Parmenides and Anaxagoras; this would be the primary task of any extension of this study. It might be that such a motif either is not present in their writings, or at least could not be demonstrated as being present. The latter, I suspect, would be the more likely peril, insofar as the notion of control is present both before and after their time. In any event, given a demonstrable notion of control in the writings of the two men, one would then have to determine the extent to which each envisions control possible. Finally, it would be necessary to explore just what Parmenides meant by the "Way of Truth" and what Anaxagoras meant by Nous, and to determine precisely how each operates and how it is related both to man's intellect and to the universe that is to be controlled.

Parmenides and Anaxagoras, therefore, would be the next figures whom I would logically treat, were I to extend this dissertation. Nevertheless, an examination of their works would not be the item that I would be most interested in doing. Rather, were I to have my own way, I should like to go backward in time, to the period before Heraclitus, and ascertain at what exact point the notion of control of the universe entered the stream of philosophic thought. Is it, indeed, with Heraclitus himself that it does so? Or is it earlier? Could one even succeed in pin-pointing the first philosopher who broached the idea? These are the questions that most interest me, and to these I should love to turn my attention. But I cannot; the

textual evidence required for such an investigation is utterly lacking.

And thus, since my real interest cannot be managed, I suspect that I would prefer to aim my studies in the other direction. Since I cannot learn where the notion of control came from, it would be of almost equal interest to investigate where it went. And with that in mind, I should think that the next phase of interest to me would be an investigation of the period after Empedocles. I do not, however, mean the era of Plato and Aristotle; this has been well studied by many scholars, and I do not think that I could add very much of significance to what they have done. Nor do I refer to the post-Aristotelian period, wherein the activities of Alexander the Great brought philosophy to some rather dark days. I mean, rather, the patristic period: the first three or four centuries of the present era. Here, it seems to me, the root question that urged on the Greeks arises once more; and I should like to follow its wanderings on this terrain.

It is not immediately evident, however, that the great figures of the patristic era were concerned with the same questions that exercised the Greeks; and thus perhaps it is time, by way of a finale to this paper, to make some remarks as to the significance of the Greek enterprise as represented in the work of Empedocles and Heraclitus.

Significance

Let us go back just a little. I have argued that man's control of the universe, or of his own destiny in that universe, is a major motif in the writings of two of the pre-Socratic philosophers. And I

have suggested that the universe's control passed from the hands of the gods to those of men themselves, for a number of reasons. I have not, however, posed the question of why man seeks control over the universe. In one sense, perhaps the "why" question is otiose; man is not, after all, a disinterested spectator in the events that take place in the cosmos. They concern him, and concern him deeply. Somewhere in the vast corpus Augustinianum--and I regret that I cannot say exactly where--there is a comment to the effect that no one engages in philosophy "nisi ut beatus sit"; it is man's happiness and his own future that are at stake here.

Yet in another sense, the "why" question is anything but an obviosity: why is it that man felt the necessity for assuming control over the universe himself? Why, at root, were the gods rejected?

I have suggested that the Olympian gods were rejected for a number of reasons, among which were internal inconsistencies. As I phrased it in the body of this dissertation, the authoritarian mode of thought (that of the Greek religion) was rejected and the rational mode adopted in its place--for the good reason that the two came into conflict. Given contradictions such as those spawned by Greek religious authoritarianism, there could have been no other outcome.

Yet the issue is not thereby settled by the results of a single case. The question will rear its head over and over again in subsequent philosophical thought: what is the relationship between the authoritative and the rational modes of thought? Can they be reconciled? Ought they be? These are momentous questions, questions that have sparked many a heated debate--one of the most notable of which,

it should be noted once again, was the Arian controversy. This latter was at root a debate as to whether the rational dare invade the realm of the authoritarian: ought one allow a non-authoritarian concept like the homooousion into the same lists with authoritarian Scripture? The same question is at the base of numerous other philosophical oddities, like the doctrine of the "double truth" that so vexed the Medievals. And, be it said, the question is still at work in the philosophical milieu of the present day, wherein the relationship of philosophy with authority is anything but clear. In our day, the question is more nearly the reverse of the Arian one: ought one allow the authoritarian mode into the same lists with the rational one?

Not only are the questions momentous; the alternative answers are more so. Suppose one opts for the solution that the two modes of thought are not reconcilable. The inevitable consequences are either the rejection of a whole area of thought, or else a sort of intellectual schizophrenia wherein one has his philosophy in one compartment, his religion in another, and perhaps a number of other areas in still other compartments. If on the other hand one permits the reconciliation of the two, then what happens to the autonomy of either--or both?

Yet something even deeper is at stake here. Whatever be said of the schizophrenic philosopher mentioned in the last paragraph, can truth itself really be parcelled up in this fashion? Or is there such a thing as truth? Has philosophy, in its long history, really ever answered the Socratic demand for an unchanging, eternal truth whereon one can ground his ethic--or, indeed, ground anything at all? Or

ought man even be able (or expected) to strive for a unity in his intellectual life?

These too are questions, of the answers of which man is not a detached observer. He cannot refuse, in the practical order, to take a stand on them. The Greeks, as we have seen, took such a stand. The significance of this dissertation, it seems to me, could be summed up in a single question: were they definitively right in the choice they made, and in the reasons for which they made it?

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