spirituality, see generally Snell. For the relation of the ancient city and its institutions to religion, see Fustel de Coulanges. More factual is Fowler, *The City-State;* his *Religious Experience* is also helpful. On the relation of philosophy to religion and the city, see Caird, an older but well-written work.

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# 14

# The Self in Ancient Religious Experience

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THE NOUN "SELF" IS *prima facie* embarrassing to the philosopher, since it seems to be little more than a hypostatized version of a reflexive and intensive pronoun. We may well ask, What is the difference between myself and my Self? How is either of these to be distinguished from me? The ancients were perhaps wiser in not rendering the equivalent Greek pronoun *autos,* or the Latin *ipse,* a substantive.

The present discussion is directed toward the place of the self in religious experience. Perhaps these perplexities may, for the moment, be suspended if we ask not after the definition but after the location of the substantive "self" in contemporary religious study. Three schools of thought presently address themselves to what purports to be the objective study of religion: structuralism, sociobiology, and depth psychology.[1] Of these, it is in the approach of depth psychology that the word "self" has its true currency.

The term "Self" (capitalized) is, for the purposes of that discipline, derived from its use by C. G. Jung and translates the German *das Selbst,*[2] a phrase that, on the face of it, does not yield much more sense than its English translation. In Jung the Self is the human being's objective (as opposed to the Ego as the subjective) identity.[3]

There are some solid reasons for not engaging the Jungian school on this subject. An encyclopedic survey would obviously be eclipsed by such debate, polemical or irenic. In addition, the depth psychologists are obsessed with the question of religious origins (as indeed are the other schools of secular religious study). It will not be the concern of the present article to seek by some reductive process the origins of Hellenic religious experience in primitive states of consciousness. We look to Greece not as a storehouse of primitive impulses but for a highly civilized approach to spiritual growth

and understanding. The Jungians are, of course, also interested in such development, but from the horizon of their particular understanding of consciousness. We may, however, unpack their use of the noun "self" in a way that will be useful for our present purposes.

If I in my maturity write an autobiography, I, as a boy of sixteen, will become an object of my present reflection. I may be amused at what seemed or were to that boy pressing or embarrassing concerns. I may also see the seeds of the man I have become. I might say that I am interpreting the ego of that boy with reference to the self, the person, who I have become. His experience of life was but a part of an integrity.

We might also define "self" as a person's project in life. I might, for example, want to be one of several possible selves: a physician, a lawyer, a professor, a poet, a lover, or a holy man. I select one or another of these goals and progress toward it, perhaps throughout my whole life. Of course, I may progress, or even unfold, toward such a goal without at first being aware that I am doing so. If "self" is defined in terms of life project, of the final intentionality (conscious or unconscious) of sensitivity, thought, and action, then we shall have something both of the scope and the economy that this discussion requires. After all, to talk of self in religious experience in terms of, let us say, humanity and the gods, would be to transgress all reasonable boundaries. If we are then to speak of life project in relation to the divine, we shall have, perhaps, a reasonable point of departure.

Depth psychology, like the other secular approaches to the study of religion, also claims objectivity. This does not mean to say that it does not attempt to study religion from within. Obviously a psychoanalytic attempt will do so. Their claim to objectivity interprets itself to exclude *ab initio* the existence of the divine as a proper subject of investigation. We shall see that the ancients entertained the question of life project in its divine dimension very seriously. Ultimately, the kind of reflection that this undertaking demands may be seen to consist in asking whether the project of a human life must have a divine origin and goal.

## The Life Story

In archaic Greek literature, the view of a human life, in the sense of life story (*bios*), falls easily within the compass of an understanding of "self" as we have defined it. A life may be interpreted only in its integrity. Thus, the motto "Count no man happy until he is dead" is not simply a counsel of despair. It is only at death that the picture is completed, and only the finished work will admit of evaluation.

This kind of biography is well represented in the story of Solon, the



Athenian lawgiver and one of the sages of Greece, and Croesus, king of Lydia, a man of fabulous wealth, recounted in Herodotus (1.30–33, 53–54, 86–91).[4] Croesus attempted in vain to impress his wise visitor with his wealth and solicited his flattery with the question "Who is the happiest man you have seen?" Solon produced two candidates for felicity whose lives seemed provokingly humble in fruits and attainment. Croesus was driven to ask directly after his own happiness. The sage replied that the gods are jealous and life a risky business. Of all the days that a man might be allotted in a span of seventy years, it takes but one day to undo happiness. Thus, a man may be accounted fortunate, but he may scarcely be esteemed happy until he is dead. Croesus later consulted the oracle at Delphi to enquire whether he should march against Cyrus, the great king of Persia. He received the ambiguous reply that if he marched against Persia a great empire would fall. In his defeat he was ruefully to recall the words of Solon.

This story may be fruitfully interpreted with reference to archaic notions of time. R. B. Onians observes, "In modern European thought there has prevailed the conception of time as a homogeneous medium analogous to empty space. . . . For the Homeric Greeks time was not homogeneous; it had quality."[5] In our story, Solon, after he has calculated the average life span at 26,250 days, remarks, "Not a single one of them is like the next in what it brings." In Homer, "the *ēmar* is not the day of the month nor is it shared by others, it is the time, the destiny experienced by an individual."[6] This may be seen in the epithets that accompany "day." Hector's death is described as *aisimon ēmar,* his "fateful day" (Homer *Iliad* 22.212). *Ēmar anankaion,* "the day of necessity" (*Iliad* 16.836) or *ēmar doulion,* "the day of slavery" (*Iliad* 6.463) describe the day when one is delivered into bondage. Odysseus reflects, "The father of gods and men makes one day unlike another day, and earthlings change their thought on life in accord with this" (Homer *Odyssey* 18.136).

Solon, in observing that life is subject to divine envy and fortune, remarks, "In the whole length of time, there are many things to see which one does not wish to see and many things to experience" (Herodotus 1.32.2). Time (*chronos*) in Homer never describes a point in time, but a duration, so that the word does not admit a use such as "at that time."[7] In the whole length of time, literally "in the whole, long time," there are many events that color the tapestry.

Notable in the story of Solon and Croesus is the passivity of humans before destiny. We are subject to what the day brings. Our chief virtue is to avoid sinful pride and to lead a humble life and leave a decent reputation behind us. It is sometimes said that Achilles entertains a choice between a peaceful and uneventful life into old age in his native Phthia and a brief and

glorious life completed by death upon the field of battle. Plato indeed so describes the position of the hero, who prefers death and justice to life and injustice in his avenging of Hector's death (*Apology* 18D; trans. H. Tredennick). Plato sounds in this context a genuinely Homeric note in Achilles' reflection that he would not want to become a laughing stock. This is appropriate for a Homeric hero to the extent that he lives within a culture of shame. Socrates, who scorns the opinion of the many, need only consider the issues of right and wrong.[8]

In Homer there is no notion of a choice on the part of Achilles, although, because of Socrates' interpretation, we are inclined to read this into the *Iliad.* In the *Iliad* Achilles says:

> For my mother Thetis the goddess of the silver feet tells me
> I carry two sorts of destiny towards the day of my death. Either
> if I stay here and fight beside the city of the Trojans
> my return home is gone, but my glory shall be everlasting;
> but if I return home to the beloved land of my fathers,
> the excellence of my glory is gone, but there will be a long life
> left for me, and my end in death will not come to be quickly.
> (9.410)

After the death of Patroclus, Thetis tells Achilles: "It is decreed that your death must come soon after Hektor's" (18.96). Achilles replies "I must die soon, then; since I was not to stand by my companion when he was killed" (18.98). This is not so much a choice as it is a natural consequence of the death of Patroclus under the condition of Achilles' withdrawal. It is not invited, but demanded, by the heroic code.

Both Plato and Herodotus entertain a qualitative sense of time, in which destiny unfolds like a sort of tapestry. Both Plato and Herodotus differ from Homer in their sense of moral exegesis in beholding the end of a man's life. Yet Herodotus retains the sense of human passivity before destiny. Is it simply that Plato, in representing Achilles' destiny as a matter of choice, rejects the passivity of the ancient view? In the myth of Er, Plato represents the soul as choosing its destiny and its life (e.g., tyrannical or philosophical) before birth (*Republic* 617DE; trans. P. Shorey). For Plato, the notion that a life unfolds unto a unity and completion is true as it is for Herodotus. Yet he combines this view with one of free choice in an ante-natal act of decision.

In geometric art, diachronically sequential events are portrayed in horizontal succession. Thus, in a funeral scene, the corpse is, in successive depictions, anointed, dressed, laid on the bier, lamented, and buried.[9] In view of this qualitative conception of time, it may be reasonable to think that it was seen as a plastic medium. For this reason, Herodotus believes that the



happiness of a person's life may not be judged until the picture is completed in death.

The tradition of considering a choice among several possible lives is preserved in their classification in Aristotle, where we may select the life of enjoyment, the life of politics, or the life of contemplation (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1095b14–1096a11). It might be thought that this view of life would undermine individuality, because we are speaking here not of my life but of a desirable life. In the archaic period, however, Croesus may be seen as a type of the hybristic and wealthy man who confuses happiness and good fortune rather than as an individual. Similarly, Oedipus would be a type in the sense that he is the complete monster of unhappiness. The consistency of thematic material and the tendency to view a character in terms of his salient characteristic in Homer may also point in this direction (although we may allow the poet to transcend the limitations of the craft of oral poetry).

## Gods

For the Greeks, a god (*theos*) is fundamentally a power to be propitiated or won over. Any unexpected or awesome manifestation of power can be divine. The chorus in the *Bacchae* of Euripides addresses Earthquake with an apotropaic formula (585; trans. W. Arrowsmith). Here is a divinity with no cult, addressed only when its terrible power is revealed.[10] An unexpected or chance meeting with a friend can be a *theos.*[11]

The word "god" appears in Greek as a predicate.[12] Thus, Eros (love) is a god (Plato *Symposium* 194E–195A; trans. M. Joyce). We may contrast this with the biblical statement that "God is love" (1 John 4:8) in which the attribute appears in the predicate and God is the subject of the sentence. Eros is seen as a power, often destructive (Sophocles *Antigone* 781–809; trans. J. Moore). Thus, a power, Eros, is a god. The equation of power with divinity leads very naturally to the predicative use of the word "god."

This manner of predication is not restricted to the divine sphere. In the *Iliad,* the muse is invoked to sing the wrath of Achilles (1.1). The hero is possessed by this emotion. Heracles is commonly described with the formula "Heraclean might" (*Iliad* 2.650; 5.638; 18.117; *Odyssey* 11.601). In this example we can observe that the name Heracles bears to his most prominent characteristic an adjectival relationship. The use of stock epithets (swift-footed Achilles, Ajax good at the war cry, Hector of the glancing helm) points in the same direction. The person is seen almost as a function of his most prominent or powerful aspect.

In Earthquake we see an example of an external power that is, by virtue

of that power, divine. In Eros we have what we would call a psychological force that is within. Perhaps it would be better to say that what we would call an inward force, if it is revealed in power and surprise, may, by those qualities, be regarded as divine.

All of this presents us with a fascinating logical problem. The same manner of predication applies to both divine and human spheres. A human emotion may be manifested with such power and surprise that it may admit of a divine predicate. We say that a man is possessed by a god, for example, Eros. It is as if he were invaded by some external power. Yet, according to another way of looking at it, the human emotion has taken on divine dimensions by the nature and extent of its power. This suggests that the boundary between human and divine is tenuous.[13]

In the *Iliad* Agamemnon explains his petulant behavior toward Achilles:

> I am not responsible
> but Zeus is, and Destiny, and Erinys the mist-walking
> who in assembly caught my heart in savage delusion (*atē*)
> on that day I myself stripped from him the prize of Achilleus.
> Yet what could I do? It is the gods who accomplish all things.
> Delusion (*Atē*) is the elder daughter of Zeus.
>
> (19.86–91)

It is not to be thought that Delusion here is only a personified face-saving device. This is a divine power. There is, of course, personification in the sense that Delusion is the elder daughter of Zeus. Delusion is a particularly interesting example of what we are looking for. It is both subjective, the psychological state of delusion, and objective, the ruin which that state brings about. The boundaries between inward and outward, human emotion and divine possession, are blurred.[14]

Homeric personification does not conceal that a god is fundamentally a quality or an aspect endowed with power. This may be seen particularly in the case of lesser divinities: Deimos (terror), Phobos (fear), and Eris (hate) are the companions of Ares, the god of war. These are no allegories, but, as anyone experienced in war would know, real and operative powers on the field of battle. Homer tells us:

> Ares drove these [the Trojans] on, and the Achaians grey-eyed Athene
> and Terror (Deimos) drove them, and Fear (Phobos) and
> Hate (Eris) whose wrath is relentless,
> and the sister and companion of murderous Ares.
>
> (*Iliad* 4.439–41)

Here Eris is personified as the sister of Ares and walks amid the hosts (*Iliad* 4.445). Ares orders Phobos and Deimos to harness his horses (*Iliad* 15.119),



yet these forces remain shadowy and without personality. Ares himself is not the god of war, but the god War. As a spear is fixed in the heart of Alcathous, "Then and there Ares the huge took his life from him" (*Iliad* 13.444; cf. 16.613; 17.529). As an Olympian, Ares is person enough to have a love affair with Aphrodite (*Odyssey* 8.266–69), yet the tendency to divinize power and aspect is clearly evident.[15]

Even where personification is much to the fore, we can see the same principles at work. Achilles is in great anger and in the act of drawing his sword when Athena suddenly appears from heaven to persuade him to stay his hand (*Iliad* 1.8.188–222). In view of the great power of his wrath, it is cause for amazement that Achilles should not slay Agamemnon. The allaying of the wrath must be a manifestation of divine power.

The boundary between human and divine may thus be regarded as theoretically tenuous. A manifestation of unexpected or miraculous power may be seen as a mark of divinity, whether it is (as we would put it) external or internal to the human person. If a man displays miraculous power, is there the possibility that he might become divine?

The hero is, for the Greeks, upon his death an object of veneration and a source of protective power and blessing. He is not, indeed, divine, but is nevertheless a supernatural, chthonic force. In the *Oedipus at Colonus*, Sophocles portrays the very process of Oedipus's heroization.[16] He had fallen from kingship, the position of a sage, and happy family life when his own relentless enquiry revealed his incest and parricide, crimes unknown to himself. Oedipus was a monster of unhappiness. Yet it is in this very character that he may exhibit spectacular power upon his death and bring protection to his kind Athenian hosts.[17]

Pindar declares that the race of humans and gods is one but that they are separated by power (*dynamis*) (*Nemean* 6.1–11). Humans may resemble the gods in mind or strength, but their fate is uncertain. Heracles is, in the words of Pindar, *hēros theos*, both hero and god (*Nemean* 3.39). Both aspects of his nature constitute his integrity and to stress one at the expense of the other is always to err.[18] Yet he is the only hero to succeed in becoming a god among the Olympians. His divinity is reflected in the fact that, whereas a normal hero has one cult site, the place of his burial, Heracles' popularity enjoys many.[19] We may think that the power of Heracles is so great that it exceeds heroic dimensions.[20]

Empedocles proclaims, "I go to and fro among you as an immortal god, no longer mortal" (Diels–Kranz fr. 112.4–5; trans. K. Freeman). He lays this claim on his ability to practice the art of divination and to cure diseases (Diels–Kranz fr. 112.10–12). Obviously the claim to divinity proceeds from an assertion of power. The difference from the divinity of Heracles consists

partially in the fact that divine status is achieved before death. What is more significant, Empedocles does not, like Heracles, become god, as his power burgeons of itself beyond mortal limits. He arrogates the position of god unto himself.[22] In all of this we may wish to see not only the confidence of a philosopher but also an "Orphic" and magical character. The guardians of the other world address the Orphic initiate in the words "Happy and blessed one, thou shalt be god instead of mortal."[23]

We have already seen from the story of Solon and Croesus how the god of Delphi is a humbling force. This aspect is, of course, also evident in the tragic story of Oedipus, in which self-knowledge brings destruction. Over the temple of Delphi stood the words "Know Thyself" (Plato *Phaedrus* 229E, trans. R. Hackforth; Xenophon *Memorabilia* 4.2.14, trans. H. Tredennick). Both Plato (*Charmides* 164E; trans. B. Jowett) and Heraclitus (Diels–Kranz fr. 116; trans. K. Freeman) understand that these words are the counsel of temperance and humility.[24]

The story is told in Diogenes Laertius that a Milesian fisherman discovered in the sea a sacred tripod. The tripod was sent to one after another of the Seven Sages of Greece until finally it was presented to Solon. Solon dedicated it to Apollo on the grounds that the god alone is wise (*Lives* 1.28; trans. R. D. Hicks). This folk story is reflected in the Platonic *Apology of Socrates*, in which Chaerephon consults the oracle of Delphi and asks who is the wisest of men (20E–21A; trans. H. Tredennick). The oracle replies that it is Socrates. Socrates shows appropriate humility in interpreting the oracle as a command to scour Athens in search of a man wiser than himself. When he fails to find such a person, he concludes that his wisdom must consist in his knowledge that he has no wisdom (23B). Here again the implication is clear: only the god is wise. That the consultation of Delphi is a project in self-knowledge is suggested by Heraclitus: "I consulted myself" (Diels–Kranz fr. 101; trans. F. M. Schroeder).[25] In this fragment the word for "consult" (*dizēmai*) is a verb that is used of oracular enquiry (Herodotus 7.142.1).

The Platonic *Apology* is also Delphic in that it is riddled with ambiguity and partings of the way. Socrates regards philosophical abandonment of Athens as an unholy desertion of the post to which the god has assigned him (28D–29A; 37CE). It is as an Athenian that he urges the care of the soul upon his fellow citizens (29D). Yet he asks the court for the same indulgence toward his manner of speaking as they would accord to a foreigner (17D). While Socrates is the autochthonous Athenian who will not, except on military service, leave his native city, he ironically casts himself in the role of both foreigner and wanderer. In this exercise of

ambiguity Socrates resorts to Heraclean language. His enquiry and peregrination within the city are a wandering (*planē*) (22A6)[26] and his actions are labors (*ponoi*) (22A7).[27] His work for the god is service (*latreia*) (23C1),[28] and he is a benefactor (*euergetēs*) (36C).[29] In Heracles, we behold a man who has become both hero and god. How strangely this contrasts with the humbling strains of Apollonian piety.

The Apollonian and the Heraclean are opposed ideals. Mortal humility and temperance belong to Delphic self-knowledge. Heracles is the man who became not only hero but also god. Perhaps Plato is suggesting that Delphic ambiguity may, in the figure of Socrates, transcend itself. From the path of Apollo there is also a parting of the ways toward the high road of Heracles. The Socratic choice of Achilles which we discussed above is an example of a departure from the passivity that we observed in the Homeric Achilles and, indeed, in the Apollonian fate of Croesus. It is perhaps in his Heraclean humanism that Socrates succeeds where so many failed in searching out the oracles of Delphi.

## Care of the Self

In the *Theaetetus* Socrates argues that flight from the miseries of human existence consists in imitation of God (176AB), but he qualifies this statement by saying that this imitation is to be accomplished as far as possible. Here we may see that aspiration to divinity which belongs to the Heraclean Socrates. Yet it is pulled short by the considerations of Apollonian piety. The world of late antiquity was not to be so bashful. Plotinus declares that our concern should be not to be free of sin but to become a god (I 2 [19], 6, 3–4; cf. I 2 [19], 1, 1–4). We shall discuss later the Plotinian celebration of Heracles.

Socrates' response to the Delphic oracle, like that of Oedipus, consists in enquiry. It is also a project in self-knowledge. Yet Socrates is not, like Oedipus or Croesus, passive before circumstances beyond his control. In obedience to the god, he engages in the task of Socratic care (*epimeleia*) (*Apology* 29DE). This response is again Heraclean. In the story of Heracles at the crossroads, which Xenophon ascribes to Prodicus, Virtue tells Heracles that the gods give nothing good or fair to humans without toil and care (*epimeleia*) (Xenophon *Memorabilia* 2.1.28.2). Heracles is not passive, as he chooses a life (*bios;* 2.1.21.9) of virtue over a life of vice. The Heraclean parting of the ways is clear, as the hero rejects the advances of the comely young woman, Vice, and follows the path of that more forbidding lady, Virtue. We can see here the difference between the passivity of a life according to the archaic view and active choice manifest in Heraclean care.



Socrates urges the Athenians to care (*epimeleisthai*) for the soul before their bodies or their wealth (*Apology* 29DE). He urges every Athenian to care for himself (*heautou*) before he cares for his affairs and to place care for the city itself above care for the affairs of the city (36C). It is obvious that care for the soul and care for oneself are equated. It is to be noticed that the Greek does not express care for the Self but care for oneself, using the reflexive pronoun.

Socrates is here playing with the traditional proverb that the man who best takes care of his affairs will best take care of the affairs of the city (Herodotus 5.29; Thucydides 2.40.2; 6.9.2; Plato *Protagoras* 318E). Clearly Socratic care is communal. The care for the soul is not a species of romantic withdrawal. It is also familial. Socrates urges the care for the soul upon his fellow Athenians as a father or an elder brother (*Apology* 31B). This provides us with a valuable key to interpretation. Parents would indeed wish children to prosper in their affairs. This is a major end of sophistic education (*Protagoras* 318E). Yet love will distinguish between this practical concern and the development of the child as a complete person. Socratic care is humanistic in its purpose to free the individual from entanglements in the world of business and politics. Yet this is a political humanism in that it wishes to base community upon the foundation of Socratic care. Care for the "city itself" may be understood in the light of Pericles' statement in Thucydides that the Athenians should become passionate lovers of their city, adorning it with great works of public art (2.43.1).[30] For the Socrates of Xenophon, care begins with the individual and extends in concentric circles to one's household, to friends, and to the city at large (*Memorabilia* 3.7.9; 4.5.1).

Care (*epimeleia, therapeia*) is a medical term.[31] It is used in Plato in a psychotherapeutic dimension, observing an analogy to medicine. In the *Charmides* Socrates recounts how, when he received a wound in Thrace, a shaman gave him an herb (156C–157C). Yet the therapy would not work unless at the same time that he received the herb upon his tongue he received an incantation into his soul. The whole person must be addressed by medical practice.[32] It is to be observed that, in the *Apology*, the physical aspect of care is not neglected. The Athenian is urged to care for the soul before the body (30A7–B1). It is a question of priority. The body should also be cared for, but true care begins with the soul or self. We may see in this a parallel to modern concern with holistic medicine.

It is a cliché of textbooks that compare Christian and pagan thought to remark that, whereas Plato entertains a dualism of body and soul, the church proclaims the wholeness and integrity of the human being.[33] The demonstrative context of the arguments in the *Phaedo* of Plato may be

explained by the Pythagoreanism of Socrates' interlocutors, Simmias and Cebes.[34] This will account for the appearance of a rather crude dualism of body and soul in that dialogue. The serious student of Plato, however, will recognize that the soul is not, for that philosopher, a pale spirit temporarily entrapped in a tenement of clay. We are used to the notion that, for Plato, the soul (*psychē*) is equated with self (*autos*), that it is the locus of ethical decision and philosophical reasoning (*Apology* 29DE, 36C).[35] When Plato speaks of the body (*sōma*), he does not always refer only to a physical object. He also describes the body as subject. In the *Phaedo* the body as object is indeed mentioned, when Socrates ridicules the explanation of his presence in prison from the disposition of his bones and nerves (98CD). The body also, however, is the place of fears and desires (66BE) and, as such, the origin of greed, civil strife, and war. It is obvious that the body is also, besides the soul, self which makes (on the basis of delusion) ethical decisions. It is the task of the philosopher to separate the soul from the body (66Ea; 67A1; 67D). This is not merely the separation of the soul as subject from the body as object, but the separation of the philosophical from the bodily self ridden with fear and desire. The unpurified soul, which shares too much the desires of the body, becomes body-like (*sōmatoeides;* 81B5; 81C4; 81E1) and is drawn back to haunt the earth as a ghost (81BE).[36] We may see in the Socratic practice of death (*meletē tou thanatou;* 81A) not merely a rehearsal for physical death but the transformation of self, a dying to the identity that experience, circumstance, and inclination may have presented to us. Thus, the *Phaedo* is very much about life, a life in which archaic passivity before fate is replaced with contemplative will and control. It is another dimension of Socratic care.

## The Unity of Virtue

In the archaic period self is seen as the sum of events as displayed over the tapestry of time. For Oedipus, to know himself is to know that he killed his father and married his mother. Knowledge of self is expressed externally, and freedom of will is not relevant in an essentially passive experience of life. For Socratic wisdom, as in the choice of Achilles as it is portrayed in the Platonic *Apology of Socrates,* care is expressed in freedom of will. For the Socratic Achilles, of course, freedom of will may result directly in acts. More profoundly, however, it is a way of contemplative inwardness which transforms the person. The acts of such a developed human being will flow naturally from the transformation itself.

In the *Republic* Plato speaks of the "inner man" who controls the multifarious beast of passion (589A7).[37] Virtuous acts or works flow from the



cultivation of inwardness. In the same dialogue, he draws a distinction between "the external practice of one's affairs" and "the internal practice which is truly concerned with oneself and one's affairs" (443D; my translation). This reflects the language of Plato in the *Apology* where Socrates counsels the Athenians not to care for their affairs before they care for themselves, or to care for the affairs of the city before they care for the city itself (36C).

The inwardness of virtue has much to do with the notion that virtue is a unity. In the *Phaedo* Plato describes civic virtue as a mere exchange of counterfeit coins (69AB). We exercise courage in one matter or temperance in another only to avoid this pain or attain that pleasure. The good person will exchange all of this currency against the one true coin of the realm. In the *Protagoras* Socrates argues for the unity of virtue and attempts to show that Protagoras's inability to argue the question demonstrates its unteachability (329B). Later in the same dialogue, Socrates, arguing that virtue is knowledge, concludes that it must be teachable.

The question may well be asked whether such knowledge is merely the sum of correct moral definitions? Are we dealing with information or with transformation? In the *Republic* the philosopher's vision of light upon the completion of his education is described as a turning about, as if upon a revolving stage (518C21). After his ascent upon the ladder of love, the true lover is, in the *Symposium,* turned toward the whole sea of beauty (211D4). In each case, the object of vision is one. We are not speaking here of yet one more item of information, but of the turning about, the conversion of the person.

Bruno Snell argues that, since the word *sōma* (body) never refers in Homer to the living body but only to the corpse, Homer, who describes the physical entity of the human person as a disparate collection of limbs and parts, does not see the human person as a corporeal unity.[38] R. Renehan replies correctly that this argument from silence is insufficient, and he adduces passages from early texts in which indeed the word *sōma* does appear to be used of the living body.[39]

In the invocation to the Muse that begins the *Iliad,* the poet sings of the wrath of Achilles, which "hurled in their multitudes to the house of Hades strong souls / of heroes, but gave their bodies to delicate feasting of dogs, of all birds" (1.1–3). Lattimore, in this translation, happily paraphrases the Greek pronoun *autous,* "themselves," as "their bodies."[40] Certainly the *psychē* is scarcely to be identified with the seat of human identity and has a joyless existence in the Book of the Dead in the *Odyssey.* Achilles tells Odysseus that he would far rather be a poor man's slave in the land of the living than king in the realm of the dead (11.489–591). We may see a gulf between the

care for the *psychē* as the seat of personality and ethical decision and intelligence in the Socratic tradition and the place of the *psychē* in Homer.[41] The funeral of Patroclus and the ransom of Hector's body in the *Iliad* demonstrate the enormous importance accorded to the corpse of the hero in Homer. A fine contrast of the difference in attitude may be seen in Plato's *Republic*, where it is urged that we should not rob the bodies of enemies, which are merely tools with which they fought and not themselves (469CE).

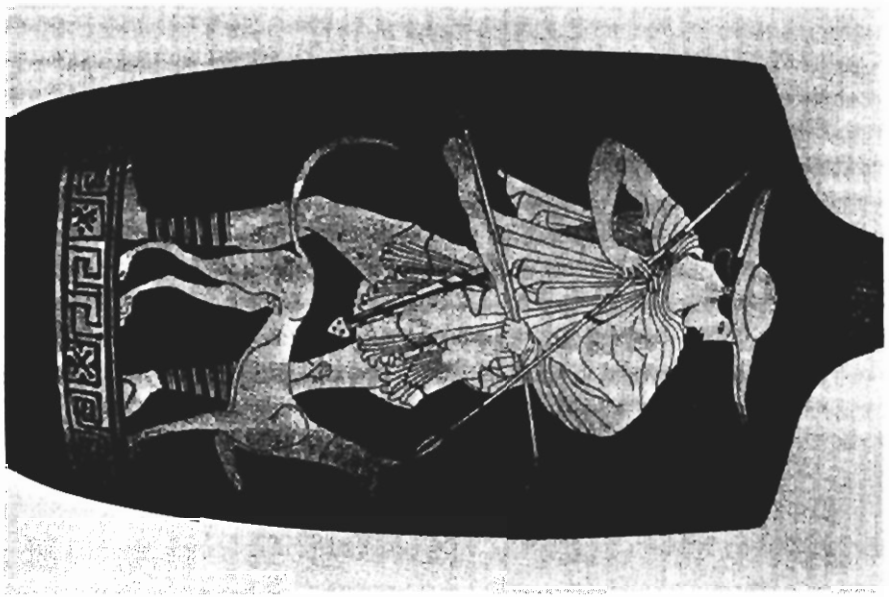
Snell argues, as we have seen, from the absence of a word for "living body" to the lack of a concept of corporeal unity in Homer. He further contends that the use of a variety of words other than *psychē* to describe psychic attributes shows a lack of any sense in Homer that the human being is a unity.[42] This view admits of the same refutation that is addressed to the supposed lack of corporeal unity in Homer. As Renehan observes, "For 'Homer', as for later Greeks, man was both a unified whole and an aggregate of discrete parts. His point of view was determined in each case by the needs and emphasis of the particular context."[43]

## Happiness

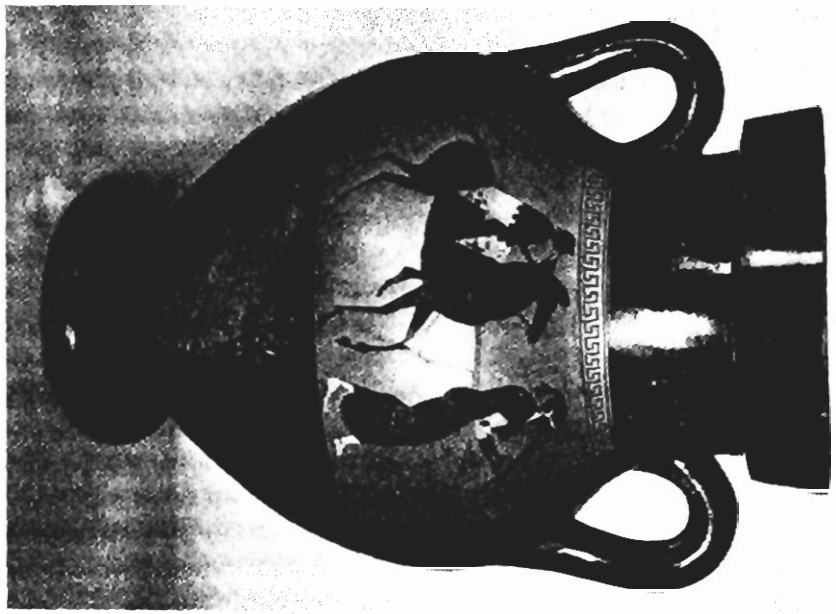
Certainly Plato and his successors, with their philosophical focus upon inwardness, locate human identity in the soul,[44] soul in its rational aspect, or mind.[45] We have seen that, in the archaic period human identity consisted in the pattern of events that made up one's life. It was suggested that the philosopher introduced a measure of free will in offering us a choice of lives. Philosophical eudaemonism seeks the happy life for the human being (Theophrastus *apud* Cicero *De finibus* 5.29.86). If, however, human identity is located in the soul or mind, are things external to myself *qua* soul or mind crucial to my identity? If self consists in the attainment of a happy life, are things external to self as soul or mind necessary to that happiness and completion of identity?

This is a question that was much debated in antiquity. The answers range from the assertion that external goods are necessary to the happy life, to the view that the best life will include them, although happiness may consist in inwardness alone, to the notion that they are irrelevant to happiness.

In the *Philebus*, in examining the Delphic injunction "Know Thyself," Plato canvasses three kinds of ignorance: To think yourself to have more property than you have, to think your body superior to what it is, and (most common) to think yourself better than you really are in soul and in virtue (48CE). This passage demonstrates that human identity may be associated with the body and with wealth as well as with the soul.



27. Young Hunter with Dog. Red-figured Lekythos by the Pan Painter. Attic. Ca. 470–460 B.C.



28. Black-figured Terracotta Amphora. Athenian. Ca. 530–520 B.C.

Socratic care for the soul does not exclude the body and external goods. In the *Apology* Socrates reproaches the Athenians for caring more for money and honor than for wisdom, truth, and the soul (29DE). He goes on to say, "Wealth does not bring goodness, but goodness brings wealth" (30B). Burnet is scandalized by the notion that wealth might proceed from virtue.[46] He need not be. It is a question of priority. Similarly, Socrates urges the Athenians not to care for their bodies or wealth as much as for the soul (30A7–B1). This need not exclude concern or care for the good of the body.

For Aristotle, happiness consists in activity that is in accordance with virtue. Contemplation belongs to our noblest part and is therefore the activity in accordance with the highest virtue to which we may attain. Therefore, contemplation is the most complete happiness (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1177a12–19). He also argues that the wise one requires the necessities of life as much as others (1177a28–35). If these, however, are supplied, one has autarchy as compared with the just, brave, or temperate person who requires others for the practice of appropriate virtue. So, for Aristotle, although the life of contemplation is the happiest life, the wise one still requires external goods.

For the Stoics, happiness consists in virtue and virtue does not admit of degrees. Therefore, for Zeno, the wise one may be happy even on the rack (Cicero *De finibus* 5.29.85). The Stoics identify the ego with the governing principle, the chief part of the soul (Galen *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* 2.2, Müller). The Epicureans are, of course, at another extreme because of their equation of the good with pleasure. For them, in consequence, the ego is not the soul but the composite of soul and body (Plutarch *Adversus Colotem* 20.118D=*Testim.* 314 Usener; cf. 21:119A). Antiochus of Ascalon presents a compromise. He distinguishes between the happy life and the happiest life (*Academica priora* 1.6.22).[47] The former may consist in virtue alone; the latter requires external goods.

## Humanity and the Gods

There are in antiquity two fundamental traditions concerning the relation between humanity and the gods. According to one, there is one race of humans and another of gods (Pindar *Nemean* 6.1–2). Another is that humans are of the same race as the gods (Orphic fr., Diels–Kranz 18; trans. K. Freeman). In Greek philosophy, the intellect is regarded as a divine element in our makeup.[48]

Empedocles teaches that we know like by like (Diels–Kranz fr. 109). We cannot perceive unless there is something in our composition that is of the same nature as that which is perceived. We know earth by earth and water by water. In the *Phaedo* Plato brings affinity and the Empedoclean epistemological principle together in a proof of the soul's immortality (79C–90D). We know the Forms not by the body but by the soul. The soul must be like the Forms, if it can know them. This likeness arises from affinity. The Forms are eternal. The soul has affinity with the Forms. Therefore the soul is immortal.



The imitation of God in the *Theaetetus* seems to be by way of knowing, for it consists in becoming "righteous with the help of wisdom" (176A). This would be knowledge that results in transformation of self, a becoming like the divine in knowing the divine. In the pseudo-Platonic *Alcibiades Major,* it is argued that if the soul wishes to know itself, it should look to its most divine part, the intellect (133BC). In this it will see, as in a mirror, both itself and God. Chrysippus interprets the Delphic commandment "Know Thyself" in accordance with the Stoic doctrine that we should live in agreement with nature (*apud* Cicero *De finibus* 3.73). Human beings, like all other animals, have a natural tendency to know themselves. But if they are to live in agreement with nature, they must first know the system of the universe and how it is administered. As the Stoics equate nature, reason, and God (Seneca *De beneficiis* 4.7–8=*SVF* 2:1024), self-knowledge may in this context also be knowledge of God.

For Plotinus the beauty of the intelligible world is reflected in the world of sense. Thus the beauty of a temple exalts the mind toward the Soul (IV 3 [27], 11, 1–8). The discursive mind, when it enters quiet and ceases from its busy labors, may in contemplation reflect the hypostasis of Nous as in a mirror (I 4 [46], 10). Consciousness, for Plotinus, may exhibit a triadic structure. The intelligible world may at once be reflected both in the mirror of art and in the mirror of the mind. The discursive mind addresses itself in the first instance toward the sensible object. In the moment of reflection, both the mind and its objects are exalted and transformed. We may see in this the influence of the *Alcibiades Major* (133BC).

Plotinus also offers an itinerary to God which consists in introspection. If our waking consciousness is, upon analysis, seen to be insufficient to explain itself or the world, we must look elsewhere for an explanation. Thus, when the mind finds that all its explanation of beauty in terms of color, symmetry, and shape fails to explain such examples as a lone star in the night sky, it looks inward to Form and that in itself which is able to apprehend Form (I 6 [1], 1–3).

The hypostasis of Nous discovers the One in analysis of its own cognitive tools:

> If it were only one, it would be sufficient unto itself and would not need to take consciousness of itself. Since indeed "Know Thyself" is addressed to those who, because of their multiplicity have the task of numbering their parts and learning their quantities and qualities and do not know all things, or know nothing, neither what is the ruling Principle, nor what is the Principle in accordance with which they are themselves. If the Principle is anything, it is greater than to be grasped by knowledge, thought, or consciousness itself. (VI 7 [38], 41, 22–27; trans. F. M. Schroeder)

The One is, in any case, always present in the consciousness of Nous, for the One is the light by which Nous sees itself and the Forms (VI 7, 16, 19–22). The quest for self and fulfillment in classical antiquity is, then, one that leads the human being into a relationship with God, who is the ground of identity.

The philosophical examination of self, in its direction of inwardness, displays a difference from the archaic view. It is more optimistic. The sense of biography, so important for the archaic mentality, is lacking. This may be seen in a striking interpretation of a text in Homer that is offered by Plotinus. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus in the underworld recounts his vision of the shade of Heracles:

> Next I saw the strength of Heracles,
> An image (*eidōlon*); but he himself (*autos*) with the immortal gods
> Rejoices in abundance and has slender-footed Hebe,
> The child of great Zeus and Hera of the golden sandals.
> (11.601–4; trans. F. M. Schroeder)

This passage is doubtless an intrusion into the Homeric text and may proceed from post-Platonic Pythagoreanism.[50] There is a rich tradition in antiquity of philosophical and literary interpretation of this passage which reflects the questions that we have been discussing.[51]

Plotinus interprets this passage in such a way that the lower soul is Heracles the historical figure, and the higher, rational soul is Heracles himself.[52] It is asked whether, for the higher soul, there is memory of friends, children, wife, and country (IV 3 [27], 27). The lower human remembers these with passion, but the higher human retains these memories passively. Heracles in heaven will consider them slight. At this point a further Heracles is introduced. The Heracles who has been translated to the Plotinian Nous, where the divine mind is rapt in eternal contemplation of the Platonic Forms, will have no such memories (IV, 3, 32, 24; IV 4, [28], 1, 1–11).

In this consideration of Heracles, we may see that biography, which was crucial to the archaic sense of self, although still of contributory importance, is actually discounted in favor of the inner life. In communion with



Nous, it is not even remembered that here we have philosophized (IV 4, 1, 4–5). The passivity of the archaic view is overcome in the sense that philosophical care for the soul is a way that may be chosen and can lead to final happiness. On the other hand, the overcoming of that passivity does not emerge directly in action. It is resolved rather in the development of the interior life, the fruits of which may indeed be evident in a person's works. These are themselves, however, not a matter of final importance.

## Notes

1. On structuralism as it pertains to Greek religion, see G. S. Kirk, *Myth: Its Meaning and Function in Ancient and Other Cultures* (Cambridge and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970); idem, *The Nature of Greek Myths* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974). On sociobiology, see W. Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1979); idem, *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*, trans. P. Bing (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1983). On depth psychology, see E. Neumann, *The Origins and History of Consciousness.*

2. C. G. Jung, *Die Beziehungen zwischen dem Ich und dem Unbewussten* (Olten and Freiburg im Breisgau: Walter-Verlag, 1971) 65.

3. E. F. Edinger, *Ego and Archetype: Individuation and the Religious Function of the Psyche* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1973).

4. Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. A. de Sélincourt (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1954).

5. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought*, 411.

6. Ibid., 413.

7. H. Fränkel, "Die Zeitauffassung in der frühgriechischen Literatur," in *Wege und Formen frühgriechischen Denkens* (Munich: Beck, 1960) 1–2.

8. B. Snell, *Scenes from Greek Drama* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964) 1, 17–22.

9. T. B. L. Webster, *From Mycenae to Homer* (New York: Norton, 1968) 205.

10. U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Der Glaube der Hellenen* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1931) 1:12.

11. G. M. A. Grube, *Plato's Thought*, 150; Euripides *Helen* 560, trans. R. Lattimore.

12. Wilamowitz, *Glaube*, 17.

13. B. Snell puts forth the controversial view that Homeric man, failing of psychological unity and will, is the subject of divine manipulation ("The Homeric View of Man," in *Discovery*, 1–42). Snell argues elsewhere that in Homer the gods do not stand outside of nature ("The Olympic Gods," in *Discovery*, 23–42). If this is the case, then divine intervention is not supernatural. We may view it as an expression of an unexpected, internal event or a manifestation of power—hence divine.

14. E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational.*

15. H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums* (New York: American Philological Association, 1951) 86–88.

16. Trans. D. Grene, in *The Complete Greek Tragedies*, ed. Grene and Lattimore, 2:11–76.

17. C. M. Bowra, *Sophoclean Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1944) 308–9.

18. U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Euripides Herakles* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1895) 1:38.

19. H. A. Shapiro, "*Heros Theos:* The Death and Apotheosis of Herakles," *Classical World* 77 (1983) 9.

20. The Homeric *Hymn to Heracles* links the surpassing power of Heracles' feats in mortal life with his present divine status on Olympus (lines 6–8; trans. A. Athanasakis in *The Homeric Hymns*).

21. Cf. fr. B 146, where prophets and physicians are among those who attain to the last reincarnation and become gods.

22. Empedocles may be "thinking of his imminent release and apotheosis as already achieved"; see W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* (6 vols.; Cambridge: University Press, 1965) 2:246.

23. See Otto Kern, *Orphicorum Fragmenta* (fr. 32C, p. 107); and Guthrie, *History,* 246 (who offers this translation), 262; on Orphism and the fate of the soul, see K. Corrigan, "Body and Soul in Ancient Religious Experience" in this volume.

24. Wilamowitz, *Glaube,* 2:123.

25. For the usual translation of Heraclitus "I have searched myself," see K. Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers.*

26. See also *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta,* ed. B. Snell (2nd ed.; Hildesheim: Olms, 1983) Adespota 284=Diogenes Sinop. 88F4.

27. See also the story of Heracles at the crossroads in Prodicus *apud* Xenophon *Memorabilia* 2.1.28.

28. See also Sophocles *Trachiniae* 70; 830; trans. M. Jameson.

29. See also Euripides *Heracles* 1252, trans. W. Arrowsmith.

30. Cf. Pindar fr. 64, Bowra; Euripides *Medea* 824–865, trans. R. Warner.

31. For a medical use of *epimeleisthai,* see the Hippocratic treatise *Peri Technēs* 7.8–9; cf. the Hippocratic treatise *Peri Iētrou* 1.4; Plato *Laws* 720CE, trans. A. E. Taylor.

32. Pedro Lain-Entralgo, *Therapy of the Word,* 108–38.

33. R. Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York: Scribner, 1941) 1:6–7.

33. See the reference to Philolaus in *Phaedo* 61D, trans. H. Tredennick. For the soul in Pythagoreanism, see K. Corrigan, "Body and Soul in Ancient Religious Experience" in this volume.

35. See also John Burnet, "The Socratic Doctrine of the Soul," in *Essays and Addresses,* 126–62.

36. See also W. K. C. Guthrie, "Plato's View on the Immortality of the Soul," in *Entretiens Hardt,* 3:4–22.

37. "Inner man" is my own translation. See the translation H. Tredennick in *Collected Dialogues,* 40–98.

38. Snell, "The Homeric View of Man," in *Discovery.*

39. Renehan, "The Meaning of *Sōma* in Homer," *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 12 (1980) 279.

40. Ibid., 280.

41. Burnet, "The Socratic Doctrine of the Soul."

42. Snell, "The Homeric View of Man."

43. Renehan, "The Meaning of *Sōma* in Homer," 280. The nature of the debate will emerge well from the following: R. Renehan. "On the Greek Origins of the Concepts of Incorporeality and Immortality," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 21 (1980) 105–38; D. B. Claus, *Toward the Soul;* J. Bremmer, *The Early Greek Concept of Soul;* L. Woodbury, review of the two foregoing books in *Ancient Philosophy* 8 (1983) 200–210. See also K. Corrigan, "Body and Soul in Ancient Religious Experience" in this volume.



44. Plato *Laws* 726A; 959B3–4; *Phaedo* 115CD ("I am this Socrates who is talking to you now," that is, the soul as distinct from the corpse which is to ensue upon his execution); the pseudo-Platonic *Alcibiades Major* 130C, the pseudo-Platonic *Axiochus* 65E.

45. Euripides fr. 1018, Nauck; Aristotle *Protrepticus* fr. 6, Ross (trans. *The Works of Aristotle,* ed. D. Ross, vol. 12, *Select Fragments* [Oxford: Clarendon Press 1952] 34–56); *Nicomachean Ethics* 1166a16–19; 1168b32–34; *Metaphysics* 1043b2; cf. 1032a8 and Ross's comments on both passages (trans. R. Hope, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*); Cicero *Republic* 6.24=*Somnium Scipionis* 8.26, trans. C. W. Keyes; Marcus Aurelius 1.22.52, trans. M. Staniforth.

46. *Plato's Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates and Crito,* ed. John Burnet (Oxford: University Press, 1924) ad loc.

47. See also J. Pépin, *Idées grecques sur l'homme et sur Dieu* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1971) 64.

48. Plato *Timaeus* 73A; 88B; 90C; *Republic* 589E; Aristotle *Eudemian Ethics* 1248a27; *Nicomachean Ethics* 1248a27 and b28; pseudo-Platonic *Alcibiades* 1.133C; Cicero *Republic* 6.24=*Somnium Scipionis* 8.26; see also Pépin, *Idées,* 3–10.

49. See my "Representation and Reflection in Plotinus," *Dionysius* 4 (1980) 54–56.

50. J. Pépin, "Héraklès et son Reflet' in *Le Néoplatonisme, Colloques Internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Sciences humaines, Royaumont 9–13 June 1969* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1971) 167–70, 187–92.

51. Ibid. (the entire article).

52. Ibid., 174–76; Plotinus VI 4 [22], 16; I 1 [53], 12.

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# CLASSICAL MEDITERRANEAN SPIRITUALITY

## Egyptian, Greek, Roman