

Symposium Philosophiae Antiquae Quartum Atheniense

Φύσις and Νόμος: Power, Justice and the Agonistical Ideal of Life in High Classicism

The Order of Existence:

Φύσις, μοῖρα, ἀνάγκη, θεσμός, νόμος, νοῦς, ψήφισμα, βουλή

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The ancient Greek experience of reality was one of order. Order meant fixedness amidst variation, stability over instability, permanence in change. The constants of existence accounted for the rhythm of things, rhythm spatial (structure) or temporal (pattern of sequence). Reality is, therefore, organic, pulsating and articulate.

The rhythms of reality are themselves immensely multiple and varied. Diversity is reproduced again and again within fixedness. The polarities that constitute the order of existence are not absolute in their concrete manifestations. To use Platonic language, between the one center of reference in each field and the indefinite multiplication of its particulars, there lie many and different focal points which articulate the field into its rich actuality. The fields, furthermore, are many and different. There was inherent pressure in the Greek experience towards polytheism, polyideism and aristocracy.

The order of reality is, thus, complex. The unifying factors are interrelated in a nexus, which itself reveals the operation of higher order constants on a field of diversity. This nexus of articulation is hierarchical, but its exact structure is not given in the basic experience of the world. In fact, the search for its discovery defines, more than anything else, ancient Greek thought. What underlies the investigation is the belief in the systematic nature of the nexus. Reality is an ordered system, is an organic whole. In this sense, the quest is for absolute principles, for first principles, for the ἀνυπόθετον. The architectonic character of Greek thought is already evidenced in Hesiod. With philosophy it becomes self-conscious.

An awareness of reality as a whole (a fully ordered system) carries with it the recognition of existents as parts. Reality consists of integrals of parts. A thing is a part of reality. This is, however, half of the truth. For a thing is a part that stands out as a (partial) whole. The integration of its own manifold constitutive fields is so strong, that bestows on it the unity which enables it to exist and to endure as an individual with a defining identity that by its existence makes a difference to the world. The power that sustains a thing in existence comes from its own characteristic identity, from its own determinative partiality. Power is of integrals. Things (= unified parts) stand in perpetual danger of committing incurable hybris by acting as absolute wholes. There is a tendency in them to extend the field of their constitutive integration more and more, to usurp the prerogatives of other parts.

The factor that most expresses the prephilosophical comprehension of the order of existence is μοῖρα. In Homer, the word keeps explicit its concrete meaning as share, portion, part. γ40: δῶκε δ' ἄρα σπλάγχνων μοίρας. θ 260 πὰρ δ' ἐτίθει σπλάγχνων μοίρας. γ 65-6: οἱ δ' ἐπεὶ ὥπτησαν κρέ' ὑπέρτερα καὶ ἐρύσαντο, / μοίρας δασσάμενοι δαίνυντ' ἐρικυδέα δαῖτα. θ 470: οἱ δ' ἤδη μοίρας τ' ἐνεμον κερώνντο τε οἶνον. ο 140: πὰρ δὲ Βοηθοΐδης κρέα δαίετο καὶ νέμε μοίρας. ρ 258: τῷ πάρα μὲν κρειῶν μοῖραν θέσαν οἱ πονέοντο. ρ 335: μοῖραν ἐλὼν ἐτίθει κανέου τ' ἐκ σῖτον αἰείρας. υ 280-1: μοίρας δασσάμενοι δαίνυντ' ἐρικυδέα δαῖτα / πὰρ δ' ἄρ' Ὀδυσσῆϊ μοῖραν θέσαν ... / ἴσῃν, ὡς αὐτοὶ περ' ἐλάγχχανον. υ 293-4: μοῖραν μὲν δὴ ξεῖνος ἔχει πάλαι, ὡς ἐπέοικεν ἴσῃν. More generally the word is employed to signify the fitting part of booty; λ 534 (when Troy was captured) μοῖραν καὶ γέρας ἐσθλὸν ἔχων ἐπὶ νηὸς ἐβαινεν. To which there corresponds the analogous use of αἶσα; Σ 327: λαχόντα τε ληΐδος αἶσαν. ε 40 = ν 138: λαχὼν ἀπὸ ληΐδος αἶσαν. The use is extended to abstract characters, υ 171: οὐδ' αἰδοῦς μοῖραν ἔχουσιν. We seem here to observe the Platonic theory of participation (μετέχειν) in its genesis.

In its cosmic significance μοῖρα is the share of existence that belongs to a thing, the portion of being that is a thing's own. Μοῖρα is the part that defines a part's (= a thing's) existence in the field of reality. Such share and portion constitutive of a thing is no mere period of time in abstracto, but a life's span in all its specificity of characterisation. In a heroic saga of war it obviously very often refers to the allotted termination of the individual's existence, when the thing ceases to be a part (of reality), and its partial being is rounded up and concluded. With one's death one is said to have filled up the share of life that belongs to him; Δ 170: αἶ κε θάνης καὶ μοῖραν ἀναπλήσης βιότιο. So Λ 263: πότμον ἀναπλήσαντες ἔδυν δόμον Ἄϊδος εἰσω, having filled up the full measure of their fate. The frequent association of μοῖρα with death is thus natural in the Homeric Epics. E.g. Φ 110: ἀλλ' ἐπι τοι καὶ ἐμοὶ θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή. ρ 326 κατὰ μοῖρ' ἔλαβεν μέλανος θανάτιο. β 100 = γ 238 = τ 145 = ω 135: μοῖρ' ὀλοὴ κατέλῃσι

τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο. A dog's death is subsumed under the power of fate; ρ 326: Ἀργον δ' αὖ κατὰ μοῖρ' ἔλαβεν μέλανος θανάτοιο. But one's destined share can be in anything. For example, δ 475 sqq.:

οὐ γάρ τοι πρίν μοῖρα φίλους ἰδέειν καὶ ἰκέσθαι

οἶκον ἑὺκτίμενον καὶ σὴν ἔς πατρίδα γαῖαν,

πρίν etc.

Cf. ε 113-5. The particular way, and conditions under which, something is going to happen may also be fated; ε 40 sqq.:

λαχὼν ἀπὸ ληΐδος αἶσαν.

ὥς γάρ οἱ μοῖρ' ἐστὶ φίλους ἰδέειν καὶ ἰκέσθαι

οἶκον etc.

Odysseus is destined to reach the land of Pheaceans, ε 345:

γαίης Φαιήκων, ὅθι τοι μοῖρ' ἐστὶν ἀλύξαι.

One may be kept in bondage due to his fate; λ 292-3:

χαλεπὴ δὲ θεοῦ κατὰ μοῖρα πέδησε,

δεσμοὶ τ' ἀργαλέοι καὶ βουκόλοι ἀγροῖῳται.

Or be delivered to one's enemy; Φ 82-3: νῦν αὖ με τεῆς ἐν χερσὶν ἐθήκεν / μοῖρ' ὀλοή.

The conquest or otherwise of a renowned city under the leadership of a warrior can also be fated. So Apollo declares to Patroclus for Troy; Π 707-9:

οὐ νύ τοι αἶσα

σῶ ὑπὸ δουρὶ πόλιν πέρθαι Τρώων ἀγερώχων,

οὐδ' ὑπ' Ἀχιλλῆος, ὅς περ σέο πολλὸν ἀμείνων.

Fated are also general facts concerning the human predicament. In connection with Achilles' extraordinary grief over the death of Patroclus, the poet observes that people suffering losses of loved ones, bewail and lament in their mourning, but then soon relent and are resigned to the inevitable; Ω 48-9:

ἄλλ' ἤ τοι κλαύσας καὶ ὀδυράμενος μεθέηκεν.

τλητὸν γὰρ Μοῖραι θυμὸν θέσαν ἄνθρωποισιν.

In later, philosophical parlance, we would say that to be patient, enduring and steadfast in suffering belongs to human nature. Here, Fate sets in this way man's thymos, makes it so to be. We thus look at the ancestry of the physis – nomos issue.

Μοῖρα holds sway over the gods as well, where no death, of course, is colouring its application. In the locus classicus of O, we hear of the respective jurisdictions of Cronus' senior sons, Zeus, Poseidon and Hades. The World is divided into three realms, all with a common boundary on the (surface of the) earth: the heavenly and atmospheric regions, the sea and the kingdom of darkness. The Gods have severally separate honours and absolute sway in the three corresponding areas of the Universe. They are their own characteristic domains, their distinct lots over which their prerogatives are absolute. Each one has a partial share in the universal dominion by ruling wholly a given subrealm of the World; O 189:

τριχθὰ δὲ πάντα δέδασται, ἕκαστος δ' ἔμμορε τιμῆς.

The (surface of the) Earth and Olympus are common ground for the exercise of their different commands. Poseidon demands that even Zeus will have to respect these divisions of authority; O 194-5:

τῷ ρα καὶ οὐ τι Διὸς βέομαι φρεσίν, ἄλλα ἔκηλος,

καὶ κρατερός περ' ἐών, μενέτω τριτάτῃ ἐνὶ μοίρῃ.

Zeus must keep within his own part of divine ruledom: he is defined by that portion; he cannot overstep the bounds of his own destined jurisdiction and, thus of his character of identity. The destinies of the three brothers are equivalent due to the equality of their defining partition; O 208-10:

ἄλλα τόδ' αἰνὸν ἄχος κραδίην καὶ θυμὸν ἰκάνει,

οἴπότε' ἰσόμορον καὶ οἴμῃ πεπρωμένον αἴση

νείκεειν ἐθέλῃσι χολωτοῖσιν ἐπέεσσιν.

Zeus and Poseidon have equal fates (ἰσόμοιροι) and the same destiny (οἴμῃ πεπρωμένοι αἴση).

Individual gods are defined by a specific role they play and by a domain where they primarily exercise that role. Provinces have been carved for them (physical and elemental often, or, more generally as definite fields of operation) and their jurisdictions are accordingly strictly departmentalised. We may say that gods are the spirits of districts of reality. In the case of the three Great brothers, those districts represent a triple division of the World, each part with a character of its own. We again seem to observe the origin of an elemental theory of divinity: there is but a short step to the Empedoclean divine roots.

The nexus that upholds the order of existence consists in an allotment of characteristic and characterizing, distinct and distinguishing, provinces and jurisdictions to the various players, the existing things which are defined by this apportionment (of districts, prerogatives and functions), by this μοῖρα. To be is to be a part but with a strong identity mirroring the absoluteness of the whole. The ancient Greek agonistical spirit is ingrained in the very world-view and experience of life that determine the character of the entire culture.

The order of existence is sustained by a nexus of reality that binds together and interlocks divine, physical and human agencies. Hesiod makes certain, what should have been assumed also from Homer, that the “physical” is one dimension of reality by the side of, and in full coimplication with, the divine and human dimensions. The world is this three-dimensional continuum.

The three-dimensionality of reality in the sense above indicated needs further probe, but it will help if the question of the rigidity of the ordering nexus is first examined. To begin with, can what is fated not happen? Can the apportionment be infringed? Can transgression happen? With each reformulation of the basic question we seem to be moving from the tendency to a more negative to that of a more positive answer.

The nexus was recognized to be absolutely inflexible in certain aspects. Penelope would like to keep awake through all night continuing the pleasing discussion with the stranger, who is not other than the yet not revealed Odysseus. But humans cannot stay sleepless for ever; τ 591-3:

ἄλλ' οὐ γὰρ πῶς ἔστιν αὐπνους ἔμμεναι αἰὲν

ἄνθρωπος· ἐπὶ γὰρ τοι ἐκάστω μοῖραν ἔθηκαν

ἄθνατοι θνητοῖσιν ἐπὶ ζειδῶρον ἄρουραν.

The lot of man does not enable him to remain sleepless for long. He is bound to sleep from time to time. Notice once more that what Homer expresses using the idea of μοῖρα, would be later formulated in terms of φύσις: human nature is such that does not allow for protracted sleeplessness. Notice also that what is natural is here posited (ἔθηκαν) by the Gods, set in each and every man as something inwritten in his make-up.

The general fact of death for mortals is, naturally, equally rigid. Moreover, death is determined for every individual at the time of his birth. When Aeneas, instigated by Apollo, rushes to fight against Achilles, Hera calls on Poseidon and Athena to help the Greek hero so that he may avoid premature lethal harm; Y 126-8:

... ἵνα μὴ τι μετὰ Τρῶεσσι πάθῃσιν

σήμερον· ὕστερον αὖτε τὰ πείσεται, ἄσσα οἱ Ἄϊσα

γινομένῳ ἐπένησε λίνῳ, ὅτε μιν τέκε μήτηρ,

what fate spun into the thread as he was born. So was Hector's lamentable fate at death preordained; Ω 209-12:

τῷ δ' ὥσ ποθι Μοῖρα κραταιή
γινομένῳ ἐπένησε λίνῳ, ὅτε μιν τέκον αὐτὴ (Hecuba is
speaking),
ἄργιποδας κύνας ἄσαι, εἰὼν ἁπάνευθε τοκῆων,
ἄνδρὶ πάρα κρατερῷ etc.

The shade of Patroclus admonishes Achilles in dream; Ψ 78-81:

ἄλλ' ἐμὲ μὲν κῆρ
ἁμφέχανε στυγερή, ἥ περ λάχε γινόμενόν περ,
καὶ δὲ σοὶ αὐτῷ μοῖρα, θεοῖς ἐπιείκελ' Ἀχιλεῦ,
τείχει ὑπὸ Τρώων εὐηφενέων ἀπολέσθαι.

The death-lot belonging to the individual takes hold of him (λάχε) at the moment of his birth. The original dispensation extends to other definite events in his life. Thus Alcinoos urges to make all necessary preparations for Odysseus' safe return back to his fatherland, η 195-8:

μηδὲ τι μεσσηγύς γε κακὸν καὶ πῆμα πάθησι
πρὶν γε τὸν ἧς γαίης ἐπιβήμεναι· ἔνθα δ' ἔπειτα
πείσεται ἄσσα οἱ ἄισα κατὰ Κλῶθές τε βαρεῖαι
γινομένῳ νῆσαντο λίνῳ, ὅτε μιν τέκε μήτηρ.

In birth a given part is given to the individual to play it out; this defines his life in its characteristic identity, and his death. For by having parts to play, and being parts, things are limited in time too: their end is inscribed into their beginning. So Hector comforting Andromache upon his leaving for the battle; Z 487-9:

οὐ γάρ τις μ' ὑπὲρ αἶσαν ἄνῃρ Ἄϊδι προΐαψαι·
μοῖραν δ' οὐ τίνα φημι πεφυγμένον ἔμμεναι ἄνδρῶν,
οὐ κακὸν οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλόν, ἔπῃν τὰ πρῶτα γένηται.

Here the possibility of something happening beyond (ὕπὲρ αἵσαν) the preordained course of events (by virtue of the original allotment) is flatly denied. The question is, however, a vexed one. It has been thought, relying on other Homeric passages where such a possibility seems to be countenanced, that events can occur beyond fatal apportionments. On closer inspection, though, one observes that such testimonies involve counterfactual hypotheticals. So ε 436-7:

ἔνθα κε δὴ δύστηνος ὑπὲρ μόρον ὤλετ' Ὀδυσσεύς,

εἰ μὴ ἐπιφροσύνην δῶκε γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη.

(The goddess puts in his mind a piece of sound prudence, to look for a seaside free from threatening rocks). We saw above that three gods conspire not to allow Achilles to suffer premature death: he does not (Y 126-8). And when in the sequel, conversely, Aeneas is in danger of succumbing before his fated end to Achilles' violence, Poseidon himself intervenes to hold him back from a combat that would theoretically end with his untimely demise (Y 330 sqq.); Y 335-6:

ἄλλ' ἀναχωρῆσαι, ὅτε κεν συμβλήηαι αὐτῷ,

μὴ καὶ ὑπὲρ μοῖραν δόμον Ἄϊδος εἰσαφίκηαι.

In fact, Poseidon's intervention does not stop here. We are informed that a wondrous haze covered Achilles' eyes; he understands the extraordinary character of the event (Y 347 sqq.) and abandons the pursuit of Aeneas. The whole episode (Y 290 sqq.) is exceedingly instructive. It exhibits the complex nature of the nexus of destiny. Too many threads are weaved into the fabric of fate for a human mind to be able always to unravel them all. We saw that Achilles' time of death has not yet come. Aeneas' life is also still incomplete: he must have issue. But it seems that the latter's lot is perhaps somehow of lower status than the former's. Aeneas' destiny in this particular respect depends on Zeus' will, while Achilles' expresses an original decree of fate. This is how Poseidon tries to persuade the other gods to intervene to save Aeneas; Y 300-5:

ἄλλ' ἄγεθ' ἡμεῖς πέρ μιν ὑπὲκ θανάτου ἀγάγωμεν,

μὴ πως καὶ Κρονίδης κεχολώσεται, αἶ κεν Ἀχιλλεύς

τόνδε κατακτείνει. Μόριμον δέ οἱ ἔστ' ἀλέασθαι,

ὅφρα μὴ ἄσπερμος γενεὴ καὶ ἀφαντος ὀληται

Δαρδάνου, ὃν Κρονίδης περὶ πάντων φίλατο παῖδων,

οἳ ἔθεν ἐξεγένοντο γυναικῶν τε θνητῶν.

Hera and the other gods refuse to intervene on the secondary justification that they have made an oath not to succour the Trojans in their difficulties, not even when Troy is to be captured and

given to fire (Y 313-7). But she allows Poseidon to decide for himself where to cast his choice. His appeal to Aeneas, as well as his original application to the Gods' council, are founded on the presupposition that as things are Achilles will kill Aeneas. His argument to Aeneas, asking him to withdraw, is telling (Y 332 sqq.):

Αινεία, τίς σ' ὥδε θεῶν ἀτέοντα κελεύει
ἀντία Πηλεΐωνος ὑπερθύμοιο μάχεσθαι,
ὅς σεῦ ἄμα κρείσσων καὶ φίλτερος ἀθανάτοισιν;
ἀλλ' ἀναχωρῆσαι, ὅτε κεν συμβλήεαι αὐτῷ,
μὴ καὶ ὑπὲρ μοῖραν δόμον Ἄϊδος εἰσαφίκηαι.
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κ' Ἀχιλεὺς θάνατον καὶ πότμον ἐπίσπη,
θαρήσας δὴ ἔπειτα μετὰ πρῶτοισι μάχεσθαι.
οὐ μὲν γάρ τις σ' ἄλλος Ἀχαιῶν ἐξαναρίξει.

Only Achilles could subdue you and deliver to death. So avoid him. He does and he survives the destruction of Troy. As it turns out here, too, the preordained sequences in both life-spans are observed. But it takes a complex operation of divine intervention and non-intervention, rhetorical persuasion and psychological manipulation to have it all as it should. There are many strands and a multifarious variety of threads that make up the nexus of fate. The unraveling of each individual thing's destiny gets entangled with that of very many others'. The allotment is not static: the parts interfere with each other in ways that make the apportionment of individuality to appear confused.*

The complexity of the ordering nexus of reality is such that in particular instances not even the gods have a ready answer independently of their wishes. So Zeus himself has occasionally recourse to the golden Scales of Fate, χρύσεια Διὸς Τάλαντα. The locus classicus is the narration of Hector's death in Achilles' hands. The Myrmidonian hero is in hot pursuit of Hector, while the divine assembly watches over the events. Zeus grieves at the prospect of the Trojan hero's death and attempts to persuade the gods to get involved and deliberate whether they should save the Trojan hero. He asks for divine consultation and he addresses all gods, because their collective concurrence is required. It is not a matter of any god's, even the supreme ones', wish. The single will of all gods might modify the decrees of fate, though even then, I suggest, by adding qualifications not foreseen and preordained in them. In our case, Athena objects: that would involve potentially the undoing of the work of fate and it does not carry the divine consensus; X 177-81:

ὦ πάτερ ἀργικέραυνε κελαινεφές, οἷόν ἐειπες.
ἄνδρα θνητὸν ἐόνα, πάλαι πεπρωμένον αἴση,

ἄψ' ἐθέλεις θανάτοιο δυσηχέος ἑξαναλῦσαι;

ἔρδ'· ἀτὰρ οὐ τοι πάντες ἐπαινέομεν θεοὶ ἄλλοι.

She does not exactly maintain that Hector's doom is fixed for just the present time. But, beyond the general fact of a man's mortality and the equally general rule of divine noninterference in affairs below their dignity (unless they happen to be intensely motivated by ulterior and weightier reasons)* there is also implied the recognition, borne by the actual course of events up to then, that Hector is doomed sooner or later at about then; that he is beginning to overstep his stay; and that he is not to be granted once more (ἄψ) divine succour in protracting the limit of his life. [Although ἄψ means here and in similar cases back and not again]. Zeus yields: he allows Athena to intervene on behalf of the dispensation destined. Hector is indeed supported by Apollo; otherwise he would not have outlived as much; X 202-4:

πῶς δέ κεν Ἑκτωρ κῆρας ὑπεξέφυγεν θανάτοιο,

εἰ μή οἱ πύματόν τε καὶ ὕστατόν ἦν τετ' Ἀπόλλων

ἑγγύθεν, ὅς οἱ ἐπῶρσε μένος λαιψηρά τε γούνα;

The combat, even so, has reached a standstill despite the divine help for Hector. It is a sign that Apollo works against fate. Zeus at long last decides to find out what has ultimately fate decreed. He weighs the death-spirits (κῆρ) of the two heroes. Hector's is heavier and, hence, mightier. He is the one doomed. X 208-13:

ἄλλ' ὅτε δὴ τὸ τέταρτον ἐπὶ κρουνοῦς ἀφίκοντο,

καὶ τότε δὴ χρύσεια πατὴρ ἐτίταινε τάλαντα,

ἐν δ' ἐτίθει δύο κῆρε τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο,

τὴν μὲν Ἀχιλλῆος, τὴν δ' Ἑκτορος ἵποδάμοιο,

ἔλκε δὲ μέσσα λαβῶν· ῥέπε δ' Ἑκτορος αἰσιμον ἦμαρ,

ῥάχεσσι δ' εἰς Αἴδαο, λίπεν δὲ εἰς Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων.

The issue is determined. Once determined, Apollo withdraws and Athena undertakes to officiate (through psychological manipulation) to the preordained outcome.

Similar is the picture that emerges from Rhapsody Θ. Zeus interdicts all separate divine interference in the natural, i.e. fated, course of events in the continuous battle which is being carried on on the human level (Θ 10-7). A grand scheme is developing and he will not tolerate any derangement by reason of the individual gods' and goddesses' subjective feelings and desires. Ulterior thoughts on his part are suggested by his reply to the cautious words of Athena bewailing the unlimited destruction of the Greek army. Θ 38-40:

τὴν δ' ἐπιμειδήσας προσέφη νεφεληγερέτα Ζεὺς·

"θάρσει, τριτογένεια, φίλον τέκος· οὐ νύ τι θυμῷ

πρόφρονι μυθέομαι, ἑθέλω δέ τοι ἥπιος εἶναι".

Zeus uses the Scales of Fate to determine objectively what is the dispensation of destiny in the matter of the battle at hand. There are now the death-spirits (κῆρες) of the collective armies that are being weighted (Θ 68-74). He then makes clear this determination to the people through signs (Θ 75 sqq.). What follows manifests the particular allotment of victory and defeat. But Zeus reveals something of the more general pattern, when provoked by Hera; the carnage of the Greek warriors will continue; Θ 473-7:

οὐ γὰρ πρὶν πολέμου ἀποπτύσεται ὄβριμος Ἴκτωρ,

πρὶν ὀρθαί παρὰ ναῦφι ποδώκεα Πηλεΐωνα

ἥματι τῷ, ὅτ' ἂν οἱ μὲν ἐπὶ πρύμνῃσι μάχωνται

στείνει ἐν αἰνοτάτῳ περὶ Πατρόκλοιο θανόντος.

ὥς γὰρ θέσφατόν ἐστι.

The whole story of the Iliad after all is about the μῆνις of Achilles, the ἔρις between Achilles and Agamemnon, and the accomplishment of Zeus' will. (And this is why the poem ends where it ends – with the full recognition of Achilles' superlative excellence and majestic honours). Since Zeus now upholds what has been ordained and is destined (which is additionally consistent with his will in a complicated matter), he does not care even if Hera refers the matter to the older gods and the powers of Darkness; Θ 477-83:

σέθεν δ' ἐγὼ οὐκ ἀλεγίζω

χωομένης, οὐδ' εἰ κε τὰ νείατα πείραθ' ἴκηαι

γαίης καὶ πόντοιο, ἴν' Ἰαπετός τε Κρόνος τε

ἦμενοι οὐτ' αὐγῆς Ὑπερίονος ἠελίοιο

τέρποντ' οὐτ' ἀνέμοισι, βαθὺς δέ τε Τάρταρος ἀμφίς.

οὐδ' ἦν ἐνθ' ἀφίκηαι ἀλωμένη, οὐ σεῦ ἐγώ γε

σκυζομένης ἀλέγω, ἐπεὶ οὐ σέο κύντερον ἄλλο.

It is important to bear in mind that Zeus respects the awesome majesty of Night; Hypnos relates how he was endangered by Zeus' wrath and how he escaped punishment by invoking the

protection of Night; Ξ 258-61:

καὶ κέ μ' ἄϊστον ἄπ' αἰθέρος ἔμβαλε πόντῳ, [cf. the throwing

down of Ophioneus to the Ocean by victorious Cronus

in the cosmic battle related by Pherecydes}

εἰ μὴ Νύξ δμήτειρα θεῶν ἐσάωσε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.

τὴν ἰκόμην φεύγων, ὃ δ' ἐπαύσατο χῳόμενός περ·

ἄζετο γὰρ μὴ Νυκτὶ θοῇ ἀποθύμια ἔρδοι.

Zeus' Sacred Scales (Διὸς ἱρὰ τάλαντα, Π 658) is the instrument by which Zeus finds out Fate's determination on particular occasions. He refers the outcome of a process going on on the physical dimension of reality to the relative force of (the spirits of) the lots defining the factors implicated in the process. To the picture is superimposed the image of Zeus' determining fate by making the scales incline in one or the other direction; cf. T 223-4:

ἐπὴν κλίνῃσι τάλαντα

Ζεὺς, ὅς τ' ἀνθρώπων ταμίης πολέμοιο τέτυκται.

Zeus is here the dispenser of war issue. In Theognis, he is the dispenser of wealth, again through determination by the use of the Scales; 157-8

Ζεὺς γάρ τοι τὸ τάλαντον ἐπιρρέπει ἄλλοτε ἄλλως,

ἄλλοτε μὲν πλουτεῖν, ἄλλοτε μηδὲν ἔχειν.

The superimposition of the two ideas is being effected in the way presently to be circumscribed. The imagery of the Scales is implicit in the notion of the inclination of events; cf. Ξ 99: ἡμῖν δ' αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος ἐπιρρέπη. Λ 509: μή πῶς μιν πολέμοιο μετακλινθέντος ἔλοιεν.

It may be that in some cases "Zeus determines fate by means of the Scales" is an Olympian way of saying "Zeus finds out what is determined by fate by means of the Scales". The older stratum of divinity having ceded power to the new order of gods, the novel rulers uphold in general the dispensations of the ancient ones (as in Hesiod). But normally the two strata work complementarily, the lower one being empowered to add determinations where there is indeterminacy left in the nexus weaved by the old powers. This view is clearly enunciated in ι, 528 sqq. Polyphemos implores Poseidon to avenge him by punishing Odysseus.

Κλυῖθι, Ποσειδάων γαίηοιχε, κυανοχαῖτα·

εἰ ἑτερόν γε σός εἰμι, πατὴρ δ' ἐμὸς εὐχεται εἶναι,

δὸς μῆ Ὀδυσσῆα πτολίπορθον οἴκαδ' ἰκέσθαι

υἷδν Λαέρτεω, Ἰθάκῃ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ ἔχοντα.

ἄλλ' εἰ οἱ μοῖρ' ἐστὶ φίλους ἰδέειν καὶ ἰκέσθαι

οἶκον εὐκτίμενον καὶ εἴν' ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν,

ὅψε' κακῶς ἔλθοι, ὀλέσας ἀπο πάντας εὔτ' αἶρους,

νηὸς ἐπ' ἀλλοτρίης. εὖροι δ' ἐν πῆματα οἴκῳ.

Ὡς ἔφατ' εὐχόμενος, τοῦ δ' ἐκλυε κυανοχαίτης.

He prays that Odysseus may perish without reaching home. But if it is fated to return to his country, let him suffer enormously before he arrives, and let him find a house full of woes. Poseidon assents to the prayer, a decree of new fate is issued and Odysseus' destiny is sealed in that way as well.

There is a nexus of order given with existence. This is (original) fate. But this leaves open possibilities that can be determined in various ways. The (Olympian) Gods issue fate in a strong sense by closing such open windows of possibility. They are also upholders and coadjutors of (original) fate, and thus issuers of fatal decrees in a weaker sense, in that they will what is fated by the darker principles preceding them in the cosmogonical and succession order.

The field of open possibilities may be specified on occasion as an alternative option. Achilles may either stay in Troy and battle there, in which case he will be crowned by imperishable glory but will die young in the foreign land; or may leave the war and come back to his fatherland, in which case he will live long but without renown. I, 410-6:

μήτηρ γάρ τέ μέ φησι θεά, Θέτις ἄργυρόπεζα,

διχθαδίας κῆρας φερέμεν θανάτοιο τέλοσδε.

εἰ μὲν κ' αὖθι μένων Τρώων πόλιν ἀμφιμάχωμαι,

ῥώλετο μὲν μοι νόστος, ἀτὰρ κλέος ἀφθιτον ἔσται.

εἰ δέ κε οἴκαδ' ἵκωμαι εἴν' ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν,

ῥώλετό μοι κλέος ἐσθλόν, ἐπὶ δὴρὸν δέ μοι αἰὼν

ἔσσεται, οὐδέ κέ μ' ὤκα τέλος θανάτοιο κιχείη.

Similar is the case of Euchenor the Corinthian, son of seer Polyidos; N 666 sqq.:

πολλάκι γάρ οἱ ἔειπε γέρων ἄγαθος Πολύϊδος
νοῦσῳ ὑπὲρ ἀργαλέῃ φθίσθαι οἷς ἐν μεγάροισιν
ἢ μετ' Ἀχαιῶν νηυσὶν ὑπὸ Τρώεσσι δαμῆναι·
τῷ ρ' ἅμα τ' ἀργαλέην θωγὴν ἁλέεινεν Ἀχαιῶν
νοῦσόν τε στυγερήν, ἵνα μὴ πάθοι ἄλγεα θυμῷ.

He would either die in his home from a painful disease or in battle at Troy. Which happens depends on his choice.

The Principle of Additive Determination helps better explain two connected salient cruxes in the Homeric worldview: the question of multiple causation and the problem of the relationship between Fate and the gods.

Multiple causation of events is explicit and manifest in such passages as where Patroclus mentions Fate, Apollo, Euphorbus and Hector as concurring agencies to his death. Π 849-50:

ἄλλά με μοῖρ' ὀλοή καὶ Λητοῦς ἔκτανεν υἱός,
ἄνδρῶν δ' Εὐφορβος· σύ δέ με τρίτος ἐξεναρίζεις.

Patroclus' prowess appears invincible in the battle. Apollo stands against him, but Patroclus fails to understand the divine presence. Apollo goes behind him and strikes a mighty blow with his hand to Patroclus' back. He gets dizzy, his helmet is thrown away, the spear broken, the shield falls down (788-804). He stands paralysed by the divine agency; 805-6:

τὸν δ' ἄτη φρένας εἴλε, λύθεν δ' ὑπὸ φαίδιμα γυῖα,
στῇ δὲ ταφῶν.

Euphorbus strikes him with his spear at the back (μετάφρενον, behind the midriff), and Hector by his sword lowermost at the flank (806-8 and 820-1). Apollo's agency has Zeus' approval; 799-80:

τότε δὲ Ζεὺς Ἑκτορι δῶκεν
ἧ' κεφαλῇ φορέειν (sc. τὴν κυνέην), σχεδόθεν δέ οἱ ἦεν
ὄλεθρος.

And so God and man simultaneously and concurrently effect the hero's death. More exactly Goddess binds him so that the man subdue him; σ 155-6:

ἄλλ' οὐδ' ὥς φύγε κῆρα· πέδησε δὲ καὶ τὸν Ἀθήνη

Τηλεμάχου ὑπὸ χερσὶν καὶ ἐγγεῖ' ἴφι δαμῆναι.

The gods' intervention is consistent with the decrees of fate, although they may supplement them. One may of course emphasise one or another agency in that triple causation depending on the circumstances and the point involved. When Xanthus (the speaking one of the divine horses in Achilles' chariot) desires to apologize to Achilles for their inability to save Patroclus from death, he ascribes the grievous event to Apollo's intervention. But it is clear from his allocution that the triple causality is always involved; T 409 sqq.:

οὐδέ τοι ἡμεῖς

αἴτιοι, ἄλλὰ θεός τε μέγας καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή.

οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡμετέρη βραδυτῆτί τε νωχελίῃ τε

Τρῶες ἀπ' ὥμοιιν Πατρόκλου τεῦχε' ἔλοντο·

ἄλλὰ θεῶν ὠρίστος, ὃν ἡύκομος τέκε Λητώ,

ἔκταν' ἐνὶ προμάχοισι καὶ Ἑκτορι κῦδος ἔδωκεν.

.....

ἄλλὰ σοὶ αὐτῷ

μόρσιμον ἔστι θεῶ τε καὶ ἀνέρι' ἴφι δαμῆναι.

The gods carry out, activate, realise, complete, fulfil the determinations of fate. Achilles speaking to Thetis remarks; Σ 115-9:

κῆρα δ' ἐγὼ τότε δέξομαι, οἵπότε κεν δῇ

Ζεὺς ἐθέλῃ τελέσαι ἢ δ' ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι.

οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ βίῃ Ἡρακλεέος φύγε κῆρα,

ὅς περ φίλτατος ἔσκε Διὶ Κρονίωνι ἀνακτι·

ἄλλὰ εἰ μοῖρ' ἐδάμασσε καὶ ἀργαλέος χόλος Ἥρης.

The reference to μοῖρα in the first two lines is implicit and understood, by analogy to the explicit combination in the last line of the quote.

In the midst of Hector's hour of glory, goddess Athena activates his fated death by the human

agency of Achilleus' strength; O 612-4:

μινυνθάδιος γὰρ ἐμελλεν

ἔσσεσθ'· ἤδη γὰρ οἱ ἐπώρνυε μόρσιμον ἦμαρ

Παλλὰς Ἀθηναίη ὑπὸ Πηλεΐδαο βίηφιν.

Agamemnon in justification of his behaviour which caused Achilleus' wrath, denies his responsibility ascribing his action to an ἄτη instigated in him by Zeus, Fate and Erinys; T 86 sqq.:

ἔγὼ δ' οὐκ αἰτιός εἰμι,

ἄλλὰ Ζεὺς καὶ Μοῖρα καὶ ἡεροφοῖτις Ἐρινύς,

οἳ τέ μοι εἰν ἀγορῇ φρεσὶν ἐμβαλὼν ἀγριὸν ἄτην,

ἤματι τῷ, ὅτ' Ἀχιλλῆος γέρας αὐτὸς ἀπεύρων.

Cf. T 409-10: οὐδέ τοι ἡμεῖς / αἰτιοί, ἄλλὰ θεός τε μέγας καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή. But of course causality and responsibility fall on the human agent as well, irrespective.

A physical substance (like a sword above in the case of death) may be adduced as cause of an event by the side of divine fate. λ 61: ἄσέ με δαίμονος αἴσα κακὴ καὶ ἀθέσφατος οἶνος. Elpenor was doomed; he drank a lot of unblest wine and this occasioned his falling down a long staircase. The wine acted so as to activate the fatal order.

A complicated story related in the Homeric Νεκυία involves Neleus' daughter Pero, the seer Melampus and Iphicles from Thessalian Phylace. Melampus undertakes to steal Iphicles' cattle and bring them to Neleus. He is caught by Iphicles' herdsmen and put in chains for a year. His bondage is caused by divine fate, by the herdsmen and by the chains themselves. We have here added to the multiple causality of events the instruments as well whereby the human agents effect the event. λ 292-3:

χαλεπὴ δὲ θεοῦ κατὰ μοῖρα πέδησε,

δεσμοί τ' ἀργαλέοι καὶ βουκόλοι ἀγροῖῳται.

The prophet is delivered from his bondage when he explains to Iphiclus what keeps him sterile and how he can cure his impotency. (We learn this from the Scholia). Thus was Zeus' will fulfilled; 296-7:

καὶ τότε δὴ μιν λῦσε βίη Ἰφικληεΐη,

θέσφατα πάντ' εἰπόντα· Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή.

Probably, Zeus' will had to do with Iphicles obtaining issue. We see the roundabout ways in which the god's will come to pass. All divine working, as well as all human activity, transpires within the framework of the complex nexus of order in reality.

The complex ways of achieving divine ends we can observe explained in O 592 sqq. by the poet himself. Zeus' will is to satisfy Thetis' (i.e. Achilles') demand: by bringing ruin to the Greek side, the supreme excellence of Achilles will be manifestly revealed, and his μῆνις will be justified. So this is Zeus' will that we hear announced at the very beginning of the Ilias (A 1-7). It finds its consummation with Hector's death at Achilles' hands – and this is why the Ilias ends where it ends. Now on the occasion of) 592 sqq. Zeus supports Hector – he is the instrument (a dear instrument at that) of the overall divine plan. His death will glorify Achilles, who is also fated to die young but with inexhaustible, eternal renown. The staunch divine supporter of the Trojan side, Apollo, is the one who initially caused the rift between Agamemnon and Achilles, a breach that set the fulfilment of fate on track, that activated the nexus of events that would eventually be concluded to his immortal chagrin. Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή. The very fierceness of the Trojans in this crucial occasion fulfils Zeus' behest (593). The complexity of the nexus of order and the principle of multiple causality in weaving the fabric of reality with time is a conscious Homeric outlook.

That the Principle of Additive Determination helps us understand correctly the relationship of gods to fate is clear from the story of Pandareos' daughters in Odyssey u. The gods destroyed their parents and they were left orphaned but grown splendidly under the tutelage of Aphrodite, Hera, Artemis and Athena. When they reached the age of marriage, flowering in all graces of virginity, Aphrodite went to Olympus to ask for them from Zeus the crowning end of a blooming marriage. However, even while she was ascending to the Palaces of the Gods, the Harpyies snatched the maidens and gave them to the Erinyes. u 66 sqq.:

ὥς δ' ὅτε Πανδαρέου κόυρας ἀνέλοντο θύελλαι·

τῇσι τοκῆας μὲν φθίσαν θεοί, αἰ δ' ἐλίποντο

ὀρφαναὶ ἐν μεγάροισιν, κόμισσε δὲ δι' Ἀφροδίτη

τυρῶ καὶ μέλιτι γλυκερῶ καὶ ἡδέϊ οἴνω·

Ἥρη δ' αὐτῇσιν περὶ πασέων δῶκε γυναικῶν

εἶδος καὶ πινυτήν, μῆκος δ' ἔπορ' Ἄρτεμις ἀγνή,

ἔργα δ' Ἀθηναίη δέδαε κλυτὰ ἐργάζεσθαι.

εὖτ' Ἀφροδίτη διὰ προσέστιχε μακρόν Ὀλυμπον,

κούρης αἰτήσουσα τέλος θαλεροῖο γάμοιο,

ἔς Δία τερπικέραυνον - ο' γὰρ τ' εὖ οἶδεν ἅπαντα,

μοῖράν τ' ἄμμορίην τε καταθνητῶν ἄνθρώπων -

τόφρα δὲ τὰς κούρας ἄρπυιαι ἀνηρείψαντο

καί ρ' ἔδοσαν στυγερῇσιν Ἐρινύσιν ἀμφιπολεύειν.

What is not fated by the inexorable world-order, can be determined by the gods, like the gifts accruing to Pandareus' daughters from the divine graces of the goddesses in question. They did not however know what their ultimate fate was: that they should not be fulfilled as women but given to death and the Erinyes. Zeus, by contrast, knows all the nexus of fate, what the dispensation is for men and what is left open, what the parts distributed to them are and what is not apportioned. Ἀμμορίη here rather means absence of dispensation, lack of apportionement, than evil lot. Ἀμμορος (later ἄμοιρος) is one without share of something (bereft of), as in ἄμμοροι ... λοετρῶν Ὠκεανοῖο (Σ 489 = ε 275). Admittedly it can also mean in Homer ill-fated, as in Ζ 408 and (in the same phrase) Ω 773. But this sense is derivative. Here Ζεὺς οἶδε μοῖράν τ' ἄμμορίην τ' ἀνθρώπων means knows what is man's fate and what is not – what belongs to his share or part and what does not. What does not may mean either what will not happen or what may happen as a result of an additional determination by some empowered agent. If it was not fated that Pandareus' daughters would die unmarried and go to attend the Erinyes, then it could happen that they married, if no additional constitutive decree did not create fate to the contrary. [The emphatic mention of Zeus' omniscience in the midst of the relation of the significant coincidence that the death-fate of the maidens was activated and seized them just when Aphrodite was going to Zeus to decree to them felicitous marriage, may also suggest Zeus' coimplication in Harpyies act just at that time. The divine ruler that knows what is fated, coeffects it together with the more directly involved agents of realisation.]

What is fated is also confirmed by the gods esp. by Zeus' sovereign thought and will. Thus, Achilleus' fate is either to die young in the war with highest fame, or old back in home with no exploits of renown. It is fated that he should not take Ilion. And this fate was also Διὸς μέγαλοιο νόημα (ρ 409), which his mother often recounted to him.

Calypso is keepind Odysseus by her. Zeus sends Hermes to instruct her to let him go. The king of the gods relates what will happen to Odysseus (ε 30 sqq.) according to his νημερτέα βουλήν (ε 30). He ends by drawing on the fatal determination on which he builds his divine will; ε 41-2:

ὥς γάρ οἱ μοῖρ' ἐστὶ φίλους ἰδέειν καὶ ἰκέσθαι

οἶκον ἔς υἱόροφον καὶ εἶν' ἔς πατρίδα γαῖαν.

Hermes goes to Calypso's island. She knows that the Messenger of Gods carries some behest; she is prepared to execute it if it is doable; ε 89-90:

αὐδα ὅ τι φρονέεις· τελέσαι δέ με θυμὸς ἄνωγεν,

εἰ δύναμαι τελέσαι γε καὶ εἰ τετελεσμένον ἐστίν.

Hermes repeats the fated dispensation regarding Odysseus; ε 113-5:

οὐ γὰρ οἱ τῇδ' αἴσα φίλων ἀπονόσφιν ὀλέσθαι,

ἄλλ' ἔτι οἱ μοῖρ' ἐστὶ φίλους ἰδέειν καὶ ἰκέσθαι etc.

That could happen sooner or later. But as it will happen, Zeus wills it now. Hermes adds a reference to his supreme authority among gods; ε 103-4:

ἀλλὰ μάλ' οὐ πῶς ἐστὶ Διὸς νόον αἰγιόχοιο

οὔτε παρεξελθεῖν ἄλλον θεὸν οὔθ' ἀλιῶσαι.

Calypso accuses the Olympians of mean envy. But (ε 137-40):

ἄλλ' ἐπεὶ οὐ πῶς ἐστὶ Διὸς νόον αἰγιόχοιο

οὔτε παρεξελθεῖν ἄλλον θεὸν οὔθ' ἀλιῶσαι,

ἔρρέτω, εἴ μιν κεῖνος ἐποτρύνει καὶ ἀνώγει,

πόντον ἐπ' ἀτρύγετον.

Zeus adds a determination to the fatal nexus. Calypso obeys, since he is stronger and empowered to create fate. Hermes emphasises the point of relative power; ε 146-7:

οὕτω νῦν ἀπόπεμπε, Διὸς δ' ἐποπίζεο μῆνιν,

μή πῶς τοι μετόπισθε κοτεσσάμενος χαλεπήνη.

There is one passage where it has been claimed that we encounter a clear example of transcending fate – even though for the worse. The allotment of evil that falls to the destiny of men is increased by their own folly. α 32 sqq. (Zeus speaking):

ὣ πόποι, οἷόν δ' ἄνθρωποι θεοὺς βροτοὶ αἰτιόωνται.

ἔξ ἡμέων γὰρ φασὶ κάκ' ἐμμεναι· οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ

σφῆσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὑπὲρ μόρον ἄλγε' ἔχουσιν,

ὥς καὶ νῦν Αἰγισθος ὑπὲρ μόρον Ἀτρεΐδαι

γῆμ' ἄλοχον μνηστήν, τὸν δ' ἔκτανε νοστήσαντα,

εἰδὼς αἰπὺν ὀλεθρον· ἐπεὶ πρό οἱ εἴπομεν ἡμεῖς

Ερμείαν πέμπαντες, 'εύσκοπον' ἀργειφόντην,
μήτ' αὐτὸν κτείνειν μήτε μνάσθαι' ἀκοιτίν·
'εκ γὰρ Ορέσταιο τίσις' ἔσσεται' Ἀτρεΐδαι,
οἵπότη' ἂν ηβήσῃ καὶ ἧς ὑμείρεται αἴης.
ὥς' ἔφαθ' Ἑρμείας, 'ἀλλ' οὐ φρένας Αἰγίσθοιο
πεῖθ' ἀγαθὰ φρονέων· νῦν δ' ἀθρόα πάντ' ἀπέτισε.

But on second thoughts this is far from a case of actual cancellation of fate. The general statement in v. 34 means that man through his own agency may well make more heavy the apportionment of wrongs that befalls him – “by his own nature” one would say later. The example shows that no caution could save Aegisthus from his doom. He was informed by the gods themselves that should he kill Agamemnon and take as wife Clytemnestra, he will be revenged by Orestes. He committed the crimes nonetheless, drawing upon himself the fated retribution. So the sense would rather be that it was not strictly fated that Aegisthus had to do what he did. He complemented the decrees of fate by his own agency, thereby activating a fated sequence of events. In the relation of the story by Nestor in γ, however we learn that Agamemnon has left behind a renowned singer to take care of Clytemnestra through his wise counsel. γ 269:

'ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ μιν (sc. Aegisthus) μοῖρα θεῶν ἐπέδησε δαμῆναι,

but when the fate of the gods bounded Aegisthus so that he was to be subjugated, bounded him to his destruction, he exiled the singer to a desert island there to die, took Clytemnestra as consort and killed Agamemnon on his return. Whenceupon the fated nexus of events followed inexorably.

Zeus in α seems to imply that Aegisthus could have done otherwise, having been advised as to the necessary sequence of events. Nestor in γ ascribes Aegisthus' act to fate. On either interpretation it is not a question of whether fate can be contravened, but of whether a fact or a hypothetical concatenation of occurrences is what is fated. In the latter case, we have to do with a situation similar to the alternative options open to Achilles, or to Heracles' choice between virtue and vice.

The complexity of the order of reality is again indicated in the same context, γ 230-8. Gods can easily save a man, if they so will. But we, mortal men of limited knowledge, do not often really know what is saving and what damnation. Odysseus has suffered immeasurably before coming to his country, where passing through one more capital danger at home, was finally saved. Agamemnon by contrast was saved from all hardship on his return back, but was visited by a pitiful end when home. In any case, γ 236-8:

'ἀλλ' ἢ τοι θάνατον μὲν ὁμοῖον οὐδὲ θεοὶ περ

καὶ φίλῳ ἄνδρὶ δύνανται ἀλαλκέμεν, οἵπότε κεν δῇ
μοῖρ' ὀλοὴ καλέλῃσι τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο.

In general, as Pindar formulated it (Paeans VI, 83):

μόρσιμ' ἀναλύειν Ζεὺς οἱ θεῶν σκοπὸς οὐ τολμᾷ.

He does not dare do so. He would have cancelled the order of things that he upholds. And this he does not will, however much he may wish to the contrary in countless cases of strong affection or fierce enmity to men or gods.

The nexus of reality is complex. The cosmic order consists in binding determinations which are stratified. A new determination may be introduced where there is an opening of indefiniteness. This is how the fabric of reality is weaved. As time goes on, possibilities are being closed down. Actuality is completely determined, in the sense in which the past is. Time is what keeps the system open.

The basic structure is given by Fate: an allotment of shares, an apportionment of roles and parts, of provinces and functions, that define things. This issuer of order precedes the Olympians. In Hesiodic terms it comprises what goes before the rule of Zeus – a nexus sustained and preserved by him and the new gods. This is emphatically and exaggeratedly formulated by Seneca, *de providentia*, 5: the power that determines our destinies *eadem necessitate et deos alligat. Irrevocabilis humana pariter ac divina cursus vehit. Ille ipse omnium conditor ac rector (sc. Zeus) scripsit quidem fata, sed sequitur. semper paret, semel jussit.* The gods are secondary issuers of fate (order) in that they can supplement what is left undetermined by the primacy issuer. But they can be taken as establishers of order (and not as arbitrary agents) in this second and more direct authority, because what they issue, they keep inexorably. Zeus can issue “constitutiones” with the power of decrees of fate; A 525-7:

τοῦτο γὰρ ἐξ' ἐμέθεν γε μετ' ἀθανάτοισι μέγιστον

τέκμωρ· οὐ γὰρ ἐμὸν παλινάγρετον οὐδ' ἀπατηλόν

οὐδ' ἀτελεύτητον, ὃ τί κεν κεφαλῇ καταεύσω.

Whoever can issue such unalterable “constitutiones”, supplementing by further determination the already established order of things, is an issuer of fate.

Because the field of determinability closes only as the present becomes past, there is a possibility of moving through the nexus of fate, through the orderly structure of the world in a free way, i.e. in a way that adds determination to the already determined fabric of reality. There are passages, ways and means, an opening of opportunity in the web of fate. One has to take advantage of such openings if he is to make a difference in the world. There is Πόρος by the side of Μοῖρα or Αἴσα. Perhaps Alcman expressed the underlying worldview succinctly:

Τέκμ]αρ (?) Αἴσα παντῶν

καὶ Πόρος] γεραιτάτοι

σιῶν]

Alcman, 1 i 13-5 Page-Davies (cf. 5 ii 3-25).

This better reflects the complexity of the world-state and its basic articulation than the all-out fatalistic formulation such as Alcaeus' (B7.10 Lobel-Page = Diehl 80.10):

παρὰ μοῖραν Δίος οὐδὲ τρίχ[ε]ς ἔρρυσεν.

That Αἴσα and destiny (πεπρωμένον) defines what is settled and bounded (τέκμαρ), while Πόρος represents the way through such determinations, is half-indicated by the explanation in De Mundo 401b10: πεπρωμένον δὲ διὰ τὸ πεπερατῶσθαι πάντα καὶ μηδὲν ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν ἄπειρον εἶναι. Of course, this is again couched in terms of absolute fatalism here. But the insight as to the significance of Μοῖρα is valid.

The cosmic significance of Μοῖρα (Αἴσα) as (world) order is shown by the frequent use of κατὰ μοῖραν in the sense of (what later will be expressed as) κατὰ κόσμον. Cf. e.g. Π 367; Τ 256; Ψ 626; δ 783; θ 54; ι 245; ι 309; ι 342; ι 352; π 385. With verbs of phatic significance κατὰ μοῖραν means orderly, appropriately, according to the several jurisdictions of things. Cf. β 251; γ 331; δ 266; η 227; θ 141; θ 397; κ 16; ν 48; ν 385; ο 170; ρ 580; σ 170; υ 37; φ 278; χ 486. The sense "in one's place, according to one's share" is present: οἱ δ' ἔζητο ἥ παρὰ μοίρῃ (ξ 448). In θ 497-98, we have a clear example of the virtual equivalence of κατὰ κόσμον and κατὰ μοῖραν. Odysseus praises the singer Demodocus for his recital of the fate of Greeks; θ 489-91:

λῆν γὰρ κατὰ κόσμον Ἀχαιῶν οἷτον αἰίδεις.

ὅσσ' ἔρξαν τ' ἐπαθόν τε καὶ ὅσσ' ἐμόγησαν Ἀχαιοί,

ὥς τέ που ἢ αὐτὸς παρεὼν ἢ ἄλλου ἀκούσας.

Demodocus sings that the Achaeans did and suffered according to the actual dispensation of fortune among them, according to their real share of action and passion in existence. He sings what truly befell them severally.

Odysseus then asks Demodocus to make another start and sing of the Wooden Horse and of Odysseus' cunning deception and of the men in the Horse who sacked Troy; θ 492-5:

ἄλλ' ἄγε δὴ μετάβηθι καὶ ἵππου κόσμον αἶσσε

δουρατέου, τὸν Επειδὸς ἐποίησεν σὺν Ἀθήνῃ,

ὄν ποτ' ἐς ἀκρόπολιν δόλον ἤγαγε δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς,

ἄνδρων ἐμπλήσας οἷς ἴλιον ἐφαλάπαξαν.

Κόσμος ἵππου is the structure and construction of the wooden horse, not merely its ornament, but the arrangement of its parts so as to make a whole. And then θ 496:

αἶ κεν δὴ μοι ταῦτα κατὰ μοῖραν καταλέξης etc.

Ταῦτα is the construction of the horse, Oddyseus' δόλος, the sack of Troy. Κατὰ μοῖραν answers exactly to the κατὰ κόσμον a few lines above, which is focused in meaning by the use of κόσμος in between. Κόσμος is the structured arrangement of parts in a whole. Κατὰ κόσμον is according to the actual arrangement of the parts. Κατὰ μοῖραν is according to the several apportionment of a whole into parts. He sings of events as they truly happened to be dispensed, distributed to the various participants.

Determination binds to a definite outcome what is a range of potentialities. Fate as representing the fundamental order of the world fastens and bounds the indeterminacy of existence. The word characteristically associated with μοῖρα in Homer is accordingly πεδάω, bind with fetters, shackle. Δ 517: ἐνθ' Ἀμαρυγκείδην Διώρεα μοῖρα πέδῃσεν. λ 292: χαλεπὴ δὲ θεοῦ κατὰ μοῖρα πέδῃσε. With infinitive. Χ 5: Ἑκτορα δ' αὐτοῦ μείναι ὀλοὴ μοῖρ' ἐπέδῃσεν, constrained him to remain on the spot. γ 269: ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ μιν μοῖρα θεῶν ἐπέδῃσε δαμῆναι, constrained him to be slain. Ἀτη binds as well; Τ 91-4: πρέσβα Διὸς θυγάτηρ Ἀτη... /.../ ...κατὰ δ' οὖν ἕτερόν γε πέδῃσεν. Gods, as supplementary issuers of fate can also constrain, bind. δ 380: ὅς τις μ' ἄθανάτων πεδάσῃ καὶ ἔδῃσε κελεύθου. σ 155: ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς φύγε κῆρα· πέδῃσε δὲ καὶ τὸν Ἀθήνη (she binded him and subjected him to his death). Similarly Ν 434-5: τὸν τόθ' ὑπ' Ἰδομενῆϊ Ποσειδάων' ἐδάμασσε / θέλξας ὅσσε φαεινά, πέδῃσε δὲ φαίδιμα γυῖα (he shackled his members so that Idomeneus killed him). ψ 352-3: αὐτὰρ ἐμὲ Ζεὺς ἄλγεσι καὶ θεοὶ ἄλλοι / ἔμμενον πεδάσσκον ἐμῆς ἀπὸ πατρίδος αἴης. A similar combination expresses the subjugating power of fate: μοῖρα ἐδάμασε. Σ 119: ἀλλὰ εἰ μοῖρ' ἐδάμασσε καὶ ἀργαλέος χόλος Ἥρης. χ 413: τοῦσδε δὲ μοῖρ' ἐδάμασσε θεῶν καὶ σχέτλια ἔργα. And so in a group of the Orphic gold leaves one finds the phrase (Il B1.4 Pugliese Carratelli = A1.4 Zuntz = OF 32 IV c 4-5):

ἀλλὰ με μοῖρ' ἐδάμασσε καὶ ἄθανατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι

καὶ Ἀστεροβλήτα κεραυνῶ (or κεραυνῶν).

[In Il A1.5 P.-C. = A2.5 Z = OF 32 IV d5, we have:

εἴτε με Μοῖρα ἐδαμάσατο εἴτε Ἀστεροπῆτα κεραυνῶν

(or κεραυνῶ).

And in Il A2.5 P.-C. = A3.5 Z = OF 32 IV e 5:

εἴτε με Μοῖρα εἴτε Ἀστεροπῆτα κεραυνῶ (-ων).

The disjunction is of course to be construed very loosely: both Fate and Zeus caused the

destruction of the Titans after their aboriginal enormity].

Determination is distribution of parts. The dispensation consists in the apportionment of parts which defines things. The order of existence is constituted by the definition of parts. One's existence is cut out from the undifferentiated universal whole. Individuality is paradoxically strongly affirmed in the very idea of *Μοῖρα* as fatal world-order. In the conception of *μοῖρα* determination and apportionment meet. So does the bond that bounds a thing as a part. This bond constitutes the individuality of a thing. Hence it is equivalent to its boundary, further the limit, end, conclusion and consummation. This is the meaning-field of *πεῖρα*, *πέρας*, a conception of vast importance in Greek thought.

The concrete sense of *πεῖρα* as bond is manifest in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo. Upon his birth, he eats ambrosia and the swaddling-bands can keep him no more constrained; 127 sqq.:

αὐτὰρ ἔπει δὴ Φοῖβε κατέβρωσ' ἄμβροτον εἶδαρ,
οὐ σέ γ' ἔπειτ' ἴσχον χρύσειοι στρόφοι ἄσπαιροντα,
οὐδ' ἔτι δεσμά σ' ἔφυγε, λύοντο δὲ πείρατα πάντα.

As evident is the meaning of the word in μ 50-1. Odysseus wants to hear the seductive song of the Sirens without falling a victim to it. Thus he is bound standing to the mast of the ship. His hands and feet are tied by a rope, and the bond is fastened up on the mast:

δησάντων σ' ἐν νηὶ θεῇ χειρὰς τε πόδας τε
ὄρθον ἐν ἰστοπέδῃ, ἐκ δ' αὐτοῦ (sc. τοῦ ἰστοῦ) πείρατ' ἀνήφθω.

Cf. μ 160-2:

ἄλλα με δεσμῷ
δήσατ' ἐν ἀργαλέῳ, ὅφρ' ἔμπεδον αὐτόθι μίμνω,
ὄρθον ἐν ἰστοπέδῃ, ἐκ δ' αὐτοῦ πείρατ' ἀνήφθω.

And μ 178-9:

οἱ δ' ἐν νηὶ μ' ἔδησαν ὁμοῦ χειρὰς τε πόδας τε
ὄρθον ἐν ἰστοπέδῃ, ἐκ δ' αὐτοῦ πείρατ' ἀνήπτον.

And similarly in the story of the cruel punishment of Melanthius. His hands and feet are turned back and tied in a terrible bond (*ολοῶ ἐνὶ δεσμῷ*, χ 200), which is then fastened by a rope high up on a column so that the body may be raised above the ground and hang high near the roof-tiles; χ 172-7:

σφῶϊ δ' ἀποστρέψαντε πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ὑπερθεν

ἔς θάλαμον βαλέειν...

σειρὴν δὲ πλεκτὴν ἐξ αὐτοῦ πειρήναντε

κίον' ἂν ὑψηλὴν ἐρύσαι πελάσαι τε δοκοῖσιν,

ὥς κεν δηθὰ ζωὸς ἐὼν χαλέπ' ἄλγεα πάσχη.

χ 189 sqq.:

σὺν δὲ πόδας χεῖράς τε δέον θυμαλγέϊ δεσμῷ

εὖ μάλ' ἀποστρέψαντε διαμπερές, ...

...

σειρὴν δὲ πλεκτὴν ἐξ αὐτοῦ πειρήναντε

κίον' ἂν ὑψηλὴν ἐρύσαν πέλασάν τε δοκοῖσιν.

This concrete sense of πείραρ, πειραίνω is further evidenced in N 358-60:

τοὶ δ' ἔριδος κρατερῆς καὶ ὁμοῖο πτολέμοιο

πείραρ ἐπαλλάξαντες ἐπ' ἀμφοτέροισι τάνυσσαν

ἄρηκτόν τ' ἄλυτόν τε, τὸ πολλῶν γούνατ' ἔλυσεν.

Greeks and Trojans are both (ἐπ' ἀμφοτέροισι) entangled (επαλλάξαντες) in a bond (πείραρ) ἄρηκτόν τ' ἄλυτόν τε (unbreakable and indissoluble). The bond stretching and strained over both, locks them in a battle without resolution, without victory and without common retreat. This is why the bond has to go alternately over them. Characteristically, they are shackles on the feet that are ἄρηκτοι and ἄλυτοι in N 36-7:

ἄμφι δὲ ποσσὶ πέδας ἐμβαλε χρυσείας

ἄρηκτους ἄλύτους, ὅφρ' ἐμπεδὸν αὔθι μένοιεν etc.

Fatal order binds and constrains and immobilizes like Hephaestus master-device by means of which he caught Ares and Aphrodite in the very act of coition. He made a nexus of copper bonds so wondrously thin like a spider's web, that could not be broken or loosed. θ 273 sqq.:

βῆ ρ' ἰμεν ἐς χαλκεῶνα, κακὰ φρεσὶ βυσσοδομεύων,

ἔν δ' ἔθετ' ἀκμοθέτῳ μέγαν ἀκμονα, κόπτε δὲ δεσμούς

ἄρρηκτους ἀλύτους, ὅφρ' ἔμπεδον αὖθι μένοιεν.

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ ζεῦξε δόλον κεχολωμένος Ἄρει,

βῆ ρ' ἴμεν' ἐς θάλαμον, ὅθι οἱ φίλα δέμνι' ἔκειτο,

ἄμφι δ' ἄρ' ἐρμῖσιν χέε δέσματα κύκλῳ ἀπάντη·

πολλὰ δὲ καὶ καθύπερθε μελαθρόφιν ἐξεκέχυντο,

ἡὺτ' ἀράχνια λεπτά, τὰ γ' οὐ κέ τις οὐδ' ἴδοιτο,

οὐδὲ θεῶν μακάρων· πέρι γὰρ δολόεντα τέτυκτο.

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ πάντα δόλον περὶ δέμνια χεῦεν etc.

When the illicit couple takes to the works of love on the bed, they are caught in the web of bonds; θ 296 sqq.:

ἄμφι δὲ δεσμοῖ

τεχνήεντες ἔχυντο πολύφρονος Ἡφαίστοιο,

οὐδέ τι κινήσαι μελέων ἦν οὐδ' ἀναεῖραι.

As πείραρ πολέμοιο is the bond of war, so ὀλέθρου πείρατα are the bonds of destruction; H 402:

ὥς ἤδη Τρώεσσιν ὀλέθρου πείρατ' ἐφῆπται,

they are fastened over them, fixed on or bound to them. So M 79:

αὐτὰρ Ἀχαιοὶ

οὐ μενέοισ', εἰ δὴ σφιν ὀλέθρου πείρατ' ἐφῆπται.

Cf. χ 33; 41. So also πείραρ οἴζυος, the bond of woe, ε 289. This bond approaches but it is fated that Odysseus will avoid its encounter for the time being:

ἔνθα οἱ αἴσα

ἐκφυγέειν μέγα πείραρ οἴζυος, ἥ μιν ἱκάνει.

So one may come to the bond of destruction, ὥς κεν θᾶσσον ὀλέθρου πείραθ' ἴκηαι, Z 143 = Y

429.

The bond of X is X fully and completely, hence the consummation of X, esp. when X represents positive content. So H 102:

αὐτὰρ ὑπερθεν

νίκης πείρατ' ἔχονται ἐν ἄθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν.

The definitive, final determination as to victory lies in the immortals. Thus also ψ 248-50:

ὦ γύναι, οὐ γάρ πω πάντων ἐπὶ πείρατ' ἀέθλων

ἦλθομεν, ἀλλ' ἐτ' ὀπίσθεν ἀμέτρητος πόνος ἔσται,

πολλὸς καὶ χαλεπός, τὸν ἐμὲ χρὴ πάντα τελέσσαι.

We have not reached the end of our struggles. Τελέσσαι refers to the completion of these struggles. In γ 433 sqq.:

ἦλθε δὲ χαλκεὺς

ὅπλ' ἐν χερσὶν ἔχων χαλκῆϊα, πείρατα τέχνης,

ἄκμονά τε σφυρὰν τ' εὐποίητόν τε πυράγρην

οἷσιν τε χρυσὸν ἐργάζετο.

These precious instruments (ὅπλα) are of consummate art (πείρατα τέχνης), they represent the limits of art, they are state-of-art achievements in tool-construction.

In μ 347, ταῦτα μὲν οὕτω πάντα πεπείραται means these things have been thus consummated, they are done, have been determined and settled and lie in the past, they are concluded in this way.

Nestor gives detailed advice regarding the secrets of the chariot-race art to his son Antilochus (O 306-48). Having done with it (O 349-50):

ὦς εἰπὼν Νέστωρ Νηληϊῆος ἄψ' ἐνὶ χώρῃ

ἔζετ', ἐπεὶ ὦ παιδὶ ἐκάστου πείρατ' εἶπεν.

He told his son the definitive factor of each thing pertaining to the chariot-race he is going to enter, the essential point, he gives him consummate knowledge of all important matters relating thereto.

The bond which makes a thing to exist in a particular way and to be characterised in a particular way, is the consummate character of that way, a determining factor, and in a worldview of departmentalization, a delimiting parameter, a limit, hence also a boundary, that binds something in a particular way. Such limiting boundary is the Ocean for the Earth. And so Ξ 200-1:

ἔϊμι γὰρ ὁσομένη πολυφόρβου πείρατα γαίης,

Ὀκεανόν τε, θεῶν γένεσιν, καὶ μητέρα Τηθύν

(repeated formulaically – with ἔρχομαι for ἔϊμι γὰρ – in Ξ 301-2). The boundary of Earth are Ocean and Tethys, who encircle and limit Earth.

Similarly, the nethermost limits, boundary, ends of Earth and Sea, is the dark place, where no Sun shines, no breezes blow, but deep Tartarus yawns; Θ 478-81:

οὐδ' εἰ κε τὰ νείατα πείραθ' ἴκηαι

γαίης καὶ πόντοιο, ἴν' Ἰαπετός τε Κρόνος τε

ἥμενοι οὐτ' αὐγῆς Ὑπερίονος ἡελίοιο

τέρποντ' οὐτ' ἀνέμοισι, βαθὺς δέ τε Τάρταρος ἀμφίς.

In the Νέκυια, Odysseus' ship after traveling through the sea reaches the limit, the bounding line constituted by the Ocean, goes to the boundary (of the Earth) which is the Ocean. So we should rather construe λ 13:

ἦ δ' εἰς πείραθ' ἴκανε βαθυρρόου Ὀκεανοῖο.

(Rather than understanding an outer bank of Ocean. In κ 508 δι' Ὀκεανοῖο περήξης means go, travel through the Ocean, along the Oceanic stream, not across the Ocean to its side beyond). There, by the boundary of Earth, is Hades, just as we hear described in δ 561 sqq.:

σοὶ δ' οὐ θέσφατόν ἐστι, διωστρεφὲς ὦ Μενέλαε,

Ἄργει ἐν ἵποβότῳ θανέειν καὶ πότμον ἐπισπεῖν,

ἀλλὰ σ' ἐς Ἠλύσιον πεδῖον καὶ πείρατα γαίης

ἀθάνατοι πέμπουσιν, ὅθι ξανθὸς Ραδάμανθους,

.....

ἀλλ' αἰεὶ Ζεφύροιο λιγὺ πνείοντος ἀήτας

Ὠκεανὸς ἀνίησιν ἀναψύχειν ἄνθρωπους etc.

(Contrast Θ 478-81 above quoted). The Elysian fields are the positive image of Hades and located in the same general area of the West, by the Ocean.

Μοῖρα and Πείραρ, and the world-view that went with them, passed over as underlying basic assumptions from pre-philosophical to philosophical thought. To determine is to specify is to circumscribe is to delimit is to delineate is to bound is to exclude is to close open availabilities of existence. World-order is a universal, but not complete, determination; a nexus of apportionments. Order is a question of distribution of distinct and distinctive shares; is making of an undifferentiated totality a whole of parts. Order is a departmentalization of reality. To be is to be a well-defined part with an identity that is manifested as separateness and individuality, general or particular. Existence is the outcome of a successful struggle to come out of the undifferentiated as a distinct, and thus specific, determination which stands out against other such determinations. At the limit, this departmentalization as multiple otherness requires opposition. The undifferentiated totality gives the Ur-substance of Ionian speculation, characteristically expressed in the Anaximandean ἄπειρον. The secretion of the basic contraries out of it explains the polarized departmentalization of reality. In Pythagoreanism, being is the outcome of a delimitation of indeterminacy. The polarity of existence is constitutive and constitutional. And as one is at the beginning of philosophical speculation close to the concrete experience of reality and to the spatial dimension of things, the limit (πέρας) that defines existence out of infinity and unboundedness (ἀπειρία), is emphatically conceived also (at some point near the beginning of the development of Pythagorean theory) as boundary in the geometrical construction of things. As Aristotle pointedly says (58B 23 DK = Metaphysica Z 1028b16 sqq.): δοκεῖ δὲ τισι τὰ τοῦ σώματος πέρατα, οἷον ἐπιφάνεια καὶ γραμμὴ καὶ στιγμή καὶ μονάς, εἶναι οὐσίαι, καὶ μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὸ στερεόν. That he had principally Pythagoreanism in mind can be shown from other corresponding testimonies. But the Pythagoreanism of Plato and the Old Academy falls into the same category. One may be reminded of the Timaeon elementary triangles and regular solids.

With Μοῖρα and Πείραρ, with determination in general whether as law of order and universal nexus of reality or as specification of the particular parts of it, is bound necessity. Order is a system of bondage: for the individual part to be able to manifest and maintain its separate existence, the principle of distribution, the departmentalization of reality must be preserved intact. Encroaching upon the distinct jurisdictions of the several things in the apportionment of reality according to the orderly distribution and arrangement of its parts, implies a tendency to undermine the cosmic order, that is the very individualization of existence, a tendency to recur to the aboriginal chaos of undifferentiated totality. No real danger lies of this: encroachment is corrected by opposite encroachment (bound to be generated given the character of the order of things), as Anaximander's law assures us: and this holds good both as to transgressions by parts on parts, and as transgression of part against the undifferentiated totality from which all individuality graduationally sprang. But it is significant that there is an inherent tension in existence: the force of individuation (the power of an individual-part) is based on a bond of determination.

Being is in bondage, even if in the bondage of order which is constitutive of its very existence.

And this is so for the absolute being no less than for the particular beings. The Parmenidean basic insight is that being is in such grip of being that nothing can divide it from itself according to some order-generating distribution, whether in a process of dispersion or of integration; B4.2-4:

οὐ γὰρ ἀποτμήξει τὸ ἔὸν τοῦ ἑόντος ἔχεσθαι

οὔτε σκιδνάμενον πάντῃ πάντως κατὰ κόσμον

οὔτε συνιστάμενον.

Justice keeps being in rigid shackles, so that it cannot come to be or pass away; B8.13-5:

τοῦ εἶνεκεν οὔτε γενέσθαι

οὐτ' ὀλλυσθαι ἀνῆκε Δίκη χαλάσασα πέδησιν,

ἄλλ' ἔχει.

Being stands unmovable, without beginning and end, in the bond of Great Chains; B8.26-7:

αὐτὰρ ἀκίνητον μεγάλων ἐν πείρασι δεσμῶν

ἔστιν ἀναρχὸν ἀπαυστον etc.

Mighty Necessity holds it fast in the Chains of Limit, which Limit shuts it in on all sides, roundabout; B8.30-1:

κρατερὴ γὰρ Ἀνάγκη

πείρατος ἐν δεσμοῖσιν ἔχει, τὸ μιν ἀμφὶς ἔεργει.

[For ἀμφὶς ἔεργει cf. N 706: τὸ μὲν τε ζυγὸν οἷον εὐξοὸν ἀμφὶς ἔεργει]. πείρατος ἐν δεσμοῖσιν here is equivalent to ἐν πείρασι δεσμῶν a few lines above: limit and bond go together.

Fate bound being to be a whole and immovable; B8.37-8:

ἐπεὶ τὸ γε Μοῖρ' ἐπέδησεν

οὔλον ἀκίνητόν τ' ἔμεναι.

There is an outermost limit to it, that keeps it compact within in absolute separation from non-being (this last phrase is, of course, a way of speaking on my part; Parmenides draws from this absolute delimitation only positive characteristics for absolute being); B8.42-4

αὐτὰρ ἔπει πείρας πύματον, τετελεσμένον ἔστι

πάντοθεν, εὐκύκλου σφαίρης ἑναλίκιον ὄγκῳ,

μεσσόθεν ἰσοπαλὲς πάντῃ etc.

It lies in a homogeneous way within its limits, in its bond; B8.49:

οἷ γὰρ πάντοθεν ἴσον, ὁμῶς ἐν πείρασι κύρει.

Δίκη, Ἀνάγκη, Μοῖρα all come to the same: the inviolable law of being. Its instrument is πέρας. This is the delimiting bond that secures the existence of being, its non-dissolution into non-being.

It is characteristic that Parmenides employs basic conceptualisations of the pre-philosophical world-view where the fundamental pattern of that world-order is revoked: in absolute being we have precisely the cancellation of all division and apportionment and departmentalization of reality. Necessary for absolute being is what belongs to it – as if there were something else that did not belong to it, but to something else. But then, this “as if” explains the world of δόξα, however this explanation is to be ontologically construed. On the other hand, the same categories are employed by Parmenides in his understanding of the wholeness of this world of our perception; B10.5-7:

εἰδήσεις δὲ καὶ οὐρανὸν ἄμφις ἔχοντα

ἔνθεν [μὲν γάρ] ἔφυτε καὶ ὥς μιν ἄγουσ(α)

ἔπέδῃσεν Ἀνάγκη

πεῖρατ' ἔχειν ἀστρων.

Most importantly we find in this connection ἔφυ (and one line before φύσιν σελήνης; and four lines before that αἰθερίαν τε φύσιν, the emergence and growth of aether; cf. in v. 3 καὶ οἰππόθεν ἐξεγένοντο). The origin of moon or heaven, has to do with how these parts of the whole came to be out of the undifferentiated totality. Φύσις is μοῖρα in a new guise. It is a dispensation, allotment and apportionment which accounts for the particularity of things in the nexus of the world-order. . and Parmenides' bounded absolute plays much the same role in cosmogony and cosmology as Anaximander's unbounded.

Φύσις in Parmenides means the genesis of the articulation, the formation of the world-order in distinct parts with separate identities of character, place and role. Exactly what we would expect for a substitution-concept for μοῖρα. So 28B19.1-2:

οὕτω τοι κατὰ δόξαν ἔφυ τάδε καὶ νυν ἑάσι

καὶ μετέπειτ' ἀπὸ τοῦδε τελευτήσουσι τραφέντα.

There is no place of φύσις in true being; 28B8.9-10:

τί δ' ἂν μιν καὶ χρέος ὤρσεν

ὕστερον ἢ πρόσθεν, τοῦ μηδενὸς ἀρξάμενον, φύιν;

Φύσις like Μοῖρα is the principle of distribution of distinct parts, characters and roles to the separate things of the world-system. It is also, just like μοῖρα again, the several parts themselves into which the cosmic whole is divided with their separate jurisdictions. Φύσις and Μοῖρα represent the necessary cosmic order. As Philodemus (de Pietate, 12) maintained: Φύσιν καὶ Εἰμαρμένην καὶ Ανάγκην (sc. τὴν αὐτὴν εἶναι).

What has troubled modern interpretative approaches to the concept of φύσις, namely a felt disparity between the meaning “constitution, nature, character” and the meaning “generation, bringing forth, origination, growth”, is (as very often in similar cases) absent from the ancient Greek consciousness. Right from the attested beginning, in Homer, we meet with both senses. The former in κ 302 sqq.:

ὥς ἄρα φωνήσας πόρε φάρμακον ἀργειφόντης

ἔκ γαίης ἐρύσας, καὶ μοι φύσιν αὐτοῦ ἔδειξε.

ρίζη μὲν μέλαν ἔσκε, γάλακτι δὲ εἴκελον ἄνθος.

μῶλυ δέ μιν καλέουσι θεοί.

The latter in Z 145 sqq.:

Τυδείδῃ μεγάθυμῃ, τίη γενεὴν ἐρεΐνεις;

οἷη περ φύλλων γενεή, τοίη δὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν.

φύλλα τὰ μὲν τ' ἀνεμοὶ χαμάδις χέει, ἄλλα δέ θ' ὕλη

τηλεθώσα φύει, ἔαρος δ' ἐπιγίνεται ὥρη.

ὥς ἀνδρῶν γενεὴ ἣ μὲν φύει ἣ δ' ἀπολήγει.

(Cf. Homeric Hymn to Demeter 8: νάρκισσόν θ', ὃν φύσε δόλον καλυκώπιδι κούρη / Γαῖα. Hesiod, Theogony, 727-8: αὐτὰρ ὑπερθεν / γῆς ρίζαι πεφύασι καὶ ἀτρυγέτοιο θαλάσσης. 811-3: ἐνθα δὲ μαρμάρεαί τε πύλαι καὶ χάλκεος οὐδός, ἀστεμφές ρίζησι διηνεκέεσσιν ἀρηρώς, / αὐτοφυής, i.e. natural, not artificial, made, originated by itself. And so Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 663: πλὴν τοῦ τρέφοντος Ἡλίου χθονὸς φύσιν, where the φύσις χθονὸς is not the nature of earth, but the natures that come from her, the creatures that she brings forth. Cf. φυτόν).

The peculiar character of a thing is due to its origination. And its origination confers upon a thing its peculiar character of being. (As Aristotle puts it, *Politica* 1252b33: οἷόν ἐκαστόν ἐστι τῆς γενέσεως τελεσθείσης, ταύτην φαρμέν τὴν φύσιν εἶναι ἐκάστου. Cf. *Metaphysica* 1014b16: φύσις λέγεται ἡ τῶν φυομένων γένεσις). The natural development of a thing from its shooting forth in existence to its perfection and end, is like the unfolding of its destiny, the rolling out of the share that belongs to it from its birth. The distributive dispensation is that matters. The model for both μοῖρα and φύσις was presented by the seed growing according to its inner logic to become a fully developed entity of a given kind.

The order of things is a given, and a necessity, whether it was called μοῖρα or φύσις. The nexus of reality consists in a distribution of parts, in a dispensation which constitutes the fabric of the world. This dispensation cannot be dispensed with. It is inviolable – so far as it goes. The universe is not entirely and completely deterministic. Its lawfulness (the ordering principle of dispensation) is not absolute, nor is it mechanically rigid. The law is organic and it gives the fundamental framework of the cosmic fabric. Patterns are continually woven in it, and the specificity of these patterns is not given in advance. The system is open to the future, because the determinations of the cosmic order leave open further more particular determinations of the general determinations that the fate = nature of things consist in and entail. In fact, the openness of the system is meaningful because it is grounded on the firm rock of a presupposed closed dispensation. Total openness means total indeterminacy, chaos. And in a chaotic situation there are not parts – unless one imposes an external system of order as system of reference. It is clear how much the ancient consciousness abhorred indefiniteness (infinity), how much it liked boundaries, enclosed forms, limits, πέρας. What is not well understood, or appreciated, is the fact that strong boundaries make for strong individuation. Individual identity requires the closure of indeterminacy that makes from the Unbounded a definite part – against all else. This constitutive limitation involves in the nature of the case a bundle of further possibilities of determination. This is the pool of potential that goes with every closed determination, and on which the individual defined by that determination draws in order to achieve its maximal self-realisation, i.e. the optimal complete determination that is available for it according to its general and particular nature. Without firm ground to stand, the individual thing can make no productive move, nor attain any significant end requiring huge concentration of energy.

The principle of additive determination means that the cosmic order is dynamic within its organic framework. The only thing settled completely is the part. The lines of demarcation dividing the individual-parts from each other may shift, expand or shrink as seen from the point of view of some individual. But according to Anaximander's law, if one individual thing pushes its limits further than it can effectively sustain, it is bound to cause the reaction of the things whose boundaries contact as a result of the former's expansion. And according to Heracleitus' law this tension fixes the position of the respective things (such as gods and men, free and slaves), position that is only defined within the unitary framework of the underlying polarity. In such sense, there is no real permanent transgression in the world. The boundaries of the cosmic dispensation are inviolable. But they are established and reestablished continually as time goes on. The complexity of the interactions involved makes it difficult in important cases to know where exactly the dividing line lies. The wise man, similarly to the god, possesses enhanced powers of seeing the patterns in the fabric woven by the fate = nature of things as activated by

the individual parts constituted by the unalterable basic framework of the universal picture woven. But success defines uncertain jurisdiction, and, in this sense, might defines right. Success renders a disputed point manifest by making it past. And so with might: it proves right as in a God's ordeal. It reveals God's judgement. And God in this case is Fate = Nature.

In order for this dynamic scheme of things to be worked out most efficiently in society, the stable framework within which human activity takes place should be simply and solely the one fixed by the determinations of Fate = Nature alone. Any subtraction from it is of course vain as impossible: 'Ανάγκη binds things so that it cannot be realised. But given the principle of additive supplementary determination, and also given frequent human ignorance of what the dispensation of Fate = Nature entails in fact, it is possible to overreach on the other side, that of excessive determination in the framework of human action. The problem to which High Classicism reacted agitatedly, and which it centralised in the φύσις – νόμος controversy, was that of overregulation in human systems. That is, the problem of the optimum degree of freedom in such a system.

In 6th century B.C., and in the Age of Tyrants, society was gradually liberated from many traditional weights that were encumbering human activity. Vast untapped pools of potential were freed from the constraints of the traditional frames institutional or valuational, and this made available enormous amounts of energy. This energy, when efficiently used, increased manifold the power-grade of Greek societies. It also ushered the era of philosophical thought, of science, of a transformed religiosity, of monetary economy, of ecumenization (the globalization of the times) in economic and intellectual activity. Eventually, the Age of Tyrants led to the Epoch of Democracy in the more developed states. Increasing social mobility weakened the hold of traditional groupings and furthered the release of individual ability from the institutional trappings of the past – a release that, instigated by the need of the times for leaps in productivity and high returns, set the stage for the emergence of mobility in the first place.

The intellectual expression of this general revolution in Greek society was the remarkable phenomenon of what we may term thorough Gnosticism, the awareness that everything is a question of knowledge – in morals, aesthetics, politics included. The wise man substituted the seer, the prophet, the mythologist and ritualist, the sage, the general, the statesman, even the artist. As to the underlying world-view of this universal Gnosticism, it remained basically the same with the pre-revolutionary one I sketched above; but an emphasis appeared on the tension and polarity of being and, thus, on the power factor (as in Heracleitus).

The final political expression of this general revolution in Greek society was the consolidation of democracy. And while one pillar of the new constitutional arrangement was freedom, the other was some form of equality or equivalence, most aptly concretised as ἰσονομία, a principle of equal distribution.

Νόμος originally, with νέμω, related to distribution as its basic sense. Νόμος initially represented the division of things as the principle of their order. It referred to the parcelling out of places, functions or roles, of provinces and jurisdictions. Νόμος is Μοῖρα, the obtaining division of reality, the distributive pattern of things; perhaps the connotation in νόμος leading to societal structures, while in μοῖρα to individual destinies. Νόμος, as Μοῖρα, has to do basically with

distribution, with apportionment, with division of shares, with departmentalization. So in Hesiod, Theogony, 74:

ἄθανάτοισι διέταξε (sc. Zeus) νόμους καὶ ἐπέφραδε τιμὰς.

He, after his victory, arranged the distribution of parts and apportioned honours to the Gods. The Muses sing (v. 66-7):

πάντων τε νόμους καὶ ἦθεα κεδνὰ

ἄθανάτων κλείουσιν,

the allotted credits and the glorious parts of the immortals (ἦθεα having originally a local signification, abodes, as νομοί). The νόμος πεδίων in Opera et Dies 388 refers to the sequence and manner of agricultural work, to pattern and distribution of parts. In ibid. 276 (to be quoted below) νόμος is an arrangement of human life, whereby man, under the tutelage of Δίκη, retrains from certain actions towards man irrespective of questions of might.

Νόμος does not occur in Homer (of Zenodotus' unhappy emendation in a 3 one need barely speak). In p 487 we have coupled:

ἄνθρωπων ὕβριν τε καὶ εὐνομίην ἐφορῶντες.

Just as ὕβρις implies transgression so εὐνομία is keeping with the proper limits, within the apportioned provinces of jurisdiction. Order for the Greek world view is fundamentally a question of partition and distribution. It consists in the pattern of the parts of reality, the rhythm of their several provinces and functions. Order is a certain arrangement, a certain way, of separation. And so Antiphon spoke of περὶ τῆς νῦν κρατούσης διαστάσεως ἂντὶ τοῦ διακοσμήσεως τῶν ὅλων. For the common formulation "orderly arrangement of the world" he substituted the term "separation", διάστασις, F23 Pendrick. For the aboriginal chaos, he used the term ἄδιάστατον (unseparated), meaning the not yet separated, segregated or distinguished (τὸ μήπω διεστηκὸς μηδὲ διακεκριμένον), F24. [As Pendrick remarked, it is noteworthy that Plutarch paraphrases Empedocle's διάλλαξις in 31B8.17 with διάστασις]. A building ἄδιάστατον is one not yet articulated in structure, i.e. unbuilt. Another of his terms to signify the cosmic order is διάθεσις, disposition, structuring (F24A). And διάθεσις is also a διοίκησις (F63; F14), administration, control, management, consists in a certain disposition of parts, a distribution of distinct "parts" (roles, functions) to parts (members) of a system. Notice the διά- common to διάστασις, διάθεσις, διάκρισις, διοίκησις.

Φύσις also, together with μοῖρα and νόμος, referred to this cardinal presupposition of order as partition and distribution. It defined a thing as a strong part on the cosmic scene; and by the combination in its meaning of the completed identity of the thing with its origin, it, like μοῖρα, suggested the preordained evolution of the part's (individual thing's) accomplished existence towards its allotted final end from its original generation. In φύσις the physical model of the seed developing to full thinghood satisfied also the metaphysical requirement for a necessity that bounds a thing in its essentials to the determination given at its origin as its own lot and share of

being. This 'Ανάγκη Φύσεως is Zeus is Fate; Euripides, Troades, 884 sqq.:

ὦ γῆς ὄχημα κάπῃ γῆς ἔχων ἔδραν

ὅστις ποτ' εἴ σύ, δυστόπαστος εἰδέναι,

Ζεὺς, εἴτ' ἀνάγκη φύσεως εἶτε νοῦς βροτῶν,

προσηυξάμην σε· πάντα γὰρ δι' ἀφόφου

βαίνων κελεύθου κατὰ δίκην τὰ θνήτ' ἄγεις.

(being, that is, equivalent to Fate).

[That it is Air that here is indicated to fulfill these functions is another story].

The objectively given order of things elicited from the Greek consciousness a positive response, a feeling of joy and satisfaction. Departmentalization (cf. the Greek city-states) and an unabated quest for (supreme) excellence fitted well with its make-up. Fierce antagonism enabled every part to play its role to the extreme of its capacity. Every individual part aspired to manifest its identity and to make the greatest possible difference in the world, given its own potential and conditioned only in practice by the similar aspirations of all other parts. In a world-view where order comes as μοῖρα, νόμος or φύσις the actuality of antagonism was the only empirical means (like Zeus' Scales) of establishing the obtaining dispensation in difficult particular cases, the actual disposition of several jurisdictions. This experience was philosophically encapsulated in Heracleitus' dictum, 22B53: πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε, τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους. [B80: εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεῶν. The antagonism by means of which the cosmic order is accurately established is universal (ξυνός). Justice is this strife and its result. Everything that takes place, comes into being through such judicious strife according to necessity. The boundaries are however in reality inviolable; B94: Ἥλιος γὰρ οὐχ ὑπερβήσεται μέτρα· εἰ δὲ μή, Ἐρινύες μιν Δίκης ἐπίκουροι ἐξευρήσουσιν. Justice holds sway because of the Law of Talion, as envisaged by Anaximander]. And ensconsed in Pindar's majestic verses (Fr. 169):

Νόμος ο' πάντων βασιλεύς

θνατῶν τε καὶ ἀθανάτων

ἄγει δικαίων τὸ βιαιότατον

ὑπερτάτῃ χειρί. τεκμαίρομαι

ἔργοισιν Ἡρακλέους etc.

And provocatively proclaimed by the Athenian ambassadors to the Melians, Thucydides V 105:

ηγούμεθα γὰρ τό τε θεῖον δόξη τὸ ἀνθρώπειον τε σαφῶς διὰ παντὸς ὑπὸ φύσεως ἀναγκαίης οὐκ ἂν κρατῇ, ἄρχειν. καὶ ἡμεῖς οὔτε θέντες τὸν νόμον οὔτε κειμένῳ πρῶτοι χρησάμενοι, ὄντα δὲ παραλαβόντες καὶ ἐσόμενον ἐς αἰὲ καταλείποντες, χρώμεθα αὐτῷ etc. On such formulations and views capitalised Plato, when in the *Gorgias* makes Callicles maintain (483c-484a): ἡ δὲ γε οἶμαι φύσις αὐτὴ ἀποφαίνει αὐτὸ ὅτι δίκαιόν ἐστιν, τὸν ἀμείνω τοῦ χείρονος πλεονέχειν καὶ τὸν δυνατώτερον τοῦ ἀδυνατωτέρου... ἀλλ' οἶμαι οὗτοι κατὰ φύσιν τὴν τοῦ δικαίου ταῦτα πράττουσι (expansionist acts), καὶ ναὶ μὰ Δία κατὰ νόμον γε τὸν τῆς φύσεως, οὐ μέντοι ἴσως κατὰ τοῦτον ὃν ἡμεῖς τιθέμεθα... ὡς τὸ ἴσον χρή ἔχειν καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ δίκαιον.

In the latter two cases we see problems and distinctions and oppositions that were absent formerly. The (necessary) nature of things and its law is contrasted to law posited by us. Otherwise at the beginning of the controversy. Heracleitus 22B114: ξὺν νόῳ λέγοντες ἰσχυρίζεσθαι χρὴ τῷ ξυνῷ πάντων, ὅκωσπερ νόμῳ πόλις, καὶ πολὺ ἰσχυροτέρως. τρέφονται γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἀνθρώπειοι νόμοι ὑπὸ ἐνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ· κρατεῖ γὰρ τοσοῦτον ὁ κόσμος ἐθέλει καὶ ἐξαρκεῖ πᾶσι καὶ περιγίνεται. Positive laws come from the divine law of cosmic order; seeming disparities are failures of human cognition. For the divine law ordains what it wills as much as it wills. We in our ignorance may take apparent transgressions of the divine law of cosmic order as violations, whereas they are means of finding out the true demarcation lines in the World's partition. What came in between so that views could move from this to the Aristophanic burlesque in the *Clouds*, 247-9:

Socrates. ποίους θεοὺς ὁμεῖ σύ; πρῶτον γὰρ θεοὶ

ἡμῖν νόμισμ' οὐκ ἔστι.

Strepsiadis. τῷ γὰρ ὁμνυτε;

ἢ σιδαρέοισιν, ὥσπερ ἐν Βυζαντίῳ;

And 1421 sqq.:

Pheidippides. οὐκ οὐκ ἀνὴρ σ' τὸν νόμος θεὸς τοῦτον ἦν τὸ πρῶτον,

ὥσπερ σὺ κάγῳ, καὶ λέγων ἐπειθε τοὺς παλαιούς;

ἥττον τι δῆτ' ἔξεστι κάμοι καινὸν αὖ τὸ λοιπὸν

θεῖναι νόμον τοῖς υἱέσιν, τοὺς πατέρας ἀντιτύπτειν;

...

σκέψαι δὲ τοὺς ἀλεκτρυόνας καὶ τάλλα τὰ βοτὰ ταυτί,

ὡς τοὺς πατέρας ἀμύνεται· καίτοι τί διαφέρουσιν

ἡμῶν ἑκεῖνοι, πλήν γ' ὅτι ψηφίσματ' οὐ γράφουσιν;

The appeal to what happens (by nature?) to other categories of living beings in support of legal relativism is of course a non-sequitur. It was made by Hesiod to virtually the opposite end. Here in Hesiod is the oldest occurrence of νόμος, Opera et Dies, 275-80:

καί νυ Δίκης ἐπάκουε, βίης δ' ἐπιλήθεο πάμπαν.

τόνδε γὰρ ἄνθρωποισι νόμον διέταξε Κρονίων,

ἰχθύσι μὲν καὶ θηροῖ καὶ ὀϊωνοῖς πετεηνοῖς

ἔσθειν ἀλλήλους, ἐπεὶ οὐ δίκη ἐστὶ μετ' αὐτοῖς.

ἄνθρωποισι δ' ἔδωκε δίκην, ἥ πολλὸν ἀρίστη

γίνεται.

In Heracleitus human (posited) laws come from the divine law of cosmic order in whatever degree of approximation they stand to their nursing master, just as νοῦς and λόγος in individual men comes from the cosmic principle even if refracted in different ways by the idiocy (subjectivity) of the human thinkers. But in the course of the 5th century, so much increasing weight of regulation has been encumbering human activity, that a reaction set in. That was not a conservative reaction; or if it were, it was neoconservative. The target was overregulation, too much institutional, structural, directive and protective weight on the freedom of human activity. Something of the spirit of liberty as against the manifold constraints superadded on the natural constants is evinced by the later Philemo, Fr. 96 PCGr.:

ὦ τρισμακάρια πάντα καὶ τρισόλβια

τὰ θηρί', οἷς οὐκ ἐστὶ περὶ τούτων λόγος.

οὐτ' εἰς ἐλεγχον οὐδὲν αὐτῶν ἔρχεται,

οὐτ' ἄλλο τοιοῦτ' οὐδὲν ἐστ' αὐτοῖς κακὸν

ἐπακτόν, ἣν δ' ἂν εἰσενέγκηται φύσιν

ἕκαστον, εὐθύς καὶ νόμον ταύτην ἔχει.

ἡμεῖς δ' ἀβίωτον ζῶμεν ἄνθρωποι βίον.

δουλεύομεν δόξαισιν, εὐρόντες νόμους,

προγόνοισιν, ἐγγόνοισιν, οὐκ ἐστ' ἀποτυχεῖν

κακοῦ, πρόφασιν δ' αἰ τιν' ἐξευρίσκομεν.

Blessed is the condition where νόμος coincides with φύσις. The dispensation for every thing is its original nature, by which it enters the theater of existence. In such a state there is no adventitious harm, beyond what is ordained in the nature of things. But from that blissful state we have fallen, constraining our natural freedom in carrying out to the maximum degree our inherent potential of realization, by unnatural bondages, becoming slaves to matters external to our happiness instituted by positive laws of our device (εὐρόντες νόμους contrasted to ἥν εἰσενέγκηται φύσιν ἕκαστον). Our discoveries (εὐρέσεις) are suspect.

Positive overregulation, restraining freedom beyond the confines of nature (beyond the distribution of provinces and jurisdictions according to divine (fatal) and natural law) is an artificial construct. Antiphon emphasized and elaborated this aspect with his theory of the nature of things. The true nature of a thing is its intrinsic substance, not the external formation or shaping of it. The substance of a thing is that which remains if any externally imposed pattern on it is removed, as with the demolition of the thing. In fact, the substance cannot be taken away from the thing, nor can it change in its proper character. Antiphon clarified his view by a concrete thought experiment. Should a bed be put into the earth, and were the wood to become living and organic again with the power to generate offspring, it would not bring up a bed but wood. So the bed-formation of the bed is not its effective substance and nature – only the underlying wood is. To what is ingrained in the nature (= substance) of a thing, a pattern or rhythm may be externally imposed. This imposition is accidental: it may come and leave without any effect on the substance of the thing and its essential character. The “substrate”, the substance of the thing is, therefore, ἀρρυθμιστον, rhythm-less (which seems to have been Antiphon’s term). As Aristotle explained (F15(b) Pendrick): δοκεῖ δ' ἡ φύσις καὶ ἡ οὐσία τῶν φύσει ὄντων ἐνίοις εἶναι τὸ πρῶτον ἐνυπάρχον ἑκάστῳ, ἀρρυθμιστον <ὄν>καθ' ἑαυτό, οἷον κλίνης φύσις τὸ ξύλον, ἀνδριάντος δ' ὁ χαλκός. σημεῖον δὲ φησιν Ἀντιφῶν ὅτι, εἰ τις κατορύξειε κλίνην καὶ λάβοι δύναμιν ἢ σηπεδὼν ὥστε ἀνεῖναι βλαστόν, οὐκ ἂν γενέσθαι κλίνην ἀλλὰ ξύλον, ὥς τὸ μὲν κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς ὑπάρχον, τὴν κατὰ νόμον διάθεσιν καὶ τὴν τέχνην, τὴν δ' οὐσίαν οὕσαν ἐκείνην ἣ καὶ διαμένει ταῦτα πάσχουσα συνεχῶς. The examples should not blind us as to the implication of the doctrine, which is explicitly meant to cover some things that come to be by nature (τῶν φύσει ὄντων ἐνίοις). The adventitious imposition of form may stem from τέχνη, but the adjunct ἡ κατὰ νόμον διάθεσις suggests artificial formations on man’s substance by means of posited laws. Antiphon’s major point would be that there can be artificiality in things natural, just as wood can be made into bed (given the shape of bed) by means of the carpenter’s art. Substance is changeless (ibid. Il. 17 sqq.): (this underlying substrate is true substance) τὰ δὲ ἄλλα πάντα πάθη τούτων καὶ ἔξεις καὶ διαθέσεις, καὶ τούτων μὲν ὅτιοῦν αἰδίων (οὐ γὰρ εἶναι μεταβολὴν αὐτοῖς ἐξ αὐτῶν), τὰ δ' ἄλλα γίγνεσθαι καὶ φθείρεσθαι ἀπειράκις. So ibid. Il. 25 sqq. (from *Metaphysica*): ἐτι δὲ φύσις λέγεται ἐξ οὗ πρῶτου ἢ ἐστίν ἢ γίγνεται τι τῶν φύσει ὄντων, ἀρρυθμίστου ὄντος καὶ ἀμεταβλήτου ἐκ τῆς δυνάμεως τῆς αὐτοῦ etc. Cf. F15 (d). 7 sqq.: ὥς τοῦτο μὲν (sc. the bed) κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς ὑπάρχον αὐτῷ (sc. τῷ ξύλῳ), τὴν κατὰ ρυθμὸν διάθεσιν· ρυθμὸν γὰρ καλεῖ τὴν μορφήν, τὴν δὲ οὐσίαν ἐκείνην οὕσαν, ἣ διαμένει ταῦτα πάσχουσα συνεχῶς. What is according to custom and (posited) law, being conventional and transient, is contrasted to natural growth and development; F15(f) 9 sqq.: (the shape and form is) κατὰ τρόπον καὶ κατὰ νόμον, τουτέστι κατὰ τὸ ταῖς τέχναις νενομισμένον καὶ πρὸς τὸ κατὰ φύσιν ἀντιδιαστελλόμενον, ὥς κατὰ

συνθήκην' ὃν κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς ὑπάρχον γίνεται καὶ ἀπογίνεται, ἡ δὲ ὕλη παραμένει, διότι οὐσία καὶ φύσις ἔστιν αὕτη τοῦ πράγματος. οὐσίας γὰρ ἴδιον τὸ ἐπιμένειν. τῶν δὲ φυσικῶν κατὰ τὴν φύσιν ἡ οὐσία etc.

[Diogenes of Apollonia utilised this argument to arrive at the hypothesis of one ultimate common substance of all reality (in the way of Ionian philosophy), given the transformability mediately or directly of everything into everything in the World. 64B2].

Accordingly, we find in the extant fragments of Antipon's *Περὶ Ἀληθείας* an emphasis on the following crucial points agreeably to what has been analysed above:

1) The many positive human laws are a matter of convention and refer to arrangements adventitious; whereas what is of the nature is born (objectively given) and necessary. F44(a) I 23 – II 1: τὰ μὲν γὰρ τῶν νόμων [ἐπίθ]ετα, τὰ δὲ [τῆς] φύσεως ἀ[ναγ]καῖα· καὶ τὰ [μὲν] τῶν νό[μω]ν ὁμολογη[θέντ]α οὐ φύν[τα] ἔστιν, τὰ δὲ [τῆς φύσ]εως φύν[τα] οὐχ[ὲν] ὁμολογηθ[έ]ντα. Proof of this is readily available if one considers that there is no shame nor harm in transgressing the laws, provided that one escapes detection; while trying to do violence beyond what is possible to any of the things born with nature one suffers harm irrespective of whether he is noticed in so doing or not: for he is harmed in truth, and not merely in opinion. Ibid. II 3-23. V. esp. v. 10 sqq.: τῶν δὲ τῇ φύσει ξυμφύτων ἑάν τι παρὰ τὸ δυνατόν βιάζηται, ἑάν τε πάντας ἀνθρώπους λάθῃ, οὐδὲν ἔλαττον τὸ κακόν, ἑάν τε πάντες ἴδωσιν, οὐδὲν μείζον· οὐ γὰρ διὰ δόξαν βλάπτεται, ἀλλὰ δι' ἀλήθειαν. Observe that one cannot really violate nature's law; he tries to do violence, and this is sufficient to entangle him in harm and misery. The same as with Fate.

2) There is excessive overregulation. II 30 – III 18: νενο[μο]θ[έ]τῃται γὰρ [ἐ]πί τε τοῖς ὀφ[θ]αλμοῖς, ἃ δεῖ αὐτοῦ[ς] ὁρᾶν καὶ ἃ οὐ [δε]ῖ· καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ὠσίν, ἃ δεῖ αὐτὰ ἀκούειν καὶ ἃ οὐ δεῖ· καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ γλώττῃ, ἃ τ[ε] δεῖ αὐτὴν λέγειν καὶ ἃ οὐ δεῖ· καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ποσίν, ἑφ' ἃ τε δεῖ αὐτοῦς ἰέναι καὶ ἑφ' ἃ οὐ δεῖ· καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ νῶ ὧν τε δεῖ αὐτὸν ἐπιθυμεῖν καὶ ὧν μὴ.

3) The dispositions constituting human laws (i.e. what arrangements or distributions they enjoin and what they prohibit) are mostly hostile to the nature, and the natural order, of things. ii, 23-30: ἔστι δὲ πάντων ἑνεκα τούτων ἡ σκέψις, ὅτι τὰ πολλὰ τῶν κατὰ νόμον δικαίων πολεμίως τῇ φύσει κεῖται. iii, 18-25: [ἔστι]ν οὖν οὐδὲν τ[ῇ] φύσει φιλιώτ[ερ]α οὐδ' οἰκειότε[ρα] ἢ ἑφ' ὧν οἱ νόμοι[α] ποτ[ρ]έπουσι τ[οὺς] ἀν[θ]ρώπ[ους] ἢ ἑφ' ἃ [προτρέ]πουσιν. That is for the most part both injunctions and prohibitions in the laws are equally inimical to nature.

4) We shall see that laws are inimical to nature because they constitute bonds on it, constraining conditions on its free development, and artificial conditions at that. Yet once established, laws do have a bearing on nature, and on the mightier questions pertaining to nature, namely life (existence) and death (annihilation). For life comes from things beneficial, dying from things disadvantageous. iii, 25 – iv, 1: τ[ὸ] δὲ ζῆν [ἐ]στι τῆς φύσεως κ[αὶ] τ[ὸ] ἀποθαν[εῖν]· καὶ τὸ μὲν [ζ]ῆν αὐτ[ῇ] ἔστιν ἀπὸ τῶν ξυμ[φερό]ντων, τὸ δὲ ἀ[ποθανεῖν] ἀπὸ τῶν μὴ ξυμ[φερό]ντων. Now beneficial things are of two basically distinct kinds: one group comes from the laws, the other from nature. The advantage of the former kind proceeds from a

bondage on nature, while that of the latter stems from the free exercise of nature. iv, 1-7: [τὰ] δὲ ξυμφέρ[ντα] τὰ μὲν ὑπ[ὸ τῶν] νόμων κε[ί]μενα δεσμ[οῖ] τῆς φύσεως ἐ[στι], τὰ δ' ὑπὸ τῆς φύσεως ἐλευθέρα. Now real benefits to nature cannot in truth pain it rather than gladden it. So that things that cause pain cannot be more advantageous than things that cause pleasure. iv, 7-17: [οὐ]κουν τὰ ἀλγύνοντα ὀρθῶ γε λόγῳ ὀνίνησιν τῇ[ν] φύσιν μᾶλλον ἢ τὰ εὐφραίνοντα· οὐκουν [ἀ]ν οὐδὲ ξυμφέροντ' εἰ τὰ λυποῦ[ντα] μᾶλλον ἢ τ[ὰ] ἡδοντ[α]. For things advantageous in truth, must benefit and not harm. iv, 17-22: τὰ γὰρ τῷ ἀλη[θε]ῖ ξυμφέρ[οντ]α οὐ βλάπτει[ν] δεῖ ἀλλ' ὥφ[ελ]εῖν. We thus complement the analysis in point (1) above: just as attempting to disobey nature harms one essentially, while transgressing the laws is harmful only if one is caught in the act, and if not, it can prove beneficial; so obeying nature is truly beneficial, whereas following laws is harmful as restrictive of the freedom of the thing. Laws restrict and constrain the freedom of the nature to manifest itself. Pleasure and pain are the indexes of how free and how bound (respectively) nature is according to a given disposition of order (cf. V. 13-24).

The experience of the High Classical Era revealed the predicament of Democracy. What in its origin and first development represents the liberation from norms and rules and structures and institutions that unduly restrict natural freedom; tends in the sequel to be transformed into a machine of creating excessive order. Order, like the Principle of Πέρας (on which it is grounded), represents the bondage of a given determination, disposition, arrangement. And just as there may exist a deficiency of ordering determination, a condition that leaves the system (under consideration in each case) insufficiently departmentalized, articulate, i.e. confused and chaotic; so there can be (and the classical mind became acutely conscious of it by means of its own extreme rationality) an overdose of ordering determination, something that deadens the system with the weight of excessive bondage, and it makes it hence underefficient. The deficiency of order reduces the efficiency of the system by underdetermination: too much energy is spent unproductively in a chaotic condition. The excess of order reduces the efficiency of the system by overdetermination: too much energy (of the little produced) is consumed in internal friction, in maintaining the constraints involved in the abnormal burden of order. There is an optimum degree of order – and consequently of freedom in any given system. That is the order of the fate or of the nature. in fact it is not the important question what or who is the issuer and guarantor of order. It may be the Fate and its inexorability. Or the Gods and their immutable will. Or long established customs proven in time for their optimal articulation of the human framework. [Hesiod Fr. 322: ...νόμος δ' ἀρχαῖος ἀριστος. Euripides Bacchae, 895-6: τότε' ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ νόμιμον / αἰεὶ φύσει τε πεφυκός]. Or a human decree positing the natural articulation of things. The crucial issue is whether the disposition “ordered” (in both senses) by some cosmic potency is the right one (the fated, the natural, the willed) or not. And the right one is objectively determined.

There is the danger of a hybris of order brought sharply to the consciousness of the high classical mind. And hence stems the intense controversy expressed as one between φύσις and νόμος. On the one side is the sense of appropriate order. On the other, the fear of the conventional, artificial, unfree. At issue is the freedom of nature as against the arbitrariness of the artificial. The key opposition is not that between nature and convention, but the one between the natural and the artificial, as we have observed in Antiphon, between freedom and servitude. For the classical spirit, freedom went with nature, slavery with artificiality.

The order of existence is a dispensation of parts in a whole. The principle of distribution, of partition is the ground of order. Thus we appreciate the astounding importance in ancient Greek thought of the problem of distribution. ἰσονομία (equality in distribution) was the central rallying cry of Democracy. At first it acted liberatingly, freeing human activity from the old patterns which could not any more help it in the new realms that it took upon itself to fathom and arrange. But soon, the political expression of the quest for greater freedom (namely Democracy) clashed with the maintenance of a high degree of freedom in human activity in general, cultural and economic preeminently. This is the eternal predicament of Democracy. In effect, the principle of equality begins after a while to collide with the associated principles of excellence and of freedom. Many of the “oligarchs” of late fifth century in Athens were upholders of freedom and excellence in a political scene dominated by the offshoots of Equality (i.e. artificiality and overregulation), that political Democracy was cultivating.

So the battle was fought largely around the idea of Equality. The neoconservative “Oligarchs” countered democratic arithmetical equality, by their own geometric or proportional equality. The archetype of this opposition appears in the theories of distribution. Excellence and Freedom required distribution according (proportionally to) merit. Callicles himself seems appeased (a mildest man) after Socrates explains his opposition to the doctrine of “might means right” that maddened Callicles before. The turning point of the argument (and of Callicles’ attitude and behaviour) occurs at Gorgias, 507d-508a: οὗτος ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ ὁ σκοπὸς εἶναι πρὸς ὃν βλέποντα δεῖ ζῆν, καὶ πάντα εἰς τοῦτο τὰ αὐτοῦ συντείνοντα καὶ τὰ τῆς πόλεως, ὅπως δικαιοσύνη παρέσται καὶ σωφροσύνη τῷ μακαρίῳ μέλλοντι ἔσεσθαι, οὕτω πράττειν, οὐκ ἐπιθυμίας ἐῶντα ἀκολάστους εἶναι καὶ ταύτας ἐπιχειροῦντα πληροῦν, ἀνήνυτον κακόν, ληστοῦ βίον ζῶντα. οὔτε γὰρ ἀν’ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπῳ προσφιλεῖς ἂν εἴη ὁ τοιοῦτος οὔτε θεῶ· κοινωνεῖν γὰρ ἀδύνατος, ὅτῳ δὲ μὴ ἐνὶ κοινωνίᾳ, φιλία οὐκ ἂν εἴη. φασὶ δ’ οἱ σοφοί, ὧς Καλλίκλεις, καὶ οὐρανὸν καὶ γῆς καὶ θεοὺς καὶ ἀνθρώπους τὴν κοινωνίαν συνέχειν καὶ φιλίαν καὶ κοσμιότητα καὶ σωφροσύνην καὶ δικαιοσύνην, καὶ τὸ ὅλον τοῦτο διὰ ταῦτα κόσμον καλοῦσιν, ὧς εἰταῖρε, οὐκ ἀκοσμίαν οὐδ’ ἀκολασίαν. σὺ δὲ μοι δοικεῖς οὐ προσέχειν τὸν νοῦν τούτοις, καὶ ταῦτα σοφὸς ὢν, ἀλλὰ λέληθέν σε ὅτι ἡ ἰσότης ἡ γεωμετρικὴ καὶ ἐν θεοῖς καὶ ἐν ἀνθρώποις μέγα δύναται, σὺ δὲ πλεονεξίαν οἶμι δεῖν ἀσκεῖν· γεωμετρίας γὰρ ἀμελεῖς. Between numerical equality and disorderly aggrandizement comes geometrical equality, i.e. proportional distributive equality according to merit.

How much at difference are Antiphon’s theory, the Pythagorean-Platonic doctrine of proportional distribution and Pericles’ description of (ideal) Athenian Democracy in his Funeral Oration? Thucydides II 37: καὶ ὄνομα μὲν (of our polity) διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐν ὀλίγοις ἀλλ’ εἰς πλείονας οἰκεῖν δημοκρατία κέκληται, μέτεστι δὲ κατὰ μὲν τοὺς νόμους πρὸς τὰ ἴδια διάφορα πᾶσι τὸ ἴσον, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἀξίωσιν, ὡς ἕκαστος ἐν τῷ εὐδοκιμεῖ, οὐκ ἀπὸ μέρους τὸ πλεονέξει τὰ κοινὰ ἢ ἀπ’ ἀρετῆς προτιμᾶται, οὐδ’ αὖ κατὰ πένιν, ἔχων δὲ τι ἀγαθὸν δρᾶσαι τὴν πόλιν, ἀξιωματὸς ἀφανείᾳ κεκώλυται. Equality is restricted to private issues. In the public sphere the preference is given according to the principle of excellence (ἀπ’ ἀρετῆς, ὡς ἕκαστος ἐν τῷ εὐδοκιμεῖ, κατὰ τὴν ἀξίωσιν), merit having the precedence over rank and wealth as being more useful to the society and the state. Nothing of what is normally associated with (particularly extreme) Democracy meets us here in this eternal eulogy of Athenian glory and her system.

* When the case by contrast is straightforward, and a threatened cancellation of the fated order in a particular event does not stem from any perplexity arising from its complexity, but relates to God's dislike as to a particular outcome, the cancellation does not in the end materialize. Zeus is moved to intervene in favour of his beloved son Sarpedon at the time of his envisaged doom; Π 433 sqq.:

ὦ μοι ἐγών, ὅτε μοι Σαρπηδόνα φίλτατον ἀνδρῶν

μοῖρ' ὑπὸ Πατρόκλοιο Μενoitιάδαο δαμῆναι.

διχθὰ δέ μοι κραδίη μέμονε φρεσὶν ὀρμαίνοντι,

ἢ μιν ζῶν' ἐόντα μάχης' ἀπο δακρυοέσεως

θείω ἀναρπάξας Λυκίης ἐν πίονι δήμῳ,

ἢ ἤδη ὑπὸ χερσὶ Μενoitιάδαο δαμάσσω.

(Note that the agency is double, Zeus' own and Patroclus' as well). He hesitates despite his strong inclination to save Sarpedon. But such an intervention requires the collective concurring will of the divine assembly. Hera responds to Zeus' query in the same way as Athena does in the similar case involving Hector's doom (to be cited below). It is not in order to loosen the grip of death at the fated time from a mortal bound to his death upon his very birth; the other gods do not concur. She adds a mighty point of disutility: if Zeus acts on this occasion in that way, another god would also want to interfere following his wishes; 444 sqq.:

ἄλλο δέ το' ἐρέω, σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλω σῆσιν.

αἱ ζῶν πέμψης Σαρπηδόνα ὄνδε δόμονδε,

φράζεν μὴ τις' εἴπειτα θεῶν ἐθέλῃσι καὶ ἄλλος

πέμπειν ὃν φίλον υἱὸν ἀπὸ κρατερῆς ὑσμίνης etc.

The order of the war would then be irreparably disrupted; and arbitrary interventions, extrinsic to the character of the cases, the merits of the warriors and the fated nexus of things, would create a chaos instead of cosmic order. Not to mention that Zeus would be pained often by such divine interferences. Nor could he be considered the ultimate upholder of the world-order. So he is persuaded by Hera to refrain from an act of irresponsibility; 458:

ὥς ἔφατ', οὐδ' ἀπίθησε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε.

* [Hera expresses such derogatory attitude with regard to human affairs to Athena in view of Zeus' determined will not to allow any god to interfere with the evolution of fate (of the natural

course of events); Θ 427-30:

ἦ πόποι, αἰγίοχοιο Διὸς τεκος, οὐκέτ' ἔγωγε
νῶι' ἐῷ Διὸς' ἅντα βροτῶν ἔνεκα πτολεμίζειν.
τῶν' ἄλλος μὲν' ἀποφθίσθω, ἄλλος δὲ βιώτω,
ὅς κε τύχη.

(*) The paper has been published in A.L. Pierris, The Emergence of Reason from the Spirit of Mystery, vol. II, Mystery and Philosophy.