Zeitschrift: Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique
Herausgeber: Fondation Hardt pour l'étude de l'Antiquité classique
Band: 61 (2015)

Artikel: Commencing cosmogony and the rhetoric of poetic authority
Autor: Clay, Jenny Strauss
DOI: https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-696942

Nutzungsbedingungen
Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Mehr erfahren

Conditions d'utilisation
L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. En savoir plus

Terms of use
The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. Find out more

Download PDF: 02.12.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, https://www.e-periodica.ch

III

JENNY STRAUSS CLAY

COMMENCING COSMOGONY AND THE RHETORIC OF POETIC AUTHORITY

Prolegomena

I would like to take up two themes here: first, since cosmogony means recounting how the cosmos came into being, I would like to explore the problem of beginning: where to start and how to start to give such an account. Second, I would like to consider where the knowledge or authority to speak about such matters comes from. Now these two questions are linked: an account of the beginnings of the cosmos has also to give an account of its own beginnings, of the origins and sources of its knowledge of beginnings. These issues are clearly philosophical, but they are equally literary or, if you like, rhetorical. And even practical: I must start my account somewhere and convince you that my account is persuasive, that I know what I am talking about. To do that, I must explain the source of my knowledge and even how I acquired it. The more distant that knowledge may be from ordinary human ken, the more imperative the need to explain its source.

I do not claim to break new ground, but merely focus on the issue of poetic and epistemological authority and how it is negotiated in Homer, Hesiod, Parmenides, and Empedocles, and how the form and structure of their compositions are shaped by the sources and character of the knowledge they intend to convey.

Homer

Ex Homerou archometha. But should we include Homer in this discussion at all? Although one might argue that the Homeric poems do present a comprehensive vision of the cosmos and contain some hints as to how it came to be, Homer does not, to be sure, present a systematic cosmogony. Such knowledge is divine in that it transcends ordinary human experience. But since each of the poets I will consider subsequently, Hesiod, Parmenides, and Empedocles, stake their claim to authority and define their credentials and subject matter in relation to their predecessors, we too must begin from the beginning.

Now much of the material that follows is familiar to you, but I want to emphasize certain aspects that will run through all the works we examine. What knowledge does the Homeric poet lay claim to and what is its source? The answer to the second question is pretty straightforward: the Muses. In several passages, we learn that the Muses or Apollo instruct (διδάσκειν) the poet; and the poet then becomes someone with expert knowledge (ἐπισταμενῶς). Phemius acknowledges that a god has "implanted" (ἐνέφυσεν) all kinds of songs in him, but he also claims to be αὐτοδίδακτος (*Od.* 22, 348). For Homer, the knowledge the Muses grant him is twofold as emerges on those occasions when the poet asks the goddesses a question or requests their aid. In the appeal to the Muses that precedes the Catalogue of Ships (*Il.* 2, 484-493), the requested knowledge concerns not gods, but human beings, human beings from the past about whom we may have heard but imprecisely (κλέος οἶον); but as eyewitnesses, the goddesses can furnish that precision to the poet. But the very first question the poet addresses to the Muses is: τίς θεῶν? "Who of the gods?" (*Il.* 1, 8). Such information concerning the divine apparently lies outside the range of ordinary human knowledge. The Homeric poet likewise struggles with the question of beginnings. In the *Iliad*, the poet declares his subject, the wrath of Achilles, and he ask the Muses to recount its beginnings (ἐξ οὗ δὴ τὰ πρῶτα, *Il.* 1, 6);

on other occasions too the poet of the *Iliad* interrupts his narrative with follow-up questions ("who was the first?"), which renew our realization of his dependence on the Muses not only for information, but also for the proper ordering of that information, i.e. its *kosmos*. Thus the epic poet, much like a cosmologist, must wrestle with the problem of proper arrangement, of *kosmos*, of beginnings.

Some cosmological bits are mentioned in Homer: Okeanos and Tethys as the γένεσις πάντεσσι (*Il.* 14, 246, cf. θεῶν γένεσιν, *Il.* 14, 201, 302); and the poet alludes to other early moments in divine history: the Titans have been confined to the underworld (*Il.* 8, 478-481); the sons of Kronos, Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades, drew lots to divide the cosmos between them (*Il.* 15, 187-193); when they were young, Hera and Zeus snuck off to make love without the knowledge of their parents (*Il.* 14, 295-296). Some less harmonious incidents in their marriage involved Zeus tying up his wife and hanging anvils from her feet (*Il.* 15, 18-21). The interesting thing about these passages is that they are all put in the mouths of gods — with one telling exception, which really proves the rule: in what is clearly a tale of cosmological import, Achilles relates how his mother often used to tell him how she rescued Zeus from the rebellious triad of Hera, Athena, and Poseidon, by summoning the giant monster Briareos (*Il.* 1, 396-406). In other words, the epic poet, even though inspired by the Muses, still places accounts concerning the cosmogonic or theogonic past directly in the mouths of the gods. Apparently, an extra layer of authority is required to recount the pre-history of the gods. It can only emanate from the *ipsissima uerba* of the gods themselves.

Another important passage in Homer further develops the distinction between divine and human knowledge. As Odysseus makes his way to Circe's house, he meets Hermes, who gives him a special plant (which somehow will protect the hero from porcinification), *moly*, of which we are told (*Od.* 10, 303-306):

ἐκ γαίης ἐρύσας καί μοι φύσιν αὐτοῦ ἔδειξε.
ῥίζῃ μὲν μέλαν ἔσκε, γάλακτι δὲ εἴκελον ἄνθος·

μῶλυ δέ μιν καλέουσι θεοί, χαλεπὸν δέ τ' ὀρύσσειν
ἀνδράσι γε θνητοῖσι· θεοὶ δέ τε πάντα δύνανται.

"[The god] dug it up from the earth, and showed me its *physis*:
It had a black root, but the flower resembled milk.
The gods call it *moly*; but it is difficult for mortal men
To dig it up, but the gods can do everything."

This passage is the first attestation of the word *physis*, a word fundamental to subsequent Greek thought and, in Homer, emblematic of the distinction between divine and human knowledge. The whole consists of the white flower and the black root, the visible and the hidden; to know the whole is to know its nature, its *physis*; and knowing *physis* allows the gods to give a full account and thus to name it accurately. Human beings, however, have no name for it. On the basis of this passage we might call Homer the first *physiologos* and the one who characterized knowledge of the whole as belonging to divinity. Similarly, the *imago mundi* that constitutes the shield of Achilles is the product of divine craftsmanship; it is a god, Hephaestus, who can depict the whole of the cosmos, including the heavens and the gods. In general, human knowledge is partial, fragmentary, but the gods alone have knowledge of the whole, of *physis*.

The notion of the duality of knowledge thus already begins in Homer and runs through Greek thought like a leitmotif. These two kinds of knowledge, divine and human, can in turn be further refined to differentiate knowledge available *to* the gods and knowledge *about* the gods, as opposed to knowledge available to humans and knowledge of the human things.

Hesiod

I have elsewhere argued at some length that Hesiod's *Theogony* represents the universe from the perspective of the gods, while the *Works and Days* represents it from the human viewpoint and that the two works are in some sense complementary.[1] The two

[1] STRAUSS CLAY (2003).

works of Hesiod, then, follow the paradigm of *moly*; the two parts, divine and human, only when taken together, represent the *physis* of the whole. But Hesiod complicates things a bit. Like Homer, his knowledge of the gods comes from the Muses, but his Muses are far more enigmatic than Homer's. He encounters the Muses in the space between the peak of Helicon and the habitations of men, a halfway point emblematic of their mediating power between the divine and the human (*Theog.* 1-34). The scene plays out in the dark, giving it a mysterious quality. The scornful address of the Muses in the plural (which breaks down any sense of human individuality) — (Ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι, κάκ' ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἷον ["Beastly shepherds, wretched tribe, mere bellies!"] *Theog.* 26) — includes us, their audience, among their addressees. We too belong to those wretches, not so much like shepherds but rather like the herd of sheep they pasture, not even living in houses (a hallmark of the human),[2] and consigned to stuffing our bellies. The distance between these goddesses and us humans appears unbridgeable.

Whereas Homer gave us no reason to question his Muses' veracity, Hesiod has his goddesses vaunt their own ambiguity; their tales resemble those of Odysseus: some may be true, but others may not be; and as human beings we cannot discern the difference. Given the unbridgeable gulf that separates gods from mortals, knowledge of the divine things is ultimately unverifiable. And even the Muses might have difficulty narrating their own birth, not to speak of all the events that occurred prior to it. Nevertheless, Hesiod declares that he will transmit to us what the goddesses tell him. In the *Theogony*, Hesiod traces his authority to speak about the gods to his personal encounter with the Muses, to what has been called his *Dichterweihe*. Before that moment of inspiration/initiation, he has attributed to the Muses another song that offers a catalogue of the gods, but one quite different from the one he will ultimately sing, with the Muses' aid. First, it begins from Zeus and Hera and Zeus'

[2] In Homer, both goddesses (Calypso) and monsters (Polyphemus) live in caves. Cf. *H.H.* 20 to Hephaestus.

offspring, the present generation of the gods (13-14); then it seems to work itself backward to Gaia and Okeanos and finally to Night and then the catch-all ἄλλων τ' ἀθανάτων ἱερὸν γένος αἰὲν ἐόντων (21). While resembling a cosmogony in reverse, its exact arrangement (*kosmos*) is obscure, and it is admittedly incomplete. I suggest that both the beginning from the present and the opaque, disjointed, and partial ordering of this catalogue represent the piecemeal and haphazard knowledge of the gods that ordinary mortals possess. It is not entirely wrong, but remains unsystematic and incomplete, rather like the partial human knowledge of *moly*. Later thinkers would label it the δόξα βροτῶν.

Armed with the laurel scepter and the divine voice the Muses have granted him, Hesiod will perform their song, but like Homer who can dictate to his Muse where to begin, Hesiod is no mere passive instrument. While the Muses instruct him to sing about the gods, Hesiod himself insists that they begin at the beginning.[3] Doubtless there were other theogonies floating around — Hesiod himself has already alluded to one in which Night is the primordial mother of all; and Homer, as mentioned, has Okeanos and Tethys (the sweet and salt water reminiscent of Near Eastern theogonies) as the *genesis theôn*. But Hesiod's repeatedly insists on first beginnings (words for "beginning" or "first" recur repeatedly in the *Theogony's* proem) and implicitly rejects other theogonies, even those that begin with Gaia and Ouranos (which is how the Muses begin their song when they entertain Zeus on Olympus [*Theog.* 45]). But while that version *ex archês* is good enough for Zeus, it does not suffice for Hesiod; he demands of the goddesses, even dictates to them, that in his theogony the Muses also include the natural phenomena (the rivers, sea, stars and heaven above [*Theog.* 109-111]), and thus what we would call both the divine and the physical cosmos.

[3] On the problem of beginning in the *Theogony,* see STRAUSS CLAY (2003) 49-72; also, more generally, BRAGUE (1990). Hesiod draws attention to it by using the word *prôtista* in line 24 and 116.

Or, if that distinction is anachronistic, a complete account of all the things that are *aien eonta*. Hesiod further insists that they begin with the "firstest" things (*prôtista*). And thus we find the startling assertion with which the *Theogony* proper begins: that Chaos was the very first (*prôtistos*) that came into being (*Theog.* 116). This neuter Chaos brings forth Darkness and Night, who unite to produce the polarities of Brightness and Day. These entities somehow belong to a category different from both the natural phenomena (e.g. earth, sun, rivers, and stars) and the anthropomorphic gods of mythology. This poetic way of speaking points to a radically new way of thinking: in figurative language, I believe Hesiod is saying: nothing can come into being before there is space (Chaos) and time (marked by the alternation of day and night, who are the offspring of Chaos).[4] The line of Chaos produces abstractions and personifications of forces and ideas that you cannot see or touch (Strife, Hatred, Fate, Battles, the so-called Children of Night [*Theog.* 211-232]) but can have a mental conception of: they are nonetheless real and eternal components of the cosmos — at least as real as the gods.

But let us look a little more closely at these primal events: the progression from space (Chaos) to time (Day and Night) requires some kind of movement, some kind of intervention to get things going. This seems to involve, first, separation or scission when Chaos, or some part of it, splits off into two similar parts that closely resemble their "parent": Night and Erebus, both characterizing the dark empty space from which they emerge. This process of fission can only multiply itself or proliferate its own qualities and therefore has limited cosmogonic potential. But in a rather surprising move, the union of these two forces of darkness produces something radically different, or perhaps we should say, complementary, entities: Day and Aither. Hesiod identifies the cause of this production as "mingling in *philotes*" or the power of Eros (*Theog.* 120-122):

[4] Note that time and the alternation of day and night in Hesiod, just as in the Hebrew Bible, is prior to and does not depend on the sun.

ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι,
λυσιμελής, πάντων τε θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων
δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν.

"[Eros] most beautiful among all the immortal gods,
Looser of limbs, of all gods and of all men
He overcomes the mind in their breast and thoughtful counsel."

As "most beautiful of the gods", Eros therefore has the power to bring together or attract by his beauty, but as λυσιμελής he also separates and dissolves body and soul, not unlike the dissolution caused by death and sleep. But if the beauty of Eros invites and entices, his violence overcomes and destroys (δάμναται) mind and will. Paradoxically, he embodies both tearing apart and joining together without which there can be no cosmos.[5]

Given the primacy of Eros in the *Theogony*, it is perhaps surprising how little we hear of him in the poem.[6] In fact the only time the verb ἐράω occurs in the poem is at line 915, where we learn that Zeus ἐράσσατο Mnemosyne, the mother of the Muses; this is the only love match, so to speak, in the entire composition. Nevertheless, the paradoxical character of Eros is central to the initial stages of cosmogony. As it unfolds, Chaos' absence of features stands in opposition to the solidity and visible contours of "broad-breasted" Gaia, which include height (mountains) and depth (glens). Gaia's parthenogenic generation of Ouranos, the enveloping sky, and Pontos, who delimits her landmasses — ἄτερ φιλότητος ἐφιμέρου ("without desirable love" [*Theog.* 132]) — further serves to define her, demarcating her most salient features. Here as with Chaos, fission serves to further define the parent. But only the sexual union of Heaven and Earth initiates the genuine process of cosmogony and determines its functioning. In the case of Gaia and Ouranos, the

[5] Cf. BONNAFÉ (1985) and MOST (2013).

[6] The adjective does occur: ἐρατὴν… ὄσσαν, 65; ἐρατὸς…δοῦπος, 70; Τηθύν τ' ἐρατεινήν, 136; of nymphs: 259, 353, 355; ἔργ' ἐρατά, 879. The Graces have a close connection with Eros: τῶν καὶ ἀπὸ βλεφάρων ἔρος εἴβετο δερκομενάων λυσιμελής, 910; their mother Eurynome πολυήρατον εἶδος ἔχουσα, 908; and one of her daughters is Θαλίην τ' ἐρατεινήν, 909; ἐρατῇ φιλότητι 1009, 1018.

erotic drive for unity is, to put it mildly, excessive and its procreative function blocked. Eros in his undiluted form turns out to be brutal and, as Ouranos' unending coitus with Gaia demonstrates, inverts its basic purpose by impeding generation, imprisoning her children in her womb. Paradoxically, this erotic union is accompanied by the simultaneous appearance of hatred as Ouranos' children both hate and are in turn hated by their father.[7] The only solution to this impasse is a violent separation through Ouranos' castration, which allows their offspring to emerge into the light. Union and separation are inextricably bound together and cosmogony requires them both. A resemblance to Empedocles' Love and Strife seems inescapable.

With the birth of Aphrodite, Eros becomes subordinate to the goddess, and his primal cosmic power domesticated. Also joining Aphrodite's entourage is Himeros ("Desire"), whose origin has always been a mystery.[8] Although his birth is never narrated in the *Theogony*, the proem mentions that his abode is near the Graces and the Muses (64). Previously, too, we have learned that Gaia generated Pontos without φιλότητος ἐφιμέρου (132), and Ouranos embraces Gaia ἱμείρων φιλότητος (177). As with the Muses and the children of Night, so also in the case of Himeros, forms of his name are deployed before his personified emergence: function precedes naming, or perhaps better: the emergence of the name crystallizes his preceding dynamic manifestation.

The arrival of Himeros on the cosmic stage is emblematic of the domestication of Eros and his new partnership with Aphrodite. In what I believe to be an etymological play,[9] the

[7] *Theog.* 138, 155. PLAT. *Symp.* 195c1-5: comments on the contradiction: the *palaia pragmata* about Eros recounted by Hesiod and Parmenides cannot be true; for he could not be responsible for the gods castrating and binding each other.

[8] Himeros along with Philotes, Oaristus, and Parphasis are embroidered on Aphrodite's *kestos* (*Il.* 14, 216-217), which Hera borrows to seduce Zeus.

[9] It will be objected that the word play is not explicit, but there are plenty of others in Hesiod. Cf. VERGADOS (forthcoming).

raw cosmic power of Eros has become split (*hêmi-eros*)[10] and tamed (ἡμερεύω)[11] to become not merely the external force that compels *mixis*, but now with Himeros in attendance, the drive from within that promotes the desire for sexual union.[12] The two of them henceforth operate together under the aegis of Aphrodite and inaugurate a new world order. To be sure, remnants of the primal erotic violence abide and are not immediately neutralized; tellingly, it emerges once again in the union of Rheia and Kronos, which introduces the second act of the Succession Myth where Rheia δμηθεῖσα by Kronos (453).[13] In the final act of succession, with Zeus's swallowing of his bride Metis, this violence is masked, so to speak, by the Olympian's "having deceived her mind with seductive words" (δόλῳ φρένας ἐξαπατήσας/ αἱμυλίοισι λόγοισιν, 889-890), precisely the weapons of Aphrodite (205), once Eros and Himeros have become her attendants and joined her entourage.

In the *Theogony*, Hesiod lays claim to an authority that is guaranteed by the Muses, but at the same time, that authority is rendered problematic by the goddesses' declaration of their own ambiguity. In the *Works and Days*, however, Hesiod openly vouches for his own truthfulness in announcing ἐτήτυμα to his brother Perses (10). Apparently, to speak of human things requires no super-human authorization.[14] In the *Works and Days*,

[10] It is hard not to think of the splitting of the round men in Aristophanes' speech in the *Symposium.*

[11] I believe that Pindar imitates Hesiod's word play in the opening of *Nem.* 8, 1-5, emphasizing the double character of Eros, gentle or otherwise.

[12] The distinction KLOSS (1994) 60 detects in Homer ("dass ἔρος offenbar den Funktionen des Körpers nahesteht, während ἵμερος dem geistig-sinnlichen Bereich angehören") is operative in Hesiod, although Kloss later (104) concludes of Eros' two appearances in Hesiod that "so ganz unterschiedlichen Vorstellungen finden sich bei Hesiod nebeneinander, ohne dass der Dichter den Versuch einer sinnvollen Verbindung machte".

[13] Note also Theia and Hyperion: ὑποδμηθεῖσ' Ὑπερίονος ἐν φιλότητι (374). Here, the violence of the verb is softened by ἐν φιλότητι; but cf. 962, 1000, and 1006.

[14] There is an exception when Hesiod speaks of seafaring, of which he only has limited experience (*W&D* 646-694). On these matters he must invoke the Muses to instruct him concerning the "mind of Zeus who wields the aegis" (661-662).

Hesiod's authority does not depend on the Muses. Not knowledge derived from the Muses gives him the authority to speak even to fools (*nêpioi*), whether his brother or the kings, but it is *nous* that distinguishes his discourse in the *Works and Days*: οὗτος μὲν πανάριστος, ὃς αὐτὸς πάντα νοήσει (293). His expertise is also conveyed by the use of the second person, singular or plural, which as both the kings and Perses recede from his discourse, directly addresses us, his audience, in his own authoritative voice. Through his differentiation of divine and human knowledge, Hesiod makes us emphatically aware of the limitations of any human account of cosmogony. Perhaps one can only come up with a likely story.

The big questions that Hesiod raised and which were taken up by his successors were the fundamental ones that can fairly be said to have preoccupied subsequent Greek thought and determined its direction. They are both ontological and epistemological: first, how can we have access to knowledge of the eternal and the divine? And can that knowledge be verifiable? In this Hesiod would I think agree with Xenophanes (fr. B 34 and B 35 DK):

καὶ τὸ μὲν οὖν σαφὲς οὔ τις ἀνὴρ ἴδεν οὐδέ τις ἔσται
εἰδὼς ἀμφὶ θεῶν τε καὶ ἅσσα λέγω περὶ πάντων·
εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα τύχοι τετελεσμένον εἰπών,
αὐτὸς ὅμως οὐκ οἶδε· δόκος δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσι τέτυκται.

****

ταῦτα δεδοξάσθω μὲν ἐοικότα τοῖς ἐτύμοισι.[15]

"Now then, clarity no man has seen nor will there be one
With knowledge concerning the gods and whatever I say about all things;

[15] On this notoriously difficult line and especially the interpretation of ἐοικότα, see BRYAN (2012). However the word is understood, it indicates a gap between the things that are and what can be known. But Xenophanes also seems slightly to mitigate the harsh speech of Hesiod's Muses, by substituting ἐοικότα for their ὁμοῖα, and using δόκος and δεδοξάσθω in place of ψεύδεα; he thereby appears to allow for some possibility of human knowledge, even if not certainty.

For even if in speaking perfectly he would be for the most part accurate,
Nevertheless, he would not know; seeming covers all."

****

"Let these things be considered similar to genuine things."

The second is raised by the very foundation of Hesiod's account of cosmogony and theogony: if the gods and the cosmos have come into being, how can they be *aien eontes*?

In turning to Parmenides and Empedocles, we observe a fundamental difference in the model of cosmogony: the paradigm of genealogy and genealogical affiliation to explain similarity and difference as well as change gives way to a typology based on *mixis* and separation, compounding and disaggregation (even if, as some claim, in Parmenides, such change may only be an illusion). This paradigm shift has been understood as a movement from *mythos* to *logos*, from a notion of anthropomorphic divinities to physical properties of the universe, from telling stories to giving rational accounts. But I would point out that this shift may have its basis in what was, at least for the Greeks, a fundamental problem and flaw in the genealogical model: how can what has been born and come into being be eternal? This existential puzzle seems to have engaged all the Pre-Socratics, but Hesiod may also have recognized the issue as he recounts the birth of the gods and simultaneously calls them *aien eontes*. Even more problematic is his awareness, most palpable with the children of Night, that the concepts they embody are already in play before their birth.[16] Be that as it may, in the case of Parmenides and Empedocles, by their choice of using the hexameter form and epic diction, they declare both their emulation of their precursors as well as their engagement with the philosophic questions they pose. Both Parmenides and Empedocles exploit a poetic medium to convey their teachings poetically. They thus

[16] See STRAUSS CLAY (2003) 19, n. 19.

invite us to explore their continuities and departures from their predecessors both in form and in content.[17]

Parmenides

Much has been written about Parmenides' use of epic language and especially his use of the *Odyssey* as a model in the proem of his poem.[18] I will not rehearse those features, but only mention in passing the parallel between Odysseus' arrival at Circe's and her instructions to the hero concerning the two ways noted by Havelock.[19] One could also point to the two ways outlined by Hesiod himself in the *Works and Days* when he describes to Perses the road to vice and the path to *aretê* (287-292). Instead, in keeping with our interest in beginnings, I would like to focus on a comparison between the proems of Hesiod and Parmenides. Here too scholars have noted many points of contact and contrast: Hesiod's Muses descend from Helikon cloaked in darkness; Parmenides undertakes a journey upward toward the light (I know some scholars have argued the opposite, but I am not convinced);[20] and the daughters of the Sun throw off their veils, revealing themselves. While Hesiod's gates of Night and Day are below the earth, Parmenides' appear to be above. Far from Hesiod's lonely nocturnal encounter, Parmenides arrives on a splendid chariot and has a divine escort,

[17] In other words, WRIGHT (1998) and OSBORNE (1998) are both right: Parmenides and Empedocles both choose and exploit the poetic form for their teaching. Cf. MOST (1999); WÖHRLE (1993).

[18] E.g., COXON (2009); MOURELATOS (2008); PELLIKAAN-ENGEL (1974); HAVELOCK (1958).

[19] HAVELOCK (1958).

[20] BURKERT's (1969) article, arguing for a mystical and initiatory *katabasis* has been influential. Even he admits (p. 11-12), however, that the gates αἰθέριαι, "reaching into the aither", create a problem for his interpretation. χάσμ' ἀχανές, "the gaping void", can refer to the expanse of heaven; cf. BACCHYL. 5, 27 where ἐν ἀτρύτῳ χάει refers to the heavens. See KAHN's (2009) convincing restatement, rebutting the view of a Parmenidean *katabasis.*

the Sun maidens, who leave the House of Night, i.e. the darkness, behind and lead him toward the light; when they arrive at the great Gates of Night and Day, the maidens easily persuade the goddess Dike[21] that their charge has a right to enter this domain. While Hesiod's Muses heap abuse upon him as almost sub-human shepherds, Parmenides' goddess greets him and receives him *prophrôn*; he is welcomed because he deserves to be there. Finally, while Hesiod's Muses do not declare their truthfulness, but instead exult in their ambiguity, Parmenides' goddess openly proclaims her ability to convey "the unshakable heart of well-rounded truth", ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμὲς ἦτορ (B 1, 52 DK).[22]

All these things are pretty obvious and on the surface. But there are some deeper and more significant differences. Hesiod gives his name and assures us that it was really *he* who encountered the Muses (τόνδε … με [*Theog.* 24]), and that it was *to him* that they gave their gift of the laurel scepter; in Parmenides the recipient of the goddess' teaching is an anonymous and generic *kouros*. The *kouros* recounts an event in the past when he was instructed by the goddess, but in transmitting the goddess' speech, Parmenides makes each member of the audience the "you" whom the speaker is addressing. Thus each one of us seems to become the direct recipient of the goddess' teaching.

Hesiod insists on the uniqueness of his encounter with the goddesses; he personally has received a special privilege through their nocturnal epiphany. Here is another and perhaps an even more important contrast with Hesiod: Parmenides uses the present tense to describe the horses as carrying him "now" and proclaims that how far he can go depends on his own *thymos*. Furthermore, declaring that the journey to the goddess is available to the εἰδότα φῶτα, "the man who knows", any time,

[21] In HES. *Theog.* 902, Dike is one of the Horai, who in the *Iliad* guard the gates of Olympus (5, 749 = 8, 393).

[22] See, among others, PELLIKAAN-ENGEL (1974), whose many good observations are undermined by her conviction that Parmenides' journey is a *katabasis*.

Parmenides causes us to rethink what at first seemed to be a unique experience. Apparently the journey that initially seemed so unique and only for the elect, can be undertaken by any man who knows, whenever he sets his mind to it. Moreover, I can proceed on the path as far as I desire. If I can, so to speak, mount my chariot any time, one wonders if, in the final analysis, I have any need of the goddess. Perhaps I can step into the chariot and take up the journey whenever my heart desires with my unaided *nous* alone. Indeed, I would then be following the goddess' instruction: "contemplate with your mind what is absent as if it were securely present", λεῦσσε δ' ὅμως ἀπεόντα νόωι παρεόντα βεβαίως (fr. B 4 DK).

Now, in the *Theogony*, the Muses address Hesiod insultingly — in the plural — and thus also us, but only once and only briefly (two lines). After that, while Hesiod "channels" the goddesses, they address neither him nor us, the audience, directly. On the other hand, Parmenides' goddess (nameless like her addressee) speaks constantly to her addressee in the singular. After the proem, the rest of the poem purports to be the goddess' words which were delivered on some occasion in the past, but what we hear are the words of the speaker, her pupil, now in the present. The speaker transmits the goddess' teaching, but at the same time assumes the persona and authority of the goddess. When she says "you", she may be speaking to the *kouros*, but we hear the speaker addressing each of us directly and intimately. Parmenides thus unites the divine authority of Hesiod's Muses in the *Theogony* with the direct instruction of the Hesiodic persona that addresses Perses in the *W&D*. Finally, while Hesiod's Muses boast of their ability to tell lies like the truth as well as true things when they want, in other words, their deceptiveness, Parmenides' goddess announces that she will tell the truth about the eternal things, which, to be sure, unlike Hesiod's gods, have not come into being. On the other hand, whereas Hesiod vouches for the truthfulness of the account he gives to Perses concerning the human things, Parmenides' goddess insists on the deceptive character of the *doxa brotôn*. Parmenides

thus completely inverts and undermines Hesiod's teaching, as well as his epistemology and his ontology.

On an even more abstract level, I would like to point to the shape of the respective proems: Hesiod's seems obsessed with beginnings and moves by fits and starts; it begins at least twice, once from the Heliconian Muses and again from the Olympian ones; it recounts their origins, and their song is about beginnings: how the Muses appeared to him "first", how they were born, and how they sang to Zeus from the beginning. And, as mentioned before, Hesiod's request to the Muses demands that they begin from the absolute beginning. Hesiod's proem repeatedly draws attention to the problem of beginning that is inherent in the very notion of theogony. It dominates the very shape of his proem and his composition as a whole.

Now if we compare this obsessive concern with beginning with Parmenides, I think something interesting emerges. Catherine Osborne has argued that the dominant shape of Parmenides' poem as a whole is the circle.[23] As the goddess herself says, it does not matter where she begins; she will end up in the same place (fr. 28 B 5 DK):

> ξυνὸν δὲ μοί ἐστιν,
> ὁππόθεν ἄρξωμαι· τόθι γὰρ πάλιν ἵξομαι αὖθις.
>
> "It's all the same to me
> Where I begin, for there I will in turn return."

Her discourse is a circular discourse of Being. In Parmenides' proem, truth itself is well rounded, enclosed on itself (ἀληθείης **εὐκυκλέος** ἀτρεμὲς ἦτορ, fr. 28 B 1, 52). But there is more: not only circular objects (wheels, sockets, axels), but circular verbal rings and *repetitions* abound. The whole first sequence is a series of echoing rings. But — and I think this is equally important — there are also pairs everywhere, two wheels, two doors, lintels and door jambs, the gates of Night and Day. Indeed, the goddess, when she describes βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδέν,

[23] Osborne (1998) 33-34.

"men who know nothing", who wander around in circles on the road of Being and Non-Being, calls them "two headed" (δίκρανοι, fr. 28 B 6, 5 DK). In addition, there are verbal doublets and repetitions: forms of φέρω occur 4 times in 4 lines; similarly verbal pairs recur at very short distance from each other: αἰθόμενος, αἰθέριαι, ἄξων, ἄξονας, σύριγγος, σύριγξιν, ἀμοιβούς, ἀμοιβαδόν. What is striking about these cases is that the same or a similar word denotes very different things: αἰθόμενος means "burning" in line 30, but αἰθέριαι (36) means reaching to the *aither*; ἄξων (29) denotes the axle of the chariot while the plural (42) refers to door posts; σύριγγος in 29 refers to the musical instrument, but in 42 to door sockets.[24]

This quite remarkable feature of the proem, where in rapid succession one word is used with two distinct meanings, would seem to be taken up later in the goddess' speech when she pinpoints the failure of human beings to assign names to things correctly (fr. 28 B 8, 53; fr. 28 B 9, 1).[25] Finally, there is a

[24] The doublets ἀμοιβούς, ἀμοιβαδόν are equally interesting and link Parmenides to Hesiod's description of the House of Night in *Theog.* 748-754. Since there is only one bolt to a door, the plural "keys" is anomalous. COXON (2009) 278-279 concludes: Parmenides' "use of the plural κληῖδας does however suggest that his gate has more than one βάλανος, each of which required its own key… Here as throughout his description, P. is concerned to emphasize the impregnability of the divine realm". Yet such double keys are unknown at this period. While the subsequent use of ἀμοιβαδόν (42) would seem to mean that the doors opened in succession, first one and then the other, the keys cannot succeed one another since there is only one, unless it is *used on succeeding occasions*. What these alternative or successive occasions must mean emerges from what has been said before: the gates are the gates of the paths (note plural!) of Day and Night (Νυκτός τε καὶ Ἤματός εἰσι κελεύθων, 34), and they must be opened in alternation for the arrival of Day and Night. Hesiod's use of ἀμειβόμεναι (*Theog.* 749) to express the alternation of Day and Night would appear to confirm the reference of Parmenides' κληῖδας ἀμοιβούς to the successive κέλευθοι of Day and Night.

[25] Note also COXON (2009) 274: "The antithesis night-light anticipates that between the two Forms so named in the Beliefs of Mortals and indicates that the cosmology of the prologue is related to that of the 'Beliefs'". WYATT (1992) has pointed to the profusion of word play throughout Parmenides' poem, although he does not see its philosophical implications. See also MOURELATOS (2008) 222-263 on "Deceptive Words".

profusion of adjectives compounded with *poly*: πολύφημον, πολύφραστοι, πολύποινος, πολυχάλκους ("very famous, very talkative", "very perceptive", "much punishing", "with much bronze"). Could we then say that the proem anticipates and pre-figures Parmenides' double argument that encompasses the two paths of inquiry: both the eternal circularity of Being and the multiple and deceptive opinions of mortals which are due to the confused polyphony of the senses? And as for the senses, they are certainly deceptive and lack the unshakable veracity of the *logos* of Being; but the world of *doxa* also has a place in Parmenides' poem, and as far as we can tell, a pretty extensive one. It is also I think represented in the proem with its abundant exuberance of sensory detail and visual and aural words: both the chariot and the road on which it travels are defined as *polyphêmos* (famous? full of talk?): the wheels and axels are burning *aithomenos* and shrieking. Likewise, the great double gates whirl and creak in their sockets. Indeed Sextus' allegorical interpretation (*Adu. math.* 7, 112-114) of the chariot as the senses — a vehicle of the senses with two ears (the wheels) and eyes (which for the Greeks both emit light as well as receive it), the *kourai* (which is also the Greek word for pupils) — has a certain attraction. In any case, Parmenides suggests that the approach to the truth requires both *nous* and the senses.

The dizzying sensory imagery of the proem prefigures Parmenides' teaching; it serves to shake up perception, just as his verbal repetitions shake up the simple signification of names for things; it prepares us for the teaching of the goddess whose discourse will demonstrate not, I think, the falsity of the sensible world, but its *deceptiveness*. It is a world of duplicity and multiplicity in which things seem to come into being and disappear, in which the one and the many are confused, and the paths of Night and Day are separated rather than recognized as being one and the same.[26] The journey to the goddess reveals

[26] Parmenides would I think agree with HERACLIT. fr. 22 B 57 DK; cf. fr. 22 B 106 DK: day and night are one and the same. For the relation between the two philosophers, see REINHARDT (1916).

the truth, the truth of Being, but, also and simultaneously, the nature of *doxa*. Parmenides' journey as presented in the proem constitutes not only the starting point, but also a microcosm of his teaching. Amid the whirling and screeching of the sensory overload of the journey is the "man who knows" (εἰδότα φῶτα) who has the capability of seeing not only with his senses, but also with his *nous*, a *nous* that can grasp what is absent as well as what is present, and therefore, like *moly*, comprehend the *physis* of the whole.

Parmenides' εἰδότα φῶτα somehow exists in a timeless sphere in which he can travel on the road of *alêtheia* whenever he wishes, and moreover travel on it as far as his *thymos* desires. There are well-known textual difficulties here, but also deeper issues that bear upon our focus on the authority to speak about the cosmos and its origins. Parmenides begins his poem (fr. 28 B 1, 1-3 DK):

> ἵπποι ταί με φέρουσιν, ὅσον τ' ἐπὶ θυμὸς ἱκάνοι,
> πέμπον, ἐπεί μ' ἐς ὁδὸν βῆσαν πολύφημον ἄγουσαι
> δαίμονος,[27] κατὰ πάντ' ἄστη[28] ἣ φέρει εἰδότα φῶτα …

> "The mares that carry me as far as my spirit would go,
> Were conveying me, when leading me they set me on the famous road full of talk
> Of the goddess, the road that carries the man that knows through every city …"

The fundamental problem resides in the tenses (φέρουσιν, πέμπον, βῆσαν): while the narrator appears to recount a unique experience

[27] Diels-Kranz adopt δαίμονες, Stein's unnecessary emendation. There may be a word play with δαήμων, genitive δαήμονος, "one who has knowledge".

[28] The fact that Mutschmann claimed πάντ' ἄστη was the reading of MS N does not vitiate its correctness: the MSS readings make no sense. COXON's (2009) 271 suggestion, following Heyne, κατὰ πάντ' ἄντην, strikes me as unconvincing. He cites ἄντην ἔρχεσθαι ("to meet face to face", *Il.* 8, 399-400) as a parallel, but the Homeric usage of ἄντην with verbs of motion almost always has a hostile sense. PELLICCIA (1988) proposes *to eon*, but I do not know how to translate this. Moreover, πάντ' ἄστη has the critical virtue of echoing the *Odyssey* proem and inviting us to recognize the Odyssean character of Parmenides' journey. More important is Coxon's claim that line 3 is "incompatible with l. 27 and with the whole context". But the fact that the road is ἀνθρώπων ἐκτὸς πάτου does not constitute a contradiction of line 3: the "man of understanding" is not, as he asserts, the equivalent of mankind in general.

of his encounter with a goddess in the past, the journey itself seems to be going on in the present tense. Moreover, the road to the goddess, and hence to *alêtheia*, appears to be available to the man of understanding whenever he wills (ὅσον τ' ἐπὶ θυμὸς ἱκάνοι, 28 B 1, 1 DK).[29] For Parmenides, it is the man who knows who can make the journey to the goddess; but if he already knows, does he have need of the goddess and her revelations? Does he need her authority to speak authoritatively? While her knowledge transcends the merely human *doxa* of mortals, can the man of understanding arrive at such knowledge on his own, unaided? Isn't the timeless, transcendent sphere of Being always available to the man of understanding, even amid that clutter and clatter of the ephemeral world? If, furthermore, Parmenides plays on the similarity between δαίμων and δαήμων ("expert", "experienced") in line 3, then the phrase ὁδόν … δαίμονος, "the road of the god[dess]" resembles the ὁδὸς δαήμονος, "the road of the one who has expertise" or "knowledge". In other words: are we to understand that Parmenides' εἰδώς φώς is already a δαήμων φώς and hence from the start Homer's ἰσόθεος φώς, "a man equal to the gods"?[30]

The strange concatenation of present, imperfect, and aorist tenses and the apparent contradiction between past and present in the proem's opening lines most closely parallels a similar phenomenon in the opening of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* and the *Theogony* in which divine time intersects with mortal time.[31] Here too we see Parmenides wrestling with the problem, both pragmatic and epistemological, of how to begin. Far from being a poetic adornment, the proem reveals itself to

[29] The phrase cannot refer to the horses.

[30] On two occasions, Homer combines δαήμων with φώς, "the man who has knowledge": δαήμονα φῶτα (*Il.* 23, 671), and δαήμονι φωτί (*Od.* 8, 159). Parmenides elsewhere puns on these terms by calling night ἀδαής "ignorant" (fr. 28 B 14, 59 DK) and describing the moon's ἀλλότριον φῶς "foreign light" (fr. 28 B 14 DK), playing on the Homeric phrase that refers to a foreigner.

[31] *H. Apoll.* 1-9; *Theog.* 2-23. Cf. ERLER (2002); STRAUSS CLAY (1989) 19-29 and (2003) 54.

be a microcosm — or *mise en abîme* — embracing both the deceptive polyphonic world of human *doxa* and the transcendent and timeless, but always available, Being.

Empedocles

In the case of Empedocles, the issues of beginnings and the sources of his authority to speak about eternal things require us to confront right at the outset an old controversy: did he compose one poem or two? The division into two compositions has always been based on an anachronistic dichotomy between 'religion' and 'philosophy'. Moreover, the Strasbourg papyrus[32] has revealed that material (the so-called demonology and some sort of doctrine of reincarnation), thought to belong to the *Katharmoi*, has a place in the *Peri physeôs*. There is, then, a growing, but by no means universal, consensus that Empedocles composed only one poem and that the whole poem began with fr. 31 B 112 DK.[33]

We have thus far pursued the question of authority and of the kinds of knowledge, human and divine, that make possible cosmological speculation. Homer's Muses transmit both divine and human knowledge of a superior kind; Hesiod's purvey divine knowledge, which may or may not be true; but in his harangue to Perses and the kings in the *W&D*, Hesiod himself claims to offer genuine human knowledge based on his ability to *noein*. In Parmenides the source of a super-human knowledge of Being was an anonymous goddess, whose speech, embracing both divine truth and human knowledge of a superior kind, is transmitted

[32] *Editio princeps* MARTIN / PRIMAVESI (1999).

[33] Cf. for example INWOOD (2001) 8-19 for a doxography; TRÉPANIER (2004); OSBORNE (1987). PRIMAVESI (2013) 667-674 gives a history of the problem; his own view (714-721) argues that the two works are analogous and that the mythic version and the physical teaching are mirror images of each other. I am attracted to OBBINK's (1993) notion that the *Katharmoi* were excerpted for performance from the larger work.

via the *kouros* directly to us. There was, however, a hint, as we saw, that the mediation of the goddess might ultimately not be necessary, that *nous* on its own might in fact suffice.

Now, Empedocles rings the final change on these possibilities by claiming that he himself is a god (or so he appears to others), or at least a *daimôn*. He claims that all human knowledge is partial (like the white flower of *moly).* Men with their inevitably fragmentary vision do not understand that human beings and everything else that we perceive is not born and does not die; they can neither comprehend that all things arise from the four immortal elements, nor are they able to grasp the workings of the cosmic cycle through the eternal forces of Love and Strife.

Empedocles chose to begin his work by addressing the citizens of Akragas (fr. 31 B 112, 1-4 DK):

> ὦ φίλοι, οἳ μέγα ἄστυ κατὰ ξανθοῦ Ἀκράγαντος
> ναίετ᾽ ἀν᾽ ἄκρα πόλεος, ἀγαθῶν μελεδήμονες ἔργων,
> ξείνων αἰδοῖοι λιμένες, κακότητος ἄπειροι,
> χαίρετ᾽ ...

> "Friends, who inhabit the great citadel of tawny Akragas,
> On the peak of the city, who concern yourselves with good deeds,
> Revered harbors for strangers, inexperienced of evils,
> Hail!"

Empedocles declares to his countrymen that he has travelled far and wide and now returns in triumph to his native Akragas. Like an Odysseus returning home, but quite unlike Parmenides' *kouros*, who journeys ἀνθρώπων ἐκτὸς πάτου, Empedocles has made his progress throughout the cities of men. In these first lines of his fragmentary proem, the speaker greets his fellow-citizens from Akragas, heaping praise upon the city and its inhabitants, and announces his apparent divinity (fr. 31 B 112, 4-5 DK):

> ἐγὼ δ᾽ ὑμῖν θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός
> πωλεῦμαι μετὰ πᾶσι τετιμένος, ὥσπερ ἔοικα.

> "I, for you an immortal god, no longer mortal
> Go among you honored by all, as indeed I seem."

Whether Empedocles' source or an imitation of our passage, a similar line, attributed to Pythagoras (ἔσσεαι ἀθάνατος θεός, ἄμβροτος, οὐκ ἔτι θνητός,[34]), significantly omits ὑμῖν which should be taken with ὥσπερ ἔοικα, although this meaning may not be apparent on the first reading — and indeed, many take Empedocles' claim to divinity and immortality at face value. The assertion that at first seemed absolute will subsequently require substantial modification, as we learn that only his six principles are eternal. But here he presents himself as honored by all to whose flourishing cities (ἄστεα τηλεθάοντα, 7) he comes. This seems to allude to Parmenides' proem (and thus strengthen the reading πάντ' ἄστη, fr. 28 B 1, 3 DK) and would make Empedocles himself an εἰδότα φῶτα who traverses all cities on the road of the goddess. He will, in fact shortly reveal that he is a *daimôn* and perhaps also an ἰσόθεος φώς, thereby elaborating and developing Parmenides' conceit. But at this point we learn that Empedocles apparently is returning to his hometown, performing a *nostos*, after his triumphal journeys elsewhere. On those journeys, he was mobbed by crowds of people in need, physical as well as psychological, and he offered healing and oracles to suffering mankind (fr. 28 B 1, 7-12 DK). Empedocles' use of the mantic language of healing suggests that he brings both revelation and alleviation of suffering. That revelation surely consists of the teachings that follow. Now, back in Akragas, he offers his own city the benefits of that teaching.

The knowledge Empedocles claims as his own derives from his being an apparent god among men; fr. 31 B 115 DK, which Plutarch tells us came from the beginning of his work, explains how this came to be: he is a *daimôn* — and for Empedocles, gods and *daimones* seem to be interchangeable: both turn out to be long-lived (δαίμονες οἵτε μακραίωνος λελάχασι βίοιο, 31 B 115, 5; θεοὶ δολιχαίωνες, 31 B 21, 7, cf. 31 B 23, 17), but not eternal. Just as many elements in Parmenides' proem prefigured his subsequent exposition, many details of this fragment also

[34] HIEROCL. *In Carm. aur.* 20, 4, 10; IAMBL. *Protr.* 15, 21.

allude to Empedocles' teaching. If the first fragment (31 B 112 DK) exerts a strong force of attraction with its human throngs accompanying the supposed god among men, this second self-presentation in fr. 31 B 115 DK repels in its description of the *daimôn*. Doomed to punishment for murder or perjury lasting 30,000 years, the *daimôn* takes on all the forms of mortal things; he is an exile, an outcast, whom all the elements spew forth in disgust. And finally the shocking announcement (31 B 115, 13-14 DK):

> τῶν καὶ ἐγὼ νῦν εἰμι, φυγὰς θεόθεν καὶ ἀλήτης,
> νείκεϊ μαινομένωι πίσυνος.[35]
>
> "Of those, I too am now an exile and wanderer from god,
> Having trusted in maddened strife."

The contrast between the triumphal return depicted in fr. 31 B 112 DK and the horrors of the *daimôn's* exile is literally mind-boggling; to have the same individual "I" described in such contradictory terms would surely catch the reader's or hearer's attention — and that was surely part of the point. The description of Empedocles' daemonic trajectory clearly adumbrates the doctrines he will subsequently expound. He has traversed all the elements, which form the eternal components of the cosmos (earth, air, fire and water), and has been held in thrall by one of the two forces that control that cosmos: Strife (note that *philia*, Strife's counterpart, is invoked and implied in the "friendly" address of fr. 31 B 112 DK). In his 30,000 seasons, he has seen much and experienced much — indeed a δαήμων — traversing all shapes and sizes; he has acquired the authority to speak about the cosmos and its cyclical workings because he has experienced them in his own person in his restless transformations.

I would argue that Empedocles's doctrine of metempsychosis has little to do with Orphic/Pythagorean religious doctrine: he exploits transmigration to lend authority to his teaching

[35] Cf. fr. 31 B 139, 1-9 DK.

concerning the cosmic cycles and the constant interactions between Love and Strife. Ultimately, it will turn out that this view is at least partially false, or certainly requires substantial revisions. Empedocles' gods are not immortal: only the four elements and the principle that brings them together, Love, and the principle that separates them, Strife, are eternal. Thus, these two fragments from the opening of Empedocles' *Peri physeôs* not only name the immortal elements of Empedocles' cosmos; they also demonstrate the workings of the two eternal principles whose interactions — attractions and separations — both create and destroy that cosmos. Empedocles attracted his audience by beginning his cosmogony with the "far-gleaming façade" (Pindar *Ol.* 4, 3-4)[36] that is ultimately belied by his cosmogonic and cosmophthartic teaching.

Anyway, back to Akragas: despite his flattering tones, despite his remarkable get-up (ταινίαις τε περίστεπτος στέφεσίν τε θαλείοις, "wreathed in ribbons and festive garlands", 31 B 112, 6 DK) and his triumphal entry into his home town, where he might have expected to have his revelations well-received, Empedocles seems to have failed as his subsequent address to the same *philoi* attests (31 B 114 DK):

> ὦ φίλοι, οἶδα μὲν οὕνεκ' ἀληθείη πάρα μύθοις,
> οὓς ἐγὼ ἐξερέω· μάλα δ' ἀργαλέη γε τέτυκται
> ἀνδράσι καὶ δύσζηλος ἐπὶ φρένα πίστιος ὁρμή.

> "Friends, I know because there is truth in the words
> Which I speak; this is very painful
> For men and in their hearts the impulse toward persuasion is full of evil envy."

"A prophet in his own country…" Most mortals are *ephêmeroi*;[37] their shortsightedness stands in opposition to the longer

[36] I was delighted to discover that TRÉPANIER (2004) 77 used the same image to describe Empedocles' proem; D'ALESSIO (1995) 159 uses it of Parmenides' proem.

[37] Cf. fr. 31 B 3, 9 and B 131, 8 DK. FRÄNKEL's classic essay (1946) mentions Empedocles only in passing.

perspective of the *daimones* his teaching requires. But before launching into his teaching, Empedocles invokes his Muse (31 B 3 and 131 DK), none other, it turns out, than Hesiod's Calliope, the Muse who grants persuasive discourse to the kings, a discourse that heals quarrels and strife (*neikos! Theog.* 87). But here too Empedocles both imitates and diverges from his predecessor by slightly varying the name of his Muse: Kalliopeia suggests a word play on the *agathos logos*, which she is asked to purvey, the good account that constitutes Empedocles' teaching and offers healing to mankind.[38] But, as quickly emerges, not all men are capable of grasping that teaching.

Here we also find another significant echo of Parmenides' proem: in addition to having suggested that he is the εἰδώς φώς who travels through the cities of men, Empedocles invokes his Muse (31 B 3, 3-8):

καὶ σέ, πολυμνήστη λευκώλενε παρθένε Μοῦσα,
ἄντομαι, ὧν θέμις ἐστὶν ἐφημερίοισιν ἀκούειν,
πέμπε παρ' Εὐσεβίης ἐλάουσ' εὐήνιον ἅρμα.

****

μηδέ σέ γ' εὐδόξοιο βιήσεται ἄνθεα τιμῆς
πρὸς θνητῶν ἀνελέσθαι, ἐφ' ὧι θ' ὁσίης πλέον εἰπεῖν
θάρσεϊ — καὶ τότε δὴ σοφίης ἐπ' ἄκροισι θοάζειν.

"And you, white-armed maidenly Muse, much wooed, much remembering,
I beseech you: of those things that it is lawful for ephemeral men to hear,
Send them, driving your chariot with lovely reins from the house of Piety

****

And the flowers of honor for good repute will not force you
To take them up from the hands of men on condition of saying more than is holy
With boldness — and then indeed to sit upon the peaks of wisdom."

[38] Cf. HARDIE (2013).

With her ambiguous epithet, Empedocles' goddess is not only "much remembering", but also "much-wooed", while remaining maidenly (rather than Parmenides' more promiscuous one?), driving her "well-reined" chariot from the house of Eusebia, and sending forth those things which are *themis* for ephemeral mortals to hear. Unlike Parmenides' "tell-all" goddess, Empedocles' Kalliopeia is far more discreet; and in an ironic reversal of traditional invocations, she is urged not to impart all she knows. Human adulation, to become famous through skill or knowledge, is a trap to be avoided.[39] Empedocles here seems to suggest that he, unlike his predecessor, may not reveal his whole teaching (or his teaching about the whole) to everyone. It is at this point, I think, that Empedocles turns away from addressing the citizens of Akragas as a group to a sole addressee named Pausanias, the son of *daiphrôn* Anchites/os (31 B 1 DK);[40] the rest of mankind are all deluded in their belief that whatever fragmentary knowledge they encounter constitutes the whole (31 B 2 DK) — again the underlying notion of *physis* (as in the case of *moly*), as the knowledge of the whole.

[39] HARDIE (2013) 237-240 (following Karsten) attractively argues for a lacuna after line 5 so that lines 6-8 form the Muse's response to the speaker. She would then be urging the poet not to reveal all she tells him (only what is *hosios* for day-creatures to hear) because of his ambition to appear wise among mortals. The sarcastic tone can be paralleled by the insulting address of Hesiod's Muses. Placing the words in the mouth of the goddess also solves the problem of θοάζειν, which would then have its expected sense of "sit" rather than "rush" — which Hardie, however, maintains. INWOOD (2001) separates fr. 31 B 3, 1-5 (= his fr. 9) and 31 B 3, 6-13 DK (= his fr. 14), taking the last lines as addressed to Pausanias.

[40] In the scholarly tradition, the change in addressee from singular to plural has been the most important formal criterion for separating the Empedoclean material into two poems, with the assumption that the *Katharmoi* constituted an exoteric work addressed to the public, while the *Peri physeôs* contained his esoteric teaching. But such a shift of addressee within a single work finds a clear parallel in Hesiod's *Works and Days* where in the first half Hesiod alternates between the kings and Perses in making his argument for justice. We should, moreover, be open to the possibility that Empedocles may have returned to address a wider audience, even in the later parts of his composition.

Diogenes Laertius tells us that Pausanias was Empedocles' *erômenos*, a biographical fiction, one supposes. But the name of Empedocles' addressee remains intriguing: if we interpret the name as "Putting an End to Suffering", then we have a *redender Name* for the effect that Empedocles' teaching will have — and indeed already has had — on his addressee.[41] We should remember that Empedocles puns on his own name, casting his teaching as *empedon*, "sure, certain".[42] I cannot at this point resist throwing out a highly speculative suggestion: if Anchites/tos was understood as a by-form of Anchises (with a common interchange of tau and sigma), or even if only the similarity of sound could evoke the other, then are we meant to think of Pausanias as the offspring of Aphrodite? He would then have been born under the influence of Love, as opposed to Empedocles himself who, as he has told us, "has put his trust in maddened Strife" (νείκεϊ μαινομένωι πίσυνος, 31 B 115, 14). Under the reign of Love, opposites attract; hence the attraction of teacher and student.

Be that as it may, the discovery of the Strasbourg papyrus with its 70 plus consecutive lines from Book One has reinforced earlier observations about Empedocles' style: Empedocles' use of repetition differs from epic repetition, if we mean the recurrence of formulaic phrases we find in epic. It also is distinct from the kind of repetition we found in Parmenides. Empedocles' deployment of recurring lines and phrases is a stylistic device that reinforces his argument concerning the recurrent cycle of the eternal elements, forever uniting and separating in Love and in Strife, a rhetoric of ceaseless change and timeless permanence. Similarly, the microcosm of Empedocles' metempsychosis, his own cyclical transmigration from plant to beast and to god and back again, mirrors the macrocosmic cycle of the universe.

[41] Cf. the epigram included in the *Palatine Anthology* (7, 508, fr. 31 B 156 DK), cited by Diogenes Laertius and ascribed to Simonides: Παυσανίην ἰητρὸν ἐπώνυμον Ἀγχίτεω υἱόν, "Pausanias, son of Anchites, a doctor, rightly named".

[42] See OBBINK (1993) 87-88 for Empedocles' punning on his own name. Hesiod, to be sure, does the same: ὅσσαν ἱεῖσαι, *Theog.* 43.

As Empedocles tells us, the *daimôn-nous* has directly experienced the four elements in its journeying, tossed from one to the other as an exile from the perfect harmony of the *Sphairos* (fr. 31 B 115 DK); he therefore has the ability to extrapolate the existence of the four elements in their distinctive and pure forms when they are completely separated at the height of Strife's power. Even though not eternal and incapable of surviving the complete revolution of the cycle, the long-lived *daimôn* can envisage and reconstruct the existence of the cosmic cycle through the combined evidence of sense perception, experience, and the workings of *nous* and through the affinity between *nous* and the *Sphairos*. Such a possibility is made quite explicit in a fragment that is usually interpreted as a tribute to Pythagoras or even Parmenides (fr. 31 B 129 DK):[43]

ἦν δέ τις ἐν κείνοισιν ἀνὴρ περιώσια εἰδώς,
ὃς δὴ μήκιστον πραπίδων ἐκτήσατο πλοῦτον,
παντοίων τε μάλιστα σοφῶν <τ'> ἐπιήρανος ἔργων·
ὁππότε γὰρ πάσηισιν ὀρέξαιτο πραπίδεσσιν,
ῥεῖ' ὅ γε τῶν ὄντων πάντων λεύσσεσκεν ἕκαστον
καί τε δέκ' ἀνθρώπων καί τ' εἴκοσιν αἰώνεσσιν.

"There was among them a man who knew extraordinary things,
Who possessed in his mind the greatest wealth,
Master of all sorts of surpassingly wise deeds;
For whenever he reached out with all his mind,
Easily would he gaze upon each of all the things that are,
Even in ten lifetimes of men and also in twenty."

What matters to us here is not so much the identity of τις ἀνὴρ περιώσια εἰδώς ("a man with extraordinary knowledge", reminiscent of Parmenides' εἰδὼς φώς), but rather the possibility of reaching out with one's mind and "gazing on each of the things that are in ten and even twenty human lifetimes".[44] The *daimôn*, punished by an exile extending 30,000 seasons, similarly

[43] These traditional identifications may be mere guesses; it seems quite possible that Empedocles is speaking about himself.

[44] In fr. 31 B 11 DK, the mass of mankind is called "fools" (νήπιοι) because their thoughts are not long-lasting (δολιχόφρονές); presumably the *daimones*, like

is capable of grasping the workings of the universe and its cosmic alternations. Even if, as some scholars have argued, Empedocles had presented a golden age of Love and harmony, a "peaceable kingdom" at the beginning of his exposition of the cosmic cycle,[45] his knowledge of the cycle and its workings, his "double tale", can only derive, as he tells us, from his participation and experiences within the period of increasing Strife (cf. fr. 31 B 124 DK).

And speaking of cycles and time's winged chariot, it is time to conclude. Much here has been speculative, some of it also dogmatic, but I hope a red thread of an argument has emerged. First, I have emphasized the problem of beginnings and the importance of opening presentations or proems as intimately bound up with the cosmological teachings that follow and how what may at first appear to be merely literary devices offers clues to the teachings they introduce. I have also tried to point out the high degree of continuity in early Greek cosmogonic speculation — in which I also included Homer. The issues I see running through from Homer onward are the themes of the kinds of knowledge and the sources of authority. On the first question, there seems to be a remarkable degree of continuity in framing and classifying knowledge as a duality: divine and human, which embraces knowledge of the divine and of the human as well as knowledge *about* the divine and *about* the human. From this immediately arises the question of the accessibility of divine knowledge and its relation to human knowledge. In Homeric

the *theoi*, insofar as they are δολιχαίωνες have had longer experience and hence can grasp the cyclical character of the cosmos.

[45] SEDLEY (1989) suggested (although he believes in two poems rather than one) that Empedocles' proem may have included a "Hymn to Love" that Lucretius imitated in his "Hymn to Venus" at the beginning of the *De rerum natura*. He insists that Lucretius invokes Empedocles solely as a poetic model without any doctrinal allegiance. Yet TRÉPANIER (2004) argues more convincingly that, just as Lucretius' invocation to Venus in the *De rerum natura* turns out to be false — or at least needs to be understood metaphorically — an Empedoclean "Hymn to Philotes" would likewise only constitute half of his "double tale".

epic, human knowledge is imperfect and partial. It is imprecise in relation to the events of the heroic past; and it is woefully inadequate in its account of the gods. The Muses who speak through the poet, however, convey an accurate and complete account of past events that includes the interventions of the gods and that gives those events their coherence. The question of the Muses' reliability only arises with Hesiod. They do indeed have knowledge of the divine, of which ordinary human knowledge is inadequate, but their knowledge is deceptive for mortals because unverifiable. Knowledge of *human* things, however, is available to someone like Hesiod who can tell it like it is to Perses, because, unlike his foolish brother, he has *nous* that can figure things out. Hesiod's authority in the *Works and Days* resides within himself.

Parmenides retains and even radicalizes the dualism of knowledge between the eternal and the ephemeral things. But here in an inversion of Hesiod, it is the *doxa brotôn* that is deceptive; while the truth of Being may have a divine source, it is nevertheless ultimately available via *nous,* at least for the "man who knows". Parmenides' dizzying journey allows him entrance to the transcendent, but always available realm of Being. Empedocles' teaching embraces both the four eternal elements and divine principles of Love and Strife as well as the ephemeral and fragmented world of mortal experience. He claims to speak authoritatively because of his personal experience. But unlike Hesiod who can vouch only for the truth of mortal matters, Empedocles, because he has been not only a long-lived *daimôn*, but has also experienced the coming to be and passing away of *ephêmeroi* in their different forms, can reveal the whole or *physis*. We thus do not need to invoke mysticism or shamanism to explain the apparently bizarre character of Empedocles' self-presentation. It is a radical but almost inevitable solution to the problem of authority and the central question of human access to knowledge of the divine and of the cosmos. His teaching concerning the eternal cosmic cycle begins from his circular voyage throughout the world, experiencing its elements, and ends in his *nostos* as a *daimôn* returning to his Agrigentine home.

Works cited

BONNAFÉ, A. (1985), *Eris et Eros. Mariages divins et mythe de succession chez Hésiode* (Lyon).

BRAGUE, R. (1990), "Le récit du commencement: Une aporie de la raison grecque", in J.-F. MATTÉI (ed.), *La naissance de la raison en Grèce. Actes du Congrès de Nice, mai 1987* (Paris), 23-31.

BRYAN, J. (2012), *Likeness and Likelihood in the Presocratics and Plato* (Cambridge).

BURKERT, W. (1969), "Das Proömium des Parmenides und die 'Katabasis' des Pythagoras", *Phronesis* 14, 1-30.

COXON, A.H. (2009), *The Fragments of Parmenides*, revised and expanded edition, R. MCKIRAHAN (ed.) (Las Vegas).

D'ALESSIO, G.B. (1995), "Una via lontana dal cammino degli uomini: (Parm. Frr. 1 + 6 D.-K.; Pind. *Ol.* VI 22-27; pae. VIIb 10-20)", *SIFC* 13, 143-181.

ERLER, M. (2002), "Praesens divinum: Mythische und historische Zeit in der griechischen Literatur", in M. JANKA / C. SCHÄFER (eds.), *Platon als Mythologe. Neue Interpretationen zu den Mythen in Platons Dialogen* (Darmstadt), 81-98.

FRÄNKEL, H. (1946), "Man's 'Ephemeros' Nature According to Pindar and Others", *TAPhA* 77, 131-145.

HARDIE, A. (2013), "Empedocles and the Muse of the *Agathos Logos*", *AJP* 134, 209-246.

HAVELOCK, E.A. (1958), "Parmenides and Odysseus", *HSPh* 63, 133-143.

INWOOD, B. (2001), *The Poem of Empedocles*, revised edition (Toronto).

KAHN, C.H. (2009), "Postscript on Parmenides", in *Essays on Being* (Oxford), 207-217.

KLOSS, G. (1994), *Untersuchungen zum Wortfeld "Verlangen/Begehren" im frühgriechischen Epos* (Göttingen).

MARTIN, A. / PRIMAVESI, O. (1999), *L'Empédocle de Strasbourg (P. Strasb. gr. Inv. 1665-1666)* (Berlin).

MOST, G.W. (1999), "The Poetics of Early Greek Philosophy", in A.A. LONG (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge), 332-361.

—— (2013), "Eros in Hesiod", in E. SANDERS *et al.* (eds.), Erôs *in Ancient Greece* (Oxford), 163-174.

MOURELATOS, A.P.D. (2008), *The Route of Parmenides*, revised and expanded edition (Las Vegas).

OBBINK, D. (1993), "The Addressees of Empedocles", in A. SCHIESARO / P. MITSIS / J. STRAUSS CLAY (eds.), Mega Nepios. *Il destinatario nell'epos didascalico* (Pisa), 51-98.

OSBORNE, C. (1987), "Empedocles Recycled", *CQ* 37, 24-50.
—— (1998), "Was Verse the Default Form for Presocratic Philosophy?", in C. ATHERTON (ed.), *Form and Content in Didactic Poetry* (Bari), 23-35.
—— (2005), "Sin and Moral Responsibility in Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle", in A.L. PIERRIS (ed.), *The Empedoclean* Κόσμος. *Structure, Process and the Question of Cyclicity. Proceedings of the Symposium Philosophiae Antiquae Tertium Myconense, July 6th –July 13, 2003* (Patras), 283-307.
PELLICCIA, H. (1988), "The Text of Parmenides B1.3 (D-K)", *AJP* 109, 507-512.
PELLIKAAN-ENGEL, M.E. (1974), *Hesiod and Parmenides. A New View on Their Cosmologies and on Parmenides' Proem* (Amsterdam).
PRIMAVESI, O. (2013), "Empedokles", in H. FLASHAR / D. BREMER / G. RECHENAUER (eds.), *Die Philosophie der Antike.* Band 1, *Frühgriechische Philosophie* (Basel), 667-739.
REINHARDT, K. (1916), *Parmenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* (Bonn).
SEDLEY, D. (1989), "The Proems of Empedocles and Lucretius", *GRBS* 30, 269-296.
STRAUSS CLAY, J. (1989), *The Politics of Olympus. Form and Meaning in the Major Homeric Hymns* (Princeton).
—— (2003), *Hesiod's Cosmos* (Cambridge).
TRÉPANIER, S. (2004), *Empedocles. An Interpretation* (New York).
VERGADOS, A. (forthcoming), *Hesiod's Intellectual World.*
WÖHRLE, G. (1993), "War Parmenides ein schlechter Dichter? Oder: Zur Form der Wissensvermittlung in der frühgriechischen Philosophie", in W. KULLMANN / J. ALTHOFF (eds.), *Vermittlung und Tradierung von Wissen in der griechischen Kultur* (Tübingen), 167-180.
WRIGHT, M.R. (1998), "Philosopher Poets: Parmenides and Empedocles", in C. ATHERTON (ed.), *Form and Content in Didactic Poetry* (Bari), 1-22.
WYATT, W.F. JR. (1992), "The Root of Parmenides", *HSPh* 94, 113-120.

DISCUSSION

G. Campbell: You argue that when Hesiod meets the Muses early in the *Theogony*, they warn him (and us?) that their speech can be deceptive and therefore we should not place absolute trust in what they say: "We know how to tell many lies that sound like truth, but we know how to sing the truth when we will" (*Theogony*, 27-28). How does this reading fit in with Hesiod's claim a little after this that the Muses know everything that is, will be, and was, and that they have granted him two parts of this divine knowledge: the past and the future?

J. Strauss Clay: First, as you point out, the Muses only grant Hesiod a part of the knowledge they possess. Second, he is instructed "to celebrate the things that are and will be, and to hymn the race of the blessed ones who are forever" (32-33). To celebrate is not quite the same as to tell the truth about something. Finally, after making a boastful declaration of their own ambiguity, they do not say what so many scholars want them to say: "but we will tell you the truth". That omission seems to me significant and must not be overlooked or ignored.

K. Schmid: What Greece is it that Hesiod's *Theogony* is written for? Does the inclusion of different traditions in Hesiod's theology have a political function?

J. Strauss Clay: Yes. While Greece continued to be dominated by small city-states, the 8th century saw the rise of Pan-Hellenic institutions, like the sanctuaries of Olympia and Delphi, the epics of Homer, and the *Kunstsprache* in which they were composed. In these the individual Greek *poleis* discovered a communality that united them despite their local differences. Surely there were also many other theogonic traditions in the early

archaic period. Hesiod's account both includes and integrates alternative and local cosmogonic accounts and avoids references to epichoric traditions, as is clear from his omission of local epithets for divinities; they appear only briefly in the first catalogue (10-21) which is rejected for being incomplete. I have pointed to traces of an alternate version found in Homer, to which Hesiod alludes, where Okeanos and Tethys were the primal divinities. We know, for instance, of different numbers and names of the Muses and the Graces from other contexts like vase painting. The *Theogony* is self-consciously Pan-Hellenic and aims to be (and in fact became) canonical for all the Greeks. As for Parmenides and Empedocles, they are part of that Panhellenic culture, and, as I tried to point out, very much in line with the questions raised by Hesiod. Their use of the poetic *Kunstsprache* likewise transcends local dialects concerns. Finally, in their own way, they each also consider themselves Odysseuses.

K. Volk: I am wholly persuaded by your reading of the development from Homer via Hesiod to Parmenides and Empedocles, but was wondering whether you thought there was any significance to the differences in genre among your texts. Of course, it is anachronistic to speak of 'didactic poetry' for this period (where all texts in question would have been considered *epos*), but I think there are still differences between Homer and the *Theogony* on the one hand, and the *Works & Days*, Parmenides, and Empedocles on the other (witness Aristotle's famous claim that while Homer is a *poietes*, Empedocles is but a *physiologos*). You yourself have mentioned the 2nd-person addresses in the *Works & Days*, Parmenides, and Empedocles as a mark of distinction vis-à-vis the first group of texts. Would you care to speculate some more on the generic differences among these poems, including perhaps their performance contexts and envisaged audiences?

J. Strauss Clay: I agree with you that there are important generic differences between, on the one hand, Homeric epic and

the *Theogony*, and even important distinctions between these two kinds of *epos*: the latter could be considered a form of catalogue poetry, of which there are passages within the monumental Homeric epics, like the Catalogue of Ships or the Catalogue of Women in *Odyssey* 11. A striking difference, however, between the heroic epic and theogonic poetry is the greater degree of authorization required by the latter: Homer's proems are 8 or 10 lines long; Hesiod's require 110 verses — but after that, he basically disappears. However, the audience is rarely directly engaged in these narrative genres, which, after all, relate events from the remote past, the actions of the heroes or cosmogonic events. In the case of the *Works and Days*, Parmenides, and Empedocles, the emphatic presence of a speaking "I" and of an addressee fundamentally changes the dynamics: we are in the here and now, a conversation is unfolding in our presence. The audience does not merely follow the story, but rather becomes actively engaged, like spectators at a tennis match. Even if the addressee remains silent, we are witnessing a dialogue, but not passively, since our evaluation and involvement with the "you" may develop and change over the course of the composition. We may identify or distance ourselves from the addressee; important signposts in this evolving relation are the use of apostrophe, and rhetorical ploys like exhortations, threats, and even praise. So while epic and cosmogonic poetry transport us to the distant past, this other form insists on our engagement in the *hic* and *nunc* of performance.

T. Fuhrer: Im Anschluss an die Antwort auf Katharina Volks Frage, dass wir Unterschiede zwischen den Texten von Hesiod, Parmenides und Empedokles nicht mit dem (schwierigen) Begriff der literarischen Gattung, sondern mit der Frage nach der Sprechsituation erklären sollten (wer spricht, wer übernimmt die Rolle des für das Gesagte Verantwortlichen?), möchte ich nachhaken: Können wir etwas sagen über den Grund, warum in diesen Texten der Anspruch erhoben wird, Aussagen über die Entstehung der Götter und der Welt, wie sie in der Gegenwart sichtbar und

erlebbar ist, machen zu können? Ist — ähnlich wie dies für das *Enūma eliš* ja möglich ist — auch hier die Art und Weise, wie Wissen und Autorität beansprucht werden, aus dem historischen, d.h. politischen oder religiösen, Kontext (mit dem ‚Sitz im Leben') zu erklären?

S. Maul: Es scheint offensichtlich, dass der Versuch, das Werden der Welt zu beschreiben, nur mit den Mitteln geschehen kann, die der Zeit, in der eine solche Vorstellung entsteht, entspricht. So ist es wahrscheinlich, dass die in die Urzeit projizierte Ordnungskonfiguration nicht nur der Vorzeit ihre Gestalt gibt, sondern auch der Gegenwartswelt, aus der eine Vorstellung von der Weltentstehung erwächst. Im Fall des sog. babylonischen Weltschöpfungsepos *Enūma eliš* habe ich zu zeigen versucht, wie eng die dort dargelegten Schöpfungsvorstellungen verbunden sind mit der altorientalischen Gegenwartswelt, mit ihren politischen, sozialen und auch topographischen und architektonischen Bedingungen. Können Sie mir darlegen, ob und in welcher Weise die im alten Griechenland jeweils herrschenden Verhältnisse die *Theogonie* des Hesiod und die weiteren von Ihnen vorgestellten Texte beeinflussten oder gar prägten?

J. Strauss Clay: The questions of Therese Fuhrer and Stefan Maul overlap, so I venture to answer them together. The *Enūma eliš*, as Professor Maul has so eloquently shown, was a ritual text recited at the New Year's festival and, while incorporating earlier heterogeneous elements, was nevertheless intimately connected with the preservation of the contemporary political, social, and religious order. The *Theogony* likewise alludes to and incorporates other accounts and is surely influenced by Near Eastern models, but while it describes the origins and character of the regime of Zeus, it does not justify a specific political order, like the royal and divine kingship of Babylon. Moreover, it is not a sacred or priestly text. I can merrily alter it, augment or curtail it; it is not tied to a sacred ritual. This divorce from a specific religious-political context seems to me absolutely crucial.

K. Volk: This is a follow-up question to that of Stefan Maul about the historical, social, and political context of the Hesiodic poems. Obviously, the *Works & Days* is more clearly anchored in a particular period and social context and shows clear concerns for contemporary issues. What about the *Theogony*, though? Is this a kind of 'prequel' to the *Works & Days*, setting up the rule of Zeus, which is then meant to guarantee the justice and social order envisaged in the second poem (cf. the *Works & Days* proem)?

J. Strauss Clay: We can say that the *Works and Days* reflects a specific period in Greek history that obtained in the early archaic period, but Hesiod would not have seen it that way. He at least believed that the fundamental character of the human condition was as he depicted it with the need for justice, marriage, agriculture, and respect for the gods as its unchanging coordinates — all predicated on human mortality and economic scarcity. That being said, I do believe that the *Theogony* offers a complementary vision from the perspective of the gods that explains and justifies the way human beings have to live in the world under Zeus's domination. Both the Prometheus story and the myth of the five races, recounted at the beginning of the *Works and Days*, reveal the depressing fact that human life was better before Zeus came to power.

R. Brague: La prétention à une inspiration supra-humaine n'est pas sans une dimension sociale. Elle sert à légitimer la compétence de celui qui, n'étant pas membre de la corporation des poètes, ne devrait pas avoir la compétence pour parler. Ainsi, dans la Bible, le prophète Amos explique qu'il n'est pas prophète et membre syndiqué d'une guilde de prophètes, mais que c'est le dieu d'Israël qui est allé le chercher pour lui confier une mission (7, 14-15).

J. Strauss Clay: There is, of course, no reason to assume that Hesiod was not a 'member of the guild', but you are right in saying that he presents himself as such in the *Theogony*. In the

Works and Days, however, we learn that he took part in poetic competitions. The *Theogony's* lengthy proem, describing his calling (not without reminiscences of the story of David), does show an awareness of and emphasis on what he sees as the problematic character of his task: accounting for the cosmos from its first beginnings. He also recognized that this subject matter requires a kind of authorization that perhaps heroic epic does not and thereby draws attention to its difficulty. Presumably, Amos' mission was not to convey stories about the origins of the cosmos, but to convey God's instructions to Israel. Interestingly, in the *Works and Days*, Hesiod does convey instruction that might seem almost prophetic about justice and work, but he there doesn't seem to need the Muses or divine inspiration.

R. Brague: Le texte qui contient l'énumération la plus complète des réalités qui constituent le monde physique (109-111) est athétisé par Friedrich Solmsen à cause de la difficulté que présente le ἐκ τῶν du v. 111. M.L. West, dans son édition commentée, athétise justement le v. 111. Quels arguments vous ont-ils poussée à les garder tous ?

J. Strauss Clay: Solmsen athetized a quarter of the poem; earlier Jacoby excluded 61%. The more conservative West restored all but 30 lines (correctly omitting some like 218-219). West's objection to line 111 is that it repeats line 45 and hence must be interpolated. Constructions *ex sensu* involving pronouns can be found elsewhere in the poem, e.g. 295, 319. The rivers and stars, mentioned in verses 109-110, are in fact catalogued in the *Theogony* (as are other natural phenomena, like the winds, sun and moon), so not their mention here, but their absence from the 'table of contents' would be anomalous. In fact, their presence in the *Theogony* is one of its defining features and makes it simultaneously a cosmogony.

R. Brague: Nous avons du mal à comprendre comment Hésiode peut se proposer de raconter la venue à l'être de dieux qui sont dits par ailleurs, et avec la régularité lancinante d'une

formule, "toujours existants" (*aien eontes*). La difficulté ne proviendrait-elle pas de ce que l'on projette sur la période épique un concept de l'éternité anachronique, celui du platonisme ? Et l'idée aristotélicienne selon laquelle tout ce qui a eu un commencement dans le temps doit nécessairement avoir une fin dans celui-ci. Mais la logique du mythe fonctionne-t-elle ainsi ? Et même un prosateur comme Thucydide parle de l'œuvre qu'il vient pourtant d'écrire comme d'un *ktêma es aiei*.

J. Strauss Clay: The issue already deeply concerned the Pre-Socratics, starting with Xenophanes (and perhaps already with the Milesians), and therefore cannot be blamed on Plato or Aristotle, and I am always nervous about attributing something to an 'epic mentality'. It does, however, seem to be a peculiarly Greek pre-occupation; it does not seem to have troubled Near Eastern and Judaic cosmogonies where the gods or the cosmos come to be but last forever. Medieval philosophers did wrestle with the distinction between eternity and sempiternity, where the latter signifies a coming-to-be, but imperishability.

R. Brague: Sextus Empiricus interprétait le début du poème de Parménide comme une allégorie de la connaissance sensible. Le parallèle avec les organes de la perception est en effet parfois tentant : ainsi, par exemple, les *kourai hêliades* (v. 9) se laissent facilement interpréter comme les globes oculaires avec leur pupille (qui est justement dite *korê*) et la lumière solaire censée présente en elles. Mais je vois mal comment Parménide pourrait considérer les sens comme conduisant à la vérité, lui qui les soumet un peu plus tard à une critique dévastatrice (28 B 7, 4 DK).

J. Strauss Clay: I think one can argue that it is precisely the cacophony of the senses and the ambiguity of language that constitutes the necessary prelude to the approach to the realm that transcends the deceptive *doxa* of the senses and of time, that is, the eternal realm of Being. The senses are deceptive and

ambiguous, but they are not nothing, i.e. non-Being. We must not forget that the most extensive part of the poem dealt with the sensible world and Parmenides seems to begin that section by pointing out the errors human beings make. The account he will give presumably avoids those errors and, as the goddess claims, is the best possible one for human beings to give, even if it will never have the certainty of Being. While the phenomenal realm of *doxa* may be based on mistaken assumptions involving non-Being, it is nevertheless not a meaningless jumble, but an arrangement, διάκοσμος, that is ἐοικότα πάντα (B 7, 60).

R. Brague: Dans le fragment d'Empédocle que vous citez (31 B 115 DK), ne pourrait-on pas distinguer d'une part les *daimones*, qui ne jouissent que d'une vie très longue, mais limitée, et d'autre part les *makares* d'auprès desquels les premiers auraient fait défection, et qui seraient les seuls à être authentiquement immortels?

J. Strauss Clay: As far as I can tell, for Empedocles, neither the *daimones* nor the gods are immortal: both are long-lived (cf. B 115, 5; B 21, 7; B 23, 17 DK). Immortal are only the four elements and Love and Strife.

R. Brague: As students of the ancient world, we have our own epistemological challenges. We are limited to the surface of things, knowing only what people said, not what they thought. Yet there is a tendency to apply distinct interpretive models to authors like Parmenides and Empedocles on the one hand, and figures like the biblical prophets on the other. That is, one considers the rhetoric of divine inspiration in the first group in terms of poetic art, metaphor and allegory, while the same rhetoric in the latter group is typically interpreted in terms of a presumed earnest report of belief or religious experience. How can we be so sure about making this distinction, and how can we tell a poet from a prophet when both speak the language of

inspiration and revelation? How do we know that Parmenides and Empedocles are not just as earnest about what they describe as inspiration as are their prophetic peers in the Jewish tradition?

J. Strauss Clay: This is of course a very important question and you are right to raise it. And I fear that I am one of those who do make a distinction between the prophets and the *physiologoi*, but Burkert on Parmenides and Kingsley on Empedocles insist on the mystical-religious character of their revelations. I think monotheism does make a difference as does a God who is all knowing and all-powerful. Already with Hesiod we have gods who may or may not tell the truth; and apparently when he exhorts and threatens the kings and his brother like the prophets of Israel, he does not need the gods to do so. It is also not clear to me how accepting the revelations of Parmenides, despite the goddess' impeccable credentials, has a direct ethical application that will require me to change my life. Empedocles, on the other hand, does seem to have an ethical doctrine (e.g., no meat eating), but the fragmentary state of the text does not allow us to be sure whether such restraint will lead to salvation. There does in any case seem to be a tension in his teaching between a mechanistic and an apocalyptic view of the cosmos, which exists whether we believe in two works or only one.

M. Erler: What does it mean for the interpretation of Hesiod and the topic of our conference that in Hesiod's time we cannot find a word that covers the meaning "cosmos" or "All". Are we allowed to nevertheless speak about 'cosmologies' at this time?

J. Strauss Clay: M. Brague has of course addressed this issue in his paper and suggested that we cannot. But I would take issue with the notion that without a word for something, there can be no concept. Brague cites Snell *et al.* as sources, but I always point out that one cannot translate the title of Snell's book, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes*, into English (nor, for that matter, Wilamowitz's *Der Glaube der Hellenen* into Greek). Snell's example,

that Homeric Greek does 'not yet' have a word for the living human body or a word for consciousness, ignores the fact that the terms that we do find are far more interesting. The Homeric distinction between the body as a passive and inert object and the living person who has defined parts as well as the view of the soul or consciousness as a field of differentiated and interactive forces is far from primitive. After all, Plato's soul is also tripartite as is Freud's. In the case of Hesiod, I would argue that he does have, if not a single word, then a phrase that does comprehend the All: "that which is and that which was and will be". I find it extremely interesting that Hesiod expresses the totality, first, as a differentiated plurality and, second, in terms of time, whereas we would, I think, tend to characterize the All in terms of space.