The Genesis of Philosophy in the West and the Presocratic Search for the Arche

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The origin of philosophy in the West is shrouded in obscurity. Based on the knowledge handed down to us, the earliest Greek philosophers hailed from the prosperous trading port of Miletus which can be found in a small region in Asia Minor called Ionia.

There are three major theories why Ionia became the birthplace of philosophy in Greece. Not one of these can sufficiently explain the origin of this branch of learning. It is highly probable that all factors could have contributed to its development. The first theory highlights the continental position of Miletus which made it open for oriental influences. Located in this territory was a seaport that may have served as the meeting ground of different races not only commercially but also intellectually. Ports usually functioned

during those times as channels for the influx of foreign ideas. According to this view, Greek philosophy had its roots from the Orient, with merchants and sailors acting as carriers of Eastern ideas to the Ionic coast. Supporting this contention is the presence of a number of Oriental influences in Greek poetry, mathematics, mythology, and astrology. It can also be noted that almost all the Presocratics were reported to have traveled to the East, and this is accepted even by those writers who are not sympathetic to this view. Historians of thought are divided on this issue.There are those who are open to the possibility that the Greeks might have borrowed some philosophical tenets from the Orient while others dismiss this claim due to the lack of sufficient material evidence.[1] Furthermore, although the Greeks might have borrowed mathematical or astrological knowledge from the East, this fact cannot be extended to include philosophy.

Other authors tend to stress the intimate link between philosophy and political development. For them, the Greeks' application of rational principles to politics, the development of written laws and holding of public debates were a few of the conditions that stimulated logical thinking, analytical interpretation, precise reasoning, and open discussions—all of these are necessary prerequisites of philosophical discourse. This theory draws a sharp distinction between philosophy and mythology. The former is seen as a reaction against the chaotic world of gods and goddesses who were often at odds with each other and who ruled men by fear and force. According to the proponents of this theory, it is not surprising why philosophy dawned in Ionia since it was also the place where the Greek epics were written. In Homer, one can already discern the breakdown of the mythological view of the world. The notion of deities as objects of worship had lost its significance. Instead, we have in his work gods that were human in almost every respect, except that they were immortal. "The spirit of Ionian civilization had been thoroughly secular, and this was, no doubt, one of the causes that favored the rise of science."[2] Like the Greek *polis* that was "governed by impersonal, uniform laws rather than the arbitrary

acts of a despot,"[3] the Greek philosophers tried to explain the universe as a cosmos—"an ordered whole governed by numbers and law, not a blind conflict of semi-conscious agents or a theater for the arbitrary interference of partial, jealous, and vindictive gods...."[4]

Contrary to this position is the third theory which sees the flowering of human wisdom as a natural course of events resulting from the progressive rationalization of the primitive religion. In other words, Greek philosophy is simply a "refined theology."[5] Aristotle himself expressed this sentiment when he said that it is possible that the writers of mythology be considered as the founders of rational inquiry. Myths are attempts to provide some sort of an explanation on how humans relate to the world and with themselves. We can single out, for instance, the *Theogony* of Hesiod, which is not simply a compilation of legends and stories. The author tries to produce, with a modest rational basis, a unified theory on the origin of the universe which for him is congruent with the origin of the gods. In the first place, Greek religion allows free inquiry for it is not a religion of dogmas and infallible teachings. What happened, therefore, was not a sharp transition but a gradual march from mythos to logos.

THALES (615-540 B.C.)

Standing at the crossroads of philosophy and mythology was a man named Thales who was recognized as one of the seven sages of ancient Greece. He was the first to suggest a single principle of the universe which is water or moist.

It is not certain whether Thales put anything into writing. Even if he wrote some treatises, none of them have survived our day. It was from Aristotle where we got most of his ideas. To quote him:

> Most of the philosophers thought that principles in the form of matter were the only principles of all things; for the original source of all existing things, that from which a thing first comes-into-being and into which it finally destroyed, the substance persisting but changing in its qualities, this they declare is the element and first principle of existing things, and for this reason they consider that there is no absolute coming-to-be or passing away, on the ground that such a nature is always preserved ... for these must be some natural substance, either one or more than one, from which the other things come-into-being, while it is preserved. Over the number, however, and the form of this type of philosophy, says that it is water (and therefore declared that the earth is on water), perhaps taking this supposition from seeing the nurture of all things to be moist, and the warm itself coming-to-be from this and and living by this (that from which they come-to-be being the principle of all things)—
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> –taking the supposition both from this and from the seeds of all things having a moist nature, water being the natural principle of moist things. (Aristotle, *Met. A3*, 983b6)[6]

It is highly probable that Aristotle's account was a mere conjecture. First, he was not quoting Thales directly. There is no evidence that whatever Thales must have written was still extant during the time of Aristotle. Second, he did not intend to make a holistic presentation of Thales' philosophy. "Thales and his successors were engaged in cosmological speculation and not in constituent analysis."[7] The latter was the interest of Aristotle. Since his concern was not historical, there was a tendency for Aristotle to understand the Presocratics from his own perspective.

When Thales said that water is the first principle of all things, what precisely did he mean? According to Aristotle, he was positing a material cause of the universe. But the distinction between the four types of cause was alien to Thales and his contemporaries. Based on this, can we say that Thales and the rest of the Presocratics are materialists? A materialist in the ordinary modern usage stands for one who has made a conscious choice between two alternatives: matter and spirit. What we must try to grasp in reading the Presocratics "is a state of mind before matter and spirit had been distinguished, so that matter, the sole and unique fount of all existence, was itself regarded as endowed with spirit."[8] For ancient philosophers, matter and spirit are two

aspects of the same reality. Matter is endowed with qualities which we attribute to spirit like life or dynamism, while spirit is viewed as having material qualities like extension. Hence, rather than using the anachronistic term "monism" for their metaphysics, it is better to use non-dualism.

Non-dualism is distinct from monism for the latter is always distinguished into two forms: materialism and spiritualism. Materialism affirms matter as the ultimate reality, and consequently deny the existence of the spirit. On the other hand, spiritualism is the anti-thesis of materialism. Non-dualism is neither materialism nor spiritualism; it does not dichotomize reality as matter or spirit. Instead, it expresses the continuity of reality and the synthesis of matter and spirit; they are not entities opposed to each other but are like two ends of a long chain, the connecting middle of which one does not see.[9]

In affirming water as the first principle, Thales conveyed something that is not immediately sense perceptible for it is obvious that not all things are water. It is a statement that goes beyond appearances. He reached out to a metaphysical doctrine that beneath the apparent plurality is a single entity which underlies all realities. According to Theophrastus, his disciple, Anaximander referred to this single entity as the *Arche*—an untranslatable Greek word which could mean source, collective mass, basic stuff, primary substance, principle or primordial element.

To clarify the meaning of the *Arche*, it is wise to refer to Thales himself who pioneered the search for this concept. When he said that water is the principle of the world, did he mean that the world was made of water or that the world came from water? It is important to clarify the distinction between the two formulations of what might have been asked by Thales because it will determine our interpretation of the other Presocratics since most of them followed Thales in coming up with a single principle. Let us try to illustrate this. When we say that the table is made of wood, what we mean is that the wood is the material from which the

table is made and it is still perceptible in it. But when we say that the paper came from wood, what we are saying is that the wood is the source of the paper, but it is not anymore visible in it. Formerly it was wood but it was transformed into paper. Applying this to the problem of Thales, what he might have meant is that the world came from water which means that all things originate from one reality, not that all things are ultimately composed of the same stuff which is pure materialism. This is consistent with our previous position that the Presocratics were never concerned with constitutive analysis of the world (with the exemption of the later "pluralists") nor with its material cause. Water is the source from which all things came from, not the visible component by which all things are made of. When Thales said that water is the source of all things or when later, water would be replaced by other elements such as air, fire, or earth, it is not exactly water which is affirmed as such, neither is it air nor fire for it is evident for us and most probably evident for these thinkers that not everything is water, air, or fire. They were not offering a physical source that has to be distinguishable in things. What they were positing is a metaphysical source, a primordial reality which goes beyond sense perception. It only means that amidst the manifold variety of substances, all things are ultimately one sharing a common origin.

Thales is likewise known for saying that water is alive and that everything is full of gods. It is not difficult to surmise why Thales thought of water as a living substance since it is in constant motion as exhibited by the ceaseless tossing of the sea. The idea that movement is an essential characteristic of life is typically Greek and it might be the same reason why Thales concluded that amber has soul since when rubbed with cloth, it becomes charged with electricity and initiates movement.[10] The notion of soul as the animator is a primitive one that antedates Thales. Furthermore, water is essential for life, thus, Thales might have argued that it must possess life itself. Now, did Thales identify the soul with water which according to him is the principle of all things? Our response to this question is affirmative considering

the second proposition attributed to Thales—that everything is full of gods. In analyzing this, it must be borne in mind that Thales was using the term "god" in a non-religious sense. In fact, the traditional concept of god as an object of worship had already lost its significance even before the time of Thales. For example, the Olympian deities were presented by Homer in the "Iliad" as almost human, sometimes even less. "In Hesiod's *Theogony* it is clear that many of the gods mentioned there were never worshipped by anyone, and some of them are mere personifications of natural phenomena, or even of human passions."[11] They have all the human qualities except one: they never suffer death. For this reason, the term "immortals" has always been used as a synonym for the Greek gods. Like his predecessors, Thales equated the concept of divinity with immortality and indestructibility.[12] Hence, in the saying that everything is full of gods, he was expressing a view common to many ancient cultures—that everything is alive (hylozoism). With this, the thought of Thales becomes clear: all things come from water and since water is alive, then, everything must be alive. This interpretation is supported by another statement by Thales mentioned by Aristotle in his *De Anima*—that the soul (life principle) is intermingled with the universe.[13]

The philosophy of Thales is not totally new, most myths from fluvial civilizations claimed that everything originated from water. Water has always been the ancient symbol for life. To appreciate him, we must not evaluate his thought using contemporary standards. He lived in an age suffused with mythological stories about imaginary gods manipulating the forces of nature. By presenting his theory not as a gospel truth to be accepted by faith or authority. Thales secured his place in human history as the father of rational inquiry. His significance can be seen not so much on the theses he proposed but on the question he implicitly raised which is a question on the ultimate source of all things. In doing this, he assumed that there is a principle that unifies all things in terms of which all things can be explained. Whether the answer

he gave is right or wrong is already immaterial. What matters most is that it is a challenge to human reason to assert itself by providing a rational explanation on the nature of reality. And this is only achievable if one can discover a principle that will provide unity and order vis-à-vis the apparent diversity and chaos of reality.

ANAXIMANDER (600-540 B.C.)

Anaximander saw the world as dominated by conflict between opposites such as hot and cold, wet and dry, light and darkness, rare and dense. Change of seasons, birth and death, composition and decay, succession of night and day, are the obvious outcome of such conflicts, the victory of one element over another. Since elements have specific characteristics that are opposed to each other like air is cold and fire is hot, water is moist while a stone is dry, he believed that it is not possible for any one of them to be the originative or primary substance for if it were so, it would destroy the rest. For Anaximander, the source of all things must be something infinite and distinct from any other substance. He called this *Apeiron* which literally means indefinite, indeterminate, unlimited or unbounded. It is a compound of the prefix "a" meaning not and *"pierar"* or *"pieras"* which means limit or boundary.[14] Thus, the term suggests the absence of boundaries. But what are boundaries? It can be observed that something may have *"perata"* internally or externally. To be unbounded externally means to be extended indefinitely, e.g., the ocean, in antiquity is always described as boundless because it was believed that one can travel through it endlessly. Not to be internally bounded means "to be an indeterminate whole, indivisible into parts..."[15] From this, we can say that the *Apeiron* of Anaximander is both indefinite, i.e., simple or a complete whole having no component or qualities by which it can be analyzed or internally differentiated; and unlimited having no external parameters.

Anaximander refused to give any positive description of his *Apeiron*, except a few "hints", such as it is not a definite thing like

water or fire, it is eternal, ageless, and in perpetual motion. Being indefinite, it contains no quality by which it can be described.

> Of those who declared that the *ARCHE* is one, moving, and *APEIRON*, Anaximander...said that the *APEIRON* was the *ARCHE* and element of things that are, and he was the first to introduce this name for the *ARCHE* ... He says that the *ARCHE* is neither water nor any of the things called elements, but some other nature which is *APEIRON*, out of which come to be all the heavens and the worlds in them. This is eternal and ageless and surrounds all the worlds.[16]

If *Apeiron* is the name given by Anaximander for the *Arche* of the universe, can we say that *Apeiron* is for Anaximander in the same way as water is for Thales? It is not only that both of them shared a similar view of the originative substance, it is likewise tenable that the two, together with Anaximenes, belong to one school of thought, using the expression loosely for "all three were natives of the same prosperous Ionian City of Miletus, their lifetimes overlapped, and tradition at least described their relations as those of master and pupil."[17] Like the water of Thales the *Apeiron* is intrinsically dynamic (in whirling vortex motion), divine, no beginning nor end, and it is that from which all things came from. Fortunately, in the case of Anaximander, we have the explanation on how things were generated from *Apeiron*. Because the originative reality has no definite qualities, it is capable of producing all things, even those that are opposite, as different things separated from it. And since it is unlimited, it will not be exhausted in the generation of different entitites. Such coming-to-be of things and their destruction "happen according to necessity for they pay penalty and retribution to each other for their injustice according to the assessment of Time."[18] The metaphor of justice is used to explain the necessity of balance or harmony. What Anaximander is saying is that being the source of things that are opposite, the *Apeiron* maintains the balance of opposites, i.e., one reality does not completely dominate its contrary reality and this is necessary for the stability of the present world. The *Apeiron* is capable of this because it combines the

opposites in an original state of togetherness.

With Anaximander, we notice an advancement in the conception of the *Arche*. "Ths is a great leap of the creative imagination, an abstraction of a very high order: Anaximander posited as explanatory of the world of sense experience a principle that had no characteristic found in the world of sense experience."[19]

ANAXIMENES (588-524)

As mentioned previously, Anaximander was silent concerning the characterization of the *Apeiron*. His disciple, Anaximenes, tried to fill this lacuna by identifying the *Apeiron* with air—generally understood in Greek as the ordinary air, wind, mist, breath, or fog. On account of this, the *Apeiron* becomes definite and the question on how it is the first principle finds solution through the polar processes of rarefaction and condensation.

> Anaximenes ... a companion of Anaximander, also says, like him, that the underlying nature is one and infinite, but not undefined as Anaximander said but defnite, for he identifies it as air; and it differs in its substantial nature by rarity and density. Being made finer it becomes fire, being made thicker it becomes wind, then cloud, then (when thickened still more) water, then earth, then stones, and the rest come into being from these. He, too, makes motion eternal, and says that changes, also comes about through it. (Hippolytus Ref. 1,7,1).[20]

There could be several reasons why air was chosen by Anaximenes. First, of all the elements, air seemed the most unlimited. It shares some characteristics of *Apeiron* such as it is in constant mobility, it has less physical qualities, it is not visible to the human eye, capable of being hot and cold, and most of all, it lacks internal boundaries in the sense that it can be compressed. To explain the coming-to-be of different realities, Anaximenes got used to terms like "rarefaction" and "condensation." But we must remember that these terms were employed not in their current scientific connotation. What is meant here is simply the

"thinning" or "thickening" of the primordial substance. Through these processes the generation of opposites became possible. To demonstrate this, he said that when one breathes with his lips wide open, the air that comes out is warm but when the lips are narrowed, it becomes cold. This is because when our mouth is loosened, there is less air present since it is not compressed. If by its thinning or thickening air can produce opposite realities (hot and cold), he might have thought that it can generate other kinds of opposites as well. Or perhaps, hot and cold are the primordial opposites for Anaximenes by which other opposites such as day and night, light and darkness, soft and hard are produced. He must have thought that there is no need to invent an indefinite substance in order to account for the generation of opposites such as day and night, light and darkness, soft and hard are produced. He must have thought that there is no need to invent an indefinite substance in order to account for the generation of opposites because air, which is a definite substance, is capable of this.

Another possible explanation why air was selected by Anaximenes as the *Arche* is due to a primitive conception which is found in different cultures all over the world—that the human soul is air or breath. The only surviving direct quotation from Anaximenes states this: "Just as our soul, being air, holds us together and controls us, so do breath and air surround the whole kosmos."[21] This becomes clear if we consider Thales' assumption that the world is alive and therefore it must be ensouled. Both philosophers related the concept of divinity, life, and mobility with each other and identified the first principle with God.

PYTHAGORAS (Between 580-500)

It is very difficult to distinguish the doctrine of Pythagoras from that of his disciples. What we have from tradition is that Pythagoras was more than a philosopher; he founded a religious community at Kroton, in South Italy during the 2nd half of the 6th century B.C. Aside from being a renowned religious teacher, he was also a revered miracle worker. It was said that Pythagorianism

is more of a religious movement. "Religion occupies a central place in Pythagorianism, and actually influences its scientific teaching."[22] However, this religion is not something which purely consists of myths and legends but one that has a rational foundation.

> If there is anything about Pythagoras that we know with reasonable certainty, it is that he taught his disciples a new view of human soul as deathless, hence divine and capable of passing into other form—the cults and practices of the Pythagoreans are grounded on this belief.[23]

The human soul is immortal; when the body perishes, the soul reincarnates into other kind of living things as a form of retribution for misdeeds done. This line of thinking is a "development of the ideas of the Milesian philosophers."[24] First, it offers a holistic view of reality assuming a form of kinship of all organisms. Also, the mythological distinction between man and the gods is obliterated for the very reason that the human soul, like the gods, is immortal. Yet, this does not imply that man and the gods are already of equal footing from the very start. Metempsychosis is a never-ending cycle unless man purifies himself. "Milesian speculation on the nature of the *kosmos* and the composition of things, including souls, pointed to the view that souls are made up of the basic stuff of the universe and so immortal. The issue is not how to gain immortality but to use it."[25] The immortality of the soul is an unargued postulate for Pythagoras and his predecessors. It is even a pre-philosophic belief dating back to the time of Homer. For Pythagoras, the best way to enjoy immortality is for the soul to earn a kind of divinity through identification with the cosmos. It is no surprise, therefore, that a religious movement dedicated to the purification of the soul be greatly engrossed with the interpretation of the world.

But before the universe can be rendered intelligible, it must first be seen in a certain state of order or harmony. According to John Burnet, the Pythagoreans might have found their solution to this problem in their analysis of music and medicine since they

held the view that music purifies the spirit, while medicine purifies the body.[26] In music, harmony is produced by notes which are in turn produced by stopping a single vibrating string at determined intervals. The distance between one interval to another is regular and can be expressed by mathematical ratio. On the other hand, in ancient medicine, health is maintained by proper balance of certain opposites in our body—hot and cold, wet and dry, and it is the business of the physician to produce their proper blend. In the wake of these considerations, harmony has something to do with proper proportion expressed in terms of numerical ratio and such proportion implies a balance between two opposites, the most basic of which, in the mind of the Pythagoreans, is the opposition between the limited and the unlimited.

"Having discovered that tuning and health were alike means arising from the application of limit to the unlimited ... it was natural for Pythagoras to look for something of the same kind in the world at large."[27] At one stroke, the world became intelligible to Pythagoras in terms of numbers. He concluded that things are numbers—that the world is a harmonious order like music or health which can be expressed by numerical relations. In applying this principle to different phenomena, the Pythagoreans developed a very complicated theory of the universe where objects, concepts, and qualities are designated by numbers. Mystical significations were similarly given. Nevertheless, the procedure they adopted was so arbitrary and unmethodical that present-day readers are puzzled by their meanings.[28]

The attempt to explain the world mathematically is the main contribution of Pythagoras to ancient thought. This, of course, does not undermine the achievements his disciples accomplished in science through their numerous discoveries. Still, we opine that this philosophy follows the line of thinking of its contemporaries by its search for the unifying principle. It must be considered that although Pythagoras became famous in the Achaian city of Kroton, he was still an Ionian from Samos, leaving the island to escape persecution which might be political or religious in nature.

The difference between him and the Milesians is that his basis of cosmic unity is the very structure of the universe itself which conveys harmony of opposites, and only in this case, this is presented mathematically.

HERACLITUS (Between 540-475)

Plato and Aristotle ascribed to Heraclitus the flux-theory of nature, which means that nothing is permanent or stable, all things are in a state of mutation. Using the river-image purportedly made by Heraclitus himself (*It is not possible to step twice into the same river.* Plato, *Cratylus*, 402a), both philosophers claimed that the primacy of change is the fundamental thesis of Heraclitus. Many scholars questioned this interpretation. For them, the heart of his system is not change but the harmony of opposites.

The "river-image" of reality as found in the text of Plato quoted above is slightly different from the quotation made by Arius Dydimud, a 1st century B.C. doxographer who wrote that what Heraclitus had, in fact, said was "Upon those that step into the same rivers different and different waters flow...They scatter and gather...come together and flow away ... approach and depart."[29] It shows that "the river remains the same but its material composition changes as different water flows through it."[30] Here, the reality of change is accepted but permanence is not denied. Like the river, things may appear to be stable, nonetheless, they are continuously transforming. The solution to this paradox is to explain how it is possible for one thing to change yet remains the same.

> The kosmos, the same for all, none of the gods nor humans has made, but it was always and is and shall be: an ever-living fire being kindled in measures and being extinguished in measures.[31]

It is obviously clear from this fragment that Heraclitus was proposing a new primary substance distinct from the water of Thales or the air of Anaximenes. By observing the phenomenon of combustion, it is easy to explain why Heraclitus chose fire as

the ultimate principle of things: it passes into everything else and everything else passes into it. It is also in a constant state of becoming. Like other philosophers before Socrates, Heraclitus identified the fire with the soul and attributed life to the primary reality being the very source of life. If the soul is made up of fire, then, it must be alive, too. It dies only when it becomes wet. The world, being made up of fire, must also be alive. All of these follow the Milesian tradition of unifying the human soul and the macrocosm.

Modern interpretations of the Heraclitian fragments tend to focus on his theory of the unity of opposites. Comparing his thought with Anaximander regarding this subject, the latter said that change is caused by strife and justice. But he failed to account for the reason why strife is intrinsic and why elements strive with each other. For Heraclitus, this does not need any explanation for he made strife as the very nature of reality. All things are made up of elements that are antagonistic with each other. This is supported by the following fragments:

> War is the father of all and king of all, and some he shows as gods, others as humans; some he makes slaves, others free.
>
> It is necessary to know that war is common and justice is strife and that all things happen in accordance with strife and necessity.[32]

The nature of these opposites is never explained by Heraclitus; we simply have a list of them: night and day, light and darkness, wet and dry, up and down, straight and crooked, sweet and sour, etc. Some of them are logical contraries, some are incompatibilities while others are simply disparate concepts. He also gave some examples of things that can generate contrary effects or have opposite qualities depending on the context or the point of view of the observer. To our mind, what Heraclitus was trying to impart is that these opposites are correlative, one cannot exist without the other. In short, the opposite disappears. "Any explanation that can be given of night will also be an explanation of day, and vice versa; for it will be an account of what is common to both

and manifests itself now as one and now as the other."[33]

To put rhyme and reason to these isolated fragments of Heraclitus and the diverse interpretations given to them, we can join Plato and Aristotle in accusing him of affirming the reality of change at the expense of permanence, or we can zero in on his theory of opposites. A careful scrutiny, however, will disclose that it is possible to reconcile the two views. One need not negate stability and declare it illusory in order to put forward the facticity of change. Stability can be an effect of an antagonism between two equal forces inherent in the thing itself. Change, on the other side, only brings about an alteration of the superficial aspects of things, but their essential constituents remain the same. Thus, an object may be stable as it appears but underlying such stability is an ongoing struggle between two opposites. That is why, Heraclitus considered the external senses as unreliable witnesses for they do not reveal the true nature of reality. To illustrate this, he gave lyre and bow as examples. They appear to be stable, but such immobility is dependent on the current tension between the chord and the wood.

This synthesis is plausible if we interpret the fire of Heraclitus in a way different from our concept of the *Arche* of the previous philosophers. With Heraclitus, we see a further advancement in the understanding of the ultimate principle. It is not just the origin of all things but also a nomizing principle. "Fire, so mobile in character, is viewed as the medium of exchange that regulates all the changes just as money functions in the market ... fire itself is the governing and regulative force of the universe."[34] Fire is the best candidate for a standard measure that can regulate all conflicts because it can consume all things. It governs strife by means of law or measure. In other words, Heraclitus was not telling us that the world is made up of fire or it came from fire but what he was trying to convey is that the cosmos is fire "being kindled in measures and being extinguished in measures." Despite the struggle of the opposites, the universe is never a chaotic one. There is a constant underlying structure or organization that determines the things' identity."[35] The unity of

things is based on this structure which is the balance of opposites.

The philosophical quest of Heraclitus for the *Arche* led him to the discovery of a certain law, proportion, or balance that underlies the totality of reality. Rejecting the polymathy of the Pythagoreans, he insisted that wisdom consists of knowing this structural unity called *Logos*.

Roughly translated, Logos means measure, reckoning or proportion. It is related to the Greek verb ***legein*** which means "to speak." By considering that the Heraclitean fire is not merely an archetypal form of matter nor an originative stuff but the regulator of balance and proportion, we can equate fire with Logos without any difficulty. Fire is the material embodiment of the Logos. The discovery of Logos is the discovery of the unity of things which "lies beneath the surface for it is a unity of diverse and conflicting opposites, in whose strife the Logos maintains a continuing balance: the world in being drawn asunder, is drawn together—a backstretched connection, as in the bow and the lyre."[36] The Logos ensures that all cosmic changes are structured by a system of measured proportion. Everything comes about in accordance with the Logos it is a law that subsumes all beings. Again, like other Presocratics, he identified the Logos with the human soul and gave it a divine nature.

God is the harmony of opposites, the common connecting element of all extremes. "God is day night, winter summer, war peace, satiety hunger; he undergoes alteration in the way that far, when it is mixed with spices, is named according to the scent of each of them."[37] For Heraclitus, the concept of divinity implies not only life but also the idea of a regulating force. He called the Logos "Zeus," for it is Zeus who establishes order among the feuding deities in Mt. Olympus.

To sum up, fire, God, and Logos are, one and the same. Heraclitus was not simply juxtaposing irreconcilable ideas but he was giving a systematic explanation of reality. There is only one reality being called by Heraclitus in different ways from different perspectives. From the cosmic point of view, the ultimate

reality is fire (macrocosmic), from the vantage point of human cognition, it is fire as Logos—the knowledge of this constitutes wisdom,[38] from the point of view of man, it is the soul—the microcosmic fire which participates with the world—fire by breathing,[39] and finally, from the standpoint of religion, it is fire as Divine.

PARMENIDES (Between 530-444)

Parmenides is considered by most as the turning point in Greek philosophy. This statement is partly true and partly false. First, it is correct that we can notice in his writings something not explicit with his predecessors which is the use of deductive argument. He began with basic premises and by rigorous reasoning, showed their implications and conclusions. He succeeded in gaining the compelling force of this method to such an extent that post-Parmenidean philosophers would try to elucidate the problems he overlooked without overthrowing his arguments. However, it would be erroneous if we say that with him, philosophy took a sudden leap because although Parmenides was the first non-Ionian thinker, it is possible that he was still influenced by the Ionians. He came from Elea, a town in South Italy not far from Croton where the Pythagoreans were based. According to Burnet, he was a former Pythagorean, the journey he described in his verse is symbolic of his conversion from Pythagoreanism to truth. The emphasis of the Pythagoreans on the power of thought must have a strong bearing on Parmenides in equating thought and reality. It is also mentioned in most books that he was a pupil of Xenophanes—an Ionian theologian-philosopher from Colophon who was expelled from his native city and spent his life travelling from one place to another. "Several towns in Sicily are mentioned in the tradition as well as Elea, on the Italian peninsula, which has led to the assertion that he was the founder of the Italian or Eleatic school of philosophy...."[40]

Parmenides' text is written in verse and divided into three parts: the Prologue, The Way of the Truth, and The Way of Mortal

Opinion. In the first place, the goddess promises that she will reveal two ways, one leading to truth and the other leading to the opinion of mortals where there is no guarantee of truth. The latter includes not just the opinions of men but physical appearances as well. The first way is reached by the intellect; the second, by the senses. At the very outset, Parmenides made the claim that only objects of thought are fully real, perceptible things are not. The rationale for this is that perception leads to contradiction and this is unthinkable.

> Come now; And I will tell Thee—and do thou hearken and carry my word away—the only ways of inquiry that exist for thinking: the one way, that is, and cannot not-be, is the path of Persuasion, for it attends upon Truth; the other, it is not and needs must not-be, that I tell thee is a path altogether unthinkable. For thou couldst not know that which is-not (that is impossible) nor utter it; for the same thing exists for thinking and being.
>
> That which can be spoken and thought needs must be; for it is possible for it, but not for nothing, to be; that is what I bid thee ponder. This is the first way of inquiry from which I hold thee back, and then from that way also on which mortals wander knowing nothing, two-headed; for helplessness guides the wandering thought in their breasts; they are carried along, deaf and blind at once, altogether dazed—hordes devoid of judgement, who are persuaded that to be and to be-not are the same, yet not the same, and that of all things the path is backward turning.[41]

Parmenides went on to state the two ways of inquiry; the first is "that it Is and it is not possible for it not to be"—this is the way that leads to truth and the second is "it is not and it is necessary for it not to be"—this path is completely unreliable for "neither may you know that which is not nor may you declare it." The difficulty in interpreting these propositions lies in providing the subject of the word "it". The actual word in Greek is the verb "***esti***" which, like other Greek verbs, can stand alone and does not need a grammatical subject. Its subject must therefore be determined within the context.

"Two hundred years of scholarship have brought to that seemingly single question a bewildering variety of answers."[42]

While we have no pretense of having the final word on this matter, our position is based on the main premise of Parmenides. He was talking of two ways of inquiry, hence, the subject of "esti' must be that which we know or that which can be the object of our inquiry. The statement means that what we can think of or whatever we can inquire into must exist for we cannot investigate nor think of something which is non-existent. "It is impossible to think what is not, and it is impossible for what cannot be thought of to be."[43] To cite the text:

> That which is there to be spoken and thought of must be. For it is possible for it to be, but not possible for nothing to be. I bid you consider this. For I bar your way from this first way of inquiry, but next from the way on which mortals, knowing nothing, two-headed, wander. For helplessness in their breasts guides their wandering mind. But they are carried on equally deaf and blind, amazed, hoarder without judgement, for whom both to be and not to be are judged the same and not the same, and the path of all is backward-turning."[44]

The proof given by Parmenides to support his argument is indirect. What we think of must exist because we can never think of non-entities. To conceive something is to explain it in some way or to attribute certain qualities to it. Since a non-entity does not have any property, we cannot predicate anything to it. Non-being is unthinkable, if ever we think of non-being, it is always in reference to something that exists. There is, therefore, a correspondence between thought and reality, between thinking and being. What is conceivable exists and what exists is conceivable. What is not possible in reality is likewise not possible in one's thought. The 2nd way was rejected by Parmenides on the ground that it leads to contradiction which is not conceivable.

Some commentators consider the system of Parmenides as a reaction against the flux-theory of Heraclitus. The former, allegedly, denied the possibility of change by declaring what *Is* to be complete, immutable, and imperishable. However, we already clarified the Heraclitean meaning of change. But did Parmenides really deny the possibility of change? This question

is closely connected with another problem usually posed when it comes to Parmenides: is the subject of "esti" material or not? If it refers to something immaterial, then the question on whether it changes or not becomes moot.

The subject of "esti" cannot be material. We mentioned previously that it refers to the object of one's thought and Parmenides was clear that it is grasped by the intellect and not by the senses which cannot apprehend the truth. Like his associates, he never thought in terms of material/immaterial dichotomy.[45] What is definite is that it is not sensible for human perception is mutable and inconstant.[46] His main contribution to philosophy is that he led the path to abstract reasoning. Change was negated by Parmenides to reality as known by the intellect but it does not mean that change is also unacceptable on the level of sense knowledge. His denial of change was based on the argument that nothing comes from nothing. Change is not possible because for reality to change, it must transform from what it is (reality) to what it is not (non-reality) which is a contradiction.

Parmenides brought to the fore the distinctions between reality and appearance, truth and sense-experience, being and becoming, which his successors had to contend with. By pointing out the superiority of reason over sensation, he advanced the meaning of the first principle which Thales introduced. Some of the characteristics he gave to reality are akin to those given by Thales and company to their *Arche*. The main difference is that Parmenides made it clear that reality is known by the intellect, something not explicit with his predecessors. This could be the reason why they had to relate their first principle with a material element like water or air in order to give it a sensible representation. Parmenides' shortcoming, on the other hand, is his failure to elucidate the relationship between the intellect and the senses. "Parmenides drew with unparallel powers of abstraction, turning his back on nature, and for that reason also cutting off his return to nature."[47] Nevertheless, it can be gleamed from his fragments, especially in his treatment of the way of mortal

opinion, "an attempt to show how there can be a world of belief side by side with truth and how it originates."[48]

EMPEDOCLES (ca. 430)

Empedocles started his philosophy where Parmenides left off. His system tried to fill in the lacunae created by the latter between stability and change, one and the many, unity and plurality, intellect and the evidence of the sense. He was the first Greek thinker to put forward a theory based on four coeval, co-equal, and distinct elements, instead of one, as the principles or "roots" or reality. These are earth, water, air, and fire which exist in varying degrees in different things. A thing is different from another due to the quantity of these principles present as well as the proportion they are mixed. But in the beginning, they exist together as one in a perfect sphere from where they emanate. This is not possible if they are taken as material realities. It follows therefore that the four roots must be pure substances, not sensible elements. Like other predecessors of Socrates, he was not giving the material component of things.

Empedocles agreed with Parmenides that nothing comes from nothing, hence, anything that is must always exist. There is no creation or destruction, only becoming. Coming-to-be is caused by the intermingling of the four roots, ceasing-to-be is due to their separation.[49] Like the rest of the Presocratics who identified the primary reality with the divine, he gave mythological representations to the four roots to convey eternity and immortality: fire is Zeus; Hera-air; earth is Aidoneus; and water is Nestis.

One notable difference between Empedocles and his predecessors is that he did not conceive his basic realities as intrinsically dynamic. There are two antithetical forces that unite and disunite them respectively: Love (philia) and Hate or Strife (neikos). Empedocles wrote:

> In Anger all are of different forms and separate, but in Love they come together and are desired by each other. From them

> comes all that was and is and will be in the future, trees have sprung up and men and women, beasts and birds and water-bred fish, and long-lived gods, too highest in honour.[50]

At the start, the four roots were mixed together in a homogenous sphere where love predominates and everything exists in harmony. This sphere is comparable to the *Apeiron* of Anaximander. But strife emerged creating a vortex which set the sphere in circular motion causing the four roots to segregate. Empedocles mentioned a two-fold tale: "at one time they grew to be one alone out of many, at another again they grew apart to be many out of one—fire and water and earth and the immense height of air, and cursed Strife apart from them, equal in every direction, and Love among them, equal in length and breath."[51] The text explains that in this world, there is a continuous cyclic process of antagonism between Love and Hate. Being co-equal, a permanent dominance of one over the other is impossible. When Love reaches the zenith of its power, it begins to diminish as Hate starts to dominate causing the separation of the four elements. After this, Love will gradually reign once again uniting all and the process repeats itself. Although the four realities are inert by themselves, the world is essentially dynamic, it is in a continual process of change passing from one extreme to another. With this, balance is approximated since neither Love nor Hate will perpetuate forever but both dominating alternately. This is analogous to the harmony of opposites the philosophers before him discussed. One reason why it was unthinkable for Empedocles to explain everything by means of one principle is that the opposites cannot come from the same principle.

For knowledge to take place, Empedocles said that there should be a certain affinity between the knower and the object. The four roots that made up the world are the same principles that constitute man. This makes it possible for man, the knower to comprehend the world. He said that blood is "the seat of human thought because being composed of all four elements in equal proportions, it is most receptive, able to be affected by all physical

things."[52] Moreover, Empedocles did not reject the evidence presented by the sense although his four basic realities are not perceived as principles for what we sensed are the compound things. Theophrastus presented the Empedoclean account of how sense perception takes place. By taking into consideration change and multiplicity in his system, (phenomena perceived by the senses), the credibility of sensual testimony was salvaged from the attack made by Pythagoras and Parmenides.

ANAXAGORAS (Between 500-428)

With Anaxagoras, we return to the Ionian tradition, having been born in Clazomenae, near Miletus. In an unusual twist, he was pictured by Aristotle as "older in years, younger in works than Empedocles." Coming after Parmenides and Empedocles, the last of the profound Presocratics (strictly speaking),[53] constructed a theory that would reconcile the view of the two philosophers mentioned. His objective was to be able to explain change and multiplicity which are observed by our senses without circumventing the way of truth of Parmenides. Empedocles had already explained ceasing and coming-to-be in terms of separation from an original mixture. Anaxagoras argued that for the original mixture to be capable of producing the multifarious universe, it must contain not just the four roots but everything.

Simplicius, from whom we owe the Anaxagorean fragments, stated that Anaxagoras started his treatise in this manner:

> All things were together, infinite in respect of both numbers and smallness; for the small, too, was infinite. And while all things were together, none of them were plain because of their smallness; for air and aither covered all things, both of them being infinite; for these are the greatest ingredients in the mixture of all things, both in number and in size.
>
> And since these things are so, we must suppose that there are many things of all sorts in everything that is being aggregated, seeds of all things with all sorts of shapes and colours and tastes ... But before these things were separated off, while all things were together, there was not even any colour; for the mixture of all things prevented it, of the moist and the dry, the hot and the

> cold, the bright and the dark, and of much earth in the mixture and of seeds countless in number and in no respect like one another. For none of the other things either are like one to the other. And since this is so, we must suppose all things are in the whole.[54]

In the initial cosmic stage before the formation of the world, all things are present in the universal mixture. Anaxagoras said that "none of them were plain because of their smallness" which means that all things are undistinguishable because of their being together. Many of the philosophers who preceded him treated the opposites as the primary constituents of all realities. Heraclitus demonstrated that opposites are correlative. Now, Anaxagoras had to have these opposites present in the universal mixture to make it clear that everything that exists was already there from the beginning and did not originate from nothing for this will be a contradiction as Parmenides pointed out.

Things began to be distinguished from each other when they were separated off from the mixture. Unfortunately, there is no consensus among scholars as to how his explanation for the genesis of things be interpreted. Anaxagoras devised the idea of "sperma" (seeds) or elements which was a way to explain something that is present but not yet visible or perceptible. The image of a seed is perfect because it is something minute and simple but when planted, it germinates and grows into a complex vegetative organism. Aristotle used the term "homoiomeries" which means "things with parts like each other and like the whole" to describe the seeds of Anaxagoras. In Aristotle's physical theory, "homoiomeries" are substances that when divided into parts will have parts that are similar with each other and with the whole. For example, the particles of gold are still gold, those of flesh are still flesh. On the contrary, human faces and trees are non-homoiomeric. He asserted that Anaxagoras' original mixture is composed of infinitesimal particles that are inert, unchangeable, eternal, infinite in number and qualitatively the same no matter how large or small, containing the characteristics of everything else. This is the reason why Anaxagoras said that there is a portion

of everything in everything for all beings are compound of "homoiomeries." The difference in nature between one thing and another is due to the numerical predominance of these particles.

However, "there is no evidence that Anaxagoras himself used this terminology and indeed, it is incredible that no fragment containing it should have been quoted if he had."[55] The word used in Greek (sperma) simply means to grow; from, it does not necessarily imply particles. There is no sufficient evidence in his text that would warrant the Aristotelian interpretation that the world as conceived by Anaxagoras is particulate. Another consideration is that it seems difficult to argue that no matter how you subdivide a thing into the smallest particle, it will always contain an infinite number of qualities like any other substance. This implies that the smallest particle of a thing can never be distinguished qualitatively from that which contains it.

When Anaxagoras wrote that things exist as seeds in the original mixture, what is meant is that things are unmanifest or indistinguishable, — latent as a seed. They are all present but not perceptible.

> Anaxagoras' stuffs contain portions of all other stuffs; but those portions are not located at one or more points within the parent lump—they are mingled smoothly and regularly throughout its body. Any stuff contains every stuff; but the contained stuffs are not present by virtue of a mechanical juxtaposition of particles; they are present as the items in a chemical union.[56]

According to Aristotle, the reason why Anaxagoras advanced the thesis that there is a portion of everything in everything is that he must have observed that everything arises out of everything, like from bread and milk our body can produce flesh, blood, bone, hair, etc. Even opposite things come out form each other as shown by Heraclitus. The only way to explain this is to conclude that the hair, blood, or flesh are already there in the bread from the very beginning. We do not perceive this sensibly because they are not manifest.

If we accept this interpretation, how can we explain why one

thing is different from another? The explanation of Anaxagoras is that one thing is different from another because of certain qualities in it that are dominant. To illustrate this, a red apple is different from a green apple because red is dominant in the first while the green is dominant in the second, but both apples contain red and green. That is why he said that all things are both "great" and "small." Some commentators interpreted this as a retort to the arguments of Zeno, thereby reinforcing the Aristotelian interpretation. But the "sperma" of Anaxagoras can be understood without resorting to homoeomerity by interpreting the expression "great" and "small" or "more and less" used by Anaxagoras as "manifest and unmanifest", respectively. A thing is both great and small because there are qualities in it that are manifest which specify it as it is while other qualities that it shares with all things different from it are latent. In this manner, we avoid the contradiction between the principle of homoeomerity and the notion that there is a portion of everything in everything.[57] "Changes in the manifestness or largeness do not involve any change in the number of the properties which is a primitive, fixed, given, already at the absolute maximum."[58] The number of all things or properties remains constant for nothing comes from nothing, creation or annihilation are impossible for in the "small" there is no least, but always "less." The text continues:

> And since the portions of the great and of the small are equal in number, so too all things would be in everything. Nor is it possible that they should exist apart, but all things have a portion of everything. Since it is not possible that there should be a smallest part, nothing can be put apart nor come to be all by itself, but as things were originally, so they must be now too, all together.
> Neither is there a smallest part of what is small, but there is always a smaller (for it is impossible that what is should cease to be). Likewise there is always something larger than what is large. And it is equal in number to what is small, each thing, in relation to itself, being both large and small.[59]

Anaxagoras devised a new concept—the "Nous" (Mind) as the initiator of motion.

> And when the mind initiated motion, from all that was moved separation began, and as much as Mind moved was all divided off, the rotation greatly increased the process of dividing.[60]

For the first time, we have the distinction between the principle of motion and the object that is moved. While matter is essentially compound, the "Nous" is infinite and mixed with nothing. Because it is the purest and the finest of all things, it can move all things without being obstructed by anything. Nothing is totally separated-off from the original mixture except the mind. But before we conclude that the Nous is immaterial and Anaxagoras is a dualist, clarification should first be made whether the "Nous" is an incorporeal force. "Mind, like anything else, is corporeal and owes its power partly to its fineness, partly to the fact that it alone, though present in the mixture, yet remain unmixed."[61] It is not even rational since its only function is to be the cosmic prime mover. The mixture in its original state is infinite and capable of producing everything. It seems that the concept of "Nous" was simply dragged by Anaxagoras to explain the initial movement, but as to how everything is dependent on it is vague.

Conclusion

"Philosophy started in the faith that beneath the apparent chaos, there exists a hidden performance and unity, discernible, if not by the senses, then by the mind."[62] The progression of ideas from Thales to Anaxagoras reveals a sequence of refinement on the conception of the *Arche*. From a mere life principle, the Presocratic delved deeper to bring to light something more basic than life as the explanation of reality. The *Arche* became the unlimited, infinite, divine, producer of all things, nomizer, the sole reality, all-encompassing, immutable, perfect, complete, harmonizer of opposites, the alpha and the omega of all beings. In the case of Empedocles and Anaxagoras, the *Arche* is not the four elements nor the homoeomeric particles but it is the original mixture itself where everything comes from in an initial state of

unity. Thus, it is incongruous to call the two philosophers as pluralists. Empedocles devised the four elements in order to render an account for the existence of change and plurality in this universe. Whether the *Arche* is identified with water or air is immaterial. When the Presocratics equated these elements with the *Arche*, what they identified are not the elements themselves in their physical manifestation but the outstanding qualities that the particular element has such as mobility, indefiniteness, importance or necessity, abundance, imperceptibility, flexibility, etc. In choosing for the material that would best qualify as the *Arche*, what they considered was the qualities which the thing exemplifies that would express the characteristics of the primary reality. Perhaps, being aware of the difficulty of conveying the nature of the Ultimate, ancient thinkers made use of these elements as symbols in order to concretize what is beyond human imagination.[63] But what is necessary is for us to understand that there is a common recognition among our first philosophers regarding the essential nature of all things, without which the whole structure of knowledge and human experience crumbles into pieces. When they pronounced that all is one or all is the *Arche*, it is not an identity statement nor a composition statement but a metaphysical one. It is an affirmation that there is an order of things which is beyond ordinary experience. The *Arche* is the explanation of all else, though in itself, remains inadequately explained.

Majority of the Presocratics agreed that the *Arche* is divine, alive, and in perpetual motion. Even Parmenides said that what IS can never perish. Although the four roots of Empedocles are inert by themselves, the world for him is essentially dynamic, it is in a continual process of change passing from one extreme to the other. Hence, dynamism is seen as an attribute of reality, its most obvious indication is movement, and its perfect manifestation is the Divine. The cosmos is viewed as if it is a living organism which exhibits growth and evolution. It develops from an original state of simplicity until it reaches its highest state of development. The natural state of things is one of motion.[64]

Rest is not inertness but a state of dynamic equilibrium resulting from the harmony of opposing forces. The need to discover the primary cause of movement was not a major problematique of the ancient philosophers. The *Nous* of Anaxagoras was devised as a sort of *deus ex machina*—an arbitrary construct in order to explain what cannot be explained by the logical import of his system. He came up with a notion of prime mover, but he only made use of it when he was at a loss for an ultimate explanation.

For our ancient philosophers nothing is a result of chance or accident. The universe is a "cosmos"—a term which conveys order, beauty and intelligence. It requires a single nomizing cause that will unify its various components, regulate everything that comes about, and subsume all events. Such an order cannot be a product of mere accident or a plurality of anteceding occurrences that happened in random. The basis of causation is synonymy. "Causation is by synonyms: who breeds fat oxen must himself be fat. The fire warms me only if it is itself warm...."[65] In simple words, the cause cannot give what it does not have. Thus, there is a certain affinity between the cause and the effect. For example, if the world is intrinsically alive, then the ultimate cause itself must have life. The universal principle is considered as the plenitude of reality which has the capacity to synthesize opposite things. It is capable of this because it is not only infinite and beyond all oppositions, it is also incomprehensible because it is indeterminate—not in the sense that it lacks qualities but because it contains all qualities.

All the Presocratics agreed that the *Arche* where everything comes from is eternal and not created. In an almost tautological manner, Parmenides said what Is, is, it is never "was" nor "will be." Since everything comes from the *Arche*, it must contain, as much as possible, the qualities which these philosophers consider as present in everything. This hypothesis is necessary because if the qualities which all things have did not come from the *Arche*, then, it would come from what is not the *Arche* which is nothing. No Greek thinker ever entertained this idea. By the use of

deductive reasoning, Parmenides demonstrated what seems to be a self-evident truth for his predecessors, that there can be no transition from being to non-being nor vice-versa. Empedocles modified the position of Parmenides in order to maintain the validity of sense experience. He explained the phenomenon of change which is perceived by our sense in terms of combination and dissolution of basic elements. But the four elements themselves are not created. Parmenides' descriptions of "IS" will still apply to them. Anaxagoras was unequiovocal in his conviction that everything comes from everything, not from nothing. Thus, he tried to prove in his system that there is a portion of everything in everything.

The contention that it was Parmenides who first questioned the validity of sense perception is erroneous. The gap between appearance and the hypothesized reality constituted the central thread of philosophical speculation in the ancient world. From the time of Thales, we could already notice the attempt to go beyond the realm of sense perception. This is the very reason why the Milesians were looking for an explanation for the unity of things. They wanted to distinguish Reality from ordinary appearances. They were aware whether openly or tacitly that the world as ordinary people perceived it is different from their understanding of it. Heraclitus tried to explain that the essence of reality is not that which is attested by sense experience (change and stability) but contrariety. Parmenides made a capital distinction between the way of truth where reality can be found for it is a way thread by the intellecct, and the way of mortal opinion—the way of appearance which leads to contradiction. The four roots of Empedocles cannot be perceptually distinguished in the original mixture nor in compound things. The inadequacy of the senses to reach the truth is also incipient in the writings of Anaxagoras. Sensation does not reveal that there is a portion of everything in everything. Instead, it only distinguishes what is the dominant.[66]

"In view of the mass of theories and explanations based on

opposites which we find in Greek philosophy and medicine, it is surprising how little this recurrent feature of Greek speculative thought has been discussed by scholar and historians of ancient philosophy."[67] Anaximander posited the Indeterminate (*Apeiron*) as the *Arche* because of its ability to generate opposites. To explain the coming-to-be of different entities, Anaximenes made use of the opposite processes of rarefaction and condensation by which Air can be hot or cold—the primary opposites. Balance between two opposing forces—love and strife, is responsible for the order in the world according to Empedocles. Pythagoras discovered that harmony is achieved by the proper balance of opposites while Heraclitus demonstrated that opposite qualities are correlative. According to Parmenides, the common mistake of mortal men is that "they made up their minds to name two forms, of which it is not right to name so much as one and distinguish them as opposite in appearance and assigned to them manifestations different one from the other."[68] For Anaxagoras, "the hot and the cold are not separated or cut off from each other with an axe—a step towards seeing them as points on a continuous scale."[69] What is common to all these views is the notion of order as dependent on the proper balance or harmony of opposites. The cosmic process is patterned on opposites that are in conflict temporarily, for the very nature of their opposition implies complementariness. To quote Radhakrishnan, "the joy of harmony is derived from the struggle of discordant elements."

Oftentimes, the Presocratic philosophers are bypassed by students of philosophy who readily equate being ancient with being primitive. Some historians even claim that they belong to a period of pre-rational thought. However, this is contradicted by Guthrie who said that "it is not that the human mind ever worked on entirely different lines but simply in their state of knowledge, the premises from which men reasoned were so different that they inevitably came up with what are in our eyes very odd conclusions."[70] No one can deny that the philosophers in question are the first masters of rational thought, the pioneers of this noble discipline who laid the foundation where the subsequent lovers

of truth securely built their systems. They lived in a time when human life was still uncomplicated and the intellectual atmosphere was not yet suffocated by macroeconomics or technology as it is today. In short, what we have presented here is philosophy as it is *originally conceived*. As we say in Latin, *nihil novum sub sole*, in the history of human thought, nothing is completely new. Every philosophy is a reaction to, a repetition, or a modification of a previous philosophy. The philosophers who came after the Presocratics may have reacted against their views or simply followed them. In either case, it was they who, to a considerable measure, set the trend of human thought.

ENDNOTES

[1]The Diffusionist approach to the study of culture is already passé. Contemporary anthropologists are more inclined to agree that it is possible to explain a cultural element in its own context, with no recourse to cross-cultural references. Moreover, cultural diffusion is something that is selective. To trace the origin of a cultural trait to another society does not explain why borrowing took place and why such trait was borrowed while others were not.

[2] John Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, Part I, (London: MacMillan and Co., 1914), p. 28.

[3] Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind* (USA: Ballantine Books, 1993), p. 19.

[4] Alfred William Benn, *The Greek Philosophers*, vol. 1, (England: Thoemmes Press, 1993, p. 3. See also Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 1, (New York: Image Books, 1963), p. 14.

[5] Oswyn Murray, *Early Greece*, (Great Britain: Fontana Press, 1983), p. 89.

[6] G.S. Kirk, et al., *The Presocratic Philosophy: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 89.

[7] Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophy*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 40.

[8] W. K.C. Guthrie, *The Greek Philosophers From Thales to Aristotle*, (USA: Harper and Row Publishers, 1975), p. 33. *The antithesis between spirit and matter had not yet been grasped, so that, although there were de-facto materialists—in that they assigned to form of matter as the principle of unity and primitive stuff of all things—they can scarcely be termed materialists in our sense and matter, and then denied it; they were not fully conscious of the distinction, or at least they did not realize its implications.* Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 20. See also Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. I, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962, p. 64).

[9] See Mercado, *The Filipino Mind*, (USA: The Council for Research and Values for Philosophy, 1994), p. 8-11.

[10] *Aristotle and Hippias say that he gave a share of soul even to inanimate objects, using Magnesian stone and amber as indications.* Kirk, et al., op. cit., p. 95.

[11] John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), p. 14.

[12] *When Anaximander says that his own first principle, the Indeterminate, is divine, or when Anaximenes teaches that infinite air is the first cause of all that is, including gods and divine beings, they do not think of the gods as possible objects of worship.* Etienne Gilson, *God and Philosophy*, (USA: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 4.

[13] Aristotle, *De Anima*, A5 411a7.

[14] *A powerful chorus of scholars proposes a new etymology for apeiros: it is formed not from alpha privative and the root of peras (limit) but from alpha privative and the stem or 'peras' (traverse) and the etymological meaning of the word is thus untraversable. Whether or not this is correct, it is in any case clear that Anaximander could have used apeiron of the unimaginably huge: in Homer the sea is apeiron, immense, not infinite. I am inclined to believe that apeiron does indeed mean 'unlimited', but that spatio-temporal infinity is not the only criterion of unlimitedness: a mass of stuff may reasonably be called unlimited because of its untraversable vastness, or because its boundaries are indeterminate...or even because of its qualitative indeterminacy.* Banes, op.cit., p. 36.

[15]Tim Rohrer, *Boundless Paradox: A Discussion of Heraclitus, Anaximander, and Gorgias*, Internet, Rohrer@darkwing.voregon.edu., p. 2.

[16] Richard Mckirahan, *Philosophers Before Socrates, An Introduction with Texts and Commentary* (USA: Hackett Pub. Co. Inc., 1994), p. 33.

[17] Guthrie, *The Greek Philosophers*, op. cit., p. 23.

[18] Reginald Allen, ed., *Greek Philosophy, Thales to Aristotle*, (London: The Free Press, 1985), p. 30.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[20] Kirk, op. cit., p. 145. It is interesting to note that Thales' water has characteristics that are similar with the *Apeiron* of Anaximander—it has no definite shape (externally unbounded), capable of changing its form into solid, liquid, or gas; as found in the ocean it is inexhaustible, and as something homogenous, it cannot be differentiated into component parts.

[21]Mckirahan, op. cit., p. 54. *The connection of life with breath is easily understandable. The Latin word for soul, anima, means both air and breath. For Anaximenes, air is theos; it is the primary substance. Anaximenes chose an air in perpetual motion as the arkhe. He respected an age-old and still flourishing popular belief which associated, and in fact identified, breath and life. That the air which we breathe should be the life itself which animates us is a common idea, and the breath-soul a world-wide conception.* Hajime Nakamura, *A Comparative History of Ideas*, (Great Britain: Urwin Bro. Ltd., 1986), p. 88.

[22] Ignatius Yarza, *History of Ancient Philosophy*, (Manila: Sinag-Tala Pub., 1994), p. 160.

[23] Alexander Mourelatos, *The Presocratics: A Collection of Critical Essays*, (New York: Anchor Press, 1974), p. 165. *The religious doctrines of immortality and transmigration are assigned to Pythagoras on introvertible positive evidence.* Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 1, op. cit., p. 181.

[24] Mckirahan, op. cit., p. 85.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

[26] The Pythagoreans equated harmony with music. For instance, having discovered the order of the position of the planets, they theorized that music

must have risen from their harmonius and orderly movement. But such sound, having been present from the very beginning, is not anymore noticeable to the human ear. See also Gutrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 220.

[27] John Burnet, *Greek Philosophy, Part I, Thales to Plato*, (England: Thoemmes Press, 1993), p. 51.

[28] *Both the unity and structure of the whole world and the specific nature of each thing are expressed by single numerical ratios, and this is what makes them knowable. This is as far as we can go in recapturing the central doctrine of Pythagorean philosophy.* Maurelatos, op. cit., p. 182.

[29] Kirk, op. cit., p. 195.

[30] Christopher Green, *Heraclitus' Theory of the Psyche*, Internet, Christo@yorku.ca, p. 1.

[31] Mckirahan, op. cit., p. 124.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

[33] Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 165.

[34] Joseph Owens, *A History of Ancient Western Philosophy*, (New York: Appleton-Century Inc., 1959), p. 49.

[35] Green, op. cit., p. 2. *The truth Herakleitos proclaimed was that the world is at once one and many, and that it is just the opposite tension, of the opposites that constitutes the unity and the One.* Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 143.

[36] Allen, op. cit., p. 9.

[37] Kirk, et al., op. cit., p. 190.

[38] *Logos conveys the idea of law, intelligence, something apart from the material. Yet in Heraclitus it is inextricably bound up with fire. Thus, for him fire is a symbol. The measures of the ceaseless changes in the universe are not, however, immediately obvious to us. An invisible harmony is better than a visible one. This harmony is the basis for wisdom; to attain to a recognition of it is the task of philosophy and its attainment sets the philosopher off from the mass of men.* Ralph, McInerny, *A History of Western Philosophy From the Beginnings of Philosophy to Plotinus*, (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), p. 38.

[39] *It is death for the soul to become water.* "By substituting 'souls' for the expected 'fire' Heraclitus has emphasized the substantial identity of the two." Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 433.

[40] McInerny, op. cit., p. 27.

[41] Allen, op. cit., p. 44.

[42] *Modern Thinkers and Ancient Thinkers*, Stanley Victor Keeling Memorial Lecture, (London: UCL Press, 1993), p. 2.

[43] Burnett, *Greek Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 67. [T] *he serious choice of subject (of esti) lies between "what is" and "what can be talked and thought about". In one way it does not seem serious for Parmenides in any case identifies the two, and according to Owen himself, "no one will deny that, as the argument goes, what is a correct description of the subject.* Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. II, p. 15, (parentheses mine).

[44] Mckirahan, op. cit., p. 153.

[45] When Parmenides says that reality is limited and that it is analogous to a well-rounded sphere, he *uses the word 'limit', not of limits in space or time, but to express fixity and invariance, also expressed by the image of shackles...and bonds...and this comparison with the sphere stresses not its shape but its completeness, i.e., being evenly balanced...like It, a sphere is spatially uniform...Parmenides emphasizes the similarity, but we should not be misled into thinking that the similarity goes further than it does or can.* Mckirahan, op. cit., p. 173.

[46] What is essential in Parmenedian philosophy is not the distinction between the material and immaterial but the distinction between sensible and intelligible.

[47] Deussen, *The System of the Vedanta.* (New York: Dover Pub. Inc., 1973), p. 48.

[48] Mourelatos, op. cit., p. 145.

[49] Kirk, et al., op. cit., p. 291.

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 293.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 289.

[52] Mckirahan, op. cit., p. 284. *The heart nurtured in the sea of rebounding blood, where most especially is what is called thought by humans, for the blood round the heart in humans is thought. Ibid.*, p. 251.

[53] *...Democraticos falls outside the period thus defined. The common practice of treating this younger contemporary of Sokrates along with the "Pre-Socratic" obscures the historical development altogether.* Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 1.

[54] Allen, op. cit., p. 51.

[55] Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 51.

[56] Barnes, op. cit., p. 51-52.

[57] *The theory rests on two propositions which can seem flatly to contradict one another. One is the principle of Homoeomeriety: A natural substance such as a piece of gold consists solely of parts which are like the whole and like one another—everyone of them gold and nothing else. The other is:"There is a portion of everything in everything," understood to mean that a piece of gold (or any other substance), so far from containing nothing but gold, contains portions of every other substance in the world. Unless Anaxagoras was extremely muddlehead, he cannot have propounded a theory which simply consists of this contradiction.* Op cit., 281.

[58] *Modern Thinkers and Ancient Thinkers*, op. cit., p. 42.

[59] Allen, op. cit., p. 51-52.

[60] *Ibid.*

[61] Kirk, op. cit., p. 364. *[I] t would be anachronistic to suggest that the conception is clearly articulated in the fragments.* CCW Taylor, *Routledge History of Philosophy*, vol. 1, (London: Routledge University Press, 1997), p. 219.

[62] Guthrie, *The Greek Philosophers from Thales to Aristotle*, op. cit., p. 24.

[63] *Symbols belong to an order of reality different from that of the true Reality they symbolize. They are used to make the truth intelligible, to make the unhearable audible. They are meant to be used as tangible supports for contemplation. They help us to reach awareness of the symbolized reality.* Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanishads*, (London: George Allen Pub., 1956), p. 138.

[64] It is noteworthy that, for Anaxagoras, *Nous* is an extrinsic only for inanimate beings, but for living creatures it is intrinsic.

[65] Barnes, op. cit., p. 119.

[66] Though the Presocratic thinkers were critical on the evidence presented by the senses, they were not saying that sense experience is per se a mistake. They were only showing its limitation for it cannot reveal the true meaning of reality.

[67] G.E.R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy*, (USA: Hackett Pub. Co., 1992, p. 27.
[68] Allen, op. cit., p. 45.
[69] Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. II, op. cit., p. 321.
[70] Guthrie, *The Greek Philosophers from Thales to Aristotle*, op. cit., p. 13.

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