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## THE ADVENT OF THE CONCEPT OF BEING

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Out of Primordial Being has grown a consciousness of Being which may be called Conceptual Being. Conceptual Being attempts to unify the three aspects of Being in order to get at Pure Being itself beyond the veridical, predicative, and existential. It attempts to abstract Being from its preconscious sources in languages and describe the universal principle to which all the uses of the linguistic term point. In this conceptualization or idealization process the inner differentiation of Primordial Being is lost, and the symbolic or generalized other is substituted. An umbrella concept under which all specific beings are subsumed is created. It is, by definition, the most general concept lacking all features and characteristics and traits because it applies to everything. In applying to everything, it, in turn, becomes the most empty concept. The key difference becomes the distinction between Being and Non-Being, rather than the internal differentiation of Being itself.

The Anaximander fragment is considered the oldest

textual fragment of Western thinking. Heidegger has studied this fragment in his series of essays on Early Greek Thinking. He translates the fragment in the following way.

But that from which things arise also gives rise to their passing away, according to what is necessary; for things render justice and pay penalty to one another for their injustice, according to the ordinance of time.<sup>1</sup>

This fragment is what we have left of the first signs of the emergence of Conceptual Being from Primordial Being. It is probable, not the first conceptualization of Being, but it is the only trace we have of that first conceptualization. As such, the fragment is like the primal scene, only here instead of a mythic image we have a statement, a text which calls for interpretation. Heidegger leads us back to rethink this first statement of the conceptualization of Being. He, of course, sees in it a reflection of his own thought. Thus, we see him twist the fragment to his own use in order to give his thoughts about Being a historical precedent at the beginning of metaphysics. Yet, Heidegger thus leads us back into an arena of thought where we can think for ourselves, taking his example for what genuine deep thought is really like. So let us side-step Heidegger's own interpretation and attempt to look

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1. EARLY GREEK THINKING; Heidegger; p20

at this first statement of conceptualization of Being in the light of what has gone before in our elucidation of deep temporality and Primordial Being.

The first question that arises is what is the “That” from which things arise which also gives rise to their passing away. The unequivocal answer must be the single source. All things that arise are totally controlled and predetermined by a single cause which determines their entire lifecycle in existence. The unity of arising and perishing flow from this single source of causation. This arising and perishing occurs according to what is “necessary.” We have already seen the key role played by necessity in the Primal Scene. Necessity, completion and becoming are the fates. Completion is the apex of arising before perishing occurs. The realm of arising and perishing is truly the arena of becoming. The pinnacle of arising is the point of completion. Necessity is the order or meaning which is seen in that which completes. Necessity is fate itself as we humans understand it. It is what must have been fore-destined from the beginning which we did not know until completion occurred. Once completion occurs, we see the pattern in what has completed as the teleology of the historical sequence of events that has, in fact, unfolded. The single source is the origin of both perishing and arising, and in that necessity becomes manifest. The first clause under this

interpretation has a clear meaning.

The second clause is, however, more obscure. The interpretation is helped by the fact that the second clause is parallel to the first. Anaximander is paying attention to the things which have arisen. These things pay for their injustices to each other according to the ordinance of time. This suggests that at the point of completion injustice may occur between things which have arisen. These injustices will be paid back in the order of time. This might be taken to mean that the single source allots each being its due; but that the being might not receive its due in-time. However, before that being returns to its source, restitution will be paid by all beings that did not give a particular being its due. This implies that the single source legislates justice which though it may not occur in-time, occurs ultimately. In this way seeing imperfection of the world is balanced by the perfecting of things by the single source. Completion in-time may result in injustice, but completion in endless time will make up for those injustices before the being returns to its source.

This is manifestly a view of wholeness. Wholeness is inherent and embedded in things. Everything achieves wholeness ultimately. But in-time wholeness may be denied by other beings. Those other beings will pay back

what they withheld of wholeness from all other beings. So wholeness will be achieved before any being returns to its single source. But what of the withholders of wholeness in this scenario? They themselves will achieve wholeness, but by giving up as a penalty what they had no right to take because it exceeded their measure. They must do justice ultimately to all other beings and be reduced to a wholeness not prescribed by themselves but determined by the single source. This retribution in the next world of endlesstime for acts done here in-time is a familiar concept in various religions. In the Islamic faith it is a stark and awesome picture indeed. The fact that Anaxamander's fragment can be read in this light as not talking directly about Being is of interest because it points back to the readings of the Primal Scene of deep temporality and Primordial Being as essentially saying the same concerning the omnipresence of the single source as a well spring beyond these mythic images. Here we see that the first statement that is supposed to conceptualize Being may be read in a similar fashion. This places the interpretation of Heidegger for whom the ultimate concept is Being in a new light. For Heidegger, as for Nietzsche, before him the "That" is Being itself giving rise to its own completion, ie. as self-grounding transcendence. The single source is from our current perspective beyond Being as what determines everything that arises and perishes. Being signifies what has arisen

when the now point coincides with the point of completion. Being is the epitome of arising, but it does not itself determine arising and perishing. Conceptual Being is the abstraction of that epitome of “completion now.” It is an umbrella concept for everything “completed now.” As such, it covers over the injustices of beings to each other with an artificial unity. This covering over of injustices can be seen as the summary of all injustices. Injustice can be seen as the difference between completed beings and incompleted beings at a given now point. The completed beings rule over those that are incomplete until they lose their completion and then their power is usurped by the now newly completed beings which, in turn, exploit those past their prime and those prior to completion. This injustice between beings can be taken as a pointer to the difference between completion and incompleteness or past completion. This is the difference between Being and Becoming. Being is only the pinnacle of arising before perishing. When this pinnacle is abstracted and made the measure of all reality, then the great injustice is done that legitimates the injustices of the completed things against whatever is incomplete. Conceptual Being, in this line of thought, is the covering over of all injustices which is the greatest injustice. This makes the establishment of Conceptual Being an original defect which at one stroke hides Primordial Being and does injustice to all incompleted

beings. Becoming is degraded and suppressed by “completion now.” It is an attempt to hold on to the completion within time instead of realizing that real completion, which is for keeps, only occurs in endlesstime. Attempting to hold on to completion in time in the face of becoming is futile. It leads to injustice to beings not yet complete, or past completion. One can only attempt to stop at the point of completion by stealing from other beings what they need to complete. Those beings that do this will have to pay the penalty in the next world, ie. endlesstime, by doing justice to all those beings that were slighted or stolen from in order to maintain the illusion of completion past the apex.

This interpretation of Anaximander’s fragment may seem hasty. We are imposing the pattern discovered in the Primal Scene of deep temporality and seen reflected in the deep structure of Primordial Being onto this fragment taken out of context. We are assuming that this remnant of the first arising of Conceptual Being, now thought as injustice, would attempt to discern the inner core or pattern of deep time or Primordial Being. This inner core was seen clearly in the emergent event by which Conceptual Being as “completion now” separated from Primordial Being. The inner core is the operation of the single source from which all Beings arise and return which, as a side effect, defines the pinnacle of arising

which is reified as Conceptual Being. Whether this interpretation may stand as against those such as Heidegger's that sees this primal event as the unfolding of self-grounding transcendence, must be based upon further analysis of what is known of Anaximander's thought. Fortunately, two excellent studies of his thought exist: The Apeiron Of Anaximander by Paul Segliman and Anaximander And The Origins Of Greek Cosmology by Charles H. Kahn. Using these studies as our scholarly basis, let us attempt to delve further into the emergent event of metaphysics in order to see if we might find some more evidence that our hasty interpretation of Anaximander's fragment is well founded or not.

Anaximander is a key figure in the emergence of the Western philosophical and scientific tradition. He was the first philosopher of whom any remnant survives, and he was the first physicist. He was the first Greek to write in prose, and the first to make a world map. His is the first physical theory of the earth and its place in the universe. His is the first metaphysical philosophy. All these firsts combine to usher in a new gestalt for the way mankind constructs reality. The previous gestalt was mytho-poetic. Men wrote in poetry and praised the Gods whose myths they retold. With the advent of Anaximander and the other Milesians, Thales and Anaximenes, this gestalt of the mythopoetic worldview



was broken and replaced by the metaphysical-physical worldview in which we are still immersed today. We can see this emergent event as inaugurating a kind of epoch which is more basic than Heidegger's epochs of Conceptual Being, or Foucault's epistemes, or Kuhn's paradigm shifts. All of these gradations of intervals occur within the meta/physical epoch which arose from the mythopoetic epoch. If we wish to study emergent events, then the most fundamental emergent event must be this one which conditions all others within the meta/physical epoch. Thus, it is worth dwelling on the contribution of Anaximander in order to see as clearly as possible what shape the advent of metaphysics gave our worldview as Primordial Being transformed into Conceptual Being.

The Greeks attributed the invention of philosophy and physics to Thales, who is said to be Anaxamander's teacher. However, no fragment from Thales has been preserved. All we know of him is that ...

His doctrine was that water is the universal primary substance, and that the world is animate and full of divinities.<sup>2</sup>

Nietzsche's commentary on this is as follows:

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2. THE ORIGINS OF PHILOSOPHY; D.A. Hyland p 112

Greek philosophy seems to begin with an absurd notion, with the proposition that WATER is the primal origin and womb of all things. Is it really necessary for us to take serious notice of this proposition? It is, and for three reasons. First, because it tells something about the primal origin of all things; second, because it does so in language devoid of image or fable, and finally, because contained in it, if only embryonically, is the thought, 'All things are one.'<sup>3</sup>

Nietzsche, here at least, attempts to point out how Thales' statement contains the germ of deeper philosophical meaning. Most other accounts consider Thales to be merely naive, taking his doctrine from other sources.

Thales was chiefly known for his prowess as a practical astronomer, geometer and sage in general. His prediction of the eclipse was probably made feasible by his use of Babylonian records perhaps obtained at Sardis; he also probably visited Egypt. His theory that the earth floats on water seems to have been derived from Near-Eastern cosmological myths, perhaps directly; water, as the origin of things, was also a part of these myths, but had been mentioned in a Greek context long before Thales. His development of this concept may in itself have

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3. PHILOSOPHY IN THE TRAGIC AGE OF THE GREEKS; F. Nietzsche; p 38-39

seemed to Aristotle sufficient warrant for saying that Thales held water to be the *Arche*, in its Peripatetic sense of a persisting substrate. Yet, Thales could indeed have felt that since water is essential for the maintenance of plant and animal life -- we do not know what meteorological arguments he used -- it remains still as the basic constituent of things. Although these ideas were strongly affected, directly or indirectly, by mythological precedents, Thales evidently abandoned mythic formulations: this alone justifies the claim that he was the first philosopher, *naive though his thought still was*. Further, he noticed that even certain kinds of stone could have a limited power of movement and therefore, he thought, of life giving soul; the world as a whole consequently, was somehow permeated (though probably not completely) by a life-force which might naturally, because of its extent and persistence, be called divine. Whether he associated this life-force with water, the origin and perhaps the essential constituent of the world, we are not told. The concluding word must be that the evidence for Thales' cosmology is too slight and too imprecise for any of this to be more than speculative; what has been aimed at is reasonable speculation.<sup>4</sup>

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4. THE PRESOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS; Kirk & Raven; p 97 -98; emphasis mine

Given our foregoing analysis of deep temporality and Primordial Being, we are able to put this reasoned speculation concerning Thales' thought in a new context. In the primal scene water played a key role. The life-giving waters arose from an unknown source and was taken from the wells by the fates to water the tree Yggdrasil, eventually returning to the earth. These waters of life could reasonably be what Thales was referring to when he said that water was the source of all things. The taking of the water from the well signifies the disposal of fate in the world. The flow of waters from the well sets up the pattern which arranges everything from their becoming to their completion on to their perishing. In this flow necessity becomes apparent as the inner coherence of arising and perishing. So when Thales speaks of water as the *Arche* of all things, he is perhaps pointing to the central element in the Primal Scene and abstracting this as the key to understanding existence. He is indicating the primal waters posited by many mythological traditions including the Greek. The flow of these primal waters through all things as they arise and perish can be linked with the concept that all things are ultimately animate, even stones. They are animated by the flow of the primal waters which are divine. This is certainly a metaphysical conception which cuts through the primal scene to its key element. What is physical in Thales' conception is the use of magnetism as empirical

evidence for the presence of the unseen life giving waters in everything. There is an identification of the unseen living waters with the soul which intermingles with everything in the uni-verse and which is the active presence of the gods. Thus, although there is no evidence that Thales connected the life-giving waters to the life-force in all animate and inanimate things, it is reasonable to consider these two ways of talking about the same thing.

With this synthesis of the Primal Scene, and Thales' thoughts concerning water and life-force, we can see that perhaps Thales is not so *naïve* as he is traditionally considered. In fact, Thales can be seen as cutting to the heart of the matter presented in the Primal Scene. He focuses on the underlying flow of the waters of life which shapes the becoming of all things as they emerge from and return to the single source. There is a hidden unity to the process of manifestation which is seen in that process itself. This, if it were Thales' doctrine, is, in fact, profound. Water in this context is truly the *Arche* or origin of all things. Thales has singled out the key element of the primal scene and represented it non-mythically. Thales breaks the enchantment of the mythopoetic realm in which the Primal Scene holds sway. The Primal Scene entrances men as the image of eternity. Thales breaks this enchantment and extracts the key

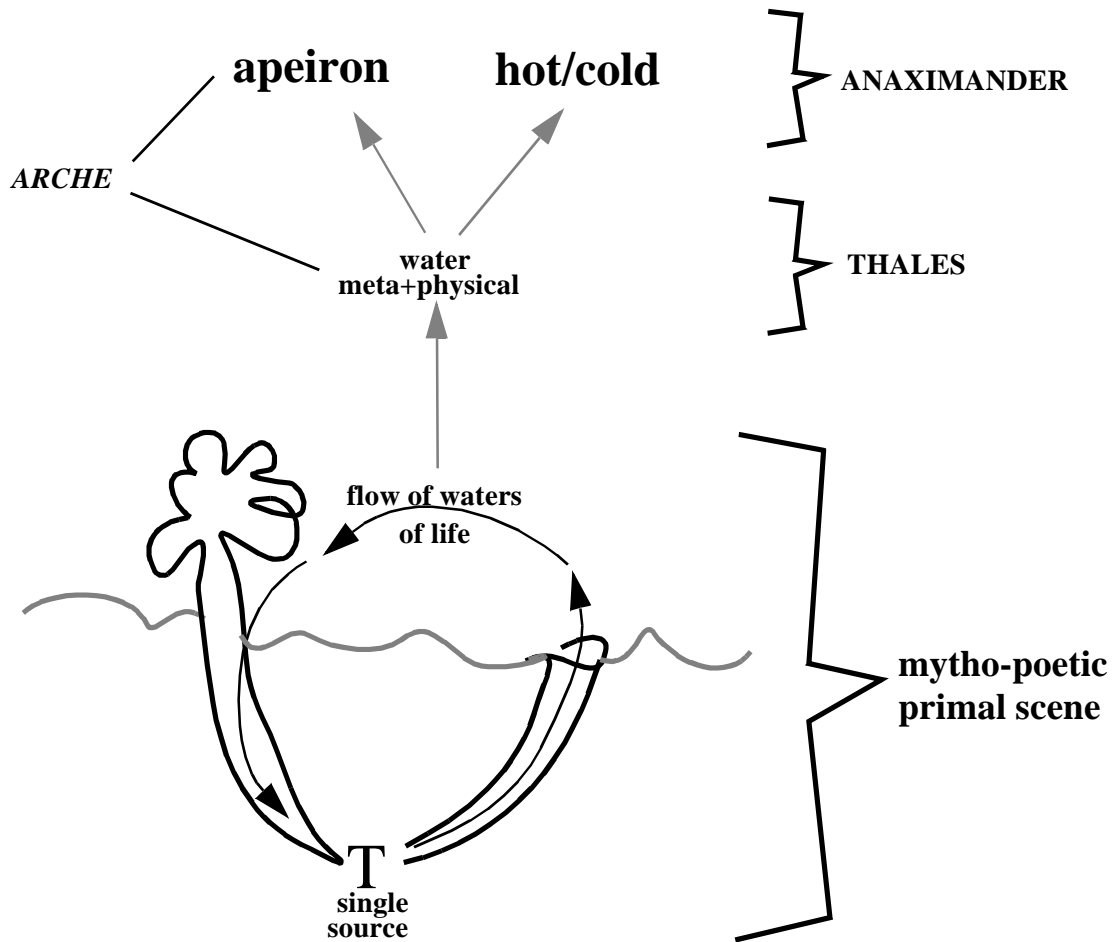
concept from the mythopoetic primal image to reveal its inner core. By revealing its inner core as separate from the entire constellation of the image, Thales transforms the mythopoetic into the metaphysical. In metaphysical thought the “meta” is broken off from the physical, whereas in the mythopoetic the “meta” is still part of an inseparable whole with the physical. Before this split there is only a mythopoetic whole which embodies meaning within the total constellation of the image. When the “meta” of the *Arche* of water is broken out from the rest of the Primal Scene, then the meta/physical distinction arises. Water, in this view, is both *Arche* and physical material. Here the “meta” and the physical are still one. Yet they are broken out of the complete meaning complex of the primal image. Enchantment is broken. The trance is transformed into ordinary consciousness in which ordinary physical objects are seen, such as water, which have meaning in relation to the *Arche* or metaphysical principle. In this case water is both *Arche* and physical thing.

Anaximander breaks the unity of the meta/physical by positing the Apieron (unlimited) as *Arche* and showing how the elements were “separated off” from that *Arche*. Water as an element splits into hot and cold. In this way Anaximander’s philosophy may be seen as a further development of the proto-philosophy of Thales. Thales’

proto-philosophy is not naive; instead it explicates the core of the Primal Image, the circulation of the life-giving waters, and by that explication breaks the entrancement of the Primal Image. This entrancement is the glimpse that the Primal Image gives of eternity -- the opposite of the in-time realm. By focusing upon that element common to both the in-time and endlesstime realms, Thales breaks the spell caused by the delineation of the difference between eternity/spacetime. Water represents something from endlesstime, in the *Arche*, and something from mundane in-time existence. In water, both these functions are combined so that a single principle summarizes the whole meaning of the primal image. However, this single key element immediately breaks apart into the *Arche* called by Anaxamander “Aperion” and into constituent physical sub-elements hot and cold. Thus, Thales’ attempt to extract the essence of the mythopoetic, in fact, immediately fails because it is the entire constellation of the primal image that contains the meaning, not just the key element of circulating water. Water itself cannot contain the whole meaning of the Primal Image, and it immediately disintegrates into a separated *Arche* and physical substrate.

FIGURE 43

{FIGURE 407}



Thales also takes the first step toward the transformation of Primordial Being into Conceptual Being. The statement that all things have their origin in water, in “All things ARE water,” is a statement which uses Being in each of its three senses simultaneously. It is a statement of identity positing an identity beyond appearances or apparent differences. It is a statement of reality; ie. water is real, and the differences between things are unreal. It is a statement of truth. As a statement it stands out against



all existence calling for empirical validation by looking at how physical water plays an important part in existence and how that role points to the role of the invisible waters of life as the unifying grounds of all things. Such a statement is, in fact, an act of Hubris. It is uttered by a single individual as his opinion. Mythopoetic comportment eschews taking personal responsibility for statements. Myths are impersonal and they restate an intersubjective view of reality. Myths are intersubjective thought, whereas philosophy is personal. Here the human individual philosopher stands out against the rest of humanity and makes his summary statement. Thus, the extraction of the key element from the primal scene is simultaneously the extraction of the individual from corporate thought. Thales appears as a figure on the ground of Greek culture with his statement which gathers together the senses of Being to posit a metaphor rather than an analogy. Thales says, “all things *are* water.” Not all things are like water. This makes use of the unique capacity of Being to transform something into something else through the verb “is.” It means all things find their *completion* in water *now*. With this statement, perhaps the first predicate as such, Primordial Being is used in a new way, uniting all its disparate senses into a single thrust which transforms all things into the *Arche* water. Thales has made all things one thing, merely by saying it with conviction. In so doing, he transforms the

mythopoetic into the metaphysical and unites Primordial Being into Conceptual Being, inaugurating a new epoch which still holds sway over us despite talk of the end of metaphysics.<sup>5</sup>

The transformation from myth to philosophy has been laid out by an excellent study by L.J. Hatab (Myth And Philosophy: A Contest Of Truths). This study shows that the transformation was gradual, and that much of philosophy comes from a reinterpretation of mythic themes. However, because of the lack of perspective on the Primal Scene of deep temporality, the significance of Thales is not well understood. It is not for nothing that the Greeks called him one of their seven sages. His thought stands against the whole panoply of the mythopoetic as a truly emergent event which caused a reconfiguration of the entire world for everyone since. We can understand the other presocratic philosophers as people whose primary goal was to grapple with this reorganization of the world -- the breakup of the primal unity of the world, language, myth and intersubjectivity. Each presocratic philosopher is a step further away from the emergent event, yet still they are part of its unfolding. They attempt to grapple with the new configuration of the world, and so in their philosophies we gain deeper insight into the nature of this transformation from mythopoetic to

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5. cf Heidegger

metaphysical reality.

Hatab makes many interesting points about this transformation. The most interesting of these is the elucidation following Nietzsche of the Dionysian aspect of tragedy and how this element was both retained and transformed in the move from the mythopoetic to the meta/physical. Hatab traces this Dionysian element back to the disruption of consciousness by sacred powers that occur in the works of Homer, and to the non-integrity of the body image which have also been observed in those works. As the unity of consciousness slowly arose, these disruptions of consciousness were more and more controlled, and the unified body image began to form. However, these dark forces continue to play an important role which is epitomized by the role of Dionysus.

One basic characteristic of Dionysus is that he is a god who “arrives.” His arrival generally takes three forms which often overlap: (1) various types of epiphany; (2) a divine “epidemic” in which the force of god evokes a kind of hysteria; (3) the god answering the call from his followers ...

The myths of Dionysus disclose the essential message of that religion: the god suffers a cruel death and dismemberment but, in various versions, is restored to life. Dionysian religion can be said to express the Greek experience of an

indestructible flow of life underneath passing individual lives, or infinite life (zoe) beneath finite life (bios). There we find, personified, Nietzsche's notion of formless destructive force underlying form. What is distinctive about the Dionysian religion can be shown by contrasting it with Olympian religion with respect to immortality. Olympian immortality meant freedom from death; Dionysian immortality brings continual death and rebirth. The myth of Dionysus reflects the cyclic regeneration of nature, the destruction and reconstruction of life forms. There is no evidence that early Dionysian religion was based upon personal immortality; in that regard it shared with Olympian religion the notice of essential human mortality. But Dionysian myths are a stark contrast to Olympian myths in that a god must suffer death. Here we find chthonic, earth elements deified to such an extent that finitude and destruction are not only acknowledged, but given sacred form. Thus, the worship of Dionysus involves not only acknowledging a destructive force, but yielding to its sacred power. Dionysian religion embraces the dark side of life in order to receive the blessings that stem from harmonizing the self with a necessary cosmic force. Its essence seems to be the realization that although nature destroys the

individual, the *whole* is indestructible and sacred; therefore, ecstatic self-transcendence (as opposed to self containment) grants religious integration.<sup>6</sup>

Hatab goes on to show how these *Chthonic* forces that embody the raw fate of man which he faces directly are transposed into tragedy. A point not stressed by Hatab is the relation between Dionysus and wine (the equivalent of northern European *mead*). We normally associate Bacchic revels with Dionysus in which wild drunkenness and ecstasy abound. However, this was not always the case. Burkert in Homo Necans discusses the drinking dedicated to Dionysus on the day of *cheos* as follows:

There is unambiguous testimony that the day of Choes was a “day of pollution” (μιαρὰ ἡμέρα). People would start the day by chewing -- contrary to all natural predilection on leaves of a particular hawthorne variety, ράμνοζ, which were otherwise used to ward off ghosts. Doors would be painted with pitch -- a normal way to waterproof wood; but when all the doors of the city shone, sticky, and black, so that a door could be opened only with care, it was a most striking expression of a *dies ater*. All temples were shut on this day, so that normal life was largely paralyzed: since there could be no oaths sworn in the temple, no important business could occur, no

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6. PHILOSOPHY and MYTH; L.J. Hatab; p 122

marriage be settled on. There could be no “normal” sacrifice at any of the alters. Nevertheless, the temples were not barricaded, just surrounded with ropes. Each individual had to construct the symbolic boundary in his mind: on this day access to the gods was interrupted. Only that temple which was otherwise shut was now opened -- the temple of Dionysus and εὐ Λιμυαίζ.

In observance of the *dies ater*, far from the goes, people gathered behind doors freshly covered with pitch to eat together and, above all, to drink. The family, including all relatives -- though probably without women -- assembled at the house of the head of the family. Officials gathered at the office of the archons, the thesmotheteion near the Agropagus. The “King,” basleus, would preside. The people probably came together at the usual meal time, in the late afternoon, What followed, however, was the clear antithesis of the usual festival meal. Each participant had his own table, and whereas wine and water were normally served in a great mixing bowl out of which the wine pourers would fill cups all around, each participant at the Choes was given a pitcher that would be his *forever*, the chous which held about two and a half liters of mixed wine. This is the prerequisite for the notorious drinking

competition: crowned with ivy wreaths, the people would wait for the trumpet to signal blown from the Thesmothetein at the king's order to initiate the drinking. Then all those assembled would drink "in silence" without a word or a song -- indeed, apparently, without prayer -- filling and refilling their cups til the Chous was empty. Out of all the odd customs on this "day of pollution," the silence while drinking probably seems the most particular to the eloquacious Athenians. To them wine and song went together; drinking to one another with song and speech was a highly social game. On the day of Choes, people sat together under one roof, but as if enclosed in invisible walls: separate tables, separate jugs, and all surrounded by a general silence known otherwise only at sacrifice when the herald calls out his εὐφημείτε.

The language of the ritual is clear: the so called drinking competition bears the stamp of a sacrifice. The peculiarities of the Choes drinking are the norm at the bloody sacrifice: not just the silence, but the individual tables and the distribution in portions as equal as possible; above all, the atmosphere of pollution and guilt. From this perspective the drinking competition reveals its original function: everyone starts together so that no one can say another started first.

Likewise, when the day begins, the act of chewing of leaves to avert evil, rather than carrying them or hanging them up, is cathartic preparation of the sacred meal, handed down from hunting rituals. By eating food, one incurs guilt which must be distributed equally among all. And only those who received their share can belong bound together by the act they committed.<sup>7</sup>

Burkert traces this and other Greek rituals back to original rituals of human sacrifice by hunters in which everyone participates in eating the flesh of the victim, thus creating a communal bond of guilt. He traces the echoes of these earliest practices down through many Greek rituals, and in this case to the ritual drinking of the new wine at the Choes drinking contest. Of course, this element of sacrifice embedded in the ritual is important, but there is another related interpretation which is important for us. This ritual of Choes represents also the drinking of the waters of life that issue from the death of Dionysus -- the god who dies. Dionysus is the fated god who was opposite all the other gods because he was not immortal. In drinking the waters of life, each participant received his own fate. The fate of each human being is separately allotted, and thus the separation of drinking vessels and tables. Silence is the proper courtesy at such a moment since each fated individual has nothing to say

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7. HOMO NECANS; W. Burkert; p 218 -220



in his fate -- nor can he help the others. Each is only concerned with himself. Together they are fated -- yet separately as individuals.

Among the Indo-Aryans, the sacred intoxicating drink is called *Soma*. A god who descended from heaven, was mashed and trampled, and squeezed - - a sacrificial victim, but still a god, regardless of his form -- and leads the pious back to heaven. The Greeks tended to equate Dionysus and the wine already in Classical times. Consequently, the drinker of the wine would be drinking the god himself, and the myths about the death of the inventor of the wine came to be descriptions of the sufferings, death, and transformation of the god himself. In this regard, Classical Greeks had virtually insurmountable inhibition: ever since Homer, the gods had been immortal by definition. How, then, could a god die or become a victim of a cannibalistic meal? Such myths become themselves “unspeakable” ἀρρητοζ. But there was a single god of whom this story was told: Dionysus. The titans lured the child Dionysus away from his throne, tore him apart and ate him. As we gather from allusions, this myth, apparently handed down in the Orphic mysteries, was known in the fifth century, even if it was officially ignored. To be sure, it describes not the preparation of the wine -- regardless of later

allegorizing interpretations -- but rather a bloody initiative sacrifice with boiling and roasting. The rite of the Anthesteria implies a somewhat different, though largely analogous, myth of the god torn apart, whose blood is represented in the sacramental drinking of the wine.<sup>8</sup>

This dimension of drinking the waters of life is very important; the difference of Dionysus from all the other immortals; the opening of his temple on a single day out of the year on which all the other temples close. This echoes the distinction which will become important later in this study between the Indo-European gods, Varuna and Mithra. Embedded in this ritual is a very ancient distinction between the bonds of Varuna and the contract of Mithra. In the Choes initiation the wine transformed into the symbolic water of life creates a BOND of guilt by those who drink the blood of the only dead god. This seals the fate of the community of men together, yet separate. The normal laws are suspended for this one day when each drinks their fate. The temples of all the other immortal gods are closed. The doors are blackened as the shadow of each man's fate falls across the threshold.

With this dimension of the Dionysian experience (which has been identified by others with SIVA in India) in place, we can pay closer attention to Hatab's analysis

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8. HOMO NECANS; W. Burkert p 224 - 225

which gains even deeper meaning. Hatab shows how tragedy bears out the dimension of fate.

Since tragedy is connected with religion, it should not be interpreted as an entirely negative phenomenon. Tragic negation is the advent of sacred meaning. We can further underscore the positive significance of tragedy by gathering a summary profile of Dionysus. He is the god who combines many apparently contradictory features. He is terrible and benevolent; he evokes frenzied violence and bestows peace; he is both a destroyer and a healer. We have gone some way toward explaining how such juxtapositions can contain a positive meaning. If the force of the god is a necessary part of the world, then resistance invites retribution, and compliance leads to harmony. Although one might easily balk at this since the sacred force seems to be constituted by negation, nevertheless Dionysian worship EMBRACES negation, affirming the disruption and destruction of the individual. Not only does this religion accept finitude, but its experiences of ecstatic self-transcendence offer immersion in that formless flow beneath finite forms. In this way the essentially sacrificial nature of Dionysian religion is “justified” in that the followers are shown the dissolving power of the god along with its cathartic effects.<sup>9</sup>

This confrontation with the positive aspect of tragic negation is very important for us to understand. At the Choes drinking festival it is this positive aspect of tragedy that is drunk in by the whole community. The waters of life in this fate represent the formlessness out of which the endless forms, like eddies and swirls in the turbulence of the well, take on momentarily. The momentary configuration of forms that take shape arise out of that formlessness. In tragedy that undercurrent of the water of life is given precedence over the momentary forms themselves. It is the formless undercurrent of the waters of life that carry the fate of the individuals that appear ephemerally in that flow. Tragedy causes a constant refocusing on the formless undercurrent which is the background for the appearance of all forms. Forms themselves are insubstantial -- mere appearances that arise from and return to the formless background. But this means, as Heidegger says, the primary meaning of truth become *Alatheia* -- manifestation.

When Thales says everything is water, we can read this deeper meaning which says that the waters of life as formlessness underpin everything. They emerge from the formlessness of those waters and return to that formlessness. Thales cuts to the core of the Primal Scene and extracts the key element -- underlying formlessness.

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9. MYTH & PHILOSOPHY; Hatab p 125-126

Anaximander attempts to be more precise. He calls the formlessness *Apieron*: limitlessness. Beings arise from the formlessness by a separating of of hot/cold opposites which give rise to a myriad opposites. The water of life is the representation of the power of the single source which runs through the entire cycle of in-time, endless time and out-of-time, and the waters arise from the well and return via the taproot of the tree to the single source. Seligman traces mythic prefiguring of the metaphysical Apeiron to the stream of Oceanus which circles the world. Oceanus is a part of the mythic body which was not mentioned before. Oceanus is the primal river that surrounds the whole world.

In Greek mythology Okeanos plays a dual role. Like the other “Urgoetter” (primeval gods), he is anthropomorphic and also signifies the region which is his domain. He is the son of Ouranos and Gaia, married to Thetys and father of the three thousand river gods and Okeanids. But at the same time he is the border stream which surrounds the earth and from which, through subterranean communication, all other rivers issue. Originally Okeanos had no connection with the sea, and, as in Egyptian cosmography, was thought as sweet water. The Greeks also shared with the Egyptians the belief that the sun on his journey round the earth traverses Okeanos by

night in order to rise again in the east. Similarly, the stars, with the exception of Ursa, rise and set in the border stream.<sup>10</sup>

In Norse mythology it is related to the great encircling snake that lives in its waters. Okeanus is the sweet water source of the water of life which is projected as the boundary. We have already seen how the single source has appeared as three of the four directions: *East, West and South*. Here is another similar representation in which mythic thought has sought to concretely represent the single source. Siegleman shows how this mythic image contains many aspects similar to Anaximander's Apieron. Thus, the source of the water of life is separated out and turned into an idea. The unity of the mythic image is broken when Thales separates out the *Arche*/physical water of life and then broken again as the *Arche* separates from the physical, becoming Anaximander Apeiron and primal opposites, hot (yang) and cold (yin).

Within the mythopoetic arena there is enchantment or entrancement with the forms continuously arising from the formless. In this trance, which enveloped everyone together, myth - poetry - language - world was all one affair that belonged together as the same. In the trance the primal image hypostatizes of that the sacred dimension effects everything. The world is drawn

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10. THE APEIRON OF ANAXAMANDER; P. Seligman p134

together by the presence of the immortals. Finite mortals form the backdrop against which the immortals are perceived. Yet the myth of Dionysus tells the unspeakable truth concerning the immortals -- they were created and they, too, may die. Dionysus is the exception which forms a crack in the facade of immortality of the jinn who lived on mount Olympus that claimed immortality. By eating Dionysus, men fed on a god instead of providing for them as they had one since Sumerian times. In the master/slave dialectic between gods and men Dionysus represented the antithetical point where the slave becomes master. In this dialectic the finitude of the gods is breached of only in whispers, and man becomes the culprit determining the fate of a god; sharing in the sacrifice of Dionysus. The shivaic force of destruction stands opposed to Vishnu. They both arise out of the Brahman; the creative and destructive forces. But the destructive force in the end is most powerful; it acts directly and perceptibly on men, but also haunts every action of the so-called immortals.

In fact, the immortals are the ones who do injustice. They are the unseen jinn who, because they are long-lived, may meddle in the lives of generation after generation of men. Their hubris was to claim immortality. But the story of Dionysus lets the secret out of the bag. They only appear immortal because they were

seen by the great grandfather, grandfather, father, and the son. It is a tale that is easy to believe. Yet it is common knowledge that the life-span of jinn is about a thousand years as man's life-span is about one hundred. In the Greek myths Uranus causes his children to be hidden inside their mother until Kronos unseats him. Then Kronos eats his children, hiding them inside himself until Zeus unseats him in turn. These first jinn do injustice to their children and to their fathers. Paul Seligman points out this clear Adike between creatures. The current ruler does injustice to his father and his children. He deposes the father king and at the same time fears being deposed by his own children. The claim of immortality by the finite jinn is the summary of this profound injustice. The lie of the immortality of the gods is equivalent to their attempt to hang on to "completion now" which is Being at the expense of those arising and passing away. Anaximander clearly indicated how this injustice will cause suffering for the injustice later, as all beings become whole before passing back toward the single source. The jinn tyrannized the Greeks in their enchantment. Yet the truth of the central injustice of this tyranny was clearly stated in the mythology. It was stated clearly as well in Sumerian mythology where it was said that men were created to feed and do work for the jinn Enki and Enlil. The mythopoetic enchantment was the slavery of men to jinn. Humans became the background



upon which the jinn manifested. These Greek jinn claimed immortality which was their hubris -- the attempt to remain in existence against their finite natures. Their immortality of the jinn covers over their injustice to men. When the meta/physical epoch occurred, there was a break with enchantment of the jinn. Instead, man imposed the rigor of the uni-verse which attempted to shut out the jinn who inhabit our pluriverse. The jinn did not go away. Men decided to not give them reality any more. This means freedom from the tyranny of the jinn also led to a certain blindness which allowed the jinn a greater freedom of action because they could act without their actions being recognized as belonging to them. Today people see Aliens in flying saucers, or the mad hear voices which we have lost our power to explain. Without knowing the ways of the jinn, we are open to their influence even more than before. This is the price we have paid for our freedom from slavery to the so-called "gods." When men were enslaved, at least they knew what they were dealing with and how to act to prevent trouble. In the metaphysical era we think we know what exists and what doesn't because we set those limits ourselves. In fact, we have become blind where we once had knowledge. Morris Berner talks about reenchantment of the world, but who would want to return to the slavery to the jinn. The problem is that slavery to ourselves is sometimes much worse. Julian

Jaynes sees this split between men and jinn as the breakdown in bicameral consciousness; still attempting to explain the great shift from mythopoetic to metaphysical without disturbing the uni-verse. Instead, we posit the pluriverse in which many creatures beyond our kin exist independently of ourselves. This is a new kind of Copernican revolution in which man is no longer the measure of all things.

Both men and jinn are subject to the operations of fate. Thales abstracted the key concept that circulated through the Primal Scene: *Water*. Anaximander split the life-giving water into *Arche* or *Meta* and the physical. In one fell swoop the nomos/logos distinction replaced the sacred/profane distinction which had ruled all the worlds prior to that time. Men suddenly found themselves mostly free of their enchantment by the gods. What caused the trance to become broken? It was the recognition of a reality that determined the fate of the jinn as well as men. That reality was indicated by the god who died; the god who was sacrificed by men. That god Dionysus became the embodiment of fate. Those dark forms of formlessness disrupting form represented by this god are, in fact, luminous. Dionysus represents the antithesis which cancels with the Olympians to release men from their enchantment. When the two illusory opposites collapse they reveal the reality beyond. From a

different perspective the luminous gods of Olympus are a dark light as well. Dionysus (like *Varuna*) and the other Olympians (like *Mithra*) are nihilistic canceling opposites. Until the cancellation occurs, you do not realize that theirs is an artificial light obscuring the real light of reality. It is the difference between the fire light in Plato's cave and the light of the sun. Fire light looks bright until you have seen the sun of the Good beyond the divided line. But once the sun shines, the flickering of fire light seems dim and oppressive. The limitations of man and the gods accepted in the Cheos drinking "contest" in silence appears as the sunlight breaking through the dark clouds.

Thales reached into the primal image and pulled out the key element that represented that luminous fate, the circulating water of life. Water exists as *Arche* and as physis simultaneously. Anaximander broke apart the *Arche* from the physis. The *Arche* aspect pointed directly to the single source as divine, as one, as the reality beyond the formlessness of water that stood opposite the invisible forms of the gods. The physis of water split into Yin and Yang, or Hot and Cold, as it was separated off. The recognition of the Apeiron as single source over and against the primal opposites Pen - Yang - Well - Hot and Tablet - Yin - Tree - Cold broke the enchantment of the mythopoetic tyranny.

Notice that the same pattern has reasserted itself yet again. The pattern of deep temporality is the same as the structure of Primordial Being which is also the root structure seen by Anaximander. The advent of Being is realized as the tyranny of injustice perpetrated by the so-called immortals. This tyranny was broken only to be replaced by the greater tyranny of man over himself. This greater tyranny makes us nostalgic of the old safe slavery where the warfare between the jinn still left the earth pure and unpolluted.

Now let us turn back to Anaximander again and think about him along with Indra Kagis McEwen who had discussed him in Socrates' Ancestor: An Essay on Architectural Beginnings<sup>11</sup>. This book concerns the advent of order as it appears in greek architecture. In it the point is made that the models that Anaximander made are as important as his theories. That in his work practical reason and theoretical reason were not yet split. Anaximander is credited with making the first model of the heavens, the first map, and setting up the Gnomon to measure the hours of the day. McEwen makes the point that these three achievements were part of the Same project. The model of the Kosmos had three parts: a sub-model of the heavens, a sub-model of the inhabited earth, and a sub-model of time. This is based on the idea that

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11. MIT 1993

Anaximander was still operating in what is called the “compactness” of the mythopoetic in which everything is related directly to everything else. It is we later ones who see them as separate models rather than as part of the same model of the Kosmos. This is interesting to us when we consider that Anaximander’s model of the Kosmos is actually an image of the whole world as *world*, i.e. as all encompassing. It includes all the visible heavens, all the known earth and time as we know it. It includes everything that is known. We can relate this to the quote from Plato’s *Gorgias* where Socrates says:

And wise men tell us, Callicles, that heaven and earth and gods and men are held together by communion and friendship, by orderliness, temperance and justice; and that is the reason, my friend, why they call the whole of this world by the name of kosmos.<sup>12</sup>

This is the locus classicus of what Heidegger comes to call the fourfold structure of the world. The world in the later Heidegger is composed of four elements which mirror each other: Heaven, Earth, Immortals, Mortals. Here we see these four named explicitly by Socrates who goes on to tell us how they are held together. Kosmos means order and goes back to the Indo-European \*kes-<sup>3</sup>. This word is related to two other Indo-European words

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12. Socrates’ Ancestor page 129

\*kes-<sup>1</sup> “to scratch” and \*kes-<sup>2</sup> “to cut.” We can see the direct connection between ordering and cutting, but scratching is more difficult to understand. However, if we see scratching as an indication of the effects of one of the fourfold on the others as in “you scratch my back and I will scratch yours” then this aspect of the root \*kes- becomes more interesting. The fourfold is made up of aspects that are cut off from each other and set up in the same neighborhood such that they can reach each others blind spots or self-unreachable parts so that they must form a communion. Layed out in relation to each other there is an order set up. By each one being temperance in itself and just to the others then friendship results.

Now what we notice is that the different aspects of the fourfold relate directly to at least three of the sub-models of Anaximander’s project of presenting the Kosmos as a spectacle. The heavens are modeled by a series of rings for the planets. The earth is modeled by a map. And man is modeled by the Gnomon which stands upright between heaven and earth and who experiences the flux of time as the movement of the sun and other heavenly bodies. What is missing is an element corresponding to the Immortals. But if the Immortals are seen as being more generally the divine then we might say that the Apeiron is the aspect of Anaximander’s philosophy that corresponds to the divine. Immortality is in this case directly

isomorphic to unlimitedness as being without limit in time. If this is so then we see that Anaximander's model sets up an explicit direct relation between the physical and the meta-physical. The fourth aspect of the fourfold cannot be reduced to a physical representation. But also we see that Anaximander's model of the Kosmos is the first articulation of the Fourfold.

The fourfold will become a very important concept later in this study as we discover that this primal metaphysical model has a dark counterpart which has been forgotten within the metaphysical era. Unearthing this dark counterpart will become an significant aspect of this study. But what is important at this point is the realization that the Fourfold that appears in Heidegger is taken directly from Socrates who in turn took it from Anaximander which means from the very beginnings of the meta-physical era. Anaximander makes a physical model of the Kosmos. Socrates interprets this in human terms and Heidegger looks at it from a purely ontological perspective. However, the model of the Fourfold is clearly the fundamental structure of the world within the metaphysical era. Socrates interprets this structure in purely human terms. This is very interesting because Heidegger points out that prior to objects we have things. However, Heidegger forgets that the "Thing" which means gathering was primordially a social gathering. And

a very important point is that the Thing is the primary social gathering from which all other things are differentiated until finally these things become objectified. Anaximander's sub-models are examples of such things. They are objects that allow us to get a view of the whole. When we consider the sub-models separately we see objects within the world: a map, a celestial sphere, a gnomon. But when we consider these sub-models taken together, as still mythopoetically "compact", then we see a *thing* which refers to the *Thing*. It is of interest in this respect that the structure we have discovered for the internal articulation of Primordial Being is reflected in the Thing. The levels of Harmony which stretch from the strife of the *ephemeron* to the interpenetration of the *holoid* are all aspects of the internal harmony of the primal social gathering. This is the insight that Socrates has had by talking about harmony between the aspects of the fourfold. The primal social gathering, Thing, within which things are differentiated within the world has various levels of harmony above the substrate of the *ephemeron*. The first of these is orderliness which corresponds to logical harmony. The second of these is temperance which allows interactional harmony to appear. The third of these is justice which allows mutual support to appear. The fourth of these is friendliness which allows interpenetrating harmony to appear. Each of these levels



of harmony attributed to Chang show us an inner aspect of the Social. The social is seen in these degrees of harmony. It also shows us that the substrate of the social is the *ephemeron* which is disharmony or madness. All the harmonious aspects of the Thing, the primordial social gathering, are built upon a foundation of strife. When we switch to the objective view we see the opposite. We see that the world is emptied of its harmony, we see objects floating in the spacetime container surrounded by pure distance. The social basis of the world vanishes under the pall of the advent of Conceptual Being and the eclipse of Primordial Being. But there is a small residue of tendencies, propensities, and desires that remain to indicate the presence of the social. Within the Thing articulated by Primordial Being there is a residue of strife at the foundation of the layers of Social harmony. Within the Objective Universe this layer of strife grows to encompass everything projecting pure distance on everything. But the objective universe is haunted by the vestiges of the social in the form of tendencies, propensities and desires. This reversibility between the pre-objective and the objective world is striking. It explains why the objective world is at once so anti-social and also so empty.

Anaximander produced the first objective view of the Kosmos. He presented it as a series of models which

appeared as spectacles which allowed an image of the whole world to be seen within the world. Socrates remembered that these objectifications of the world referred back to the primal social experience in which harmony was paramount. Heidegger again forgot the social aspect of the gathering of the Fourfold but conceived it again as whole after the different aspects of Anaximander's model had for so long been separated into its sub-models which were seen as separate technical achievements instead of a single project of showing the underlying order within the Kosmos. Our task is to ask whether the fourfold as posed by Anaximander, Socrates, and Heidegger is the whole of the internal coherence of the world. Is there perhaps some aspect of that internal coherence that has been forgotten. Anaximander wrote in prose and gave up poetry. He was the one to set the precedent which broke off thinking from poetry. In that break the decisive difference between the mythopoietic era and the metaphysical era was produced. Now we must ask that with the subjugation of poetry to prose (discursive thought) whether something crucial was obscured and finally lost. Heidegger thinks poetry as the physis of language. So here we are talking about the split between logos and physis and ultimately about all the dualistic constructions like mind/body, self/other, etc. which the western worldview worries over so obsessively. We must look carefully at that split between

physis and logos and see what it covers over within our own tradition.

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