Fragment 22   AUTOPOIESIS

Having made the claim that Plato's lower utopia was an autopoietic system, it behooves us to explore exactly what is meant by autopoiesis. Autopoiesis means self-production. It is a term introduced by the biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela in the late seventies to describe living systems. We will take the essay "Autopoiesis: The Organization of the Living" that appears in <u>Autopoeisis And Cognition</u>[1] as the basic text from which our exposition will work. Autopoiesis is contrast to allopoiesis which means "other production." A living system is seen as self-producing, while many other systems that are not living are seen as producing many outputs other than themselves and not themselves. This definition of autopoiesis allows them to define life without any recourse to vitalism, at what they call the mechanical level alone. It allows a whole new way of discussing the difference between non-living and living systems.The question that arises is whether other systems which are self-producing are autopoietic, and thus, in a

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1. (D.Reidel 1980)

sense, living. Varela wants to limit autopoiesis to systems like the nervous system, the immune system, and the living organism. He calls other systems, such as social systems, that appear self-organizing *"autonomous"* rather than autopoietic. However, others who have taken up the concept of autopoiesis and attempted to apply it to different realms, use autopoiesis in a looser fashion to cover a multitude of phenomena that seem to produce themselves. Here the term autopoiesis will be used in the broader meaning of any apparently self-producing entity, and social systems will be included as the kind of system that may be autopoietic.

Social systems are not always autopoietic. In fact, autopoietic social systems are of a very special type that is, in fact, rare. But all social systems tend toward autopoiesis as an ideal, or at least this occurs in the Indo-European derived societies. So we are not intending to say that all social phenomena are autopoietic, but only that they may become autopoietic in special circumstances, and Plato is taking these circumstances as the paradigm for his new colony in The Laws. This is a very important distinction because autopoietic social systems achieve a certain harmonic resonance of the intersubjective group that is generally lacking in society. That harmonic resonance of individuals which knits them into a whole is seen by some as the ideal state of harmony

in society. This state is invoked in the low utopia, but is destroyed in the high utopia where complete fusion occurs. Harmonic resonance may only occur between different entities that entrain with each other. In the high utopia, all the differences are suppressed, and identity is achieved, so harmonic resonance cannot occur.

The autopoietic system is a specific peculiar theoretical construct. That construct is like a perfect example of self-grounding, or what Henry calls ontological monism, in which Being grounds itself. Thus, autopoiesis is a translation into a system description of the fundamental motif of self-grounding transcendence. It is a structure which is like the Escher picture of the river that serves as its own source. It is a paradoxical theoretical construct in which the separate elements of the theoretical construct wrap around each other to produce the illusion of difference while at the same time giving complete and consistent unity to all the different parts. It is to Maturna and Varela's credit that they came up with a way to express this knot of concepts in such an elegant formulation. But it is our belief that the autopoietic system is not a new concept, and is, in fact, very old, going back at least to Plato's Laws as a thread through the history of Western metaphysics.

Autopoietic machines explicitly violate the guideline

developed by Russell and Whitehead that a class should not be a member of itself. An autopoietic machine is a member of a class. It produces another member of that class which is itself in a subsequent point in time. Thus, the class living organism has a member, a particular living organism. That member produces life by producing itself as a unity at a subsequent point in time. This is a paradoxical situation. We cannot say how it came into existence. But given the presence of a self-producing entity, we can see that it is indeed producing itself at a subsequent point in time so that both versions of itself are members of the class of living things. This production of the subsequent member from the prior member is the creation of the class "living." Living is nothing other than this self-production. So the class is nothing other than the production of the new version of the member. This is, and is not, the same as a class being a member of itself. It is not the same in that the class can be said to not really exist; it is only a definition of what is going on. It is the same because by producing the member, you are producing the class, and in some sense the member is nothing other than the same thing again except now it is a member of the class "living."

From this short summary exposition you can see how tricky the whole idea of autopoiesis really is. It is a conceptual structure especially designed to have a certain

paradoxical structure so that the term "living" may be derived from its components rather than as some meta-level principle added to the components. This is really a trick of speech which can be considered sophistry. However, the point which is made here is that this trick of speech corresponds to some real things in the world such as living organisms that can be seen actually producing themselves as they grow and continue to function. We extrapolate this and see that there is a certain intersubjective pattern, allbeit very rare, that does the same thing. It is a social pattern that has the main aim of producing exactly the same pattern over and over which is, by the way, the patterning of itself. Plato attempts to describe such a pattern in The Laws. For him it is a city which has laws that it levies on itself. The laws regulate the functioning of the city such that the end result is producing exactly the pattern inscribed in the laws. In The Laws, we are obviously dealing with an ideal case, what has been called the lower utopia. For instance, in The Laws, there are only so many households in the city. The whole structure of the laws is set up to maintain and reproduce in itself this pattern of households. Or again the choruses are set up so that each age group asserts the noble lie, such that the noble lie as a pattern is imposed on the city, continuously. The noble lie says that the good people get good things. One of the good things the good people always get is the participation in the chorus

that says that good people get good things. So the pattern of the choruses produces itself within the population, sculpting their words and actions, such that it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. The people act good because they will get good things like being in the chorus that expresses the noble lie. There are several different examples of the self-producing or self-fulfilling prophecy embedded in The Laws.

The autopoietic machine is a kind of perpetual motion machine. Plato wants his city to be long-lived and stable. The autopoietic structure results in long-lived and stable structures which are nonetheless changing. Within these systems, what Maturna and Varela calls the organization is stable through continual self-production even though the structural substrate of actual components that are organized are constantly being replaced.

> The relations that define a machine as a unity, and determine the dynamics of interactions and transformations which it may undergo as such a unity, constitute the ***organization*** of the machine. The actual relations which hold among the components which integrate a concrete machine in a given space, constitute its structure. The organization of a machine (or system) does not specify the properties of the components which realize the machine as a concrete system; it

only specifies the relations which these must generate to constitute the machine or system as a unity. Therefore, the organization of a machine is independent of the properties of its components which can be any, and a given machine can be realized in many different manners by many different kinds of components. In other words, although a given machine can be realized by many different structures for it to constitute a concrete entity in a given space, its actual components must be defined in that space, and have the properties which allow them to generate the relations which define it. [p77]

Here structure and organization are separated. This distinction may be argued to be the whole crux of the sophism of autopoiesis. Both organization and structure are relations. But here, relations are distinguished by whether they relate to the whole or the part. The discrimination as to whether something belongs to the whole or the part is subject to discussion and different interpretations. Determining whether something is associated with the whole or part specifies whether the feature is part of the unity being self-produced or not. Any relation excluded makes self-production easier, but also reduces what is considered part of the living organization of the system. It is an arbitrary decision whether to exclude something from the organization of

the system and to say that it is part of the substrata which could be replaced with some other completely different substrata. This replacement is only ideal, and never occurs in practice. However, even though the distinction is highly questionable, it is useful when looking at Plato's Laws. In The Laws individual people are definitely part of the substructure that might be replaced by other people, or even by automata of some type, in the case of the slaves for instance. The laws themselves deal with the organization of these individuals into a social structure, of a unique kind that is supposed to resist change. Thus, the distinction that is difficult to imagine on the cellular or organism level is clearer in terms of the presentation of an autopoietic social system.

The autopoietic conceptual system also carefully discriminates between what is part of the autopoietic system itself and what is part of the observer's frame of reference. Purpose, aim, function, intent are things projected on the system by an observer, and are not part of the system itself. Thus, we say that the autopoietic social structure has no purpose, aim, or function beyond self-production. Teleology, or even teleonomy, is something we project on the autopoietic social system, not something inherent in it. This distinction is much clearer than that between organization and structure. It says that function is an epiphenomena that is projected on

the organisms that make up the social structure. Those organisms, say an ant colony, have no purpose beyond producing its own organization. Any purpose we see in the ant colony beyond that is our projection. So too, in Plato's lower utopian city, the city has no purpose beyond maintaining itself, in its original form. Except with the autopoietic city in Plato there is a twist. The city itself is oriented toward the Good. The Good is its goal. This is justified by the realization that the city is its own observer. Our concept of being scientific observers is a special case. Actually, because the city is made up of people, they are all observers of each other and themselves. They each have their own aims which they are projecting on the city. Plato wishes to consolidate these aims, using the noble lie, and direct the combined intentionality toward the source of all good things. The difference between the observer and the system, in this case, becomes the difference between the Good, as ultimate aim, and the city itself. This is only possible since the city is itself a system of observers which can be reflexive, turning back the observer onto the system observed. Thus, not only is the vital principle embedded in the mechanism, but the observer is embedded in the mechanism, giving a special case even of autopoiesis itself. This double turning back can be related to the double transgression spoken of in the last chapter. There is a transgression between the Night and the Covered, and

then with the birth of Eros there is the transgression across to Chaos and Tarturus. The first transition gives rise to the life of Eros. The second gives rise to the birds and the positive fourfold. The second transition is the opening up of the world within which observation can occur. The first transition gives rise to the germ of life and its desires. The unity of autopoiesis signified by the egg lies between these two transitions before the birth of Eros. In generic autopoiesis, there is an attempt to shun the projections of the observer. But in the autopoietic city as an intersubjective structure, this is not possible.

> Autopoietic machines are homeostatic machines. Their peculiarity, however, does not lie in this but in the fundamental variable which they maintain constant. << An autopoietic machine is a machine organized (defined as a unity) as a network of processes of production (transformation and destruction) of components that produces the components which (i) through their interactions and transformations continuously regenerate and realize the network of processes (relations) that produced them; and (ii) constitute it (the machine) as a concrete unity in the space in which they (the components) exist by specifying the topological domain of its realization as a network. >> It follows that an autopoietic machine continuously generates and specifies its own organization

through its operation as a system of production of its own components, and does this in an endless turnover of components under conditions of continuous perturbations and compensation of perturbations. Therefore, an autopoietic machine is a homeostatic (or rather a relations-static) system which has its own organization (defining network of relations) as the fundamental variable which it maintains constant. [page 78-9]

This definition of autopoiesis definitely contains a goal that Plato had in the creation of his lower utopia. In the lower utopia, the network was of households. The whole purpose of the network of households was to produce itself. All other structures in the city are subservient to this ultimate end. The fact that the number of households is to remain constant is evidence that the lower utopia of Magnesia was homeostatic. The production of the households was both reproductive, educational, and destructive in the sense of being a unit of war. Through time, in succeeding generations the household produces the individuals that will reconstitute the household. If it cannot supply those individuals itself, then they are taken from other households. Surplus individuals who are citizens serve to reproduce the whole through colonization. The households provide the concrete embodiment of the city by their spatial location and allocation of land and wealth. Surplus wealth is also

recirculated so that no households become too powerful and upset the balance outside the range of the four classes. Household lots and farming equipment may not be sold so that the household continues to exist through time and cannot be dissolved either. The city itself is meant to continuously withstand the perturbations from the environment and continue to subsist maintaining its own unique structure. When that structure is broken, the city ceases to exist. Of course, the biggest threat to the city is war with other cities. As with the Spartan model, the lower utopia is continuously geared for war. However, this is just a small part of its aim since it is designed to embody the whole of virtue to which all its citizens are oriented by the noble lie. It is set on projecting a self-fulfilling prophecy that will make all its citizens the best they can possibly be. Since wealth is said to be aligned with goodness, the citizens compete with each other in being good.

> Since the relations of production of components are given only as processes, if the processes stop, the relations of production vanish; as a result, for a machine to be autopoietic, its defining relations of production must be continuously regenerated by the components which they produce. Furthermore, the network of processes which constitute an autopoietic machine is a unitary system in the space of the components that it

produces and which generate the network thorough their interactions. The autopoietic network of processes, then, differentiates autopoietic machines from any other kind of unit. [page 79]

The households in Magnesia produce households. A household is a process. The living inhabitants of the household write their names on a wall, and those who have died are erased. Thus, as names are written and erased, the household moves forward through time. The individuals pass through the household as structural units whose only purpose is to maintain the organizational relation between their household and every other household in the city. When the households are somehow decimated beyond the point that the other households can repair, then the autopoietic structure vanishes. The network of households exists in spacetime, and the network is continuously reconstituted in spacetime. They form a unity or totality which is the city. This totality is not accomplished by making everyone identical as in the high utopia, but instead by maintaining continuously a single pattern through time. This pattern is made up not of identical individuals, but a fixed set of households that may vary within a given range. In Magnesia, it is the household that is the fundamental unit of society, not the individual, as in the high utopia. The

household mediates between the biological organism and the city. The household is the center of manifestation within the city. It is the nexus for showing and hiding.

> (i) Autopoietic machines are autonomous; that is they subordinate all changes to the maintenance of their own organization, independently of how profoundly they may otherwise be transformed in the process. Other machines, henceforth called allopoietic machines, have as the product of their functioning, something different from themselves. Since the changes in allopoietic machines may suffer without losing their definitory organization which are necessarily subordinated to the production of something different from themselves, they are not autonomous. [page 80]

There is no doubt that the city, once formed, is autonomous. It may act independently and simultaneously with any other city. The number one priority of any city is to maintain its organization at all costs. Once this breaks down, it is merely a collection of groups of individuals which are not acting cohesively. The city is certainly an allopoietic machine beneath its autopoiesis. It must produce all kinds of products in order to maintain itself which are other than it. Autopoietic organization is over and above the allopoietic structure of the city. The city is in the relation

between the households. When the city vanishes, one merely has group relations between families, but the set of families do not form a city as an intersubjective unity above the family level. This group of families do not exhibit autonomy because they cannot act together as one toward a common goal. In the case of Magnesia, this autonomy is not just behavioral but also intentional. The city has its own viewpoint as an observer, of other cities and of itself and its parts. The reflexivity of the city makes this connection between behavior and cognition possible.

> (ii) Autopoietic machines have individuality; that is, by keeping their organization as an invariant through its continuous production, they actively maintain an identity which is independent of their interactions with an observer. Allopoietic machines have an identity that depends on the observer and is not determined through their operation, because its product is different from themselves; allopoietic machines do not have individuality. [page 80-1]

The city is the identity of the set of households that make it up. The city is an abstraction projected by those households working together. It is an identity, but not of the type of the high utopia. It is rather the identity of the symbol. The city symbolizes unity, but it has itself no

life. The life is in the households that have banded together to form that idealized unity. Normally that ideal is given life by being personified by a King. But Magnesia has no king, and the unity of the city remains abstract. That identity is the *self* which is being continuously reaffirmed and reproduced. Since the city is an intersubjective structure, the *self* of the city is what G.H. Mead called the Generalized Other of all the individuals within the city.

> (iii) Autopoietic machines are unities because, and only because, of their specific autopoietic organization: their operations specify their own boundaries in the process of self-production. This is not the case with an allopoietic machine whose boundaries are defined by the observer, who by specifying its input and output surfaces, specifies what pertains to it in its operations. [page 81]

The households of Magnesia, because of their land allotments, define the boundary of the city as a specific threshold. In the city, the boundary is twofold. It is territorial in the sense of boundary markers being set down, and it is "nationalistic" in the sense of interests of the city beyond its borders.

> (iv) Autopoietic machines do not have inputs or outputs. They can be perturbed by independent events and undergo internal structural changes

which compensate for these perturbations. If the perturbations are repeated, the machine may undergo repeated series of internal changes which may or may not be identical.Whichever series of internal changes takes place, however, they are always subordinated to the maintenance of the machine organization, a condition which is definitory of the autopoietic machines. Thus, any relation between these changes and the course of perturbations to which we may point, pertains to the domain in which the machine can be treated as an allopoietic machine. This treatment does not reveal its organization as an autopoietic machine. [page 81]

The city's reaction to inputs and outputs may be independent from our observations of those inputs and outputs. One reason for this disconnection is that the autopoietic intersubjective structure has its own agenda that may differently value different states of affairs and react accordingly. But at a more basic level the city maintains its own organization as a first priority, and then, only after that, has been served, does it react to inputs and produce outputs.

Accordingly, an autopoietic organization constitutes a closed domain of relations specified only with respect to the autopoietic organization that these relations constitute, and, thus, it defines

a "space" in which it can be realized as a concrete system; a space whose dimensions are the relations of production of the components that realize it:

(i) Relations of constitution that determine that the components produced constitute the topology in which the autopoiesis is realized.

(ii) Relations of specificity that determine that the components produced be the specific ones defined by their participation in the autopoiesis.

(iii) Relations of order that determine that the concatenation of the components in the relations of specification and constitution and order be the ones specified by autopoiesis. [page 88]

The city of Magnesia is really a closed system. It has only one intrinsic purpose which is to maintain its *self* as identity, as autonomy, as unity. It does this by constituting itself as a maintained network of households; by specifying the nature of the household itself that participates in this network; and by determining the overall order which is embodied in The Laws themselves by which the households regulate their interactions with each other and all other subservient parts of the city.

The autopoietic space, however, is curved and closed in the sense that it is entirely specified by

itself, and such a projection represents our cognitive relation with it, but does not reproduce it. In it, *specification takes place* at all the points where its organization determines a specific process(...); *ordering takes place* at all points where two or more processes meet (...) determined by the structure of the participating components; *constitution occurs* at all the places where the structure of the components determines physical neighborhood relations (...). What makes this system a unity with identity and individually is that all the relations of production are coordinated in a system describable as a homeostatic system that has its own unitary character as the variable that it maintains constant through the production of its components. In such a system, any deformation at any place is not compensated by bringing the system back to an identical state of its components as it would be described by projecting it upon a three dimensional Cartesian space; rather it is compensated by keeping its organization constant as defined by the relation of the relations of production of relations of constitution, specification, and ordering which constitutes autopoiesis. In other words, compensation of deformation keeps the autopoietic system in the autopoietic space. [page 92-3]

Here the bending back of the autopoietic system on itself is clearly stated. This bending back through the maintaining of its own organization as a variable creates the paradoxical relations between the versions of the autopoietic system that exist at each new point. But what is clear from this closure is the relation between the autopoietic system when considered as an intersubjective structure and the ***world***. The world, as *uni*-verse, is also a closed system. It is self-producing as well. It specifies components, network relations and orderings within its space. The world is projected as the positive Fourfold, but that projection unfolds from the closed autopoietic system. The world is the cognitive aspect of the city as autopoietic unity. Each city has its worldview. That worldview conditions, and filters how the world is seen. The worldview is just as closed as the autopoietic unity that underlies it. The world is the second paradoxical overlay. Not only is the city folding through itself at the level of mechanism, but also at the cognitive level. This double paradox, based on a double transgression, determines the intersubjective structuring of relations out from which the world unfolds. Just as Aristophanes suggested after the creation of birds, there is the creation of the elements of the positive Fourfold of Heidegger.

Of interest again is the relation of the birds to Eros and the Egg. If the "egg" is the autopoietic unity as closed,

then when it breaks open we see Eros, the deeply desired, and with the second transgression, the birds are created. The "birds" are the elements of the autopoietic network. They are the flock of the nodes in the autopoietic network. The network itself is seen as a flock of birds. The flock maintains its formation, or the network relations based on the arrangement of the nodes, in the dynamics of group flight. This is similar to the formation of the Hoplites in the Phalanx while they are running. Each Hoplite represents a household. The Phalanx is the living embodiment of the city in close ranks. Thus, the birds signify the autopoietic nodes moving as a flock. Different birds might take the lead at different times, and they may all shift position in flight, but the organization is maintained because of its aerodynamic characteristics that makes flying together take less energy. Once the autopoietic network appears as the first expression of Eros, then the associated cognitive structure appears in the second creation of Eros of the positive Fourfold. The autopoietic unity appears as the first manifestation of the world. It manifests as a whole intersubjective structure first, before it breaks up and unfolds into the degenerative universe of the real city or the ideal higher utopian city. The higher utopian city is the totalitarian fusion of the elements of the autopoietic network into a single monolithic structure. In the real city the autopoietic network has disintegrated. But in either case, the

remnants of the world as it first unfolded from the autopoietic lower utopia remains.

Let us attempt to get the structure of the manifestation of the world clear. First, there is the negative fourfold of Night, Covering, Chaos, Abyss without transgression. We can say that just like the Positive Fourfold of Heidegger, which he took directly from Greek cosmology, there is a mutual mirroring without images between these four elements. Saying that they interpenetrate, as Jean Stambaugh does, may be going too far. The point is that the negative Fourfold without transgression, or transcendence of any kind, is an excellent picture of what Michael Henry calls the Essence of Manifestation which he posits to be pure immanence. We see that here the Essence of Manifestation is not without structure. It has the structure of pure concealment. Concealed by lack of light, concealed by covering, concealed by disorder, concealed by being absent. This is the negative picture of all that the advent of transgression or transcendence will bring. Transcendence will bring light where there was dark, uncovering (Aleithia) where there was covering, the ordering by the transcendent of what it transcends dualistically, and presence instead of absence. So within the structure of the Essence of Manifestation, the negative Fourfold, is the foreshadowing of

transcendence. The Essence of Manifestation is is exactly like the Unconscious from Freud and Jung. It is what never appears, but what distorts consciousness, i.e. transcendence, through its self-concealment such that it inadvertently derivatively appears as through the side effects of its withdrawal. Derrida calls these effects DifferAnce. That is the differing/differing of what is written.

It is significant that Tereus cut out the tongue of his wife and that she had to weave/write her sign. The action of the essence of manifestation withdraws, conceals itself, and in the process it lays down traces which appear as differing and differing distortions. The fact that the writing is woven is very significant, as it points to the fact that the writing is fated, as the fates are weavers. Weaving the writing into the wedding dress is also significant, as that is the covering of woman who is herself normally concealed within the household. It is the wedding dress that is taken off as husband and wife have intercourse within the inner precincts of the household. Teresus had already violated the sister before they were married. So the wedding dress becomes superfluous as the signifier of purity before marriage. The superfluous, or as Derrida would say, supplementary, wedding dress is woven with the writing of fate.The writing displays the displacement of the wife of Tereus to the slave quarters

from her rightful place. It shows that she is not dead. It ultimately reveals here tonguelessness and vengeance. Through the writing the younger sister discovers that her place differs from what she though it would be, and it deferrs her wedding, replacing it with a grisly feast. For the wife the writing releases the pent-up vengeance.

The first transgression of Night against Covering is analogous to the first intercourse of the husband and wife which takes place with cultural approval at night under a covering within the innermost recesses of the household. There the bridal dress may be taken off because the household itself provides the covering. Only the lamp associated by Praxagora's speech with the phallus sees and gives light to what should remain hidden. Praxagora's lamp brings light to the darkness it uncovers by being a signal to the other plotting women. It allows the women to rehearse and order themselves for their assault on the assembly. It allows the women assembled outside their households at night to prepare to go to the assembly and present themselves where they are normally absent. Each woman comes from the bed of her husband out to meet the others. The seeing of the naked bride, and the carnal knowing of the new wife, is the act of the husband sanctioned by marriage. That union is the realization of the power of Aphrodite. Aphrodite has five aspects, one of which is desire. Tereus, because of his

hubris and desire, went beyond the bounds set by marriage and the laws and customs that guard the household. He concealed his wife, and then rendered her mute. He lied about her death. He raped her sister before he had married the sister. He killed his own brother. All these are violations of the household of the most terrible kind. But through these violations of the household the structure of the household is highlighted. These are all examples of actions you must not do within the scope of the household because they wreak utter destruction on the household. The highlighted structure of the household revels the negative fourfold.

The first transgression of Night to Covering gives rise to the "egg." The egg is a closed unity. Within it is the germ of life. The egg signifies the infolded autonomy, individuality, unity and lack of inputs and outputs of the autopoietic system. The egg hatches to give rise to Eros. Eros is one of the aspects of Aphrodite. It is one phase of an autopoietic ring made up of *longing*, *desire*, *eros* (arousal), *persuasion*, and *action*. I speculate that it is this whole ring that expresses all the aspects of Aphrodite that exists within the closed surface of the autopoietic unity. When the egg breaks, only one of these aspects becomes visible. In this case, it is Eros, but it could have been any of the others. The hatching breaks the shell so we see more than the closed surface of the unity. What

appears, then, is one of the faces of Aphrodite which is the real inhabitant of the egg before it is broken open. Having studied the eras of the unfolding of the world, it is clear that the arising of Aphrodite occurred in a prior stage. She is seen as arising on a clam shell from the sea in many depictions. This clam shell is probably the same as the shell of the egg. Aphrodite is covered. She arises from the sea which is itself a signifier for chaos. The cause of her arising is the falling of Uranus' phallus into the sea. When the transcendent phallus is "cut off," i.e. when transcendence stops, then we fall, and we move from the presence of transcendence to an absence. The presence of Aphrodite is the absence of transcendence. The phallus of Uranus was preventing the children of Rhea from appearing. The stopping of transcendence from blocking the way allowed the children of Uranus to manifest so there was a concomitant movement from the absence of children to the presence of children, who were the titans. The overthrowing of Heaven is like the movement from day to night. That shift made Kronos -- time -- come into being, who practiced the opposite injustices to those of his father. So we can see that all the elements of the negative fourfold appear in the arising of Aphrodite. Aphrodite is associated with the great mother -- the mother goddess of the old Europeans. Aphrodite is that which holds together. It is outward unity. It is what Laotzu calls the mysterious female, the feminine aspect

of reality. That feminine aspect of reality is seen by the patriarchal society as being associated with all the aspects of the negative fourfold, but as Aphrodite, these aspects are brought together without transgression and transmuted into something positive. Women are the creatures who manifest their innermost secrets to man at night. The great goddess was worshiped by prehistoric man in caves. The vulva of the great goddess, and woman, is full of darkness. The cave, and vulva, contains darkness because it is covered; covered by the household, by earth, by clothes. Covering is almost synonymous with the woman in traditional cultures. It is covering that increases allure. Exposure decreases allure by desensitization. Thus, the free society such as our own, where sexual matters are openly discussed, sex freely available, marriage weakened, etc., is really the furthest from any knowledge of Aphrodite. Woman is seen by the Greeks as irrational. They are always suspect of betrayal, and so they are like *Pandora* harbingers of chaos. Also, the woman is conspicuous by her absence. The absence of the wife, because she is hold up inside the household, is seen as the ideal situation for women. The upper class women are the most imprisoned. The good wife has the qualities of absence and silence. So when Tereus hides his wife and tears out her tongue, he is really only imposing on her a radicalization of the best qualities all women already prefer culturally to possess. So we see

the negative fourfold as formulated by Aristophanes is an image of the positive characteristics of women. Aphrodite brings together all these characteristics into a single manifestation without any transgression. Each quality mirrors all the others without images. Aphrodite is really the relation between all these characteristics seen in terms of their effect on man. Men become immersed in Aphrodite like the male celebrants of Cybele who castrate themselves in their ecstasies. These male worshipers give up their potency -- the possibility of transcendence -- but so doing they become the drones who are opposites of the *chosen one* who has sexual intercourse with the Goddess. The one enveloped by the Earth Mother and as a sacrifice dies. The drone and the one who is sacrificed are nihilistic opposites. This immersion in the aura of woman is not entirely sexual. It has to do with the belonging together of the negative fourfold which is the opposite of man. Aphrodite brings together the mirroring negative characteristics so that they appear overwhelming to man.The darkness suggests secrets. The covering suggests the possibility of uncovering. The chaos suggests freedom from the tyranny of order. The absence is the memory of the desired. Alone, each of the elements of the negative fourfold appear negative. But to the man who must be the opposite of all these characteristics, when they are brought together in woman, a tremendous response is

generated which drives the man toward union with his other -- to the man who must work in the daylight outside the house; who must be uncovered to attack in the law courts, to refutation of his arguments in the assembly, to ridicule in the theater of the Old Comics, to death in war; who must be rational in ordering the things of the world for which he is responsible; who must always be present under the gaze of others. To this man, who must manifest all the opposite characteristics of women within Greek society, the combination of the opposite characteristics in woman has tremendous allure, for in her he can hide. And the ultimate in this hiding is at night under covers where he experiences the momentary chaos of orgasm which leaves him with a definite feeling of depletion. Woman, on the other hand, is projected by men as feeling full. She has filled the void of her vagina. She has been covered by her husband. She has received the fire of his passion. She has received the ordering germ that may produce the forms of her children. Man and woman, as culturally defined, seek what the other has. They wish to become the other. And in a culture such as the Greek's, everything was arranged so that this becoming the other occurred through sanctioned sexual intercourse surrounded by a cultural environment that heightened that experience of transformation. By emphasizing the difference between men and women, Greek culture made the transforming experience more pronounced. This was

an artificially created situation where the merging of the opposites would have the desired highly charged effect. In a society where we emphasize the sameness and equality of the sexes, and where women do not have such a potent dose of the negative fourfold, it is hard for us to imagine what it was like. But perhaps the troubadour poets come the closest. Their poetry is about transgression of marriage vows -- and the love of the unobtainable other.

Aphrodite is the inner relation between the elements of the negative fourfold as they relate to man, the keeper of the positive fourfold. But we must remember that the emergent event in which Aphrodite appeared from the sea was followed at the beginning of the next epoch by the appearance of the meteor of Delphi that established the navel of the world and the oracles. The meteor reminds us of the unhatched "egg" as seen from the outside. Inside is Aphrodite, in the cave, under the sea, within a clam shell, within the egg shell. Outside is the rock-like exterior. The earth is such a rock. And at Delphi it was a crevasse in the rock from which the vapors which gave the ability to communicate with the gods arose. It was first discovered by a shepherd. Then later the Pythoness, priestess, would set on a tripod over this crevasse to give her response to questions. At the high point the responses were in poetry. And they were uncannily accurate in

some cases. But it was a woman who sat suspended over the crevasse to receive the vapors. The woman would go into a trance to receive communications from the gods. The inner relation between the two emergent events, Aphrodite and Delphi, is an important point. It is through the crack in the earth that the answers come along with vapors. The Delphic oracle is signified by the stone meteor which fell there, and then later with the navel of the earth that marked the landing site of the stone of Kronos. Within the egg is Aphrodite. The outside is the navel of the universe. When it cracks, Eros or the vapors of other worldly knowledge come out. We are really looking at the autopoietic unity from two different vantage points.

When the crack occurs in the cosmic egg, one gets a glimpse at one of the aspects of Aphrodite. In this case it is Eros (arousal) that appears. Eros is a manifestation of Aphrodite. Any of the other manifestations of Aphrodite could have appeared: Longing, Desire, Persuasion, Action. Persuasion did appear to Parmenides, for instance. Each of these are phases of an autopoietic ring which remains whole within the egg. But on manifestation, when the egg breaks, then one of the phases manifests, and the others are hidden. The egg signifies the closure of this fivefold autopoietic ring. The key here is the fact that between the unity of the egg and

the appearance of the birds there is a manifestation of some aspect of Aphrodite. Thus, at the inner core of Being, clinging and craving is posited to produce the dynamic. Eros transgresses a second time the division between Night/Covering and mingles with Chaos/Abyss to produce the birds. The birds signify the nodes of the autopoietic network. This appears in Plato's Laws as the network of households of the lower utopia. It is the shape that fits into many different tiled patterns, like a fivefold Penrose tile. Together these tiles, or network nodes, comprise the autopoietic system. The autopoietic system organizes itself continually. It has the paradoxicality, at the machine level, of being its own producer. When it appears as a city where human beings are, then it has a second type of paradoxicality which is reflexivity. The city is its own observer. The difference between these two types of paradoxicality, mechanical and cognitive, allows the world to appear as the positive fourfold. The Enframing opens out from the positive fourfold, producing the difference between the real and the imaginary cities that Frame the autopoietic lower utopia. Appropriation of the positive fourfold has its opposite in the Enframing. The Enframing separates body and mind. The body is the real city. The mind is the ideal city. The Appropriation from which the Enframing unfolds allows bodymind to appear as the knot of dual paradoxicality. The Framing (Enframing) is the source of all the nihilistic

opposites.

In order to understand this whole series of steps, let us try to lay it out in order and then introduce the vocabulary of Deleuze and Guattari in their book <u>Anti-oedipus: Capitalism And Schizophrenia</u>.

1) Good

The single source of the endless variety of all things.

This is eclipsed by the negative fourfold.

It is what Plato calls the whole of virtue composed of wisdom, moderation, justice, courage.

Embodying the Good is the goal of the foremost city, even if it is necessary to perpetrate the noble lie to do so.

2) Negative Fourfold = Night, Covering, Chaos, Abyss

The negative fourfold is proposed by Aristophanes in his theogony. Its elements exist first before anything else comes into Being. Like the positive fourfold, the elements mirror each other without images, and perhaps interpenetrate.

The first transgression causes the egg of Eros to be laid in Covering by Night.

The negative fourfold is the nature of woman.

The negative fourfold reminds us of Henry's Essence of Manifestation.

3) Egg of Eros sealed.

Described as a "wind-egg" which means infertile.

This egg actually contains the Negative Fourfold as a whole represented by Aphrodite. Within the egg Aphrodite is whole.

The egg is the clam shell that Aphrodite rides, ascending out of the sea.

The egg is Hun Tun, the primordial whole, the cosmic egg, Purusha, Yamir.

The egg signifies the unity of the autopoietic system that has individuality, autonomy, and no inputs or outputs.

From the outside, the Egg is Earth or a rock that serves to surround the cave of Aphrodite.

In Deleuze and Guattari's terminology, the Egg is the Body-without-organs. In their theory, the unity is a supplement, added on to the desiring machines.

4) Egg of Eros ruptured.

Within the Egg of Eros Aphrodite as the mutual mirroring relation between the negative fourfold as it elicits the response of its opposite. When the egg is ruptured, then one of the aspects of Aphrodite appears as manifest in the rupture. In this case, it is Eros. It could have been Longing, Desire, Persuasion, or Action just as well. These form an autopoietic ring of phases. This autopoietic ring is an intersubjective structure corresponding to the Socius of Deleuze and Guattari.

When Eros bursts forth from the Egg, the second transgression occurs in which Eros mingles with Chaos in the Abyss. This gives rise to the Birds.

The rupture in the egg is like the chasm in the earth that the vapors of divination appear through.

5) Birds

The birds are equal to the nodes in the autopoietic network. The autopoietic machine is composed of partial machines.

The birds are equal to the households in Plato's lower utopian city.

The birds are equal to desiring machines, or partial objects/organs in the terminology of Deleuze and Guattari.

The birds fly in flocks, just as the Hoplites run in a Phalanx.

6) Positive Fourfold = Heaven, Earth, Gods, Mortals

Once the birds are created, then Eros draws together the elements to create Sky, Earth and Ocean. Gods and Men are created after that. This occurs in a similar way to how Love draws together the elements in Empedocles.

The positive fourfold is the male opposite of the female negative fourfold.

The elements of the positive fourfold mirror each other without images, as described by Heidegger.

The positive fourfold is the World and Being seen as Appropriation.

The positive fourfold is represented by the lower utopian city.

7) Enframing (or just Framing)

Framing is the photographic opposite of Appropriation.

Framing is the essence of technology and is the source of all nihilisitc distinctions.

> Framing produces the opposition between the real city of man and the higher utopian ideal city of the Gods.

> Framing is the realm of the forgetting of Being where the full concentration is upon beings.

Notice that in our scheme, the Good is opposite the nihilistic Framing. The negative fourfold is opposite the positive fourfold. The Egg of Eros is opposite the Birds created by Eros. The rupture of the Egg of Eros is in the middle with no opposite. This structure is presented as an unfolding, but actually it can also be seen as a static structure which shows the oppositions laying behind the concept of Being. When we consider the three levels of city, we see that the Enframing represents to us the highest and lowest of these. The opposite of Enframing which is Appropriation represents the middle alternative that is normally hidden. That middle alternative is really autopoietic. The nodes in the autopoietic network are represented by the Birds which are like partial objects (desiring machines). These partial objects that make up the network which is the autopoietic system, form a whole which is the essence of manifestation or body without organs. It is the unity, individuality, autonomousness, input/output-lessness of the autopoietic system. This unity is an event horizon which is never seen itself. Within it is the essence of manifestation that

is purely immanent. It is a closed horizon rather than a barrier. What is within it never manifests. Spinoza calls this the "immanent substance." The desiring machines seem to emanate from it, each independent of the other. As Deleuze and Guattari say, it is like "badges hanging off a uniform." Each desiring machine is completely unrelated to the others. It is their very non-relation that indicates the unconscious is present. That unconscious, in terms of manifestation, is the pure immanence that Michael Henry calls the Essence of Manifestation. Between the Egg of Eros, which contains Aphrodite, and the Birds, is the intersubjective structure of the socius. It is an autopoietic ring of five phases. These five phases structure the intersubjective relations, here of lovers. But there are other ways of looking at this five-phase ring. It can be looked at in terms of the Five Hsing of China (Earth, Metal, Water, Wood, Fire) were it is seen as relating to nature. It can look like the five phases of software development when it concerns production. It can look like the different types of linguistic moods: Question, Command, Negation, Statement, Conditional. It also appears as the stages of the scientific method. In terms of autopoietic theory, if the Birds are the nodes, and the Egg is the unity, then the Ring that manifests on rupture of the unity should be the cognitive component of the intersubjective autopoietic system. The observation of a system sees it in a certain light and partially ruptures

the unity. When we are the system that is being observed, then what is happening is that certain aspects of the whole autopoietic intersubjective ring structure appears. All intersubjective relations are governed by this ring structure of the socius.

So ultimately these stages may be seen as a representation of the double knot of the human autopoietic system, i.e. the lower utopian city. The autopoietic ring is the cognitive aspect. The relation between the autopoietic unity and the network nodes is the mechanical aspect. The autopoietic unity never appears anywhere within the autopoietic system. The set of network nodes are each producing part of the whole which eventually becomes the next version of the system. How that transformation of the current network nodes into the next version of the network occurs, is a function of the whole as almost a supplement to its production of the parts. That supplement bridges the gap probably on an ad hoc basis, substituting in new nodes for old, remaking connections, maintaining overall order against constant perturbations. The shuffling around the network nodes to maintain the whole that is embodied in those nodes, but never appears as such, is contrast to the appearance of reflexivity as the system cognizes itself. Each of the phases of the autopoietic ring are of the other phases, so that each difference that occurs by changing

phases reaffirms the sameness. This is the difference between Aphrodite and her attributes. Aphrodite is the equivalent to the whole of the cognitive cycle, while the individual phases appear between the autopoietic unity and the multiplicity of network nodes or birds. The outside of the Egg of Eros is the whole of the network nodes at a mechanical level which is set over the network itself as a supplement. In this way, we see that the Egg of Eros as seen from the inside and being ruptured, appears as a model of autopoietic cognition; whereas the outside of the Egg of Eros can be seen as the supplementary unity of the mechanical network. These two phases of the paradox of the human autopoietic system are like the butterfly-like wings of a strange attractor. They are orthogonal but interacting dimensions of paradoxicality that are simultaneously operative.

The Socius stands between Desiring Machines and the Body without Organs. The autopoietic ring of intersubjective cognition stands between the autopoietic whole and the network nodes. Eros breaking out of the Egg stands between the Egg and the Birds. The inside and outside of the Egg relate to each of these two dimensions of paradoxicality. But this whole structure that is the double knot of paradoxicality that autopoietic systems represent stands between the positive and negative fourfolds. These represent two views of the

"space" that the dual knot of paradoxicality inhabits. The negative fourfold relates more to cognition, whereas the positive fourfold relates more to the mechanical aspects of the autopoietic system. However, really both relate to both phases of the autopoietic knot of paradoxicality. The autopoietic system as a whole arises from and stands against the negative fourfold. It pops into existence from out of concealment. The autopoietic network operates within the realm or world of the positive fourfold. All the nodes, or partial objects, are things seen within the mirroring of Heaven, Earth, Godlike-ones and Mortals. These two views are really two ways of looking at the same realm of manifestation which is, in fact, the *uni*-verse. The autopoietic system is the core of the *uni*-verse and the *uni*-verse, is the realm of manifestation of the autopoietic system.

Beyond the structuring of the *uni*-verse as a place of manifestation for the autopoietic system there is the Enframing and the *Good* that are the realms of distinction within which the universe occurs. These realms of distinction make the universe a place for the outpouring of the Good or of nihilistic opposition. These are two ways of looking at the world. Plato wants us to rise above seeing everything in terms of nihilistic oppositions to seeing the source of the Good shining through all the aspects of the world. Thus, the world becomes a place

full of meaning instead of a hollow place. But here we sense the relation of the Holon to the Ephemeron. And finally, we must realize that the whole structure is dictated by Primordial Being. The autopoietic system is a projection of the elements of Primordial Being collapsed to four instead of eight: *holoid/ephemeron, integra/holon, novum/epoch, essencing/eventity.* On the way in the collapse of Primordial Being from eight elements to the fusion into Conceptual Being, there is this stage at which partial fusion has occurred, and that partial fusion gives the double knot of paradoxicality that is the autopoietic system. The autopoietic system is an intepenetrating whole made up of scattered partial pieces. When we see it as interpenetrating, then we see it as the full vessel of the Good. When we see its scattered parts, we can see in it the manifestation of Framing as the play of nihilistic opposites. The autopoietic system may be viewed in either of these ways legitimately. The autopoietic system is a Novum in the sense of an emergent event which pops into existence. Its lifespan is an epoch which ends when it disintegrates. Thus, every autopoietic system embodies the complete structure of every emergent event and produces an epochal timespan based on the period of its viability. We can study the autopoietic system as a stable example of the structure of every emergent event. Each autopoietic system has its own internal principle of development -- what the Chinese call Li -- which is

unique. This makes it an *integra*. At the same time it has a definite structure as a *holon*. Each node is a *holon*, and the whole is probably a *holon* in larger structures. As a *holon*, it nestles into a hierarchy, playing the part of both whole and part simultaneously. Finally, an autopoietic system has its essence, i.e. core set of attributes, which evolves over time due to internal unfolding and perturbations in the environment. This evolution of the core set of attributes is called essencing. Even though it is holding its organization constant, it may be changing that organization, as in the case of growth. The growing city or organism is essencing, that is unfolding into existence up to the point of dissolution. Also, each autopoietic must be embodied as a set of evolving entities, eventities, in spacetime/timespace. So all the aspects of Primordial Being are bound together in the autopoietic unity. It sets at the threshold of complexity between the eight elements and complete fusion where there are still four main elements left before complete collapse. This fourfold structure of collapsing Primordial Being gives rise to two projections as the positive and negative fourfold. Just like at the level where we see either the Good or Enframing, depending on whether we make non-nihilistic distinctions or not, so too, at this level, we see the fourfold of collapsing Primordial Being projected out as the structure of the World (Transcendence) or the structure of the Essence of

Manifestation (Immanence). Concretely, this fourfold becomes represented as the double knot of paradoxicality which we see in the Egg of Eros, the rupture of the Egg, and the creation of Birds. These symbols, in the theogony of Aristophanes, perhaps asserted in jest but here taken seriously, represent the double knot of paradoxicality in the autopoietic system along both its cognitive and mechanical dimensions. It is clear that Aristophanes understands the schizophrenic nature of the socius as well as anyone in history. It is clear that Aristophanes understood the breakdown of humans into desiring machines because he used that as a means of ridicule and caricature in all of his plays. It is clear that he understood the nature of the unconscious because of the depth that his plays exhibit in which the humorous segments stand out on a deep unsaid backdrop which he talks through consciously as he talks directly to his audience. So here we emphasize the fundamental relations between the aspects of manifestation, and attempt to deepen Heideggers' critique as presented by Joan Stambaugh, by focusing on how the paradoxicality of the autopoietic system stands within the world as a special kind of entity that acts as the axis of the world. Plato understood this special place of what we now call the human autopoietic system, and attempted to build a model of it in his lower utopian city in both The Laws and the Republic.

The ultimate sociology attempts to understand this intersubjective structure. Autopoietic sociology does not look at the social construction of reality alone, only one part of Being. Instead, it looks at the social construction of the world and within the world, its axis which is the human autopoietic socius. This structure is self-producing, self-observing. It is a stable form of the same structure that produces the emergent events in the world. Thus, it is the pivot of our concern in a world that changes with discontinuous breaks in an unpredictable interval. The Socioautopoietic system is the basis of the projection of the world, and beyond that values. The world appears as the projection of the fourfold of collapsing Primordial Being, and values appear as the immersion in nihilism or the advent of non-nihilistic distinctions. Thus, we have either a hollow or full world, and that world may either be seen immanently as the negative fourfold, or transcendentally as the positive fourfold. The world unfolds from the autopoietic system that combines into a double paradox the body without organs, the socius, and desiring machines. Deleuze and Guttari, in their annihilation of psychoanalysis and economics, create a radical reflexive theoretical ontosociology.

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