The Meadow

A Journal of Philosophy, Religion Mysticism and allied Arts

"Theodorus, my friend, appears not to have badly conjectured concerning your disposition; since to wonder is very much the passion of a philosopher. For there is no other beginning of philosophy than this. And he who said† that Iris is the daughter of Thaumas, did not genealogize badly." – Socrates, The Theaetetus, 155c.

Iris is the messenger of Hera, and the daughter of Thaumas, 'wonder'.

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The Meadow

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Editorial

Our second issue of The Meadow arrives long after we posted the first one - which is not what we planned at all, but such is the nature of time-bound life! We hope, however, that the mix of material here will prove to have been worth the wait, and that it provides both inspiration and food for thought. We would be delighted to receive emails or letters in response to anything posted in this issue and will add anything relevant to the articles in our letters section.

"Ancient Wisdom for Modern Life"

This is the banner which heads the home page of our Website, and as we are serious about this claim perhaps an exploration of some of the words of the great philosophers of antiquity have to say concerning the present world crisis which has given rise to the so-called 'war on terror'.

The material advances mankind has made since the industrial revolution have been dramatic and brought undoubted benefits to many - although these benefits are not simple, and come with an admixture of problems. Perhaps the biggest problem that our use of technology presents to souls being born into the present time is that of our relationship to materiality: for most of recorded history the ordinary human life ran down fairly limited and predictable tracks as regards the acquisition of material things, whereas today an increasing number of men and women have the power to accumulate a mass of possessions. Consumption now runs riot and is regarded as good by the majority, and although a sizeable minority correctly recognise that human consumption beyond a certain point equals an over-exploitation of the world's limited resources, there are far fewer who understand the corrupting effects of a life of possessions upon the soul.

Such is the ignorance in these matters that no major political movement has, in recent times, suggested that there should be limits to the generation of wealth for the good of the individuals within their influence. Many ridicule the idea that a moderately wealthy person would be happy if they could only increase their income by a little more, realising that the "ideal income" will always continue to be a little beyond what is already brought in: but very few apply this to nations or societies at large.

Life, of course, has many small purposes which should contribute to greater purposes, and these greater purposes, in their turn, contribute to an overall purpose. Now since everything concerned with the human being is eventually dispersed except the immortal soul, the overall purpose can only be that of the soul herself. The question we need to ask concerning wealth is "does this particular wealth serve the cultivation of my soul?" If the honest answer is in the affirmative, then the portion of wealth which is before the questioner should be pursued by its proper means: but if wealth is acquired merely for its promise of corporeal pleasure, then it should be regarded with suspicion for, as Plato tells us in the *Phaedo* (at 83d) "Every pleasure and pain, as if armed with a nail, fasten and rivet the soul to the body, cause it to become corporeal, and fill it with an opinion, *that whatever the body asserts is true*. For, in consequence of the soul forming the same opinions with the body, and being delighted with the same objects, it appears to me that it is compelled to possess similar manners, and to be similarly nourished, and to become so affected, that it can never pass into Hades in a pure condition; but always departs full of a corporeal nature; and thus swiftly falls again into another body, and, becoming as it were sown, is engendered; and lastly, that from these it becomes destitute of a divine, pure, and uniform association."

What Plato describes is the effect of an outward moving energy in the individual: but the same is true of societies. The first effect of an overemphasis on possessions is the stimulation of the desire nature, which is never satiated, no matter what vast wealth is accumulated; *but the second effect of possessions is fear, because the desire is not to have wealth but to continue for all time to have wealth - and so fear enters like a worm into the ripened fruit*. And, quite obviously, the thing which breaks our hold on possessions is death, for death removing body from soul must remove the ornaments of body, possessions, from the soul at the same time. Therefore the natural fear of death inherent in all mortal animals grows in humans to become a overwhelming shadow, and drives out - a far as this is possible - reason and peace from the life of the soul. Societies which are based on the generation of material wealth also become destitute of a divine, pure and uniform association; for

fear is that which encloses and isolates, corrupts and separates. As Plato says (*Phaedo*, 66d) "all wars arise through the possession of wealth."

Now the ancient discipline of philosophy held that four virtues were cardinal to human life: Wisdom, Temperance, Fortitude and Justice. Proclus shows, in his *Commentary to the Republic*, that wisdom is that excellence of the human soul which is exercised when the soul reasons well, temperance that excellence which is exercised when the soul desires well (that is to say, when it desires the true beauty), fortitude that excellence which is exercised when soul directs its actions in an ordered way, and justice that excellence which harmonises all these together so that each plays its proper part. Looking at these four virtues or excellence, it is perhaps easy to see that wisdom and justice are required in the world, if we are to overcome the present problems. Perhaps, too, temperance as a tempering of desires is also required in a world which has increasing wealth at its disposal: but fortitude is less obviously necessary. But, in truth, fortitude is especially required at the present time, if we are to act wisely and well in our national and international relations. It is here that a couple of quotes from the sages of the Platonic tradition may throw some light on the subject.

"The characteristic property of fortitude is the not declining to things subordinate," says Damascius *(Com. Phead. I*, 149) who thus shows that when an individual or a society is attacked with disorder it must retain its own ordered nature.

"Not to fear a departure from body as into something void, and nonentity, gives subsistence to fortitude," says Porphyry *(Aux. Int. Sent. 32)* showing that the realisation that we are primarily an immortal soul underlies the ability to order one's life.

"I call fortitude," said Socrates in the *Republic* (429c), "a certain preservative. . . . A preservative of opinion formed by law in a course of education about things which are dreadful, what these are, and of what kind: I called it a preservative at all times, because they [the guardians of law] were to retain it in pains and in pleasures, in desires and fears, and never to cast it off." Who thus shows that those who cast off their previous convictions when under attack from whatever quarter are failing in fortitude.

When an individual is faced with loss and death, an appropriate response is required, but where fortitude is lacking the response is liable to be either too weak or too strong - too cowardly or too rash. So too, a nation when attacked should respond according to reasoned necessity, and not allow emotional reactions to blot out reasoned considerations. So the question that the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom must ask themselves is, does a spectacular but relatively small attack on a populated building in New York warrant the invasion of two countries with its inevitable loss of life, and breakdown in order? Does it warrant the abolition of very long held constitutional safe-guards, which have been preserved even in the face of widespread death and destruction over the centuries?

On the other hand, the question many more governments must ask themselves is whether or not commercial gain in areas of great oil-wealth have not distorted their responses to the actions of tyrants who happen to be in control of those reserves? Has an intemperate desire for wealth brought about an undermining of international justice?

And what of justice? Has justice been served by the invasion of states which were, in very varying degrees associated with the perpetrators of the September attack on the World Trade Centre? Let us turn to Socrates who is speaking in the *Crito*, after he has been wrongfully condemned to death, and see in him not only a full manifestation of fortitude, but also reason in the face of unreason:

Socrates: Shall we say then, that we should by no means willingly act unjustly? Or may we in a certain respect act unjustly, and in a certain respect not? Or is to act unjustly by no means neither good nor beautiful, as we have often confessed before, and as we just now said? Or are all those things which we formerly assented to dissipated in these few days; and has it for some time been concealed from us, that though we are so old, yet in seriously discoursing with each other, we have in no respect differed from children? Or does it not thus subsist more than any thing, as we then said, whether the multitude admit it or not? And whether it be necessary that we should suffer things still more grievous, or such as are milder than these, at the same time shall we say or not that to act unjustly is evil and base to him who thus acts?

Crito: We shall say so.

Socrates: By no means, therefore, ought we to act unjustly.

Crito: We ought not.

Socrates: Neither, therefore, ought he who is injured to return the injury, as the multitude think, since it is by no means proper to act unjustly.

Crito: So it appears.

Socrates: But what then? Is it proper to do evil to any one, O Crito, or not?

Crito: It is not proper, Socrates.

Socrates: But what? Is it just to repay evil with evil, as the multitude say, or is it not just?

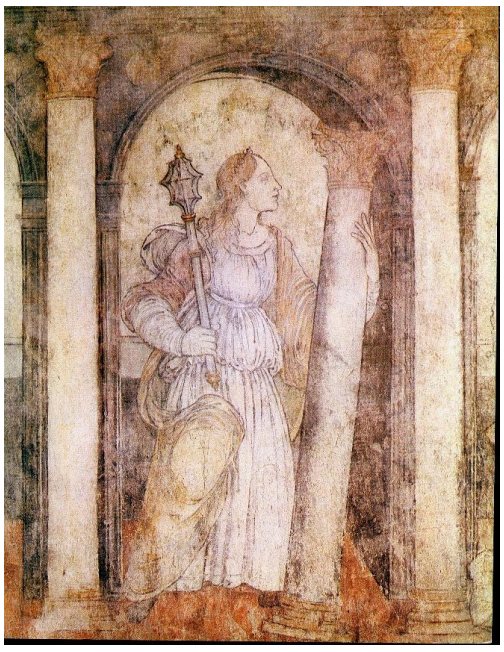
Crito: By no means.

Socrates: For he who does evil to men, differs in no respect from him who acts unjustly.

Crito: Your assertion is true.

Socrates: *Neither, therefore, is it proper to return an injury, nor to do evil to any man, however you may be injured by him*.

If we are to live our lives according to philosophy, then, neither fear nor revenge should shape our actions. And we should require those who act on out behalf in the political arena to take cognisance of these ordinating reasons and place them above the reactive instincts of man as a herd animal.



Allegoric figure of Fortitude from the Four Virtues by unknown artist (also attributed to Botticelli), c. 1490, fresco, Castle Chapel, Esztergom

The Perennial Philosophy

Don Skilling

The German philosopher Leibnitz is credited with the first use of the term 'Philosophia Perennis'. 'The philosophy that is of all time' informs us that this philosophy is not a concept or idea that is gradually evolving. It is permanent, and its purpose is to present us with a key to understand the origin and nature of the Universe and our own Self. We study it to learn the Mystery of Creation and Wisdom of the ages. Any changes that take place will be in our consciousness as we learn our true nature and purpose.

The Perennial Philosophy in the form of myth, oracular utterance, direct revelation, and a golden chain of teachers, is guiding mankind towards Wisdom, for: "Philosophy is the purification and perfection of human life." Hierocles.

The Greeks passed the Wisdom Teaching to us. They may have received it from the Egyptians for the teachings were given in the Inner Temple and are embodied in sacred ritual and in their hieroglyphs. In Greece and Turkey there were temples dedicated to the Egyptian Gods. Pythagoras taught it, and then Plato gave it a clear exposition in his Academy, where the theory and practice of the Perfect Life were taught. In the 15th Century the Florentine scholar, Marsilio Ficino, translated the Greek writings of Plato and his followers into Latin. These teachings are at the root of the Classical Renaissance that swept through Europe in the 15 th and 16th Centuries. They have had a profound influence upon western civilisation generally.

The essential element of the Perennial Philosophy is not man-made, or of one place or culture. It does not grow by accretions of human knowledge and discovery, for it is of all time and there is evidence of its influence in many traditions. The word "philosophy" is the key that opens the doorway out of this particular fallacy for philosophy is literally the love of wisdom; it originates in the Love, Wisdom and Power of the Divine Ground of the universe.

The Transcendent Reality that is also the divine Immanence is the ground of our being. As a unity it is the Transcendental - Immanence; the one unchanging Spiritual Ground of all created things. It is beyond our experience or imagination, for there are no images to help us to understand this mystery. Metaphor and analogy are aids. It is not continuous being or life, for it is the Source of all Being, all Life and all Intelligence. From it all beings come forth; all lives are born; and all order and intellectual ideas proceed. It is the Unitive Being, Life and Intellect of God that cannot be explained because the mystery is not for rational, pragmatic and practical consideration. The Glory of the Transcendental-Immanence is the Radiance of the Creator. It is Light that cannot be corrupted.

To appreciate the whole panorama of God's Creation, we look to contact the universe at all levels, not merely the physical and most obvious. Each of us is provided with starting points, doorways that are never closed, through which we may enter to view the hidden life, and the causes and principles of the universe. We move from multiplicity towards unity, from many things to single principles and laws. They are integral aspects of an inner Light, which enlightens because it is not alien. It is at

the heart of our own being. To accept its truths is not to receive something from outside our self. We are simply finding out more about the center of our own life. This we have been doing since we were born.

Divine Love and Wisdom are the substantial foundation of creative power and order in the universe and in Man. Every expression of this is an element of the Perennial Philosophy as an educational gift to mankind. We understand this as our own potential to love Wisdom matures. The great religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, and Islam place emphasis upon different aspects of the perennial Philosophy.Religions are not different qualities in the Essence of God; they are methods by which man relates to God.

Eternity, time and the perpetual.

"The Perennial Philosophy is of all time." There is often confusion of the concepts of eternity and time. This is especially perceptible in the phrase "It will continue for all eternity". That which is eternal has no duration and is unchanging. It is real and pure in the absolute sense and cannot be corrupted. It is not born and cannot grow, decrease or die, for these take place in time. Simple definitions are:

The eternal is unchanging Reality. It has no duration.

● Connecting the eternal and time is the perpetual that is unlimited continuation.

● Time is the measure of duration and change. It has beginning and end.

The interdependence of time and space in terms of physical objects and events is obvious. Time allows events to happen in the same place at different times. Space allows events to happen in different places at the same time.

The teaching about THE ONE is simple: The Absolute ONE is eternal, unknowable, unchanging, undifferentiated and unconditioned. The ONE is the ultimate Source of all. There is nothing prior to the ONE.

The "Big Bang" theory of the creation of the universe can help us to understand the ideas of the Eternal unchanging ONE, and Creation.

● Time and space have a clear relationship, as the expansion of the universe causes change. Time is a measure of change.

Principles may be considered the power of God's Creative Intellect perpetually directing and supporting all states of change, growth and decay. They maintain stability during the cycles of life in time and space.(Note 1)

The beginning of wisdom is: Get wisdom.
Yea , with all thy getting, get understanding. *Proverbs*, iv, 7

On the quest for wisdom, the first question to answer is: "Who am I?" The Perennial philosophy teaches not that we have a soul but that we are a Soul. The body is a residence or vehicle for the Soul. It affirms the Reality of Spirit as the Ground of all beings including our own Soul. So we have a threefold identity - Spirit, Soul and Body.

My body liveth by my Soul and my Soul by God; therefore I will seek Him that my Soul may live. *St. Augustine of Hippo*.

Body is temporal, Spirit is timeless, Soul is a bridge between the two.

The second question is: "Why am I?" In every creative process there is an order. Stated very simply it is, 'The first in intention is the last in execution'. Divine Intellect creates the universe and then man. However that is not the end of the process for man has a purpose. Human beings appear when conditions are suitable in the world. There is nothing without purpose. God is the source and ultimate stability and Ground of all. The Cosmos proceeds from unity into multiplicity. Man returns to the Father by living and learning in the Cosmic Universe. The circle of love and life is complete. We have a contribution to make.

When the love of wisdom awakens in the heart, then mind and will are engaged in the quest for the SpiritualGround of all Wisdom. This journey, from darkness of ignorance into Light, is a path of perfection. Practical ideals for living a good and just life aid us to make life in this world in the model of the Soul's spiritual home. It is our purpose to fill our life with Light for there is no greater Beauty.

The Soul has two levels of activity: an objective, natural life of this world, and an inner subjective life. To control the impulses, instincts and emotions of the natural life and its desires, we learn prudence in our choices; temperance to control desire; and fortitude to overcome fear and laziness. Thus order and discipline make our lower nature an efficient instrument of the Soul.

Sin is a withdrawal from the art of Divine Wisdom and the Order of Divine Love. *St.Thomas* .

Evil is resistance to the living inspiring spirit of God. *William Law*.

The beautiful order of our environment is for our education; to learn principles; and to use them. From the moment a child is born the urge to learn is obvious. This urge is the love of life that remains constantly with us, sometimes in spite of training and schooling that dulls the mind. The greatest gain from knowledge and skill is not physical comfort or convenience; it is as a co-worker with the Divine Powers and other Souls; integrating our lives with the life of the universe, and our minds with the Divine Mind that is the Spirit within us. This is the purpose of every human Soul. God is not changed by our ignorance, but we are changed when we know that His presence within us is the essence of our true nature. Wisdom is the virtue of the Soul.

This is the teaching of the Perennial Philosophy through all its channels. 'Thy Will be done on earth.' It answers the question, "Why am I?" The Cosmos tells us that the truly spiritual Life is the most practical and efficient.

The writings and words of great teachers are often very simple. The literal meaning of the Christian Bible, the Koran, the Baghavad Gita, Kaballah, Buddhist and Taoist writings have behind them an allegorical and a moral teaching. These precede the most profound meaning that is anagogic or mystical for it conducts the aspiring soul towards union.

In the fine arts also, there are many layers of symbolism - psychological, political and mystical, that are there to educate and inspire the Soul. In architecture the great cathedrals have a literal meaning as a place of worship, a symbolic meaning of the whole universe and by analogy, an image of a human being, both body and soul. The symbolism of a building as an image of the human soul, the inner world of man, corresponds to the fourth and highest meaning, the "anagogic" or mystical.[(Note 2)]

A clear and important distinction is made in the Perennial Philosophy between levels of awareness, based possibly upon the idea: "As you think so you are". Simply stated they are:

- Practical thinking for mundane activities and estimation.
- Abstract thought implying conceptual development and using simple ideas.
- Reasoning with completely abstract ideas, implying use of dialectic.
- Intuition, which is above any process of thought but as "interior tuition" reveals chains of ideas in magnificent order.

Without these levels of awareness there can be no myths, allegories, parables or metaphors. For in the latter are hidden the truths about Spiritual life and power, so that only those who are ready for the teaching receive it. We are each given what we need to be ourselves throughout all stages of development to full consciousness of the divine Light.

Perfect Wisdom came with kindergarten methods to men's kindergarten souls. *E. Underhill*.

It is common to consider the principle of 'life' as feminine and 'intellect' as masculine. This is helpful when discussing the Greek Gods. A Gospel allegory, explained by Eckhart, concerns a widow whose only son was dead. By 'widow' we understand a soul whose 'man' was dead. Therefore the 'son' also was dead. By 'son' we comprehend the intellect that is 'man' in the soul. The widow was not alive in the intellect, therefore the man is dead and she is a widow.

Ambiguity of vocabulary leads to confusion of thought. Metaphorical language is not ambiguous; it participates in the remarkable power of words, of poetry, and the two-edged sword of rhetoric, to inspire and to awaken aspiration for ultimate Truth and Beauty.

Know that the Soul is Master of the Chariot, who sits within; and the body the chariot is. Regard thou the intellect as the charioteer and reason as the reins. *Katha-Upanishad*.

Personal growth

Self-consciousness is first a process of separation, physically from the mother, and psychologically from our creative source. "You are my children." Thus we have, "the nobleman who journeys to a far country." This can be interpreted as the human soul, with dawning consciousness, awakening in the natural environment of the world after leaving its spiritual home. Consider the myth of Persephone carried off into the underworld.

Psychology is the science of the human soul. The first step on the journey to freedom is to know we are a human Soul. The psychological teaching of the Perennial Philosophy stresses the problem of 'ego-centricity'. Personality is the lowest part of our nature. It becomes the prison of dawning consciousness. If we are driven by energies within the lower nature - instincts, emotions, desires and glamour - then we must know this. The Soul has to be in control, not to suppress all these movements of life but to recognise them for what they are. Where it is appropriate we act with the energy they generate. So we are not drawn hither and thither by every whim, fancy or passing emotion but act from the center of consciousness and do not 'wobble'.

The Cosmos and the Macrocosm

A good painting by a great artist is appreciated in many ways. Some viewers appreciate the colours, others the subject matter or look for symbolism, or an object of interest. They may look, and read the name of the artist and pass quickly on. It depends upon interest, training, education and experience.

The universe is the greatest work of art. It is born in the Mind of the Master Artist and Great Architect and fashioned by His Power. His is the guiding intelligence by which all natural and human forms emerge and multiply. He provides the energy, space and material. Its physical beauty has been the source of inspiration for artists of every kind - writers, painters, poets, and musicians. However, to recognise its beauty and ever-changing loveliness is only the beginning. We are impelled to look deeper within this order and we find another order of mathematical beauty and intellectual wonder. We learn how to read its symbols. Scientists have already learned some of the laws but most are really only scratching the surface.

The 'Cosmos' is the created universe. The 'Macrocosm' or Great Order includes God and the Spiritual Order.

The Cosmos

The Greek word 'Kosmos' means order. In the Perennial Philosophy it means the universe considered as a system, perfect in order and arrangement. Divine creative ideas and energies produce and order the Cosmos. As a unity it is an expression and symbol of the unity of its spiritual causes. Nothing comes from nothing. Cause and effect cannot be separated.

The universal form creator is Soul. It creates the forms that "inform" all material things. Our own bodies are formed and have their characteristics from the genetic code that is the formative power in action.

An accomplished dancer flows through one movement to another, each figure springing naturally from all that preceded it. Any disruption or disturbance is accommodated as though effortlessly by the artist, with music, rhythm, timing, movement and construction creating a complete and perfectly harmonious unity. Examine individual parts and you know, 'This is here because that was there, it follows naturally'. The truth is that the dancer knows the human body and it's capabilities. Unite this knowledge with an understanding of the elements of dancing - steps and positions, poise, balance, posture and shapes created when still and moving. Construct the dance- the movements, rhythm, time and tempo; where and how to begin; how to introduce variety and maintain unity. All these ingredients make it possible to create a beautiful dance.

The dance of Cosmic Life cannot be reduced to the elements of this analogy. Divine Mind has no limitation, for it is the origin of the Principles and Laws of Nature. There is no gap between the origin of all things and the tiniest portion of dust in the universe. So-called 'empty' space has been found to have an energy system within it. There is no where that is completely empty. Thus the creation of the whole universe is such that when we look at any part of it we know that there are sufficient reasons for its existence and that it has a place and function in the natural order of things and lives. Nature is purposeful, satisfying and beautiful.

For naught so vile that on the earth doth live
But to the earth some special good doth give. *Shakespeare. Romeo and Juliet*.

The Perennial Philosophy teaches that we repeat this cosmic order in terms of our own nature and body. We have many of the natural elements in our body or physically this would be alien environment and we could not have physical nourishment. We live by the same scientific laws. Individually we are a little order repeating the greater, a microcosm of the macrocosm.

Awakened to our individual human nature, education is our purpose. We need intellectual nourishment so we educe, draw out the innate ideas and creative principles within the Soul to be fully conscious of our Self. Remember that love is the motive power of the mind. The macrocosm is a perfect example of principles and laws in action; our own nature is the Soul's workshop. So we explore our nature and learn to use our own powers. Now we need double vision - of what is, and what shall be - the actual and the potential.

When Mind and each believing mind are not divided,
And undivided are each believing mind and Mind,
This is where words fail,
For it is not of the past, present or future.
The Third patriarch of Zen.

The perennial philosophy does not offer an easy ride through life. Released from the prison of materialism the Soul is centered in its own consciousness. To gain further enlightenment and knowledge attention now moves in two directions:

- Inward to the intellectual and spiritual center. The universal source of all life.
- Outward and downward into particular areas of our human nature and the world.

Focus attention upon our spiritual center and we become aware that there must be a single Cause of all causes. Concentrate attention upon the manifested universe, and ignore its laws and principles, then the emergence of higher and more complex forms appears to be the result of chance, like dice rolling for untold millennia. This is a degeneration of consciousness. A maturing mind, with a vision of unity, can recognise purpose unfolding in action. Both directions need attention or we lose our balance. Without unity there is no purity or security.

The purpose of the Perennial Philosophy is to help man to his final end.
St. Thomas Aquinas

On the wings of reason and love we rise beyond the cleverness that is so valued today. By these we learn the unity of all things, and the bond of the Law of Love. For we can love only what we know, and we can never know completely what we do not love.

He who cultivates the soil may have his share of good things, but
the man who cultivates the mind will enjoy a perpetual feast.
Confucius.

The final purpose of reason is to control our thoughts, and guide the heart and will. When Spirit reigns our personality is transformed. This transfiguration marks the end of our journey to God. Then begins the journey in God.

Reason is like an officer when the King appears.
The officer then loses his power and hides himself.
Reason is the shadow cast by God; God is the Sun.
Jalal-uddin Rumi

Absorbed in quiet reflection when all else is forgotten, time and events pass without notice. Our consciousness is released from its prison house. Perhaps we see a flower

in all its radiant beauty and are filled with wonder. Or view the beauty and harmony of the world and indeed the whole universe, and know that we are an integral part of a great creation. Our true identity is in part revealed, and we are transformed. This moment out of time is an experience of Metanoia- a transformation of consciousness and character.

Man is a mighty wonder, for he passes into God's nature as though he were himself divine. How happy is the blend of human nature. Joined to God by his resemblance to Divinity, he looks down upon the part by which he is common with the earth. Man has his place in the blessed station of the midst, so that he loves those below himself, and is in turn, loved by those above. Heaven seems not too high for him: for it is measured by the wisdom of the mind (nous) as though it were quite near. *'The Perfect Sermon of Hermes Trismegistus.'*

The Spirit within is not altered as our consciousness changes, for the Immanent and Transcendent Spirit is One. Divine Reality is not divided. God Transcendent is The Word, the Creator Lord, supra personal and unapproachable. God Immanent is personal because He is the Father of all. He is close but always showing a different facet of his Nature - ever unchanged, presenting a never-ending variety of the same truths. When both the Immanent and the Transcendent are present consciousness is transformed. We cannot command Spiritual perception. Heart and mind are silenced by deliberate choice and in that receptive, contemplative stillness, where even the longing for illumination or participation in the life of the spirit is calmed, then the Light shines into the consciousness.

Sell your cleverness and buy bewilderment;
Cleverness is mere opinion, bewilderment is intuition.
Jalal-uddin Rumi

All things speak of One origin. The Deep calls to the Deep, urging us towards maturity.

Stages of personal development are recognised in the tradition of most societies. They mark the path of initiation from child to mature adult. Intellectual awakening and growth are similar in pattern to physical development. There is a movement upward; from simple concepts to principles and laws; moving always toward the highest Ideas that substand all things and lives. This expansion of consciousness is a gradual progress from darkness into light. Ideally the stages of initiation are marked by the acquisition of the virtues for "Virtue is the perfection of the Soul":

● Physical virtues are harmony and control of the body.

● Ethical virtues are the ability to live harmoniously with others, and observance of custom and right opinion. They are virtues of children when well educated.

● Political virtues are rational and scientific, concerning reason directing the lower, irrational, nature as an instrument; exercising prudence, fortitude, temperance and justice. Plato discusses these in "The Republic". With the ethical virtues they enable people to work together for a common purpose.

● Cathartic virtues liberate the Soul from passions, irrational desires and illusion, to act rationally from its center and according with higher spiritual influences.

● Theoretic and intellectual virtue gained as the Soul unites itself with the intellect above itself and is freed to use intellect fully.

● Paradigmatic virtues "It is the business of philosophy to make us intellect; but of theurgy to unite us to intelligibles." *Thomas Taylor, the Platonist*.

The virtue of the mind is Prudence (or Wisdom).
The virtue of the will is Fortitude.
The virtue of the heart is Temperance.
The virtue of all three combined in Soul is Justice.

Socrates: Not even by riches therefore is a man delivered out of a miserable condition; nor by any other thing than wisdom and virtue.
Plato. First Alcibiades.

We rejoice in the beauty and order of the natural world. Then we look beyond the physical forms, and seek the perfection and beauty of permanent causes. If the images on the path are worshipped then we stop short, for this is idolatry, a veil across the face of Truth.

The Perennial Philosophy is for our education. It teaches that many things and actions in the universe result from a few principles. From a variety of related experiences we abstract a common principle and then use it. Principles are real and permanent. We do not invent them when we formulate them. For a purposeful life we require objective and subjective activity. Education literally means educing ideas from the all-knowing ground of Self. We learn about ideas and principles, then if we are wise, we apply them to enhance our lives.

A student of the Perennial Philosophy engages in the true education of the soul. The starting point is human psychology, the science of the soul, for we are each a soul. Metaphysical truths are presented as practical ideals to live by. Their effectiveness for moral and rational living individually and collectively is confirmed by experience. Our aim is to examine our subjective life objectively and our objective life subjectively. Then we shall recognise each prison that we considered to be enlightenment when we entered it.

Practical knowledge and scientific facts do not tell us the purpose and meaning of life. It is certainly not to gratify the desires aroused by extreme materialism - The badge of the wealthy nations. We know more and we can do more than ever before. How are we using our knowledge and skills? The perennial philosophy teaches that we are one body of mankind. If a part is sick then the whole body will suffer, each part in its own way.

A mind in the grip of materialism is like a sword in a stone. But it is ready for us to withdraw when we know that reason is rightfully our God-given weapon. It is for each of us to use in the fight against our own ignorance. It clears a pathway to intuition, that direct perception of truth that is the gift of God to the pure in heart and mind.

To become fully conscious of the Macrocosm we have to open all our 'eyes' to the many levels that produce and maintain the physical realm. This is possible because we are each a microcosm, and have a point of contact at every level of the Macrocosm. We apprehend the Macrocosm with our total being. Then we see things as they really are and not merely as they appear to be. With this gift, every shred of fantasy and illusion is stripped from consciousness, and fear, anger and glamour are seen in their true identity as products of the emotions. Commonplace things and events have a new significance and a personal relevance that transforms consciousness. With mind and heart purified the Soul is free to know and to express its true nature and purpose.

The instruments of learning originate in the powers of the Soul, not as activities but as the center of the Soul's being, from its spiritual ground. "The Deep calls to the Deep." The Divine Immanence in every human being reaches out to bring into our

consciousness the Immanence in every portion of the universe. There is no where that God is not, except in our undeveloped consciousness.

The Perennial Philosophy is Divine Love Wisdom and Power planted in every human soul as a seed. Germinated, it grows into the love of Wisdom that qualifies each of us to grow to full stature - to love the good in all things, and to act providentially. It empowers each human Soul to live with the principles and laws that order the universe. It is above all, a school of Love and Affinity with the Creator and His Creation.

That art thou.

Notes
1 The Chaldean Oracles are helpful when considering the Creation in Time and Space.
2 This is discussed by Martin Lings in "The Sacred Art of Shakespeare", Ch. 3 Page 15. Pub. Inner Traditions.

OUR LOSS

Guy Wyndham-Jones

To realize our loss is yonder's gain,
May not bring succour or relief from pain,
When breath itself seems to perpetuate
The shocking gap death wills to generate,
Between the departed and the left behind -
A constant legacy of human kind.
Nor does there ever seem to be a time
When death is welcome as a good sublime;
Too young, too old, too healthy, too infirm,
Too premature to end this earthly term,
Are all the cries throughout our history -
The cries of torment and of misery.
Yet from an overview it can be seen
All that has happened and what might have been,
If all our ardent wishes were fulfilled,
Those of the wise, the clever, and unskilled.
But this the precinct of the Gods remains,
To know what would have been, what earthly gains
And losses benefit the human soul,
What truly tends her nearer to her goal.
And thus the loss of one beloved and true,
The Gods decree, from wisdom's overview,
Is finite, for a time - the loss will end,
And re-united will be friend to friend,
And lover to the loved, in time to see,
That death is granted by divinity
As true re-birth of life and purity,
The path to lasting peace - serenity.

Some Thoughts on a Chaldean Fragment concerning Death

John Bee

There is a curious fragment of the Chaldean Oracles which has caused some disagreement between its translators: it is also open to misunderstanding because of a religious concept which has come into focus in recent times. The fragment reads, in Greek, "βι σωμα λιποντων ψυχαι κααρωταται." (Fragment no. 27 in the recent edition of the Thomas Taylor Series - p. 13 in both the first and the second editions - and number 159 in the Majercek translation.)

Thomas Taylor translates this fragment as "those souls that leave the body with violence are most pure" while Majercek translates with a very different "because the souls of men who have left the body by force are accursed"! Majercek in her notes discusses the word καρωτατοι, "accursed" - and καρωται, "most pure" either of which could have been the original word used and which is the cause of the very different translations. She mentions, too, Lewy's interpretation that the fragment is concerned with "mystic voluntary suicide" but although Lewy comes closest to the meaning here, Majercek dismisses it because Dodds makes a very reasonable - but irrelevant - distinction between theurgic death and suicide. We need to go back and re-examine the fragment and its implications.

The word βι is, I think, the word which is actually causing the problem here: Liddell & Scott give this entry for the word:

"1 Bodily strength, force, power, might, especially of men and animals, also of winds; 2 in Homer . . . frequently of strong men, bi Hraklheij [mighty Heracles] . . . but also strength of wind." The entry ends by quoting Xenophon, who uses the word in a phrase which translates as "to make a thing one's own *perforce*."

What we need to see here then is that in the fragment bi can mean strength, rather than violence, and that actually what it is referring to is the strength of the soul which is to leave the body, so that a full translation of the fragment would read "the souls that leave the body by *[their own] strength* are the most pure." This certainly removes the possibility that the fragment can be connected with the idea that those that die on the battlefield are more pure than those that die through sickness: the idea that paradise awaits those who have embraced the philosophy of violence is not supported by the Oracle.

If we are to accept my interpretation of the fragment we need to look at what theurgic death really is, since this is so obviously misunderstood by Majercik. In such situations it is always good to return to Plato as our starting point, and in this case much material from the *Phaedo* is of importance: Socrates (at 64a) says in this dialogue "Those who are conversant with philosophy in a proper manner seem to have concealed from others that the whole of their study is nothing else than how to die and be dead" and later (at 67e) "those who philosophize rightly will meditate how to die and to be dead will be to them of all men a thing the least terrible." From here Socrates moves his disciples to consider that philosophers alone are able to recognise and pursue what is true, and in particular true virtue, and says (at 69c) that "true virtue

is a purification from every thing of this kind [shadowy appearances] and temperance and justice, fortitude, and prudence itself, are each of them a certain purification. And those who instituted the mysteries for us appear to have been by no means contemptible persons, but to have really signified formerly, in an obscure manner, that whoever descended into Hades uninitiated, and without being a partaker of the mysteries, should be plunged into mire; but that whoever arrived there, purified and initiated, should dwell with the Gods."

In philosophy we approach every manifested idea and strip away the clothing of particularity: the philosopher sees particular instances of justice, for example, and looks for the essential idea of justice - the universal which particulars embody. We seek, then, the very soul of justice rather than any particular manifestation of it, understanding that once Justice Herself is with us our lives will be, by the power of the Goddess Dike, just. But this movement which strips away particularity - true philosophy - carries with it many of the pains which we associate with death, especially when it is our own soul which we seek: the removal of illusion is often the most unnerving of activities, and demands the exercise of fortitude. It requires, of course, the other primary virtues: temperance, by which we ensure that our desires are properly directed according to right reason; wisdom, by which we are able to act as intellectual beings; and justice, by which we are able think and act in a balanced way.

It is the exercise of virtues as an integral part of philosophy which makes true Platonism so distinct from philosophy as taught in the vast majority of modern institutions. This is especially the case when these virtues are moved inwards and bind the meditative and contemplative processes of the human soul to their divine paradigms. How is this accomplished? I think the dialogues of Plato give us a very clear hint: in most of the dialogues after the initial scene-setting and establishment of a theme there is a central section in which the logical faculties of the student are given proper exercise, and then once this has been accomplished there is a usually a mythological re-enactment which allows the intuitive faculty of the soul to be unfolded. Each of these two different approaches are essential to the philosopher: either one without the other is likely to produce at best a half-formed wisdom which is likely to be discovered when life presents one of its major trials.

In our inductive thinking we start with the outward manifestation of an idea and remove the initial layer of its "clothing" and arrive at a more essential understanding of the idea. This understanding may serve us for some time before we are ready to remove the next layer; with good fortune we are prompted to do this through the questioning of a Socrates. Otherwise we may get forced into this process by hard circumstances. Of course the true philosophic training should lead to every human being becoming his or her own questioner, so that nothing escapes such philosophic examination. At each stage we leave something of the body (that is, the outward manifestation) behind, and die a small death.

But our deductive thinking can start with the very highest and universal ideas - the very light of the Gods - which can be traced downwards towards particular manifestation. Here we must begin with the worship of the Gods, for to attempt to start with the highest without proper worship only invites the purification of the god Hubris. In worship, again, we cast away the smallness of self in order to turn to the Self who illuminates the universe - we die to our merely personal desires and find the supra-personal self.

In each case the philosopher must undergo a loss before a greater gain is made. Small concepts must be extinguished in order that great ideas can be received; the illusion of what we think we are must be surrendered in order to find out what we truly are.

The philosophic death and the theurgic death (the one arising as thoughts move inward, the other arising as we accept the overshadowing of the Gods in worship) have nothing to do with the literal death of the body. As Porphyry says in his *Auxiliaries to the Perception of Intelligibles* (7-9): "The soul is bound to the body by a conversion to the corporeal passions; and again liberated by becoming impassive to the body. That which nature binds, nature also dissolves: and that which the soul binds, the soul likewise dissolves. Nature, indeed, bound the body to the soul; but the soul binds herself to the body. Nature, therefore, liberates the body from the soul; but the soul liberates herself from the body. Hence there is a twofold death; the one, indeed, universally known, in which the body is liberated from the soul; but the other peculiar to philosophers, in which the soul is liberated from the body. Nor does the one entirely follow the other." The death through which the soul liberates herself from the body is not necessarily coincident with the physical death, and it is quite possible for the theurgic philosopher to become impassive to the body while still inhabiting it.

Damascius in his *Commentary on the Phaedo* (I, 51) picks up on the phrase that Socrates uses twice - "to die and to be dead" and points out that to die is not the same as to be dead; he suggests that the carthartic virtues are the province of the philosopher who is "to die" but the theoretic virtues are those which are exercised by the philosopher who "is dead." In the Chaldean fragment we are looking at the process of (philosophically) dying and so, naturally, the Oracle says that the soul who leaves the body by her own strength is "most pure" - the word cathartic meaning, of course, purifying. Once the reader stops thinking in terms of the literal death, the meaning of the Oracle is clear and concise.

One final point, which students of the highest philosophy may like to consider is that the word βι is so often used to indicate a strong wind. Now the original meaning of psyche, soul, was breath, or wind: how perfectly the Chaldean theurgists describe the object which must purify itself.

CRITO on Prudence, is from the Physical Eclogues of Stobæus

God fashioned man in such a way as to render it manifest, that he is not through the want of power, or of deliberate choice, incapable of being impelled to what is beautiful in conduct. For he implanted in him a principle of such a kind as to comprehend at one and the same time the possible and the pre-eligible; so that man might be the cause of power, and the possession of good, but God of impulse and incitation according to right reason. On this account also, he made him tend to heaven, gave him an intellective power, and implanted in him a sight called intellect, which is capable of beholding God

The Divergent Uses of Greek Philosophical Terms By Platonic Philosophy and Modern Psychology: Two Illustrations

Robert K. Clark

While a number of Greek philosophical terms have been adopted by modern psychology, the manner in which they are utilized by psychologists differs considerably from what Platonic philosophers understood them to mean. Perhaps the most well-known example is the word *archetype*. [(1)] In this essay two other terms will be briefly considered: *daimon* (or *daemon*) and *psyche*.

At first glance, the use of the word daimon in modern psychology does not appear to be greatly different from the way in which it might have been understood in the Graeco-Roman world. For the ordinary man, the daimon was a driving power which brought about events in his life which were unforeseen and not consciously chosen.[(2)] In a similar vein, Carl Jung stated that:

> The Greek words daimon and daimonion express a determining power which comes upon man from outside, like providence or fate, though the ethical decision is left to man.[(3)]

For Plato and Socrates, the daimon was not a determining power, but rather a divine *guardian* and *guiding* power. In *The Apology*, after Socrates has been condemned to death, he addressed those who had voted to acquit him:

> I think of you as my friends and I wish to show you the meaning of what has now happened to me. For to me, judges - and in calling you judges I am calling you rightly - something wonderful has taken place. For previously the familiar divinatory voice of the daimon always spoke to me quite frequently and opposed me even in very small things if I was about to do something I should not rightly do. And now there has happened to me that which might be considered and is generally thought to be the greatest of evils. But the divine sign opposed me neither when I left my home in the morning, nor when I was coming up here to the court, nor when I was about to say anything. And yet on other occasions it stopped me many times in the middle of speaking, but now, in this matter, it has opposed me in neither my deeds nor my words. What, then, do I suppose to be the cause of this? I will tell you. That which has happened to me seems to me to be good, and those of us do not conceive rightly who think that death is an evil. That which, to me, is a clear proof of this has occurred. For the familiar sign would surely have opposed me if I had not been about to do something good.[(4)]

There are marked points of agreement in these passages, including the recognition that the daimon is a power connected to, but distinct from, oneself and that, whatever the daimon's promptings, ethical or moral decision-making remains the province of the individual. In another passage, however, Jung wrote:

> On closer inspection one finds, however, that the civilized man of antiquity, such as Socrates, still had his daemon and there was a widespread and natural belief

> in superhuman beings who, we would suppose today, were personifications of projected unconscious contents.[5]

This conception is given further exposition by the psychotherapist Dr. Rollo May, who considered that:

> The daimonic is any natural function which has the power to take over the whole person. Sex and eros, anger and rage, and the craving for power are examples. The daimonic can be either creative or destructive and is normally both. . . .The daimonic is obviously not an entity but refers to a fundamental, archetypal function of human experience.[6]

In being thus possessed, Jung concludes that:

> The daemon throws us down, makes us traitors to our ideals and cherished convictions - traitors to the selves we thought we were.[7]

Thus, in modern psychology, daimons are considered to be a natural function of a person which can take them over, a personification of one's own projected unconscious, certainly not an entity in itself, much less a divine guide, as Socrates considered his daimon to be. To a Platonist, on the other hand, the daimon is a metaphysical, ontological reality, not a projection of our unconscious. In modern terms, some might equate it with the guardian angel or spirit guide.[8] Philo, indeed, equated daimons with angels, when he spoke of those

> . . .who are absolutely pure and excellent, who have received a greater and more divine spirit, having never craved for earthly things, but are lieutenants of the ruler of all, like ears and eyes of the great king, beholding and hearing all things. They are called daimons by other philosophers, but the Sacred Word is accustomed to call them angels.[9]

As was the case with Socrates, the daimon of Plotinus, the great third century Platonic philosopher-mystic, was a close companion and guide. Porphyry, one of Plotinus' disciples, recorded that

> From birth Plotinus had something more than did others. An Egyptian priest who had come to Rome and made his acquaintance through a friend wanted to give an exhibition of his wisdom and asked Plotinus to come see his own attending daimon evoked. Plotinus having readily consented, the evocation took place in the temple of Isis, for the Egyptian said that this was the only pure place in Rome. When the daimon was summoned before their very eyes, a god came who was not of the order of daimons and the Egyptian said: 'Blessed are you who have a god for a daimon and not a companion of a lower order!'. . .Plotinus thus had as a companion one of the more divine daimons, and he kept his divine eye continuously raised towards this companion.[10]

While it has been observed that daimon is a vague word in the long history of Greek literature and culture from before Homer well into the early centuries of Christianity,[11] it was given much clearer and exact expression by philosophers in the Platonic tradition. Thus Apuleius defined daimons as follows:

> Indeed, to comprehend them in a definition, daimons are in the class of living beings, rational in nature, passive[12] in soul, aerial in body and eternal in time. Of these five properties which I have mentioned, the first three belong to us as well as them, the fourth is peculiar to them, and the last they have in common with the immortal gods.[13]

Daimons were generally understood to be beings hierarchically posterior to the gods and prior to heroes and men.[14] The Pythagoreans exhorted one to

> Honor first the immortal gods, in the order established by custom. Revere the oath. Pay reverence next to the benevolent heroes and the daimons of the underworld.[15]

For a Platonist, the daimon was a protector and guide, acting not from without, but from within. This interior guidance and aid could bring about a great illumination and upliftment to one who was receptive to it. As Proclus wrote:

> It must be said that Socrates primarily in his own discursive reason and in his knowledge of reality benefited from the inspiration of his daimon, who awakened him to divine love; and secondarily, that even concerning the things of life it restored and regulated his providential care for those less perfect; and, as far as the daimon's own activity is concerned, that he received the light proceeding from it not only in his discursive reason or in his opinionative power, but in his subtle body,[16] the daimonic illumination spreading suddenly through every part of his life and then moving sense perception itself. For it is evident that although the activity of the daimon is the same, reason benefits from it in one way, imagination in another, and sense perception in another, and each of the elements which constitute us is affected and moved by the daimon in a distinct way. Therefore the voice did not act on Socrates from without, as an impression, but from within, the inspiration, having traversed his whole soul and penetrated as far as the organs of sense perception, finally became a voice, discerned by the consciousness rather than by sense perception; for such are the illuminations of good daimons and of the gods. [17]

The conception of psyche or soul is also quite different in modern philosophy and Platonic philosophy. For Jung, the psyche is "the totality of all psychic processes, conscious as well as unconscious".[18] In fact, Jung made a distinction between soul and psyche:

> By soul, on the other hand, I understand a clearly demarcated functional complex that can best be described as a 'personality'. [19]

While, as it has been pointed out,[20] Jung's use of Greek terminology was intended to delineate the area of interest for analytical psychology, rather than philosophy, no true Platonic philosopher could accept this interpretation of psyche as representing the reality which the word should convey. To the Platonist, psyche or soul is not a compendium of processes, but the substanding principle (*hypostasis*)[21] which allows psychic processes to occur. It is not a personality, but the principle which substands personality.

From a Platonic perspective the psyche - the soul - is a unity or oneness,[22] a principle of life,[23] self-vital,[24] self-motive,[25] immortal,[26] participating in eternity by reason of its being (*ousia*) and in time by reason of its activity (*energeia*).[27] Indestructible and imperishable, incorporeal and separable from body, [28] it is soul which makes us what we are - human beings.[29] Thus the meaning of the Delphic maxim "Know Thyself" is know your soul.[30] As souls, we have the capacity to ascend beyond the corporeal and limited to that which is truly spiritual, lasting and real. The vista which unfolds before us is as beautiful as it is real, if we but look. As Plotinus wrote:

> What then is the way? What are the means? How may one behold this ineffable beauty which remains within its holy sanctuaries and does not come without

where the profane may see it? Let whoever is able arise and follow within. Close your eyes and exchange this way of seeing for another, and awaken that vision which all possess but few use.

What does this inner vision see? When it is but newly awakened it is not able to look at that which is too bright. So the soul herself must become accustomed first to look at beautiful pursuits, then at beautiful works, not those which the arts produce, but those of men of good repute. Then look at the soul of those who produce the beautiful works. How, then, may one see the beauty of a good soul? Withdraw into yourself and look. And if you do not yet see yourself as beautiful, just as the maker of a statue which must become beautiful cuts away, smoothes, polishes and cleans until beauty is revealed in the face of the statue, so too must you cut away the excess, straighten the crooked, brighten that which was dark, and never cease working on your statue until the godlike splendor of virtue shines out on you, until you see temperance seated on its stainless throne.

If you have become this, and see it, and dwell within yourself in purity, having no hindrance to becoming one, with nothing else mingled inwardly with yourself, wholly yourself, nothing but true light, not measured by size, nor circumscribed into limitation by shape, nor increased by magnitude into boundlessness, but unmeasured in every way, because greater than all measure and superior to every quantity; if you see that you have become this, then you have now become vision. You may be confident then, for you have already ascended and need a guide no longer. Gaze intently and see![31]

NOTES

[1] In Jungian psychology an archetype is not considered to be an innate idea. "What above all stultifies understanding is the arrant assumption that 'archetype'means an inborn idea." Rather, "archetypes are typical forms of behaviour which, once they become conscious, naturally present themselves as *ideas* and *images*." C.G. Jung, *Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, 2nd edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 226. It has been claimed that "Jung's concept of the archetype is in the tradition of Platonic Ideas." Andrew Samuels, et. Al., *A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p. 27. However Ken Wilber, the well-known author of works on Transpersonal Psychology, concludes that "the Jungian *archetypes* are not the transcendental archetypes or Forms found in Plato, or Hegel, or Shankara, or Asanga and Vasubandhu. These latter Forms - the true archetypes, the ideal Forms - are the creative patterns said to underlie all manifestation and give pattern to chaos and form to Kosmos. . . .The Jungian archetypes, on the other hand, are for the most part the magico-mythic motifs and 'archaic images'. . .collectively inherited by you and me from past stages of development, archaic holons now forming part of our own compound individuality (they come from below up, not from above down). And coming to terms with these archaic holons - befriending and making conscious and differentiating/integrating these prototypes - is a useful endeavor, not because they are our transrational future, but because they are our prerational past." Ken Wilber, *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution* (Boston: Shambhala, 1995), pp. 247-48.

[2] Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), pp. 180-81.

[3] C.G. Jung, *Aion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 27.

[4] Plato, *The Apology* 31-32.

[5] C.G. Jung, *Civilization in Transition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 446.

(6) Rollo May, *Love and Will* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1969), p. 123. See also Stephen A. Diamond, *Anger, Madness and the Daimonic: The Psychological Genesis of Violence, Evil, and Creativity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

(7) C.G. Jung, *Symbols of Transformation* (New York: Pantheon, 1956), p. 357.

(8) "Spirit guide: A nonphysical entity, usually perceived as the Higher Self, an angel, a highly evolved being or group mind, or a spirit of the dead. The purpose of a spirit guide is to help and protect an individual, assist in spiritual development, or provide a source of inspiration." Rosemary Ellen Guiley, *Harper's Encyclopedia of Mystical & Paranormal Experience* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), p. 562.

(9) Philo, *On Dreams I* 138-141. Translation © 2005 by Robert K. Clark. All rights reserved.

(10) Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus* 10. 14-30. Translation © 2005 by Robert K. Clark. All rights reserved.

(11) Herbert Jennings Rose, "Nvmen Inest: 'Animism' in Greek and Roman Religion'", Harvard Theological Review, Volume XXVIII, October 1935, Number 4, p. 247. The present essay is not intended to address the entire history of the use of the word daimon. It is also not intended as a critique of modern psychology or to in any way suggest that its use of Greek terms is not valid or valuable within its own frame of reference.

(12) That which is passive is subject to passion, able to be moved, as by prayer. Apuleius specifically notes that daimons are passive, but that the gods are not. The reason for this is set forth by Sallust: "If anyone thinks, in accordance with reason and truth, that the gods are not subject to change, and then wonders how they rejoice in the good and reject the bad, how they are angry with sinners and become propitious when appeased, the answer is that deity neither rejoices (for that which rejoices also feels sorrow), nor is angry (for anger is a passion), nor is appeased by gifts (for it would be then be subject to pleasure). It is not right to think that deity should be moved to good or to evil by human affairs. The gods are always good and always give aid and never harm, being ever in the same changeless state. We, when we are good, are united to the gods through our likeness to them; but if we are bad we are separated from them because we are unlike them. And when we live according to virtue, we are close to the gods; but when we become evil, we cause them to become our enemies - not because they are angry, but because guilt prevents us from receiving the illuminations of the gods. If by prayers and sacrifice we obtain release from our guilt, we do not appease or change the gods, but by the acts we perform and by turning toward the divine we heal our evil and so again enjoy the goodness of the gods. To say that the gods turn away from the bad is like saying that the sun hides itself from the blind." Sallust, *On the Gods and the World* XIV. Translation © 2005 by Robert K. Clark. All rights reserved.

(13) Apuleius, *On the God of Socrates* 148. Translation © 2005 by Robert K. Clark. All rights reserved.

(14) See, for instance, Plato, *Republic* 392a and 427b; Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras* 31, 37 and 100; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* 8:23; Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras* 38.

(15) *Golden Verses of the Pythagoreans* 1-3. Translation ©2005 by Robert K. Clark. All rights reserved. I have translated *cthonious daimonas* as "daimons of the underworld". Hierocles, in his commentary, interprets this passage as referring to terrestrial (*ekikthonioi*) daimons. However, as it has been pointed out, "the adjective ' *cthonious*' has no other meaning than 'underground'." (Noel Anjoulat, *Le NÃ©o-platonisme Alexandrin d'HiÃ©rocles d'Alexandrie* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), p. 182. This has been noted elsewhere, as in the translation of the *Golden Verses of the Pythagoreans* by N. Rowe included in M. Dacier, *The Life ofPythagoras* (York Beach: Weiser, 1981), p. 202. See also Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Oxford

University Press, Eighth Edition, 1940) and A. Bailly, *Dictionnaire Grec-FranÃ§ais* (Paris: Hachette, 1950). The unusual order followed here, that of gods - heroes - daimons, is discussed in Johan C. Thom, *The Pythagorean Golden Verses* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 103-112.

(16) *pneuma*. While the general meaning of *pneuma* is "air", "breath" or "spirit", it acquired special meanings in the Neoplatonic and Stoic traditions. See G.R.S. Mead, *The Doctrine of the Subtle Body in Western Tradition* (London: Watkins, 1919), pp. 47 & 77; Robert Christian Kissling, "The ochema-pneuma of the Neoplatonists and the *de Insomniis* of Syrenius of Cyrene", *American Journal of Philology* 43 (1922), pp. 318-330; G. Verbeke, *L'Ã©volution de la doctrine de pneuma du Stoicisme Ã St. Augustin* (Paris: Louvain, 1945); and E.R. Dodds, tr. Proclus: *The Elements of Theology* , Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), Appendix B, pp. 313-321.

(17) Proclus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades of Plato* 80. 4-22. Translation

(18) C.G. Jung, *Psychological Types* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 463.

(19) *Ibid.*

(20) Andrew Samuels, et. al., *A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p. 115.

(21) Plotinus, *Ennead* v. 1, especially chapters 2 and 3.

(22) Plotinus, *Ennead* vi. 9. 1. 30.

(23) Proclus, *Elements of Theology* , proposition 188.

(24) Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, proposition 189; Plotinus, Ennead iv. 7. 9. 6-9.

(25) Plato, *Phaedrus* 245e-246c and *Definitions* 411c. (The latter work was probably not composed by Plato himself.)

(26) Plato, *Meno* 81; *Letters* VII 335A

(27) Plotinus, *Ennead* iv. 4. 15; Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, proposition 191.

(28) Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, proposition 186.

(29) Plato, *Alcibiades I* 130c.

(30) Plato, *Alcibiades I* 130e. See also Eliza Gregory Wilkins, *"Know Thyself" in Greek and Latin Literature* (New York: Garland, 1979), pp. 60-77.

(31) Plotinus, *Ennead* i. 6. 8. 25-27 through *Ennead* i. 6. 9. 1-24. Translation

Myth - the Final Phase of Platonic Education

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Plato and myth - the misunderstanding of the *Republic's* condemnation

I have entitled this article "Myth - the Final Phase of Platonic Education" for two reasons: firstly because I want to explore the fascinating area of Platonic myth; and secondly because I hope that the title will have provoked a small degree of surprise, since it is commonly held that Plato disliked myth.

Let's deal with this misunderstanding before moving on to the substance of my lecture. It arises principally from a well known passage from the Republic's second and third books in which poetical myths are denounced as misleading; Socrates, making a distinction between stories that are safe to tell to children and those that are grossly misleading, is asked which fables come into this latter category replies:

"Those which Hesiod and Homer tell us, and the other poets. For they composed false fables to mankind, and told them as they do still." [377d] The fables in which Gods and heroes are portrayed as doing evil are especially hurtful and "Not to be mentioned in our city" [378b] In this passage there is a series of criticisms quoting examples from the ancient poets and showing why they seem to distort important truths.

Looking more closely at the writings of Plato and seeing in them many myths, orthodox commentators concede that while Plato is for *philosophical* myths, they claim he is against *poetical* myths here attacked. Is this a valid analysis? I think not: as with all Platonic doctrinal statements we must look carefully at the context in which they are made.

In this passage of the *Republic* Socrates is especially concerned with the training of the young and ignorant - to the Greeks these terms are virtually interchangeable - and in other dialogues in which this is not an issue poetical myths and their makers are perfectly acceptable. A cursory look, for example, at the *Laws* will show Plato quoting Homer with approval at least five times (680a, 681e, 707a, 777a, 804a) - a little strange, then, according to the common understanding, if Plato exiles Homer from his city but cannot exile him from his writings. But while these references may be dismissed as a stemming from a inescapable literary tradition in which Plato found himself, we can find more positive evidence for his reverence for the ancient myths.

In the *Ion* [533c], for example, when Ion complains that while he can rhapsodise the works of Homer easily and with beauty he is unable to do so with other poets, Socrates - the critic of Homer in the *Republic* - says that the reason for this is that there is a power which descends from the Gods to great men and thence to others who, like Ion, use the works of these men. It is, he says, like a series of iron rings the first of which is attached to a magnet so that the power of the magnet passes on to all in the series. So here we have Socrates affirming the divine inspiration of Homer which is more powerful than the mere use of his human poetical powers - he is likened a little later to the priestesses of Cybele who "perform not their dances, while they have the free use of their intellect . . . . [but when] . . . . possessed by some divine power." The passage is finished [534e] with an unambiguous statement: "those beautiful poems are not human, nor the compositions of men; but divine, and the work of the Gods: and that poets are only the interpreters of the Gods, inspired and

possessed, each of them by a peculiar deity who corresponds to the nature of the poet."

In the *Phaedo* [69d] Plato uses the imagery of an Orphic myth concerning Dionysus and the Titans - a myth to which I will return later; but it is worth noting here that the words of Socrates are received in this dialogue by his closest disciples who had been initiated, as it were, into the truths of the deepest philosophy. And so we see emerging the opposite viewpoint concerning myth for those who have been properly educated - far from misleading, myth delivers the most important truths: this is also expressed in the *Laws* [658d] , the Guest says "But perhaps we *old men* should hear with the most pleasure the rhapsodist when properly handling the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, or some of the works of Hesiod, and should proclaim him the victor of all the others."

Indeed in the very section of the *Republic* [378a] in which myth-makers are being condemned, Socrates says of the stories concerning the castration of Uranos by Kronos, and the overthrow of Kronos by Zeus:

"For though these things were true, yet I should not imagine they ought to be so plainly told to the unwise and young, but ought much rather to be concealed. But if there were a necessity to tell them, they should be heard in secrecy, by a few as possible; after they had sacrificed not a hog, but some great and wonderful sacrifice, and thus the fewest possible might chance to hear them."

Now the hog was the sacrificial victim offered by those who attended the most outward of the mystery celebrations held at Eleusis: these celebrations were open to all - slave and freeman, the ignorant and the wise - the only qualifications were that the attender should be able to understand Greek, and be free from the impurities of murder. The deeper mysteries of the Eleusinian cult were for those who had undergone various initiations and the sanctuary was cleared of the uninitiated before they were celebrated. The words of Socrates, then, become quite clear - myths are properly the province of those who are able to appreciate their hidden truths: I would say that the "great and wonderful" sacrifice to which he refers is none other than the sacrifice of the self in the quest for spiritual truth - but whether this is too fanciful, we can be certain that it indicates that Plato considered myth an essential part of a deeper appreciation of truth.

Platonic dialogue - the use of myth to present a wholistic vision of truth

Let us move on, then, by considering the structure of Plato's dialogues: we can generalise and find three phases in most dialogues after a subject has been raised for consideration:

Firstly, there is a statement of accepted truth - a formula which encapsulates the best view of the subject from a traditional perspective, or an opinion held by a protagonist: in either case this corresponds to the first of three powers which Platonists held to be the range of human gnostic levels - in this case the level of opinion, which receives knowledge from external sources: it can affirm that something is, but cannot say why a thing is. It may also be seen as corresponding to the first stage of the mysteries, that of telete - one who has "sacrificed the hog" and who made an initial affirmation that there are mysteries, but cannot say what they are because the eductive process of mystical initiation has not be started.

Secondly, there is a rational examination of the original thesis: this usually constitutes the bulk of the dialogue. Here various positions undergo a dialectical process which

reveals the "why" of a thing; it is a separating out process which overcomes the misleading appearance of concepts by division, definition, demonstration and analysis. For example the bald statement that "war is beautiful" is found to be wanting: the exercise of bravery, the aiding of one's friends in war, the defence of the just, and so on are all things which make war appear to be beautiful; but the death and destruction which are a part of war is not beautiful. Once these things are separated out from each other the philosopher can think clearly about war, in contrast to the receivers of opinion who must accept the approximate generalisations of truth which the first gnostic level deals with. This level may seen as corresponding to the second level of initiation into the mysteries, muesis, literally the "closing of the eyes" which indicates that the reception of external data ceases and truths are discovered by a more inward process.

Thirdly, after the exercise of reason comes the third phase of Platonic dialogue: the telling of a myth. The dissection of the subject has left us like a busy forensic pathologist with many parts scattered around, but with no living body - much truth, but little beauty. It is for this reason that Plato uses myth, for myth is a moving thing to which the soul responds. The power of a story, as any parent knows - and indeed as any Hollywood producer knows - is that on hearing it virtually all humans begin to identify with the characters it contains and move with them in their trials and tribulations, in their failures and triumphs. Myth is perhaps the best way to bridge the objective-subjective divide that has done so much to damage the body of modern western thought. The third stage of the Eleusinian mysteries was called Epoptia literally "to inspect" - but, I think, meaning to contemplate in the most mystical manner; that is to say, it corresponds to those states described by eastern mystics in which the self is seen as an indivisible part of the great sweep of the universe.

Some scholars have commented on the power of mythic story to make this last jump in philosophic understanding: let me quote two:

G R Levy says in his introduction to the second edition of Stewart's *The Myths of Plato*, "In this [seventh] letter he [Plato] argues that the highest truths can never be written down, and that any such dissertation, if it existed, would fail to express its author's deepest knowledge. This bears some analogy to the methods . . . of Ch'an and Zen in the Far East, and the "ear-whispered teaching" of the "beyond" in Tibet. It simply explains the place of myth in Plato's philosophy, which calls upon the kind of consciousness that is outside logic." The use of the phrase "ear-whispered teaching" is interesting when one realises that the word myth is related to the Greek word for murmur - myth, then, can be understood as the initiatory story murmured in the ear of the prepared individual, rather than the more public utterances of the philosophic lecture.

Szlezak in his 1999 work *Reading Plato* adds his conviction that ". . . the ability of pictures and stories to depict a fact in its entirety and intuitively is an indispensable supplement to conceptual analysis."

What power then, is carried in seemingly innocent words of the Guest in the *Statesmen* [268e] before he introduces a myth - "Be as children, and listen."

One final statement from Socrates on the place of myth will, I think, suffice before moving on to look at the philosophic treatment of myth in the Platonic tradition. When faced with his own death, the noble Socrates seeks to turn it to the benefit of his closest companions and says [*Phaedo* 61d-e] of death and what lies beyond: "What I

have heard I will not enviously conceal from you. And perhaps it is becoming in the most eminent degree, that he who is about to depart thither should consider and mythologize about this departure: I mean, what kind of thing we should think it to be. For what else can such a one be more properly employed about, till the setting of the sun?"

Traditional, Orphic and Platonic myth

If we are to assume, then, that the properly educated philosopher studied myth - deepening the oral tradition and passing on in the seclusion of Academy's grove the living symbolic truth of the mythos - we must make some attempt to explore philosophically the mythological material we have to hand. We must, of course, recognise that an oral tradition, once its living channels are broken, is difficult to recover: it must say to us in that fine Shakespearean phrase "Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts" - although I think considerable help is at hand from the neoplatonists of late antiquity, who seemed to be moving much of the oral tradition into their writings in the face of the seemingly inevitable collapse of the old consensus of philosophic paganism, and together with it the failure of its oral tradition. While it can be argued that neoplatonism arose some 500 plus years after the life of Plato, the fact that their language, education and culture remained closely related to his own gives their insights into myth some weight.

So what kind of myth did Plato use in his Academy? We must, of course, use the dialogues at least as our starting point - it is, I think, safe to assume that they at least hint at the mythos which crowned the logos of the more openly taught philosophy. There is a degree of uncertainty here, because he makes it very clear in his writings that these don't speak plainly the deepest truths that he knows. We have already made reference via G R Levy, to the Seventh Letter, in which Plato writes: "Every worthy man will be very far from writing about things truly worthy . . . but the objects of his pursuit are situated in a beautiful region."

While in the *Phaedrus* [275d ff] he says: "That which is committed to writing contains something very weighty, and truly similar to a picture. For the offspring of a picture project as if they were alive; but, if you ask them any question, they are silent in a perfectly venerable manner. Just so with respect to written discourses, you would think that they spoke as if they possessed some portion of wisdom. But if, desirous to be instructed, you interrogate them about any thing which they assert, they signify one thing only, and this always the same. And every discourse, when it is once written, is every where similarly rolled among its audience, and even among those by whom it ought not to be heard; and is perfectly ignorant, to whom it is proper to address itself, and to whom not. But when it is faulty or unjustly reviled, it always requires the assistance of its father. For, as to itself, it can neither resist its adversary, nor defend itself.. . . But there is another discourse, and how much better and more powerful it is born than this . . . . that which, in conjunction with science, *is written in the soul of the learner*, which is able to defend itself, and which knows to whom it ought to speak, and before whom it ought to be silent."

What mythology is used in the dialogues is, then, only a very approximate guide to that used within the Academy "soul to soul" so to speak. However we can see three distinct kinds of myth within the writings of Plato:

Firstly, the type one might call philosophic myth - that which is the least misleading, and can be heard by those with a minimum of proper education. A good example of

this is the myth of Er which is related in the last book of the *Republic*. Er, a Pamphalian, is taken up after a battle as dead and placed on a funeral pyre with his fallen comrades; however before the pyre is lit at the appropriate time, he revives and relates the vision he had in his sojourn with the newly dead. He had accompanied the departing souls to their place of judgement in Hades, although he himself was not judged; some souls were to be purged in the lower realms of Hades, while others rise to the more blessed circles in which the rewards of a virtuous life were received. After this he sees the souls who are about to be incarnated in earthly bodies and watches as they choose their forthcoming lives - each one choosing according to his degree of ignorance and knowledge. As they grasp their life among those spread like flowers before the throne of Necessity so their guiding daemon leads them to the three sisters who spin, measure and cut the thread of their self-chosen fate. Finally the host of the soon-to-be incarnated souls are taken across the plain of Lethe (the word means forgetting) a hot and unshaded plain until in the evening they come to the river that runs through it. All are obliged to drink from this river; some drink of it deeply and others but little; and in the measure that they drink of these waters, so they forget their pre-terrestrial existence. After this they fall asleep until the middle watch of the night when a storm of thunder and lightning scatters the souls into the world of bodies. The *Republic's* enquiry into how a city is to be organised was originally prompted because, as Socrates says, it is difficult to see how justice operates within the individual with all his or her faculties and powers (see 368c - 369b), so that using a city as an analogy for the individual is considered to be the best way to examine the subject. The long dialogue builds up series of dialectic investigations into the relationship of the parts; the myth of Er brings the central point of the investigation back into focus - it shows the soul as a decision-making being moving through different phases of a great cycle of lives: it is the ability of the soul to make intelligent and just decisions which must be cultivated.

Secondly, there is the Orphic initiatory myth. Morgan in his recent book *Platonic Piety* has explored Plato's connections with the Pythagorean and Orphic schools which were strong in Magna Graeca (southern Italy) - the very area which the Epistles tell us Plato had much to do with. The clearest reference to the Orphic myths (which Classicists consider to be a separate strand of mythology from the more mainstream tradition - it is a deviant mythology, to use their term) is a quote in the Phaedo [69d]:

"For it is said by those who write about the mysteries,
The thyrsus-bearers numerous are seen,
But few the Bacchuses have always been."

The myth to which this refers is that of the dismemberment of Dionysus - a universal myth which is worth retelling.

Cadmus, king of Thebes, had four daughters: Semele, Ino, Agave and Autoneon. Of these four, the beauty of Semele attracted Zeus who lay with her and implanted his immortal seed in the mortal woman. But Hera, the first wife of the King of the Gods, was moved by jealousy and planned the destruction of her husband's lover, as well as the child which she carried within her womb: to this end she planted in Semele's mind a doubt as to the real identity of the father of her child. The only sure proof that he was indeed Zeus, was, Hera suggested, that he should appear in his true form, rather than the disguise of mortality which Zeus had put on to lie with Semele. Thus it was that the princess asked of Zeus a favour, to which he agreed; she

then demanded that he appear before her unveiled by illusion. Unable to refuse what he had promised, he was forced to comply, and stood before Semele in the full heat and force of his lightning and thundrous essence: as no mortal can withstand such untempered power, she was immediately destroyed. But Zeus took the unborn child from her disintegrating body while cooling tendrils of ivy protected him from the intense heat of the Father, who, taking the role of mother, sewed him into his thigh.

So it was that Dionysus was born a second time, from the miraculous womb of his Father, but still Hera's jealousy pursued the child, who was being cared for by nymphs: some sources say these nymphs became afraid and others that they were driven insane, and so he was given into the keeping of his aunt, Ino, who brought him up in a grotto. In an attempt to keep him from the destructive power of Hera, Ino dressed him as a girl and later, Zeus disguised him as a goat.

As he grew into a youth, Zeus placed him on his throne, gave him a sceptre and announced him to be the next ruler of the world - but this served only to rekindle the anger of Hera and she incited the Titans, the gigantic divine offspring of an earlier generation of Gods, to capture the boy Dionysus.

The Titans ensnared Dionysus by disguising themselves as Bacchae (followers of Dionysus), and presenting him with games and playthings - for he was little more than a child: the toy which finally trapped the divine child was a mirror. Once captured the pretend Bacchae gave him not a sceptre - as befits the ruler of the world - but a thyrsus made of a fennel stalk. The monstrous giants then tore him to pieces and prepared to devour him; his torn members were first boiled in water and then roasted over a fire. But while they feasted on the cooked flesh, Zeus, alerted by the rising steam, and perceiving the cruel act, hurled his thunderbolt at the Titans. There followed a battle between the titanic giants and the Gods, during which the uneaten heart of Dionysus was gathered up by Athene; the Titans were defeated and from their burning ashes mankind was generated

Dionysus shown on a throne and being presented with the enslaving mirror

Afterwards, Zeus commanded Apollo, Dionysus' half-brother, to bury the scattered limbs of the slain youth according to custom, and this being done, Dionysus was regenerated from the preserved heart by Athene; having been restored to pristine life and vigour, he took his place among the Olympic Gods - the only one born of a mortal woman.

According to the later Platonists this Orphic myth has Dionysus as symbolising the effect of the descent into generation of the intellectual, or spiritual, soul. In the eternal realms she is a whole, but in life as a soul connected with body she become separated out, and subject to death and decay. The Thyrsus, a stalk of fennel which is hollow and divided into chambers (and incidentally the stalk in which Prometheus brought down the fire of heaven for the benefit of mortal man) also represents division. The Titans - the "ti" of the word means, in Greek, particularity - are the material powers which draw down the soul from her contemplation of universals in her pristine condition towards the involvement of the particularities of the sense-perceptive life. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates correlates the thyrsus-bearers - those who hold the false sceptre - with the many who have not philosophized rightly, and who are, therefore, trapped in the world of apparent truth. The few Bacchuses, in contrast, are those who have been purified, initiated and healed - reworked, if you like, by Wisdom and Light and raised to the Olympic heights. Dionysus has, as you will notice, three births: one from the womb of Semele, one from the thigh of Zeus; and one from the ashes of the fire by the wisdom of Athene - an interesting correlation may well be seen between these three births and the three phases of the Platonic dialogues, as already mentioned.

Dionysus, with a thyrsus as sceptre

Finally there are the myths which are from the mainstream of the Greek tradition - references to which abound throughout the dialogues. The *Cratylus* covers most of the common names of the traditional pantheon and discusses the attributes of the Gods and heroes so revered by the Greeks. Since the two epics of Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* , are the most continuous narrative from this tradition I propose, very briefly, to follow the neoplatonists in a symbolic analysis of these two stories - if you are interested in modern scholarship in this area I would recommend Robert Lamberton's *Homer the Theologian* as a reasonably comprehensive survey of the history of philosophical interpretation of Homer; but for an example of this at work, Porphyry's *On the Cave of the Nymphs* which together with Thomas Taylor's sympathetic notes is essential reading in this area [see volume II of the Thomas Taylor Series - *Select Works of Porphyry*].

To begin, then, what is the general symbolic thrust of the two epics? According to Hermeas in his Scholia on the *Phaedrus* of Plato, the *Iliad* is a symbolic representation of the descent of the soul into matter. He points out that the Greek word for the city of Troy, Ilium, is derived from the word for mud - and for this reason the Greeks, who represent rational souls are called foreigners, while the Trojans who represent the irrational souls which in neoplatonsim animate the irrational creatures of natures are called genuine - that is to say the proper inhabitants of this muddy ball. Now in the *Phaedrus* Plato says that the human soul

descends into a terrestrial life because she pursues beauty, but cannot sustain her station in the heavens because of her mixed nature and so pursues not Beauty herself in the eternal, but its sensible reflection (see the myth of the chariots of the Gods and souls). In the *Iliad* the Greeks possess beauty, in the form of Helen, but cannot sustain their continued possession of her because of deception: she is stolen away by Paris and must dwell in the lower world of Ilium.

Paris abducts Helen - note the representation of Eros (desire) between the two

The Greeks, therefore, are obliged to leave their true homeland and spend a complete cycle of time - 10 years - toiling in a siege in order to recapture the beauty which is so desirable. The abduction of Helen, by the way, was granted by Aphrodite to Paris as a reward for choosing her before Hera and Athena in the famous judgement of Paris: these three divinities represent the three principal powers of the soul as outlined in the *Phaedrus* : Athena being the wisdom of reason, Hera being rulership of controlling volition, and Aphrodite being the impulse of desire. In the dialogue the soul is portrayed as having a winged chariot driven by a charioteer (reason) and impelled by two horses (volition and desire) - it is this second horse which gives the soul so much trouble and causes her to lose her heavenly orbit.

Agamemnon, sacrifices his daughter Iphegeneia

The leader of the Greeks, Agamemnon, is obliged to sacrifice his own daughter before the winds will take the Greeks across the ocean to Ilium: an image, perhaps, of the loss of the soul's pristine innocence as a precursor to the fall into matter. Once the sacrifice is made, however, the foreigners are able to cross the ocean - which stands for the order of generation - and set about their seemingly endless war. For reasons of time I will cut to the chase here and skip to the end of the *Iliad*, rather than go into the detail of the siege. For all their bravery and labours the siege seems to be deadlocked: while the plain of Troy is under the control of the Greeks, they are unable to take the city itself and the prize of Helen within. Ultimately the deadlock is broken not by force of arms, but by the cunning of Odysseus: here then is an image of the triumph of the soul when she turns again, even in the apparently irrational world, to the faculty of reason - which our cunning hero, beloved by Athena, represents. But here we must look at how precisely Odysseus arranges the siege's successful conclusion: the famous wooden horse again has a linguistic clue for us - and a surprising one at that. The Greek word for wood in hyle - but this word also means matter: what does this tell us? A common position for those who have begun to see the universe in terms of spirit and matter, and the soul as a primarily spiritual thing, is to think in terms of escaping the material world: it is easy to misinterpret Platonism as having this position - and certainly easy to read the strand of neoplatonism which follows Plotinus as this. From this viewpoint the only reason for the soul to descend into matter is in order to re-ascend as soon as possible: but this is not the complete picture by any means. A careful study of the Timaeus (esp. 41b - 43a) shows that in the creation of the manifested universe the Demiurge, according to Plato, instructs the junior gods (that is to say, the gods which rule the mundane world) to create human souls, woven with mortal and immortal threads, in order that the universe may be complete and beautiful. We see, then, that while Plato requires us to free our souls from the distortions of the sense-life, he does not require us to reject the mundane: indeed, in the discussion which follows the analogy of the Cave (Rep. VII, 519c ff) when discussing the fate of the freed cave-dweller, who has obtain the contemplative vision of the sun - in other words fate of the philosopher who has risen to the contemplation of the One before all being - he says this:

It is our business then, said I [i.e. Socrates], to oblige those of the inhabitants who have the best geniuses, to apply to that learning which we formerly said was the greatest, both to view The Good, and to ascend that ascent; and when they have ascended, and sufficiently viewed it, we are not to allow them what is now allowed them.

What is that? [asks Glauco]

To continue there, said I, and be unwilling to descend again to those fettered men, or share with them in their toils and honours, whether more trifling or more important

Shall we then, said he, act unjustly towards them, and make them live a worse life when they have it in their power to live a better?

You have again forgot, friend, said I, that this is not the legislator's concern, in what manner any one tribe in the city shall live remarkably happy; but this he endeavours to effectuate in the whole city, connecting the citizens together; and by necessity, and by persuasion, making them share the advantage with one another with which they are severally able to benefit the community: and the legislator, when he

makes such men in the city, does it not that he may permit them to go where each may incline, but that himself may employ them for connecting the city together.

Now the city stands for the whole made up of parts: it is both an image of man - soul, mind, will, heart, powers, faculties and bodies - as well as the manifested cosmos with all its parts. Plato is looking for philosophers not to live in some hermit's cave, but to rule as kings. In other words the ultimate paradox of the human condition is that we should have our spiritual or intellectual eye free from the distortion of matter, but our pure vision is to be used in the service of the perfect manifestation of the pattern which the Demiurge looks to in the Eternal. The escape from the limitations of matter is, then, to enter willingly into matter. So now we can see that the Greeks escape from the seemingly unending siege of Troy by entering the hylic horse - a sacrifice to Athena - is the very image of the soul entering willingly into the heart of matter in order to bring to it her own measure of reason. After this subterfuge the "strangers in a strange land" have, once more, been united with beauty. As an interesting aside, a play written by Euripedes has Helen living in Egypt while the siege of Troy takes place, and Paris merely living with a phantom image of the stolen queen. This is very much a Platonic concept - it matches exactly Diotima's description of mundane beauty in the *Symposium* . It is reliably reported that Euripedes and Socrates were good friends, and some scholars have gone so far as to suggest that his latter plays were written in collaboration with Socrates.

Let me now turn to the *Odyssey*: just as the *Iliad* was said to be the story of the descent of the soul, so the subsequent epic is the story of the soul's re-ascent - and just as the cycle of the descent takes 10 years, so does the reascent. Odysseus starts out from Troy with his ships, his numerous crew, and his share of the Trojan spoils; after the ten year siege he is naturally eager to return home. But he incurs the wrath of Poseidon, the ruler of the ocean - which as we have said before is symbolic of the order of generation - and so must go through many trials before he reaches his goal. This is as one might expect, because as we are all well aware, once one has become immersed in the swirling currents of generation it is by no means easy to free oneself: whether we see this in terms of karma, or in terms of psychological development the message is still the same - we have to move through what seems to be a great deal of suffering before we released from the ties that bind us. As the journey passes through its various phases - each of which is symbolically explored in Thomas Taylor's essay *On the Wanderings of Ulysses* - Odysseus' possessions are lost: his ships; his crew; and his plunder. This can be seen as an image of the removal of material illusion and attachment from the returning soul which, according to Platonic philosophy, is a necessary discipline if the eye of the soul is to be purified. Meanwhile his wife, Penelope, sits at home avoiding accepting any of the false suitors who would take his place: she does this by promising that once she has finished her wedding veil she will accept the hand of one of the suitors: she weaves by day and unpicks her handiwork by night - this is taken as symbolic of dialectical philosophy by the latter Platonists: an image of the construction of philosophic concepts which must be continually built up, inspected and reduced to their simple elements, before a new cycle of construction is started.

After the storms, the monstrous opponents, and dark magic of his various adventures, the last trial Odysseus must undergo is his encounter with Calypso: this is a mixture of pleasure and pain which gradually become more and more unbearable. Calypso, says Taylor, symbolises the faculty of imagination or phantasy - this is not quite reason, but yet not quite sense; for having crossed and recrossed the ocean of the

sense life it may seem that a haven has been reached - but gradually it dawns upon the wanderer that he is still not in that realm of pure intellect wherein the soul is truly happy. Taylor points out that the name Calypso is derived from which means "to cover as with a veil" - in other words this realm of phantasy, although a more inward thing than sense, still does not reveal the intelligible forms which are the soul's true objects of contemplation. Eventually, through the intervention of Hermes, the God of reason, Calypso is persuaded to release Odysseus, and he sets sail upon a raft -

And now rejoycing in the prosp'rous gales,
With beating heart Ulysses spread his sails;
Plac'd at the helm he sate, and mark'd the skies,
Nor clos'd in sleep his ever watchful eyes.
There view'd the Pleiads, and the northern team,
And great Orion's more refulgent beam,
To which around the axle of the sky
The bear revolving, points his golden eye;
Who shines exalted on th' aetherial plain,
Nor bathes his blazing forehead in the main.

For what is said here is in conformity to the stages through which the former cave dweller of the seventh book of the Republic must be led who passes from the darkness of the cave - material life - to the light of day - intellectual life. Before the final vision of the sun, says Socrates, the freed man will "more easily see what the heavens contain, and the heavens themselves, by looking in the night to the light of the stars and the moon, than by day looking on the sun, and the light of the sun." For by this, as Proclus well observes, "Plato signifies the contemplation of intelligibles, which the stars and their light are the imitations, so far as all of them partake of the form of the sun, in the same manner as intelligibles are characterised by the nature of the Good." That Homer is not describing a purely mortal activity can by seen by the fact that he says that this starry vigil is continued for 17 nights without Odysseus closing his eyes.

One last mighty storm is summoned by the Lord of the Oceans and even the rough raft is lost to our hero: he is washed up on the shores of Phaeacia utterly naked. That this country stands for the Platonic "intelligible realm" is conveyed by a number of correspondences: it is the first place Odysseus has come to in all the twenty years of siege and storm-tossed wanderings that is entirely beneficent and without the mixture of good and evil which is characteristic of the sensible world. The inhabitants of the land are god-like in their manners and environment - the entrance to king Alcinous' palace is guarded, for example, by

"Two rows of stately dogs on either hand,
In sculptur'd gold, and labour'd silver, stand.
These Vulcan form'd intelligent to wait
Immortal guardians at Alcinous' gate."

Further, during their feast the magic of the minstrel who sings of the siege of Ilium, brings to the mind of Odysseus the whole series of trials he has undergone since he left his homeland - just as one might imagine a soul newly arrived at a state of intellectual purity surveying in perspective the adventures it has undergone in the dream-like state of her earthly life in which it seemed that the material world was the all. The royal house of Phaeacia welcome Odysseus to their palace, feast him, hear his tear-stained story, and then replace the lost earth-born treasure of Troy with their finer gifts; finally they take him aboard their own ships to return him to Ithica, his

long-lost fatherland. In case we still don't realise that this noble race represent the inhabitants of the Intelligible realm, Homer describes their ships as "swift as thought."

After these experiences the cunning Odysseus of the outset is transformed into the wise Odysseus, -

O still the same Odysseus! (she rejoin'd,)
In useful craft successfully refined!

and on reaching the shore of his home, he enters the cave of the nymphs - read Porphyry for a detailed exposition of Homer's description of this place - and meets Athene, not disguised as in many other previous encounters, but as herself: her words to him are poignant:

Know'st thou not me; who made thy life my care,
Through ten years' wandering, and through ten years' war;
Who taught thee arts, Alcinous to persuade,
To raise his wonder, and engage his aid.

In now remains only for the long-exiled king to draw upon the bow which hangs upon his palace wall, and purge his kingdom of the insolent suitors with the Apollonic arrows, and to bring peace again to the land which is under his sovereignty. He is united to his father and he himself becomes god-like:

So Pallas his heroic form improves
With bloom divine, and like a god he moves!

The journey, then, of the soul is complete: she has been tempered by the toils of war in the material world; she has met with fortitude the trials of the ocean of generation; she has cultivated wisdom and entered the intellectual realm of pure forms; she has re-established justice within her own realm. All these steps are fully in conformity with the Platonic doctrine of virtue, or perhaps we should say that the doctrine is in conformity with the Homeric pattern of the Hero.

I hope this article has presented at least a primae facia case for the integral part that mythology played within the Platonic system of philosophic education; and that the examples I have touched upon will encourage a further exploration of the subject. Mythology is not reducible to logical analysis - not, at least, if we are to preserve it power to move the soul: nevertheless its flights start as we reach the summit of dialectic, and its insights can re-invigorate our rational life. Perhaps it is best to end with words from the Seventh Epistle:

"For a thing of this kind cannot be expressed by words like other disciplines, but by long familiarity, and living in conjunction with the thing itself, a light as it were leaping from a fire will on a sudden be enkindled in the soul, and there itself nourish itself."

The return of Odysseus

Greek Melian, 450 BCE