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Aletheia: The Orphic Ouroboros

Glen McKnight

Bachelor of Arts

This thesis is presented in partial fulfilment of the degree of
Bachelor of Arts Honours

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Abstract

This thesis shows how *The Orphic Hymns* function as a *katábasis*, a descent to the underworld, representing a process of becoming and psychological rebirth. I begin with the Greek concept of *sparagmós*, a dismemberment or deconstruction, as a necessary precursor in that it emphasises at once both primordial unity and yet also the incipient tensions within the Orphic initiates on this path to katabasis. The argument herein extends beyond literary explication to consider how the Orphics sought to enact this process in Greek society itself.

The thesis then establishes the connections between the *Hymns* and the thinking of Nietzsche and Jung. Each writer drew influences from Orphism, which influenced modern thinkers in turn. I argue that the dynamic between key Orphic pairs, such as Orpheus and Eurydike, or Persephone and Demeter, reflects aspects of the psycho-social process of individuation, that is, from darkness to light, or from fractured to psychological wholeness.

Finally, this thesis demonstrates how the poetry of Rilke and H.D. functions as an Orphic katabasis. Both the *Hymns* and these early twentieth century poets (Rilke in “Orpheus. Eurydike. Hermes” and H.D. in “Eurydice”) treat Eurydike as an aspect of Persephone, reclaiming Eurydike as a goddess of rebirth. I argue that their purpose is to resist hegemonic and authoritarian violence in their respective contexts.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- i. Incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;*
- ii. Contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis; or*
- iii. Contain any defamatory material.*

Signed: GLEN MCKNIGHT

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Orphic Hymn to Persephone

Persephone, blessed daughter of great Zeus, sole offspring
of Demeter, come and accept this gracious sacrifice.

Much-honored spouse of Plouton, discreet and life-giving,
you command the gates of Hades in the bowels of the earth,
lovely-tressed Praxidike, pure bloom of Deo,
mother of the Erinyes, queen of the nether world,
secretly sired by Zeus in clandestine union.

Mother of loud-roaring, many-shaped Eubouleus,
radiant and luminous, playmate of the Seasons,
revered and almighty, maiden rich in fruits,
brilliant and horned, only-beloved of mortals,
in spring you take your joy in the meadow of breezes,
you show your holy figure in branches teeming with grass-green fruits,
in autumn you were made a kidnapper's bride.

You alone are life and death to toiling mortals,

O Persephone, you nourish all, always, and kill them, too.

Hearken, O blessed goddess, send forth the fruits of the earth
as you blossom in peace, and in gentle-handed health

bring a blessed life and a splendid old age to him who is sailing
to your realm, O queen, and to mighty Plouton's kingdom.

Introduction

ὁμολογέει δὲ ταῦτα τοῖσι Ὀρφικοῖσι καλεομένοισι καὶ Βακχικοῖσι, ἐοῦσι δὲ Αἰγυπτίοισι καὶ Πυθαγορείοισι·

“In these things they are in accord with the rites called Orphic and Bacchic, which are really Egyptian and Pythagorean.” — Herodotos, *Histories* 2.81 (OF 650).

The Orphic Hymns are a collection of eighty-seven verses of vague authorship and debated composition, often invoked in passing yet rarely examined, by ancient and modern scholars alike. The *Hymns* are both a cosmogony and theogony, describing and conflating the birth of the cosmos and the Hellenic pantheon. In their ritual *mīmēsis*, I propose they are ultimately an anthropogony, describing humanity in our own process of becoming. No author for the *Hymns* has been established. The *Hymns* are instead traditionally attributed to mythological Orpheus, the bard whose lyre moved stones and stony hearts to weeping, inseparably implying his descent to the underworld, or *katábasis*. Exploring the poetic sequence of the *Hymns* and the inseparable mysteries of Dionysos and Persephone, I argue that the *Hymns* themselves function as a katabasis within ancient Orphism. They were popularly translated in Romanticist Europe, and Orphism itself was thus influential within both modernist and post-modernist thought. I thus investigate the importance of this distant collection to the works of Nietzsche and Jung, and ultimately explore how this resonates with the adaptations of Rainer Maria Rilke and Hilda Doolittle, or H.D.

The Orphic Hymns.¹

The followers of Orpheus, the *Orphikoí*, were both initiates of the mysteries and ecstatic worshippers of Dionysos Bakkhios, *mystai* and *bákkhoi*. Orpheus was said to travel with the Argo and was an ancient, preceding even Homer. He was the mythic originator of all mystic rites, the *teletai*, from the revels of Dionysos to the mysteries of Eleusis. The poet was thought to be divinely inspired, communicating truth within ritual performance: a prophet who is both *mágos* and *mántis*, that is, both mage-priest and seer.² However, in the oft-quoted passage above, Herodotos, as other scholars in classical Greece, correlates Orpheus with the teachings of the mystic philosopher Pythagoras.³ Both Pythagoras and Orpheus were said to have travelled to Egypt and been initiated in its mysteries.⁴ Each taught revelation through music, vegetarianism, and reincarnation, or *metempsychōsis*. Each claimed descent from Apollon, and each descended to Hades in katabasis.⁵ The central deity in Orphic ritual, however, was not Apollon but Dionysos, crowned in horns and serpents, bound with vines and ivy: the pan-Hellenic god of revel and liberation, fluidity and contradiction, transgression and transformation. Dionysos is dichotomy. He is the ever-arriving foreigner, the new-comer, yet one of the oldest of the pantheon.⁶ He undergoes and incites *sparagmós*, a ritual of dismemberment and unification, and is similarly divided and unified by innumerable epithets.⁷ The *sparagmos* of Dionysos forms the model for Orpheus' own, a mimesis that follows his own katabasis and leads to his transcendent immortalisation, an *apothéōsis*. The final figure essential to this analysis is Kore-Persephone, mother of Dionysos and Queen of the Dead; the maiden of Demeter and

¹ This thesis uses many terms from Ancient Greek, and significant etymologies are discussed in several cases. I define these terms as they arise, together with some words which have since migrated to English. I include translations of the more obscure deities in parentheses. A glossary of ancient terms and deities as they relate to this thesis is appended.

² Athanassakis & Wolkow xi, xvii; Bernabé "Imago" 101-02; Burges Watson, "Erotic Mysteries" 49; Christopoulos 206, 213-14; Edmonds, "Dionysos" 424-25, "Mystai" 28, and "Who" 78; Graf, "Text" 55, 60-61; Morand 211-12; Nagy 50-51; Riedweg 254; Torjussen 8; Zabriskie 427-28.

³ Bremmer, *Initiation* 59-61; Burges Watson, *Mousike* 4; Christopoulos 215; Faraone, "Rushing" 328.

⁴ Bremmer 73; Burges Watson, "Erotic Mysteries" 61, and *Mousike* 3-4; Graf "Text" 55; Martín Hernández, "Herodotus" 250-51; Tortorelli Ghidini 148-49.

⁵ Bremmer 60-61; Zabriskie 443. Orpheus renounces Dionysos for Apollon after his own katabasis.

⁶ Athanassakis & Wolkow xiv-xvi; Bremmer 56, 78; Casadio 36-37; Cole 263-64; Ford 343; Herrero de Jáuregui, "Dionysos" 242-43; Porres Caballero, "Rebirth" 130.

⁷ Bremmer, "Otto" 4-6; Encinas Reguero 349-52; Henrichs, "One" 561-63; Foley 117-18; Santamaría 47. The names of Dionysos measure in the hundreds at least.

the mistress of Hades. In Hesiod she is overlooked; in Homer she is “dreadful” and “terrible” in her wrath. Nevertheless, she is the essential figure of maternal benevolence towards the *mystai*, despite her ever-present rage.⁸

Scholars in antiquity attributed several poetic works to Orpheus, written from the fourth century BCE to CE, most notably the *Orphic Rhapsodies*, *Theogony*, and *Argonautika*, each presenting a singular pre-Socratic cosmogony.⁹ These works are less relevant here, however, than the Orphic gold leaves or tablets, named for their composition. These funerary inscriptions date from the fifth century BCE, although not rediscovered until the nineteenth CE. They comprise instruction in a ritual mimesis of dialogue and drama, traversing the lands of the dead.¹⁰ As recently as 1962 archaeologists uncovered the sixth century BCE Derveni papyrus, half-burnt in a funeral pyre. The papyrus is our most archaic text, an Orphic commentary by a self-identified *mántis* upon a lost hymn to Zeus.¹¹ This brings us to the *Hymns* themselves, at once literary and theurgical, invoking nearly the entire Hellenic pantheon.¹² The Orphic origin of the gold leaves and Derveni papyrus is now certain.¹³ The age and provenance of the *Hymns*, however, remains unsettled. That the *Hymns* reflect Orphic philosophy has been established,¹⁴ but ancient references to a single corpus of hymns may refer to our text, or to another, lost yet similar in composition.¹⁵ Likewise, the clear influence of the philosophers Herakleitos, Empedokles, and Pythagoras, may have instead been mediated by the Stoics.¹⁶ Several contemporary scholars thus situate the *Hymns* within the fifth to sixth centuries BCE;¹⁷ others the second to third CE: thus ranging almost the entire period of Orphic literature with only the flimsiest of distinctions between them. As Athanassakis and Wolkow concede, “a date of

⁸ Bernabé, “Gods” 437, and “Imago” 112; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 90; Bremmer, *Initiation* 2; Edmonds, “Orphic” 77-78, and “Who” 86; Graf 63; Henrichs 561; Obbink, “Poetry” 294.

⁹ Bernabé, “Gods” 422-24, 433; Graf, “Text” 53; Karanika 393-406; Obbink, “Orphism” 352-53.

¹⁰ Athanassakis & Wolkow xi; Bernabé 423-24, 435; Betegh, “Thurii” 219; Calame, “Gold Lamellae” 203, 207; Obbink, “Poetry” 302-03; Riedweg 223, 239-241.

¹¹ Betegh, “Derveni” 39-42; Graf 62; Janko 1-2; Most, “Fire” 117-18, 120.

¹² Athanassakis & Wolkow xviii, xxi; Herrero de Jáuregui, “Poet” 224-27; Morand 210-11, 222.

¹³ Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 68, 72, 99; Betegh, “Thurii” 222-23; Calvo Martínez 371-72; Edmonds, “Mystai” 33-34, and “Sacred Scripture” 259; Graf 66; Most 120-21; Riedweg 255-56.

¹⁴ Athanassakis & Wolkow xvii; Herrero de Jáuregui 236; Morand 209-10, 223; Obbink, “Dionysos” 288.

¹⁵ Athanassakis & Wolkow x; Herrero de Jáuregui 228-29, 242; Obbink 288.

¹⁶ Athanassakis & Wolkow xiii; Bernabé, “Gods” 428-29; Most 128-130.

¹⁷ Bremmer, *Initiation* 65; Edmonds, “Orphic” 77.

composition cannot be assigned to the *Hymns* with any certainty”.¹⁸ Today, the *Hymns* are almost entirely overlooked.¹⁹ Those few texts which *are* recommended by Orphic scholar Alberto Bernabé are not available in English.²⁰

The study of Orphism itself is not without controversy. José Calvo Martínez notes “stubborn scholars ... still deny the very existence [of Orphism]”,²¹ scholars who Fritz Graf decries as using “hypercritical” and “vastly overstated” arguments.²² Graf refers to Radcliffe Edmonds,²³ who asserts that “no ancient source ever credits Orpheus with special knowledge ... on the basis of his own descent to the Underworld”.²⁴ Graf contradicts this claim in the accounts of both Kallimakhos and Epigenes—a Pythagorean contemporary of Euripides—who each discuss lost texts attributed to Orpheus, a *Katabasis into Hades* and a *Hieros Logos*.²⁵ Christoph Riedweg even reassembles abstracts of the latter in the Orphic tablets, further asserting that “Orpheus was doubtless the most famous visitor of the underworld in antiquity”.²⁶ Ultimately, in addition to specific cosmological deviations from Hesiod and Homer,²⁷ one may observe inscriptions where the initiates name themselves as *Orphikoi*.²⁸ Nevertheless, the identifying phrases associated with Orphism implied the prestige of initiation,²⁹ and were thus appropriated as a symbol of specialised knowledge or authority, especially when revealing symbolic truth or obscured meaning.³⁰ As Edmonds himself states, Orphism existed in a religious continuum, “an

¹⁸ Athanassakis & Wolkow ix, who note a possible influence of Ptolemy would require the 2nd c. CE.

¹⁹ Athanassakis & Wolkow ix-xi; Edmonds, *Ancient Orphism* 398; Herrero de Jáuregui 227-28.

²⁰ Bernabé 424. Namely Gabriella Ricciardelli’s *Inni Orfici*, and Anne-France Morand’s *Études sur les “Hymnes Orphiques”*. See also Morand 209.

²¹ Calvo Martínez 371.

²² Graf, “Text” 54. Referring to Edmonds and Linforth.

²³ See Edmonds “Mystai” 17-21, “Orphic” 76-77, “Sacred Scripture” 265-66, and “Who” 82. See also Bremmer, *Initiation* 18-20, 75; Calame, “Gold Lamellae” 217-18; Torjussen 9, 17. Some also overlook the syncretic conflation of deities in Orphism, as per Edmonds, “Orphic” 86-87; Faraone, “Rushing” 324; Torjussen 11-17. This is repeatedly claimed for thrice-born Dionysos himself, see Bernabé, “Gods” 425, and “Imago” 121; Graf 57-58, 63; Janko, col. XIII-XXII; Obbink, “Dionysos” 287. Edmonds does note the early Christian bias constructing Orphism, although long since rejected, see “Mystai” 19-20.

²⁴ Edmonds, “Sacred Scripture” 260, my emphasis.

²⁵ Graf 54. Also note the *Argonautika*, although this was not produced until the Hellenistic period.

²⁶ Riedweg 253. See also Herrero de Jáuregui, “Dialogues” 272-73; Obbink, “Poetry” 292-93; Riedweg 222-23, 231-32, 236-37.

²⁷ Athanassakis & Wolkow xi-xii; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 69-70, 100-01.

²⁸ Graf 55; Obbink 290. See also Edmonds, “Mystai” 27; Torjussen 8-9.

²⁹ Cole 267-68; Graf 63-64; Herrero de Jáuregui, “Poet” 231.

³⁰ Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 75; Bremmer 1-4; Edmonds, “Mystai” 27-28; Graf, “Exclusive Singing” 13-15; Jiménez San Cristóbal, “Water” 166-67; Macías Otero, “Echoes” 23-25. The oldest

osmotic relation, in which it both receives and exercises ideological influences”,³¹ indeed reflecting the fluid and transformative nature of thrice-born Dionysos himself. The *mágoi* were clearly fond of disagreeing with one another.³² To recognise them competing in interpretations, however, is not to decry one or another as a charlatan.³³ They may instead be seen as specialists within a field, comprising both general principles and divergent conclusions, that is, akin to academics today. This explains not only the importance placed in Orphic literature on exegesis,³⁴ but also upon the critical evaluation of ritual texts within the Derveni papyrus itself.³⁵ The familiar criticism of the Derveni commentator, that allegorical texts must be interpreted to be understood,³⁶ reinforces the observation that deliberate contradiction and allusion were a hallmark of the texts associated with the mysteries,³⁷ and thus informs my own interpretation of *The Orphic Hymns*.

This thesis interprets *The Orphic Hymns* as a katabasis themselves, as a process of transformation and becoming through self-deconstruction. It thus proposes a fundamental similitude with the theoretical adaptations of Nietzsche and Jung, and the poetic adaptations of the katabasis of Orpheus and Eurydike by Rilke and H.D. Chapter One begins with division, or sparagmos. This chapter explains sparagmos as a process which alludes to a fundamental unity, both underlying and expressed by that division. It dissects the social context of Orphism to examine an ongoing tension between individual and collective. In the practice of disciplined and non-violent *askēsis*, the *Orphikoí* rejected normative morality and social practice in favour of a greater encompassing and unifying identity. In their descent to transformation, they subverted masculine ideals of gender towards hybridity, where violence was itself rejected, and yet sustained as a metaphor of transformation. Orphism reflects this

known instance of the Orphic *sphragis*, or catchphrase, is the Derveni papyrus itself, see Graf 14.

³¹ Bernabé, “Gods” 428. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow xii; Bernabé, “Imago” 121; Bremmer, “Place” 4-5; Edmonds, “Sacred Scripture” 262-65; Herrero de Jáuregui, “Dialogues” 273-74; Henrichs, “Dismembered” 64-65; Obbink, “Poetry” 307; Riedweg 239.

³² Edmonds, “Mystai” 16-17, 21, and “Sacred Scripture” 257-59, 270; Most 120-21; See also Herrero de Jáuregui, “Dialogues” 273.

³³ As per Bremmer, *Initiation* 69; Edmonds, “Who” 82.

³⁴ Edmonds, “Mystai” 22, and “Sacred Scripture” 266-67; Most, “Fire” 120-22, 128-30.

³⁵ García-Gasco Villarubia 115; Most 126; Riedweg 220-21, 245-46. See also Most 118, where the Derveni commentator is identified as simultaneously Heraclitean and Derridean.

³⁶ Calame, “Gold Lamellae” 205; Janko 2, col. IV-VII, XX; Most 123-24. See also Bierl 393-94.

³⁷ Herrero de Jáuregui, “Poet” 236-37; Morand 220-22.

psycho-social tension in the metaphor of right madness as divine possession, or *enthousiasmós*, a harmony of opposites. This forms the bedrock of comparison to the katabasis: of psychological permeability, fuelled by self-reprobation, and thus self-rebirth. I dissect the symbolism and psychological allegoresis used within the *Hymns* to convey the concept of sparagmos as both an escape and yet affirmation of mortality. This illuminates the birth of the cosmos within the *Hymns* as a descent to the underworld of personal becoming, a continuum composed of that same dynamic tension. Life and death are conflated and reversed, the *mystai* imprisoned within their own flesh. I examine the mysteries as a process whereby the gods foreshadow the trials of initiation which the *mystai* emulate, and by which the *bákkhoi* are reborn. The *Hymns* echo this process in ritual reiteration, conflating the mutual identity of Bakkhos and *bákkhos*, for whom, like Orpheus, sparagmos leads to psychological rebirth, a mediation from katabasis to apotheosis.

Chapter Two turns like Orpheus to see behind and moves the analysis of sparagmos to katabasis, the journey to the underworld from which the Apolline bacchant first returns. I examine the descent to darkness as both the profound potential of non-being and a crisis of transformation, simultaneously entwining death and initiation. I delve within the elemental symbolism of the *Hymns*, interpreting the qualities they represent within the *mystai* themselves. This further establishes the *Hymns* as a katabasis, as an apotheosis of becoming by which both deity and devotee are born in psychological reflection. Each opposite is embodied simultaneously as the *mystai* strive towards harmony. This chapter thus explores adaptations of the Orphic katabasis, examining the revival of Orphic thought by those poets and scholars such as Nietzsche and Jung, seeking to redefine their own spirituality in humanistic terms. It presents a reciprocal approach towards unity between Dionysos and Apollon, as examined in the Jungian conception of Phanes, and reveals an underlying irony in their Nietzschean opposition. The Dionysian and Apollonian poet thus acts as a critical junction, deconstructing themselves as both transformer and transformed. For Derrida this tension of opposites was an irreconcilable aporia, yet this may also be understood in the concept of *omphalós*. In ancient terms, omphalos is the navel, the centre of the world and thus its liminal intermediary. It was the altar at the heart of Delphi, the sanctuary of Apollon and Dionysos both. I argue that this reading not only

connects Orphism to modernity, but is critical in understanding *The Orphic Hymns* and the teleological necessity of descent to achieve rebirth.

Chapter Three explores the *phármakos*, the sacrificial surrogate. A *phármakon* represents the dynamic tension I develop in previous chapters in that it signifies both poison and cure, a harmony of opposites. I explore this conflation as the self-immolation of poet and *bákkhos* alike in pantheistic synaesthesia, blurring world and being together into a single experiential continuum. This chapter complicates the Orphic understanding of death as apotheosis in escape from the painful cycle of rebirth as a psychological metaphor, representing reintegration. The sacrifice destroys both the surrogate and the self in the recognition of relational unity. Yet, I will argue, the sacrificial victim of Orpheus' descent is not himself, but Eurydike. This chapter thus compares her simultaneous importance and apparent absence in ancient myth, revealing Eurydike to be the expression of Persephone. I hence examine the autophagy of Kore-Persephone, transforming herself within the prototype of the katabasis over which she presides. She is therein the symbol of the immediacy of and underlying unity between the transformation of the underworld and the transformative *mystai herself*, guiding herself to transformation. The katabases written by the neo-Romanticist Rainer Maria Rilke and modernist Hilda Doolittle each reclaim Eurydike, yet I shall examine how the syncretic oppositions within these texts express the same tensions as Orphism itself. This chapter ultimately reaffirms the processes underlying both katabasis and sparagmos within the *Hymns* as the self-initiation of rebirth, the destabilisation of the aporia recognised in the self-reflection of the *mystai*. These poems reflect the *bákkhoi*'s rebirth in the revel of unbecoming, a cyclical process of inspiration that unceasingly leads to Mnemosyne, and the remembrance of unity between us all.

Chapter One: SPARAGMOS

ναρθηγοφόροι μὲν πολλοὶ, βάκχοι δὲ τε παῦροι·

“Many bear the thyrsos; few are the bakkhoi.” — Plato, *Phaedo* 69c-d.

Sparagmós refers to the dismemberment of Dionysos, god of transformation and liberation, wine and revel. Dionysos is devoured by the Titans, destroyed by the thunderbolt of Zeus, and then reconstituted. The worshippers of Dionysos, the *bákkhoi*, are similarly reconstituted, reaching a transformative epiphany in ecstatic *mímēsis*. Each exists within a relational dynamic tension, whereby division asserts a dispersal of primordial unity. Unity is thus affirmed through multiplicity. This chapter first examines these foundations of Orphism, and how, within this interplay between dismemberment and coherency, the *Orphikoi* formed a counter-cultural movement rejecting the temporary transformation of ecstasy for disciplined *askēsis*, a lifestyle of reflection and non-violence, and asserting an encompassing unity with all sentient life. This understanding of sparagmos unravels the ideology of hybridity fundamental to Orphic identity. Thus, I secondly examine the psychological processes of transformation in the ritual *teletai*—including the invocations of *The Orphic Hymns*—by which that hybrid unity was affirmed. I then explore the relationship between Dionysos Bakkhios and the ecstatic or *bákkhos* as a reciprocal assertion of mutual identity, a blur between opposites in dynamic tension: life and death; madness and liberation. In ritual *ékstasis*, the *bákkhoi* resolve those tensions within themselves. Finally, I explore how sparagmos is not only division, but also expansion: a continuum of being invoked in the *Hymns* to reconcile psychological individuation within a vast and enveloping nature, descending towards rebirth.

I. Unity in Multiplicity: A Sparagmos of Society.

In the funerary texts of the Orphic tablets, only the disciplined soul may renounce their thirst for rebirth in the waters of Lethe (Oblivion). Instead they drink of the spring of memory, Mnemosyne, and remember divinity.¹ The *bákkhoi* thus renounce rebirth and yet seek it in deification, wishing for both life and death in a single breath. *The Orphic Hymns* similarly summon Dionysos Bakkhios as Eubouleus, a name of death and rebirth in the mysteries of Eleusis, for both Hades and life-bringing Protogonos.² They summon Protogonos as the cosmic antecedent of “ineffable, secretive” Dionysos.³ He is the “ineffable, hidden, brilliant scion” known as Phanes, the “pure light”, and child of Night.⁴ This series of contradictory obfuscations is the essence of Dionysos. He is the vine: a glyph of rot and rejuvenation obscured by itself, as the *Hymns* describe, “wrapped in foliage, decked in grape-clusters”; the chthonic earth as both the transformative underworld of Persephone and the creative fertility of Demeter.⁵ The avowed purity of Phanes was thus expressed not in singularity, but multiplicity, in the “two-natured, thrice born Bacchic lord, |... two horned and two-shaped”.⁶ Dionysos was already divided as Phanes-Protogonos as by sparagmos itself. In the process of possession, or *enthousiasmós*, the *bákkhoi* thus unite the experiential hybridity of the possessed with the ideological hybridity attributed to Dionysos. That is, the self divided in hybridity not only unites the ecstatic with the deity, but unites their practice with the principles which precede it.

The fifth century BCE commentator of the Derveni papyrus regarded with “amazement and pity” those who performed the ritual *teletai* without ever understanding them.⁷ This was the condemnation of Sokrates for those who merely wielded the Dionysian *thyrsos*, who imitated Dionysos merely in ritual, seeking the transient insight of ecstasy alone. The *Orphikoí* instead turned to the disciplined

¹ Bernabé, “Imago” 123; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 74; Burges Watson, “Erotic Mysteries” 58, and *Mousike* 3; Calame, “Gold Lamellae” 216; Casadesús Bordoy, “Dionysian” 389; Faraone, “Rushing” 312; Riedweg 223; Santamaría Álvarez 215; Torallas Tovar 408-09; Tortorelli Ghidini 153-54.

² *OH* “To Dionysos” 30.6. See Athanassakis & Wolkow xv, 6i, 18.12n, 30.6n, 41.8n.

³ *OH* 30.3.

⁴ *OH* “To Protogonos” 6.5, 6.8. Protogonos also “bellows like a bull” (6.3), as Dionysos is “bull-faced, warlike, howling, pure” (30.4). See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 6i, 30i.

⁵ *OH* 30.5. The chthonic simultaneity of both life and death is also explored below.

⁶ *OH* 30.2-3. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 30.4n. Protogonos is likewise “two-natured” (*OH* 6.1).

⁷ Janko, col. XX.

practice of *askēsis*.⁸ Askesis subverted the concept of ecstatic possession as a substantiated rather than temporary transformation. It was the core of the *Orphikos bíos*, or Orphic life, a life of non-violence by which the initiates, the *mystai*, internalised the philosophical principles of the *teletai* within self-reflection and thus self-transformation, each reborn in transcendent *apothéōsis* to become as Dionysos.⁹ The *Orphikoí* sought *kátharsis* not only in the release of crisis—the *órgia* of intoxication and liberation in the revels of Dionysos—but the psychological cultivation enabling crisis to be overcome. Striving for this understanding, the *Hymns* invoke their rites as “learned contests” overseen by the fated Stars.¹⁰ As Athanassakis and Wolkow argue, the *mystai* yearned to become “participants in the cosmic order”.¹¹ This struggle was undertaken—with an irony not only typical but fundamental to Orphism—in struggle’s very renunciation.

Askesis was introspective, not rejecting the world but resituating humanity’s response to it.¹² The *bákkhoi* thus embraced becoming. They invoked “life’s spark for every creature”, as the *Hymns* describe, to be subsumed within the harmonious totality of cosmic Aither, “O tamer of all”.¹³ Physis (Growth) is herself “all-taming and indomitable” within the *Hymns*,¹⁴ “bitter to the vulgar, sweet to those who obey you, | wise in all”.¹⁵ The *Orphikoí* sought rebirth within this transformative continuum, as Miguel Herrero de Jáuregui explains, “the ‘Orphic’ taste for very pregnant belief formulations ... to load traditional formulae with radically new religious content without changing their form”.¹⁶ Thus, the subversion of feminine Physis in the *Hymns* as “virtue itself” metamorphosed the masculine ideal of *areté*,

⁸ Burges Watson, *Mousike* 3; Casadesús Bordoy, “Dionysian” 393-94; Jiménez San Cristóbal, “Meaning” 48. Compare similar criticism from Herakleitos, Janko 4; Most, “Heraclitus” 107-08.

⁹ Athanassakis & Wolkow xvi; Bernabé, “Imago” 100; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 73-74; Burges Watson 2-3; Calame, “Gold Lamellae” 206; Casadesús Bordoy 387-88; Graf, “Exclusive Singing” 16; Herrero de Jáuregui, “Dialogues” 285-86; Jiménez San Cristóbal 49-51; Macías Otero, “Echoes” 26-27; Santamaría Álvarez 214; Torallas Tovar 408. This apotheosis is discussed below.

¹⁰ *OH* “To the Stars [Astron]” 7.12. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 42.11n, on “the noble contests of our initiation” (*OH* “To Mises” 42.11), as both askesis and the deciphering of allegory and symbolism.

¹¹ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 7.12-13n. See also 7i, 8i, 12i, 62i, 63i, 64i. The Stars also represent rebirth, born from heroization and yet begetting mortals in turn, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 7.3n.

¹² Cf. Edmonds, “Who” 94, who nevertheless notes that neither were the Orphics chaste, as likewise often depicted. See Jiménez San Cristóbal, “Meaning” 52.

¹³ *OH* “To Ether” 5.3. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 5i. The importance of breath is also explored below.

¹⁴ *OH* “To Physis” 10.3. See also “fearless, all-taming, destined fate, fire breather” (*OH* 10.27).

¹⁵ *OH* 10.15-16. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 10.26n.

¹⁶ Herrero de Jáuregui, “Dialogues” 278. See also Herrero de Jáuregui 287-88; Santamaría Álvarez 214.

virtue.¹⁷ The *mystai* similarly beseech Zeus for a warrior’s glory, *kléos*, connoting both death and deification,¹⁸ as “divine peace ... glory without blame”,¹⁹ that is, they sought it within the *Orphikos bíos*, a life of non-violent reflection. Thus the thunderbolt—the fated death leading to rebirth in apotheosis, both transformation and catastrophe, or the epiphanic katharsis of im/mortality—is entreated for “divine peace ... crowned with honours”.²⁰ As askesis becomes heroism, so the “desired crown” sought in the Orphic tablets, reached in both symbolic and literal death by the *mystai*,²¹ represents the culmination of askesis: the learned contests of the Stars.

The mythic origin of both Dionysos and Orpheus was Thrake (Thrace), representing a nature both disruptive and yet familiar, a *xénos*.²² The *Orphikoí* similarly divided themselves from society while asserted an underlying unity with those comprising it. Claude Calame thus describes Orphism undertaking twin paths of “inversion and subversion”.²³ Orphism wound as the serpents of the *kērúkeion*, the caduceus staff of Hermes leading souls into the underworld of transformation. The *Orphikoí* hence attempted less to distinguish themselves from other *bákkhoi* than from competing magician-priests or seers, the *mágoi* and *mántes*,²⁴ who were specialists producing their rites, the *teletai*, through literary analysis. As Dirk Obbink observes, they undertook “a sparagmos of the text”.²⁵ Orphism was a movement of scholars, non-hierarchical and counter-cultural, striving to reconfigure normative morality with neither the wealth nor power of their established contemporaries.²⁶ It is no surprise they were deeply mistrusted. To conservative society, radical ideals—and worse, the willingness to practise the conclusions of those ideals—were as ever a

¹⁷ *OH* “To Physis” 10.10. Virtue or *areté* was explicitly masculine in Homer. Physis was herself “first-born” (lit. trans. Protogeneia, 10.5) and “light-bringing”, (10.6), that is, Protogonos-Phanes, reinforcing the gendered hybridity of Dionysos, explored below, hence “father and mother of all” (10.18).

¹⁸ Herrero de Jáuregui 271-72.

¹⁹ *OH* “To Zeus” 15.11.

²⁰ *OH* “To Zeus the Thunderbolt” 19.22. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 33i. This is explored in chapter 3.

²¹ *OF* 488, qtd. Herrero de Jáuregui 276; Santamaría Álvarez 213.

²² Athanassakis & Wolkow, 80.2n; Bremmer, “Otto” 10-11. Hence comparable to Dionysos’ historical Mycenaean origins, itself both foreign and familiar, see Herrero de Jáuregui, “Dialogues” 272.

²³ Calame, “Gold Lamellae” 203.

²⁴ Bremmer *Initiation* 69; Edmonds, “Mystai” 30-32; Jiménez San Cristóbal, “Meaning” 49.

²⁵ Obbink, “Dionysos” 289. See also Most, “Fire” 120-21.

²⁶ Edmonds, “Dionysos” 397; Horster 67, 79-81; Jiménez San Cristóbal 49; Morand, 219.

threat to the social order.²⁷ This, we remember, was the charge brought against Sokrates himself.²⁸

The *Orphikoí* had rejected the violence of the *thusía*, the burnt offering or blood sacrifice undertaken even at Eleusis, instead asserting unity with all sentient life.²⁹ In Euripides' *Hippolytos*, Theseus thus condemns his own son, decrying the Orphic obsession with both literature and vegetarianism.³⁰ As Sara Burges Watson sardonically explains, "Not only are they elitist and intellectual; they threaten the very continuity of the polis and its accustomed means of communicating with the divine."³¹ As the thunderbolt in the *Hymns*, "shak[ing] the seat of the gods" itself,³² the *Orphikoí* enacted their own sparagmos, disrupting mainstream Hellenism with claims to truth built not upon tradition, but deliberation. Yet Euripides was also an adherent of the mysteries, a self-identified *bákkhos* who collected Orphic texts and refused to consume anything *émpsykhos*, or "food with souls".³³ Thus, when Euripides writes of "honouring the smoke of many books",³⁴ the bacchant supplants *thusía* with philosophy, advocating Orphism in the same text in which he apparently condemns it. We may thus appreciate the irony of Theseus' accusation of insufferable hypocrisy for Orphism in the context of Orphic literature itself, which famously compelled its readers to search for hidden or apparently contradictory meanings.³⁵

An evident tension arises between the Orphic worship of Dionysos Omados, ("taker of raw flesh"), and the persistent abhorrence of the *bákkhoi* for "the crime of *ómophagia*".³⁶ The *bákkhoi*'s aversion to the violence inherent to eating the dead relates to the very foundations of the *teletai*, to both the Pythagorean transmigration of souls, or *metempsychōsis*, and a horror at sparagmos itself.³⁷ Past scholars associated the revelling *bákkhoi*, or *mainádes*, with omophagia, yet this is found only in the propaganda of early Christianity; as Silvia Porres Caballero asserts, even in

²⁷ Edmonds, "Mystai" 29, and "Dionysos" 396; Janko 5-6.

²⁸ Janko 6, 14-15. As against Protagoras, Anaxagoas, and Diagoras. To this we should add Pythagoras.

²⁹ Bremmer, *Initiation* 5, 8; Calame 203; Evans 6; Georgoudi, "Gods" 94.

³⁰ Euripides, *Hippolytos* 952-54 (*OF* 627). As examined below. See Most 117.

³¹ Burges Watson "Erotic Mysteries" 50. In reference to *Hippolytos*.

³² *OH* "To Zeus the Thunderbolt [Keraunios Zeus]" 19.3.

³³ Euripides, *Kretans* 472.9-19 (*OF* 567), qtd. Bremmer, *Initiation* 66. See also Bremmer 67-68.

³⁴ Euripides, *Hippolytos* 954.1, (*OF* 627), qtd. Jiménez San Cristóbal, "Meaning" 58. See also 50.

³⁵ Edmonds, "Orphic" 75, who does not extend this observation to Euripides' work itself.

³⁶ Athanassakis & Wolkow xv.

³⁷ Athanassakis & Wolkow xiii-xv; Burges Watson 50; Edmonds, "Mystai" 28-29, and "Who" 94.

metaphorical sparagmos, “Maenads never ate their victims”.³⁸ Indeed, the *bákkhoi* rejected not only flesh but eggs, leather, and even wool, dressing only in linen.³⁹ We may thus examine the hymn to Justice, which not only asserts a fundamental equality between all living things,⁴⁰ but, as Athanassakis and Wolkow observe, references Hesiod where vegetarianism is a gift from Dike (Justice) and Nomos (Law) to enlightened humanity.⁴¹ However, despite the absolute absence of maenadic omophagy, the association has persisted—a testament to the image of Dionysos as Bakkhios Omestes, devourer of humanity.⁴² Let us thus compare three invocations of Dionysos in the *Hymns*:

you take raw flesh in triennial feasts, wrapped in foliage, decked
with grape clusters.⁴³

you burst forth from the earth to reach the wine press,
to become a healer for men’s pain, O sacred blossom! [...] |
A redeemer and a reveller you are, your thyrsos drives to frenzy.⁴⁴

you take raw flesh, and sceptred you lead us into the madness of
revel and dance,
into the frenzy of triennial feasts that bestow calm on us.
You burst forth from the earth in a blaze ...⁴⁵

In all three passages we may note an explicit connection between the omophagia of Bakkhios and the *enthousiasmós* of the bacchanal, possession by the deity healing in “revel” and “frenzy” the “raw flesh” of humanity, taken by Dionysos and transformed in the transcendental inspiration of ecstatic *bákkheúein*. Dionysos transfigures the worshipper, “drives to [the] frenzy” of revel, that is, to become as himself, the “reveller”. In this transformative becoming, this dichotomous “calming” by “frenzy”, Dionysos, the Loosener, is the “healer”. The humanity of the possessed is consumed, leaving only Dionysos. The *bákkhoi*, as the Dionysian vine itself, are reborn. Further, in anticipating and then replicating the aspects of each invocation, the *Hymns*, as the vine, weave themselves one into the other: later passages are incipient within the first,

³⁸ Porres Caballero, “Maenadic Ecstasy” 178. See 177-81. See also Georgoudi, “Dionysos” 51-52.

³⁹ Bremmer, *Initiation* 67; Christopoulos 218; Graf, “Text” 66.

⁴⁰ *OH* “To Justice [Dikaiosune]” 63.12-16. Note this deity is not Dike but Dikaiosune, Righteousness.

⁴¹ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 63.14-15n.

⁴² Georgoudi 49-50; Porres Caballero 179. That is, Anthroporrhaistes, Render of Men, and Omadios, Taker of Flesh.

⁴³ *OH* “To Dionysos” 30.5.

⁴⁴ *OH* “To Lysios Lenaios” 50.5-8.

⁴⁵ *OH* “To the God of Triennial Feasts [Trieterikos]” 52.7-9. Ellipsis in original.

as Dionysos is incipient within Protogonos and the *bákkhoi* in Dionysos. As we shall see, this incipency was the crux of the mysteries.⁴⁶

Before interpreting this riddle, or *mystērion*, let us return to the sparagmos not of Dionysos, but of society. Orphism enacted sparagmos, dividing themselves from societal norms while asserting equality for those within it. The *Orphikoí* thus subverted the city Dionysia, not only devaluing a norm, but providing a valid alternative.⁴⁷ This was especially true for women. While worshipping together was rare outside of Eleusis,⁴⁸ the profusion of female *bákkhai* was unheard of for a male deity.⁴⁹ The liberation and deliberate transgression of gender roles was indeed central to maenadic identity, male or female.⁵⁰ The *Hymns* are similarly overseen by the triptych, Hekate “of the crossroads”,⁵¹ the chthonic Titan of witchcraft and madness. As Athanassakis and Wolkow explain, she was “a murky goddess on the fringes of Greek religion”, explicitly equated with Selene (Moon) and Persephone, Queen of the Dead.⁵² Hekate is hierophant of the *Hymns*, ushering Prothyraia (Birth), and so becoming mother to the *mystai*, a re-enactment of the mystic birth of Brimos at Eleusis, as we shall see.⁵³ Eleusinian Demeter herself occupies a central position within the *Hymns* literally, invoked in the centremost verses. We may likewise observe the penultimate seat of Hestia, the central fire, final supplication before the triple death of the initiate.⁵⁴ The conflicted invocation of Ares represents this rejection of patriarchal authority. His association with masculine *areté* would epitomise machismo were he not defused, commanded to “exchange the might of arms for the works of Deo [Demeter]”.⁵⁵ Dionysos, it seems, was a lover.

⁴⁶ Janko, col. XVII; Morand 220. We may compare Lacanian jouissance, joyful at the painful dissolution which leads to psychological transformation.

⁴⁷ Calame, “Gold Lamellae” 203, 206-07; Christopoulos 217-19, 222; Edmonds, “Mystai” 19, and “Who” 75, 79-81; Wildberg, 206-07.

⁴⁸ Bassi, 214; Bremmer, *Initiation* 2-4, 170-72; Evans 21-23.

⁴⁹ Calame 214-15; Cole 271-73; Faraone, “Gender” 120-21; Jiménez San Cristóbal 52-53; Obbink, “Poetry” 298-99; Porres Caballero 166-67; Suárez de la Torre, “Apollo” 64; Valdés Guía 101-02.

⁵⁰ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 27i, 31.1-4n; Bassi, 195; Bremmer, “Otto” 14-15; Casadio 38-39; Faraone, “Rushing” 319, 329-30; Porres Caballero, “Maenadic Ecstasy” 165, 169-73; Valdés Guía 107, 111-12.

⁵¹ *OH* “To Hekate” 1.1.

⁵² Athanassakis & Wolkow, 1i, who note the association of crossroads with witchcraft also, 1.1n.

⁵³ *OH* ‘To Prothyraia’ 2.2-5, 14-15. See Edmonds, “Who” 91-92; Faraone, “Gender” 131-32, and “Rushing” 323; Riedweg 232. Brimos, the mystic birth, is examined below.

⁵⁴ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 40i, 84i. Note also the association of Hekate with Eleusis, Johnston 124-25.

⁵⁵ *OH* “To Ares” 65.8. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 65i, 65.8-9n.

While the role of Dionysos in disrupting the social order is explicit,⁵⁶ scholars equally contrast the constraining and undermining performance of the militaristic elements of the city Dionysia as a tool of Athenian imperialism.⁵⁷ The popularity of the liberating god meant the gradual yet inevitable usurpation of the mysteries of Dionysos, of Eleusis, and the maenads of Delphi and Parnassos: their priestesses overthrown and reappointed.⁵⁸ Thus Orpheus, founder of the mysteries, was associated with the colonising order of the city-state.⁵⁹ Similarly, within the *Hymns*, although an aspect of lunar Hekate presides over each cycle, when deities are paired the male often leads.⁶⁰ Within this patriarchal climate, the exceptional wealth of many female adherents may indicate that these were the only women able to resist conformity and marriage, implicated in the corrupt aristocracy as they may be.⁶¹ The *Hymns* are also careful to invoke Athene as Pallas, distancing themselves from the Athenian hegemony she inescapably suggests.⁶² A constant tension was torn between autonomous expression and the threat to civil control mutable identities represent. Dionysos himself likewise represents at once pan-Hellenism and yet its dissolution, the same uneasy tension between the new order of Solon and the destabilisation of the Pisistratid tyranny.⁶³ In an appropriately Herakleitean dichotomy,⁶⁴ the charge of either joining or rejecting the mysteries amounted to outrage and scandal either way.⁶⁵ The only resolution to division was one the *bákkhoi* could create themselves.

⁵⁶ Bassi 192-93, 201-04, 228-233, 238-243; Bierl, "Dionysos" 372-80; Bremmer, 7, 174; Spineto 299-300, 309-10; Wildberg 217.

⁵⁷ Bassi 197-204, 212-17; Bierl 368; Spineto 301-04; Nakajima 198-99; Valdés Guía 103; Wildberg 224. Compare the usurpation of Dionysos by Alexander, see Borgeaud 171-72; Bowersock 4. We may compare the Foucauldian concept of carnivale, reinscribing the very systems it temporarily subverts.

⁵⁸ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 40i; Burges Watson, *Mousike* 2; Cole 265-70; Evans, 3-5; Horster 63-66, 71, 74; Porres Caballero 167-68; Rigoglioso 5; Suárez de la Torre 75-77; Valdés Guía 104, 112-15. Note also the Pythia at Delphi, likewise seized and manipulated, see Suárez de la Torre 70-72, 75-76.

⁵⁹ Karanika 393, 397-410. Yet as with Demeter herself, see Borgeaud 165-66; Bremmer 167.

⁶⁰ Rhea follows Kronos, as Hera Zeus. See Athanassakis & Wolkow xviii, 10i.

⁶¹ Bernabé, "Imago" 121; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 99; Bremmer 69, 175; Edmonds, "Who" 79-82. See *OH* "To Dike" 62.4-8, "To Justice" 63.7, and "To Nomos" 64.5-6, on the condemnation of greed as hubris, although a conservative reading would also be possible, condemning those left wanting.

⁶² Athanassakis & Wolkow, 32i.

⁶³ Bassi 192-93, 197-98, 204-10; Cole 265-69; Suárez de la Torre 70-71; Wildberg 217, 224; Valdés Guía 112-13. Each side thus had its own Kleisthenes, although either makes a poor Dionysos.

⁶⁴ Wildberg 205-08, 213-15. We could as easily say Derridean, see Most, "Fire" 118. Herakleitos is elaborated below.

⁶⁵ Bassi 194-95; 200-02; Burges Watson 2-3; Janko 14-15; Versnel 41-42.

II. Madness and Enthousiasmos: Sparagmos in the Psyche.

The social divisions encountered and enacted by Orphism reflect tensions within the psyche. The educated Orphics rejected the hegemonic pageantry and hypocrisy of the polis.⁶⁶ The city Dionysia was a parody of *bakkheúein* that instead of liberating channelled and controlled.⁶⁷ The maenads who had once imitated the nursemaids of Dionysos instead replicated the violent and temporary metaphors representing their former selves.⁶⁸ Yet ritual *mímēsis* was essential to initiation, it was the core of the *bákkhos* possessed in *enthousiasmós*, an inspiration of the world-soul, *pneūma*, reversing the division of the individual psyche from the universal.⁶⁹ This was *ékstasis*, as Athanassakis and Wolkow define, “effacing ... the distinction between divine and human ... where someone at the same time is somehow both himself and not himself”.⁷⁰ The *Hymns* invoke airy *pneuma* as Hera: “your form is airy, | O Hera ... | The soft breezes you send to mortals nourish the soul”.⁷¹ They summon Dionysos Bakkhios, bringer of ecstasy, to “Hearken to my voice, ... | breathe on me in a spirit of perfect kindness”, to be *enthused* and *inspired* in possession.⁷² As Athanassakis and Wolkow explain, *psykhē* (soul) and *psykhō* (blow) arise from a common ideolinguistic root.⁷³ Breath as a means of inducing trance provides a ritual source for this language,⁷⁴ much as the ecstatic dance of the maenad inspired what is now understood to be purely symbolic violence.⁷⁵ as Pentheus in Euripides’ *Bakkhai* is destroyed by his inability to distinguish symbolic truth,⁷⁶ so once fell the scholar. Yet the madness of Euripides’ Pentheus is also the madness of the *bákkhoi*, a “crisis of agitation”, as Ana Jiménez San Cristóbal terms it, or trance and subsequent *katharsis*.⁷⁷ The *bákkhoi* underwent a process of suffering and reorientation, a descent

⁶⁶ Christopoulos 220.

⁶⁷ Cole 275; Encinas Reguero 356-57; Porres Caballero, “Maenadic Ecstasy” 159; Valdés Guía 113-14.

⁶⁸ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 52i; Faraone, “Gender” 140-41; Porres Caballero 162-65, 169, 180-81.

⁶⁹ Bowden 77-79; Megino 143, who comments on the hymn to Zeus found within the Derveni papyrus.

⁷⁰ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 30i.

⁷¹ *OH* “To Hera” 16.1-3. See also “you are in everything, even in the air we venerate” (*OH* 16.6).

⁷² *OH* “To Dionysos” 30.8-9. Compare “may you come with kindness on your joyous face” (*OH* 16.10).

⁷³ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 16.3n. See also Megino 139-142. Aer is itself *Nous* (Mind) in the Derveni papyrus, see Janko, col. XVI-XVII; Megino 143; Most, “Fire” 118.

⁷⁴ Ford 348-54. See Levaniouk 175-96, on the similar conflation of spinning, noise, myth, and ritual. Compare the inhalation of vapours by the Pythia, Athanassakis & Wolkow, 79.4n.

⁷⁵ Bremmer, “Otto” 11, noting the confusion of several scholars over this distinction. See chapter 2.

⁷⁶ Foley 108, 115-16, 121-22, who observes the smiling mask of Dionysos over this tragic gulf.

⁷⁷ Jiménez San Cristóbal, “Meaning” 51.

culminating in rebirth;⁷⁸ a *katábasis*. The mimesis found in *enthousiasmós* thus not only represents but inculcates the reality it imitates. This is the “audacious oxymoron” Francesc Casadesús Bordoy finds in Sokrates, “that Dionysian *mania* frees ‘the men who are rightly possessed by madness’”,⁷⁹ those transformed within the *Hymns*, “shouting, thyrsos-loving, finding calm in the revels”.⁸⁰ Euripides’ blur between Dionysos and maddened Pentheus, Bakkhios and *bákkhos*, was the same liminal obfuscation of the mysteries.⁸¹ Madness itself was also borne by Hera, transforming the *bákkhoi* in ritual as she had Dionysos in myth.⁸² However, Orphism sought the collective healing of madness-as-transgression under the auspices of intellectual Apollon, as did Orpheus himself.⁸³ The *Hymns* thus invoke the solar *lyristés*: “You lead the Muses into dance, | O holy one, you are Bacchos”.⁸⁴ The muses dance to Apollon’s cosmic lyre as maenads to the whirling ecstasy of Dionysos, for the frenzied transformation of the bacchanalia is only rightly possessed through the discipline of askesis.

Dionysian mania was a transformative liberation. Two statues were upheld in Sikyonian revel: one Bakkheios (Ecstatic), the other Lusios (Loosener), signifying frenzy and freedom, madness and emancipation.⁸⁵ In Korinth two statues stood by those same names, indistinguishably carved from a single tree—madness at once the agent and affect of liberation, indecipherably intertwined.⁸⁶ Two *Hymns* to the bacchic Kouretes likewise sound, beating their feet upon the maddening Kybelean earth.⁸⁷ They first follow Dionysos, where “discordant is the lyre [they] strike”, Dionysian frenzy disrupting the harmony of Apollon’s golden lyre.⁸⁸ They then

⁷⁸ Calame, “Gold Lamellae” 209-10; Casadesús Bordoy, “Dionysian” 391-93.

⁷⁹ Plato, *Phaedrus* 244d-e, qtd. Casadesús Bordoy 391. Emphasis in original.

⁸⁰ *OH* “To Silenos Satyros and the Bacchae” 54.11. Compare again to 52.7-8, above.

⁸¹ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 30i, 30.3-4n, 52i; Bassi 194; Calame 218; Cole 273-74; Foley 109, 115; Riedweg 242-44; Santamaría 53-54. Of course, Euripides was himself one of the *bákkhoi*, as above. Those besought to bring transformative madness to the *mystai* are thus as many as those who curse others with the same, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 27.11n.

⁸² Athanassakis & Wolkow, 12i, 12.5n, 12.6n, 27.13n; Cole 275-76; Faraone, “Gender” 122, and “Rushing” 320, 325; Herrero de Jáuregui 241; Obbink, “Dionysos” 292-93; Santamaría 44.

⁸³ Casadesús Bordoy, “Dionysian” 393-94; Suárez de la Torre, “Apollo” 58-60, 67-70.

⁸⁴ *OH* “To Apollon” 34.6-7. The unity between Apollon and Dionysos is explored in chapter 2.

⁸⁵ Cole 273-74; Santamaría 50. Note also the masks of Naxis, one of vine, the other fig, Santamaría 51.

⁸⁶ Santamaría 51. See also Foley 110.

⁸⁷ *OH* “Hymn to the Kouretes” 31.2-3; “To the Kouretes” 38.9.

⁸⁸ *OH* 31.3. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 31.3n, 34i.

follow the Titans, the very hands of sparagmos upon the child-god. Only after this do the *Hymns* invoke the Kouretes as both Korybantes and Dioskouroi:⁸⁹ that is, the slayers of Korybas, chief of their number, who ascends to godhood “with the murder of twin brothers”;⁹⁰ and the “celestial twins” themselves.⁹¹ Each are both mortal and divine, the very manifestations of *ékstasis*. The Kouretes-Dioskouroi thus become “life-giving breezes, glorious saviours of the world”;⁹² pneuma now attuned to the once-discordant lyre. This complex syncretism asserts the transformation of sparagmos: only in the divided, and thus reflecting self, is unification found. This is the dichotomous essence of Dionysos,⁹³ an autochthonic *xenós*,⁹⁴ a god whose temple was the illusory—or abstract and thus ideal—truth of theatre,⁹⁵ whose wine, like the bread of Demeter, signifies civilisation, yet undoes itself in revelry.⁹⁶ The bull, both threatening and nourishing life.⁹⁷ Dionysos is Lusios (Loosener) constrained as Lenaios, the wine-press, itself the very body of the maenad, *lēnai*.⁹⁸ He is “the roaring Eiraphiotes” within the *Hymns*, the one sewn up, imprisoned in flesh in order to live, howling with both anger and triumph.⁹⁹ The madness of Dionysos is both death and rebirth, signifying the transformative sparagmos of the *bákkhoi* themselves.

The dynamic tension between these opposites form a harmony, permeability representing the possibility for transformation. Within the *Hymns*, “ineffable, secretive” Dionysos is “primeval, two-natured, thrice-born”,¹⁰⁰ the dual progression of a single being, or Orphic Phanes as “two natured Protogonos”.¹⁰¹ So “ineffable, hidden, brilliant” Protogonos, the “seed unforgettable, ...|... of the many counsels and of the many seeds”,¹⁰² is also the feminine Dionysos, the “unforgettable and

⁸⁹ *OH* 38.20-21. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 37i, 38i.

⁹⁰ *OH* “To Korybas” 39.6. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 39i. Korybas is explored in chapter 2.

⁹¹ *OH* 38.23. As winds both save and threaten those at sea, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 38i.

⁹² *OH* 38.3. Note the same position as *OH* 31.3, above.

⁹³ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 30i; Bierl 369-71; Encinas Reguero 353; Herrero de Jáuregui, “Dionysos” 246; Henrichs, “One” 554; Versnel 37-38; Wildberg 205-08.

⁹⁴ Cole 263-64; Georgoudi, “Dionysos” 58-60; Schwartz 301-03. We might compare *unheimlich*.

⁹⁵ Bierl 366; Cole 276-78, who notes this was where oaths to Dionysos were sworn.

⁹⁶ Borgeaud 162-63; Wildberg, 222-23. We may once more compare Derrida.

⁹⁷ Bremmer, “Otto” 11-12; Macías Otero, “Image” 332-34.

⁹⁸ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 50i; Valdés Guía 100-02.

⁹⁹ *OH* “To Sabazios” 48.3. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 48.3n. Referencing the thigh of Zeus.

¹⁰⁰ *OH* “To Dionysos” 30.3, 30.2. Primeval is trans. Protogonos. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 30.2n.

¹⁰¹ *OH* “To Protogonos” 6.1. Protogonos is explicitly Phanes, 6.8.

¹⁰² *OH* 6.5, 6.4-10. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 6i. Eros and Metis are explored below.

many-named seed ...|... ineffable queen Mise | whose twofold nature is male and female”.¹⁰³ Dionysos not only represents each opposite, but erases any differences between them. His gendered hybridity or sexual permeability was a *mystērion*, a *symbolon* associated with katabasis, the transformation of the psyche as the liminal breach between life and death, as we shall see.¹⁰⁴ The bacchants, seeking rebirth, are thus bestial-human satyrs: savage and effeminate; lecherous and divine. Silenos Satyros, nurturer and hedonist, is the culmination of the triumphant bacchanals, or *thíasoi*.¹⁰⁵ He is the hybridity of the *Orphikoí*, an *askētēs* balancing the union of opposites.¹⁰⁶ Myth depicted Orpheus similarly: hero and coward; lover and celibate; an essential ambivalence, as Burges Watson argues, oscillating “between the sublime and the ridiculous”.¹⁰⁷ Orpheus is himself the resolution between the dichotomy he presents. His iconography is thus rich in both hetero- and homo-eroticism,¹⁰⁸ that is, transcendent bisexuality. Orpheus is the poet-prophet, straddling every realm.¹⁰⁹ In ontological terms humanity is relational; we exist within, not merely upon the world. Alberto Bernabé hence interprets the punishments in Hades described by Sokrates as an Orphic-Pythagorean treatise on metempsychosis, a transfiguration of the psyche by which Hades is itself transfigured.¹¹⁰ The Orphic cosmos exists within a pantheistic dynamic tension,¹¹¹ “Ever incomplete, terrestrial and then again celestial,”¹¹² as the *Hymns* declare, blending life and death—the transformation of the psyche—into a singular and unceasing motion. The result is an alchemical androgyny, divine Hermaphroditos.¹¹³ As a means of referencing dynamic unity, sparagmos undoes itself, collapsing its own division by its very enactment.

¹⁰³ *OH* “To Mise” 42.2-4. Mise is “Dionysos” and “Iacchos”, 42.1-4, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 42i.

¹⁰⁴ Athanassakis & Wolkow xiv; Bernabé, “Gods” 429-32, 435-36; Faraone, “Rushing” 329; Foley 107, 110-11; Spineto 305-06; Suárez de la Torre, “Apollo” 73; Obbink, “Poetry” 300; Wildberg 209-10.

¹⁰⁵ *OH* “To Silenos Satyros and the Bacchae” 54.1-2

¹⁰⁶ *OH* 54.7-8. See also Evans 2-7; Foley 112-14. This asceticism draws attention to the dichotomy.

¹⁰⁷ Burges Watson, “Erotic Mysteries” 50-51. See also Christopoulos 207; Heath 178-81; Zabriskie 439.

¹⁰⁸ Burges Watson, “Erotic Mysteries” 51, 54-56, 62-63; Evans 20. See Burges Watson 47-49, on homosexuality in Phanocles, responding to Hesiod and Plato. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 58.3n.

¹⁰⁹ Burges Watson, *Mousike* 1-3; Bremmer, “Otto” 16-17; Edmonds, “Mystai” 32, and “Orphic” 79-80; Herrero de Jáuregui, “Dialogues” 290.

¹¹⁰ “Imago” 101-04, 109-11, 122-25. Bernabé does not assert this conclusion until the final pages, his revelation of “from the very beginning a precise symbolic value” (125) is therefore twofold.

¹¹¹ Bernabé, “Gods” 439; Morand 214, 219; Herrero de Jáuregui, “Poet” 228-29, 235;

¹¹² *OH* “To Night [Nyx]” 3.8.

¹¹³ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 3.8-11n, 4.5n, 7.9n, 9.4n, 9.5n, 10.9n, 10.18n, 30.2n, 32.10n, 35.5n, 36.7n, 38.2n, 51.3n, 55i, 58i; Henrichs 566; Zabriskie 439.

Fundamental union—not *despite* but *because* of opposition—is most profound in the chthonic, the underworld and fertile earth of Hades-Plouton and Kore-Persephone herself, the mother of Dionysos.¹¹⁴ The fecund blood of castrated Ouranos (Sky) poured out upon Gaia (Earth) thus births both the Erinyes (Furies) and the Nymphs.¹¹⁵ In the Derveni papyrus the Erinyes are also the kind-faced Eumenides, and each are the *psūkhaií*, the souls of the dead.¹¹⁶ Although Athanassakis and Wolkow argue that the *Hymns* render these two often conflated aspects distinct, it is rather that the attributes associated with each are deliberately inverted.¹¹⁷ So the kind Eumenides become chthonic *daimōnes*:

Everlasting, repugnant, frightful, sovereign,
Paralysing the limbs with madness, hideous, nocturnal, fateful,
Snake-haired, terrible maidens of the night.¹¹⁸

They are yet the “pure daughters ...|... of lovely Persephone, fair-tressed maiden.”¹¹⁹ Persephone as Kore, maiden on the blossom-bedecked Nysian plain, creates a sharp juxtaposition to these wraiths, just as does Demeter’s prophecy that *frightful* Persephone “would mount the blooming bed of Apollon | and give birth to splendid children, their faces burning with fire”.¹²⁰ These deadly shining Eumenides represent the same conflated contrast as the raving Erinyes within the *Hymns*,¹²¹ who nevertheless bestow the beneficence of the Eumenides:

The speedy flames of the sun and the moon’s glow
cannot arouse life’s delights without your aid,
neither can the excellence of wisdom, ... the virtue and the joy.¹²²

This simultaneous inversion—as between Hemera (Day) and Nyx (Night), at the threshold of Tartaros—emphasises an interchangeability, deepening their psychic conflation, bound together in the souls of mortality. Yet it also represents a destructiveness of life in the Eumenides: “your awesome eyes flash forth | flesh

¹¹⁴ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 18i, 29i, 73i; Wildberg 213-215.

¹¹⁵ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 26.2n, 69i. As per Hesiod.

¹¹⁶ Janko, col. I-VI; Most, “Fire” 126. This is further explored in chapter 2.

¹¹⁷ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 69i, 69.16n, 70i. Compare 69.15n, 70.4-5n, 70.8n, 70.9n, 70.10n.

¹¹⁸ *OH* “To the Eumenides” 70.8-10.

¹¹⁹ *OH* 70.2-3.

¹²⁰ *OF* 284, qtd. Athanassakis & Wolkow, 70.2-3n, who raise the tenuous possibility that Apollon may here be adapted from the verb *apollumi*, “as an oracular periphrasis for Hades as ‘the destroyer’”.

¹²¹ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 69.2n, noting consistent maenadic imagery. Hence “rabid and arrogant, you howl over Necessity’s dictates” (*OH* 69.6).

¹²² *OH* “To the Erinyes” 69.10-12.

eating darts of light”,¹²³ suggests more the rays of the solar archer, the arrows of Apollon, than the Stygian gloom of cold and silent Hades. Meaning is not found in itself but in its relational context to bios: the gifts besought of the Eumenides, which maintain rather than transgress boundaries, are selfish hubris, complacent to injustice.¹²⁴ The *mystai* need not to conquer the Furies of a guilty conscience, but rather their thirst for materiality. Kore must descend to Hades to be reborn as Persephone, and from this arise the mysteries of Eleusis.

III. The Divine Initiate: Sparagmos as Mystic Identity.

The crises of sparagmos are re-enacted in the mysteries. The Eleusinian mysteries were a mimesis of the katabasis of Persephone and Demeter, representing unity between not only human and divine,¹²⁵ but the goddesses themselves.¹²⁶ They share their transformation: each descends and each returns. While Persephone dwells within the underworld, while Kore is obscured, so Demeter trails death upon the earth. Further, in Orphism it is not the *psykhopompós*, the soul-guide, Hermes, but Hekate and Demeter who descend for Persephone.¹²⁷ This unity is reflected in the *Hymns*, where Persephone is Moon, “brilliant and horned”, who is herself Selene, Hekate, and Artemis.¹²⁸ While each of these is at times a child of Demeter, they are syncretised together, Persephone and Hekate are both Sole-Offspring, as is Demeter herself.¹²⁹ In the *Hymns* Artemis unifies these epithets, invoked not only as the mother of frenzy (Kybele-Demeter) but the maiden of moonlight (Persephone-Selene), and thus also the transformative Birth which intercedes.¹³⁰ At Eleusis, the *mystai* descend through terrifying visions, passing through the gate to the underworld which is simultaneously the subterranean wedding, the *khthoniōs hyménaios*. Their agony culminates in revelation when Demeter returns with Persephone and the mystic child, “in whom she

¹²³ *OH* 70.6-7. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 69.70.6-7n, who relate this passage to Selene.

¹²⁴ Borgeaud 161; Foley 120. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 69i; Most, “Fire” 133-34.

¹²⁵ Bowden 80; Bremmer, *Initiation* 9-11; Calame, “Identities” 268; Evans 5-6.

¹²⁶ Calame 266-67; Perluss 95. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 27i.

¹²⁷ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 40.11n; 41.5-7n; Edmonds, “Orphic” 84. As opposed to the Homeric hymn.

¹²⁸ *OH* “Hymn to Persephone” 29.11 See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 1i, 29i.

¹²⁹ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 29.1n, 40.16n, 41.1n. See Janko, col. XXII. This is elaborated in chapter 3.

¹³⁰ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 2i, 10.19n, 36i, 40i; Bernabé, “Gods” 424-25; Johnston 123-25. Compare *OH* “To Hekate” 1.4-8 with *OH* “To Artemis” 36.5-12. Thus Physis (Growth) follows Selene as Prothyraia (Birth) follows Hekate. Persephone, of course, is followed by the birth of Dionysos (*OH* 29-30).

gives birth to *herself*'.¹³¹ Yet the child is not Brimo, the rage of Kore-Persephone,¹³² but Brimos, Iakkhos, the embodied ecstatic cry of Dionysos, self-transformed.¹³³ This is also found within the *Hymns* as Mise, the feminine Dionysos associated with both katabasis and Eleusis, and known not only as Mise-Kore but Thesmophoros (Law-Giver) another epithet shared by both Demeter and Persephone.¹³⁴ Within the *Hymns*, Dionysos-Mise dances as the initiate herself, rejoicing in the mysteries of Kybele in Phrygia, Aphrodite in Kypros and Kythera, and Isis, upon the banks of the Nile.¹³⁵ The transfiguration of Brimo/s, the hybrid rebirth of Dionysos as the child of life-and-death, Kore-Persephone, was essential to the mysteries, Eleusinian or Orphic.¹³⁶

The *teletai* of the gold leaves likewise present the *mystai* in mimesis of the nursemaids of Dionysos. They leap into the sea towards death and rebirth, replicating the Dionysian apotheosis of Ino-Leukothea and her son, Melikertes-Palaimon¹³⁷ This further intensifies the unity the *Hymns* assert between the pelagic Dioskouroi and the leaping Kouretes, who dance to the madness of another Dionysian nurse, Kybele.¹³⁸ Pallas Athene, leader of the Kouretes and maenad in the divine *thíasos*, represents a similar Dionysian rebirth. She is Metis, the wisdom of Phanes, swallowed by Zeus and reborn,¹³⁹ as the Derveni papyrus expounds, “not (creating) different things from different ones, but different ones from the same.”¹⁴⁰ While the *mystai* emulate myth,

¹³¹ Kerényi, qtd. Perluss 95, original emphasis. See Bremmer 6, 11-16.

¹³² Bernabé “Gods” 437, and “Imago” 111.

¹³³ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 40.10n; Calame 265; Jiménez San Cristóbal, “Dionysos” 276-82; Zeitlin 548-49.

¹³⁴ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 42i, 42.4n; Edmonds 77-78. Hence the festival *Thesmophória*.

¹³⁵ *OH* 42.5-10. The association with Egypt is traced from Herodotus at least, see Bernabé “Imago” 101-02; Bremmer 73; Burges Watson “Erotic Mysteries” 61, and *Mousike* 3-4; Graf, “Text” 65; Martín Hernández “Herodotus” 250-51; Tortorelli Ghidini 148-49.

¹³⁶ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 40i, 40.10n; Bernabé, “Gods” 437-38; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 91; Jiménez San Cristóbal 296. As per the child-disciple Mousaios, see Herrero de Jáuregui, “Poet” 232-33.

¹³⁷ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 74i, 75i; Faraone, “Gender” 121-22, and “Rushing” 313-20; Henrichs, “Dismembered” 66; Jiménez San Cristóbal, “Dionysos” 285-87, 291-92; Zeitlin 545-49.

¹³⁸ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 31i, 38i, 39i. Kybele is the divine grandmother of Dionysos, mother of Persephone, as Ino is his mortal aunt, the sister of Semele. Each raised the god at different times.

¹³⁹ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 6i, 6.10n, 15.3-5n, 26i, 32i, 32.10n. Athene also implies Erikhthonios, who anticipates Ino and Melikertes, as Dionysos anticipates Erikhthonios, see Zeitlin 545-48. Athene is herself the tamer of horses, subduing watery Poseidon, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 17i, 32i, 32.6n, 32.12n. The horse and chariot as a Pythagorean symbol of the soul in Plato’s *Phaedrus*, is conflated with Helios, the solar chariot descending to Okeanos, beyond the world of the living, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 8i, 8.16n, 8.19n, 83i. She thus represents the transformation of the *bákkhoi*.

¹⁴⁰ Janko, col. XV, original parentheses. See Most, “Fire” 118-19. This is explored in chapter 2.

those mythic figures reiterate their own precedents in the same ongoing process of cyclical identification.

Dionysos, whether Bakkhos or Mise, is a glyph of the *mystai*. As Jiménez San Cristóbal explains, “βᾶκχος [bákkhos] is not a theonym but an attribute that manifests a particular condition of men or gods”,¹⁴¹ that is, *ékstasis*. Yet Bakkhios—the bringer of *bákkheúein* to the *bákkhoi*, an epithet from the ecstasy of his followers—eventually became simply Bakkhos, Ecstatic, and a bacchant himself.¹⁴² Although there are many cases of a god being named for their followers—many for Dionysos himself—in none other does the god *become* the follower.¹⁴³ Dionysos dons the garb of the worshipper, their rituals and disguises, and inverts the mimesis of the mysteries.¹⁴⁴ So in the *Hymns* “he himself stirs up the triennial revel again”.¹⁴⁵ The revel led by Dionysos is not only the re-enactment of his dismemberment, but the ritual worship by Dionysos of his dismembered victims, who are possessed of him.¹⁴⁶ In this way each is substituted for the other: the surrogate Pentheus in the world of the living, whose drawn-out suffering reaches in the moment of death an epiphany of revelation, and the supplicant Dionysos in the realm of the dead, child united with mother.¹⁴⁷ Worshiper and deity together undertake metonymic reciprocity: as Dionysos becomes Bakkhos, so the *bákkhoi* are reborn to the breast of their mother Persephone, as Bernabé details, “in which the *mystēs* identifies with Dionysus (let us remember that he is βᾶκχος [bákkhos] himself).”¹⁴⁸ Enacting the *Hymns* thus not only invokes the deities within them, it asserts their mutual identity with the *bákkhoi*.

Orpheus represents a shared identity himself, for his *Hymns* take place in an eternal present shared with the *mystai*.¹⁴⁹ Within this ritual simultaneity, Hekate,

¹⁴¹ Jiménez San Cristóbal, “Meaning” 46.

¹⁴² Jiménez San Cristóbal 46-47; Santamaría 38-39.

¹⁴³ Faraone, “Rushing” 318; Ford 345-47; Santamaría 40-49.

¹⁴⁴ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 30i, 52i; Cole 273; Faraone, “Gender” 131-32; Santamaría 44, 48-49. See *OH* “To ... Triennial Feasts [Trieterikos]” 52.3-8, on Dionysos leading his own procession, and “Hymn to Dionysos Bassareus and Triennial” 45.2-4, as the subject of his own frenzy.

¹⁴⁵ *OH* “To ... Annual Feasts [Amphietos]” 53.5. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 53.6n.

¹⁴⁶ See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 50i; Porres Caballero 159-61; Santamaría 51-52; Valdés Guía 106-07.

¹⁴⁷ Athanassakis & Wolkow xiv; Barrett 338-40, 344-45; Bassi 232-33; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 95-96; Buxton 86; Faraone “Gender” 126-27; Foley 113, 119-123, 130; Macías Otero, “Dionysos” 334-37, 344-46; Schwartz 319-25. Pentheus is explored in chapter 3.

¹⁴⁸ Bernabé, “Imago” 123-24. See Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 92; Edmonds, “Festivals” 185; Jiménez San Cristóbal 52; Martín Hernández, “Herodotus” 256-57.

¹⁴⁹ Herrero de Jáuregui, “Poet” 227, 230-35; Morand 213; Riedweg 225-26.

“Herder of bulls”, blesses the ritual oxherd—a hierophant, the Orphic *boukólos*—to later become herself both bull and torch-bearer, that is, Dionysos-Iakkhos.¹⁵⁰ Each hierophant cyclically raises the god within themselves. Scholars thus observe that while the epithets that comprise the *Hymns* are divorced from any explicit narrative, each pseudonym constructs a complex web between identities, a chain of implicit allusions wrought in the specialised knowledge of the *mystai* themselves, functioning as a synecdoche of the unfolding Orphic universe.¹⁵¹ The use of epithets as a syncretic tool in Orphic poetry is extensive.¹⁵² Anne-France Morand illustrates this in the hymn summoning Phanes as “unspeakable Ericepaios” noting that the deity is not yet thrice-born.¹⁵³ Only later, in the hymn to Dionysos Trieterikos is he “Unspeakable mystery, thrice born, ...| Protogonos, ... Ericepaios, father and son of the gods”.¹⁵⁴ As Morand explains, “assimilations are not indiscriminate mergers, since they appear at different times of the cosmogony”.¹⁵⁵ It is thus only following Protogonos that Selene, incipient in “nocturnal” and “saffron cloaked” Hekate,¹⁵⁶ becomes “torch-bearing”, leading the revels over which Hekate presides.¹⁵⁷

The pantheon, a fluid system of relationships between aspects, produces a continual dynamic tension, both union and division.¹⁵⁸ As Phanes is Eros (Love), unifier of opposites, “the cosmic force of love and attraction”,¹⁵⁹ so the *Hymns* unite Physis and Pan as *pantophuēs*, “all-begetting”, that which grows and that by which it does so.¹⁶⁰ Yet Phanes is also Metis (Wisdom), or synthesis from analysis, and Persephone is instead divided: “O Persephone, you nourish all, always, and kill them too”,¹⁶¹ as Athanassakis and Wolkow show, “*Phersephonē pherbeis ... kai ...*

¹⁵⁰ *OH* “To Hekate” 1.7. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 1.3n, 1.10n; Jiménez San Cristóbal “Dionysos” 276-81. Hence torchbearing Artemis 36.3, Demeter 40.11, Trieterikos 52.3, and Silenos Satyros 54.10.

¹⁵¹ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 30i; Bernabé, “Gods” 440; Herrero de Jáuregui 227, 238-39; Morand 214, 222-23.

¹⁵² Bernabé 424-25; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 88, 92; Herrero de Jáuregui 280; Janko, col. XXII.

¹⁵³ *OH* “To Protogonos” 6.4-5, trans. Morand 219. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 6.3n, 6.4n.

¹⁵⁴ *OH* “To Trieterikos” 52.5-6, trans. Morand 220.

¹⁵⁵ Morand 220. See also Dionysos Bassareus Trieterikos “conceived in fire” (*OH* 45.1) referencing the preceding hymn to Semele, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 45.1n; Morand 214.

¹⁵⁶ *OH* “To Hekate” 1.7, 1.2.

¹⁵⁷ *OH* “To Selene” 9.2-3. Hence Artemis follows, as above. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 9.3n, 36.3n.

¹⁵⁸ Bernabé 439; Suárez de la Torre, “Apollo” 58; Versnel 27-28, 34-37.

¹⁵⁹ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 58i. See also 6i, 6.1n, 6.2n, 6.5-7n, 6.9n, 58.4n, 58.5-7n. The same is said of Aphrodite in the Derveni papyrus, Janko, col. XXI.

¹⁶⁰ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 11i. See also 14.1n, 34.1n; *OH* “To Zeus” 15.10. Physis is accurately Phúsis.

¹⁶¹ *OH* “Hymn to Persephone” 29.16.

phoneueis’ (‘Persephone, you nourish ... and ... kill’).¹⁶² Hence Athene Tritogeneia (Born-for-Three), the fully-formed daughter of Metis and leader of the *thíasoi*,¹⁶³ accounts for and inverts thrice-born Dionysos: the preconceived replacing ever-arriving Bakkhos and initiating the reversal of the *bákkhoi* themselves, whose own rebirth leads to initiation within the hymnal cycle of the mysteries.¹⁶⁴ We may also compare the many oscillating dichotomies within the verses to Dionysos in the *Hymns*,¹⁶⁵ with the deliberately ironic and thus revelatory use of conflicted epithets by the *bákkhos* Euripides in *The Bakkhai*, which emphasises truth and falsehood by omission and ironic juxtaposition.¹⁶⁶ Thus, when “child of Earth” in the hymn to Kronos immediately follows the use of that epithet for Herakles,¹⁶⁷ by the one hand the hymnodist deepens their association, aligning the labours of the *mystēs*, whose “twelve deeds of valour stretch from east to west”,¹⁶⁸ with the intellect of Promethean Kronos, “father of time”.¹⁶⁹ However, in so doing, the *Hymns* also associate the transformative labours of askesis and apotheosis with the differentiation of the cosmos—a striking apart by the mental divisiveness of Kronos as Nous (Mind), as the Derveni papyrus asserts—that is, the individuation *from* unity which Kronos enacts.¹⁷⁰ Thus, by the other hand, the universe itself is torn asunder. Ultimately, Herakles-Kronos, Eros-Metis, or Dionysos-Phanes, are each a singular force, both unifying and disrupting the cosmos at once.

IV. Pantheisma: Sparagmos and the Cosmos.

The Orphic cosmogony is a descent to becoming. The Orphic cosmos is thus a unity of relational aspects within the *Hymns* that “lovingly mingle and twine”, expressing a

¹⁶² 29.15-16n. Parentheses, ellipses, and italics in original. Bolded for clarity.

¹⁶³ *OH* “To Athene” 32.13. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 32.13n.

¹⁶⁴ Athanassakis & Wolkow xviii, 30i.

¹⁶⁵ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 15.8-9n, 30.4n, 30.6n, 50.2n, 52.2-3n.

¹⁶⁶ Encinas Reguero 353-63.

¹⁶⁷ *OH* “To Kronos” 13.2. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 12.1n. The initiates are also invoked as Kronos, “child of Earth, child of Starry Sky”. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 4i, 13.6n; Herrero de Jáuregui 279-80.

¹⁶⁸ *OH* “To Herakles” 12.12. Here conflated with Apollon as Paian, compare “archer and seer” (*OH* 12.5), “O illustrious Paion” (*OH* 12.10). See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 8.13n, 12i, 12.3n, 12.5n, 12.10n. That is, Phanes. This is also the wheel of Stars, the “noble race for works of renown” (*OH* “To the Stars [Astron]” 7.13), from *drómos*, a progression, see Athanassakis & Wolkow 7.12-13n. See chapter 2.

¹⁶⁹ *OH* 12.3. Hence “prudent lord” (*OH* 13.7) as *promētheu*, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 13.7n.

¹⁷⁰ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 13.1n; Casadesús Bordoy, “Castration” 378; Janko, col. XIV-XV. See Herrero de Jáuregui, “Dionysos” 239-40; Morand 213. That is, Metis, the other aspect of Phanes, as above.

pervasive pantheistic divinity.¹⁷¹ The Dionysian is mutually its own ancestor and descendent, devouring itself in unification.¹⁷² The Empedoklean elements within the *Hymns* thus describe an anthropomorphised creation,¹⁷³ while the *bákkhoi* create themselves out of themselves, in “a chain of deaths”.¹⁷⁴ This metempsychosis is thus the katabasis or sparagmos upon the cosmic scale, that is, a cosmogony as anthropogony.¹⁷⁵ In the *Hymns*, “Physis’ invincible drive”, urging towards being, is hence identified with the “roaring whirl” of Ouranos,¹⁷⁶ the “dreadful Necessity” of cyclical incarnation.¹⁷⁷ This is the spinning lure of Dionysos by Titanic earth in the Zagreus myth.¹⁷⁸ Fiery Phanes, “self-born, untiring”, the mental harmony of Eros-Metis, is divided, his “endless whirl” in the *Hymns* differentiated by Kronos in cyclical individuation.¹⁷⁹ The pneuma descends through the Stoic assemblage of the self.¹⁸⁰ Thus airy psyche dismembers and yet consolidates itself, from the fiery hybridity of Aither, “driven everywhere by the wind. | Filled with blazing thunder, filled with water”, to that of Erebos, the chthonic mist, “blown by fair breezes, | [to] send fruit-nourishing rains to mother Earth.”¹⁸¹ Dionysos-Phanes descends to Earth.

Psyche is imprisoned in being. As air is psyche,¹⁸² so water is fluid *hylē*, the formlessness of unconscious substance. Athanassakis and Wolkow argue that oceanic Proteus is a *dēmiurgós*, shaping humanity by containing all shapes within himself, the “first-born, who showed the beginning of all nature”, as the *Hymns* declare.¹⁸³

¹⁷¹ *OH* “To Physis” 10.11.

¹⁷² Athanassakis & Wolkow, 3i, 4.1n, 4.2n, 8.2n, 10.10n, 15.3-5n, 15.7n, 52.6n; Bernabé, “Gods” 425-27; Bremmer, *Initiation* 62; Casadesús Bordoy, “Castration” 377-81; Edmonds, “Orphic” 80-81; Graf, “Text” 65-66; Herrero de Jáuregui, “Poet” 239-41; Janko, col. XIII-XVI; Morand 219-20; Torjussen 14. Hence reconciling Hesiod. This explains the triple generation of Nyx, as mother, wife, and child, debated Torjussen 11, as per the Derveni Papyrus, Janko, col. XX-XXII, XXV-XXVI.

¹⁷³ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 1.2n, 5.2n, 5.4n, 6.9n, 8.1n, 10.14-16n, 11i, 14.9-10n, 15i, 16.4n; Bernabé 428; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 88-89; Buxton 87-88; Janko, col. XVII-XIX, XXII; Torjussen 15-17.

¹⁷⁴ Kahle 153-54, discussing a passage of Orpheus, inspired by Herakleitos. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, *OH* 73i; Herrero de Jáuregui 241-42; Janko, col. IX, XV-XVI; Morand 213-14; Nakajima 194-95.

¹⁷⁵ Boned 35; Foley 125; García-Gasco Villarubia 111-12; Porres Caballero, “Rebirth” 127-29.

¹⁷⁶ *OH* “To Sky [Ouranos]” 4.6, 4.4.

¹⁷⁷ *OH* “To Night [Nyx]” 3.11. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 4.6n.

¹⁷⁸ Levaniouk 165-66, 175-79.

¹⁷⁹ *OH* “To the Sun [Helios]” 8.3, 8.7. This whirl is shared by Ouranos and Protogonos with Zeus and Physis, and compared to the phoenix, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 8.3n, 8.7n.

¹⁸⁰ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 13.1n, 15i, 64i. This is reversed in the final stages of the collection.

¹⁸¹ *OH* “To the Clouds [Nephelai]” 21.2-7. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 16i, 16.4n, 21i.

¹⁸² Athanassakis & Wolkow, 16.3n; Janko, col. XVII-XIX. Hence “Life does not exist without you, growth [i.e. Physis] does not exist without you” (*OH* “To Hera” 16.5). As above.

¹⁸³ *OH* “To Proteus” 25.2. See also “Physis was the first to place everything in Proteus” (*OH* 25.9), “ever

Okeanos is likewise the transitional barrier of being: “Your waves, O Okeanos, gird the boundaries of the earth”.¹⁸⁴ He is the tempestuous delineation of Hades or the Isles of the Blest, that is, “the crossing of Okeanos for the initiate”.¹⁸⁵ The serpentine rivers of Okeanos are the Hermetic *kērúkeion* itself: the rings cosmos and chaos; formation and transformation; being and desire—by which being becomes.¹⁸⁶ The hymn to Tethys thus intones “your waters feed wild beasts”,¹⁸⁷ necessitating the transformation to rain by fire and air. This entreaty for the “mother of dark clouds” is hence the reversal of Hera’s descent.¹⁸⁸ Thus, although Athanassakis and Wolkow note a lack of profundity in the thalassic hymns,¹⁸⁹ it is through the sea gods that pneuma is imprisoned in earth, as the *Hymns* reveal: “Demeter’s sacred throne trembles when you hold prisoner | the gusty winds driven to your gloomy depths.”¹⁹⁰ Poseidon, driving desire, is thus both “dark-maned holder of the earth” and “Shaker of the earth, deep roaring ruler of the waters”.¹⁹¹ He is the transitionary *omphalós*: the navel of the world; the stone swallowed by Kronos of concretised falsehood, saving Zeus in supplantation, and forming Poseidon’s own shrine at the heart of Delphi, lost to Apollon as was Athens to Athene.¹⁹² Poseidon’s displacement realigns desire to intellect, the liberation of the winds of psyche from its earthly prison, stilling the upheaving earth, that ships may sail Okeanos’ span.¹⁹³ As the unconsciousness of the waters imprisons the breath of psyche in chthonic caves, so the fluidity of the *mystai* is the very tool of their liberation.

Gaia (Earth), both mother and prison, is not only the fertility of Physis and Pan, but the “pains of labour” deplored within the *Hymns*, the tearing of the ploughed

turning the swift stream | into an unceasing eddy, flowing in all things | circular and ever changing form” (*OH* “To Physis” 10.22-23). See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 25i, 25.1n, 25.2-3n, 25.4-8n, 25.9n.

¹⁸⁴ *OH* “To Okeanos” 83.3.

¹⁸⁵ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 83.3n. See also 83i, 83.4-5n.

¹⁸⁶ Hence Aphrodite, desire itself. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 55i. This is explored in chapter 2.

¹⁸⁷ *OH* “To the Sea [Thalassa]” 22.6.

¹⁸⁸ *OH* 22.7. Hera is herself Nephele (Cloud). See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 16i, 16.4n, 22i, 22.7n.

¹⁸⁹ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 17i, 22i, 23i.

¹⁹⁰ *OH* “To Nereus” 23.5-6. Athanassakis & Wolkow compare Pandora, 23.5-7n, 43i.

¹⁹¹ *OH* “To Poseidon” 17.1, 17.4. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 17.5-6n, 26.6n.

¹⁹² Athanassakis & Wolkow, 17i. Yet only after possession by Themis, who is Gaia, “the first to show mortals the holy oracle | as prophetess of the gods in her Delphic hideaway | on Pythian ground where Python was king” (*OH* “To Themis” 79.3-5). See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 79i, 79.3-6n. Hence all soteriology is qualified by the earth, e.g. “the waves are your blossoms, O gracious one, as you urge horses and chariots on” (*OH* 17.5). This is explored in chapter 2.

¹⁹³ *OH* 17.9-10, 22.9-10, 23.7-8. This is death. The body as prison/tomb in Orphism is explored below.

earth.¹⁹⁴ She is the unasked for binding of life to flesh, a soul wandering in “a meadow in Tartaros, thick-shaded and dark”, the tomb of the Titans and thus of the *mystai* themselves.¹⁹⁵ The *Hymns* thus invoke “O Plouton, holder of the keys to the whole earth”, conflating fertility and imprisonment both:¹⁹⁶

To mankind you give the wealth of the year’s fruits,
yours is the third portion, earth, queen of all,
seat of the gods, mighty lap of mortals.
Your throne rests on a dark realm,
the realm of distant, of untiring, of windless, and of impassive
Hades;
it does rest on gloomy Acheron, the river who girds the roots of the
earth.¹⁹⁷

Although a distinction is discernible here between Hades and Earth, each continues through the other: only by the realm of the dead is the “wealth of the year’s fruits” released. Note also the profound irony of Hades, often described in terms of lack,¹⁹⁸ as specifically “*windless*”, remembering that the *psūkhai* of the dead are the winds of pneuma. The earth-as-underworld, supposedly filled with souls, is *aching* with want. If Gaia is a prison, inescapable Hades is an open door, leading to rebirth.

The *mystai* are explicitly identified with the Titans: the “glorious children of Sky and Earth, | ancestors of our fathers”,¹⁹⁹ by which the *Hymns* reference Dionysos-Zagreus, according to Plutarch, in “a riddling myth about rebirth”.²⁰⁰ As the action of Khronos is Inescapable and Inevitable,²⁰¹ “the creation of a time subordinated to a rigid norm”,²⁰² so psyche is cast within the rigid confines of the body, circumscribed by itself, absorbed and reborn. The body in Orphic allegory, *sōma*, is both tomb,

¹⁹⁴ *OH* “To Earth [Ge]” 26.5. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 40.1n, 51.14n; Janko, col. XXII

¹⁹⁵ *OH* “To Plouton” 18.2. Note the conflation here between Tartaros, the asphodel meadows, and the sacred meadows of the initiate. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 18.2n, 37i, 37.3n. This is explored below.

¹⁹⁶ *OH* 18.4. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 18.4n, 26.4n.

¹⁹⁷ *OH* 18.5-10.

¹⁹⁸ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 18.9n; Bernabé, “Imago” 95.

¹⁹⁹ *OH* “To the Titans” 37.1-2. Whether referencing the intermediary Gigantes as argued by Edmonds, *Ancient Orphism* 360-74, 392-95, is moot in terms of the ultimate descent from the Titans, ie, “from you are descended all toiling mortals, | ... | of all generations of the world born of you” (*OH* 37.4-6). See Herrero de Jáuregui, “Poet” 235; Henrichs, “Dismembered” 61-64.

²⁰⁰ Plutarch, writing on Empedokles, *OF* 318, qtd. Burges Watson, “Erotic Mysteries” 61. See also Bernabé, “Gods” 432; Casadesús Bordoy, “Dionysian” 387-90; Obbink, “Dionysos” 289-90; Porres Caballero, “Rebirth” 127-28.

²⁰¹ That is, his wife, called Ananke, Inevitability, and Adrasteia, Inescapable, as per *OF* 77, who together produce Aither and Khaos, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 55.3n.

²⁰² Bernabé 434.

sēma, and thus imprisoned, *sōzein*.²⁰³ So humanity dwells “in Tartarean homes”.²⁰⁴ Sokrates argued that the Orphics thereby considered the psyche kept safe until its price to Persephone’s cryptic grief was paid, and so too the gravestone marks the existence of the grave.²⁰⁵ Yet Hades stands void in the *Hymns*, empty and unfulfilled, the *psūkhai* spun out upon the wheel of rebirth. Plouton, like Physis, like Pan, is the frenzy of Dionysos, bringing both life and death: “as you dissolve whatever ripens, | father and mother of all”.²⁰⁶ The *Orphikoí* constructed not a binary but a continuum, a unity of Eros and Thanatos, that *bakkheúein* and askesis culminated in the liberation of the psyche from the tyranny of existence: one transforming the other by virtue of its virtue.²⁰⁷ They thus reconfigure the golden aeon of Kronos, who frees the Titans from the womb of Earth.²⁰⁸ Yet humanity is not imprisoned in Tartaros, but has taken it for ourselves. So the *mystai* plead to the Titans: “banish harsh anger | if some earthly forefather of mine stormed your homes”;²⁰⁹ so Demeter flees the chthonic serpent of Zeus and yet becomes a serpent herself, birthing serpentine Persephone,²¹⁰ uniting the earth and the spirit it fled.

While Demeter is the “spirit of the unripe fruit” within the *Hymns*,²¹¹ it is Persephone, child of life and bride of death, who harvests the earth’s blossoms upon her Nysian meadow. This is the grief for which Persephone must be repaid, not the *death* but *birth* of Dionysos by she who “bore divine Euboulos by yielding to human need”.²¹² This is the depth of the katabasis, the rage of Melinoe in the *Hymns* as “a two-bodied spectre sprang forth from Persephone’s fury”, a fury, we note, directed not at Hades, nor the Titans, but Zeus.²¹³ As the violated conception of Kore-

²⁰³ Athanassakis & Wolkow xiv; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 80-81; Burges Watson 59-62; Riedweg, 229. *Sozein* is derived from *sōizo*, kept. This is also found in Plato.

²⁰⁴ *OH* 37.3.

²⁰⁵ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 87.3-4n; Graf, “Text” 58-59; Herrero de Jáuregui, “Dialogues” 290.

²⁰⁶ *OH* “To Physis” 10.17-18. Note the similarities with the hymn to Persephone, *OH* 29.16, above. See *OH* “To Pan” 11.21-23, and “To Plouton” 18.11, 17.

²⁰⁷ Burges Watson, *Mousike* 3; Casadesús Bordoy 394-97; Herrero de Jáuregui, 288-89; Tortorelli Ghidini, 153-54. That is, the cycle of Apollon, Athanassakis & Wolkow, *OH* 34.15n.

²⁰⁸ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 13i.

²⁰⁹ *OH* 37.8. That is, the bodies of the Titans themselves. See Faraone, “*Orphic*” 399-402.

²¹⁰ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 14i, 15i, 40i. I.e., the injury of Deio/Demeter, see Janko, col. XXII.

²¹¹ *OH* “To Eleusinian Demeter” 40.5.

²¹² *OH* “To Mother Antaia” 41.8. Athanassakis & Wolkow do not reconcile the identity of Eubouleus as either Hades or Zeus-Dionysos within this passage, yet note the apotheosis of the *mystai*, 41.8n.

²¹³ *OH* “To Melinoe” 71.5. The cycle is thus repeated. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 71.2-3n, 71.4-5n.

Persephone anticipates that of Dionysos, so the sparagmos of Dionysos, as Wildberg asserts, lost in self-contemplation in the Titans' Lacanian mirror, is also anticipated by the divided body of Zeus, dispersed as the self-pervading cosmos.²¹⁴ The crime of Zeus, the grief of Persephone, is life itself.

Orphism sought to reconcile this apparent paradox. The violent castration of Ouranos by Kronos—replicating the sundering of Phanes by Khronos—enacts the emergence of individuation.²¹⁵ The death of Orpheus is likewise a sparagmos, an *órgia* of *mystai* and maenads as each recognises themselves within the other in the epiphany of *ékstasis*.²¹⁶ Victims of sparagmos deny and yet incarnate as Dionysos:²¹⁷ a death, renunciation, and rebirth; a katabasis. The serpent-wound *kērúkeion* unifies the juxtaposed in the descent to the underworld, just as fragmentary Dionysos is reassembled in the temple of Apollon,²¹⁸ to, as Athanassakis and Wolkow state, “reconstitute the esoteric knowledge that leads to a revelation”.²¹⁹ Sparagmos is thus the poetic moment of union between life and death; as Herrero de Jáuregui observes, the mystery of the oracle is solved in the revelation of the *mystēs*' own identity. The barrier to initiation is not paradox, but the appearance of paradox where none exists.²²⁰ So Pan in the *Hymns* separates the elements even as he unites them;²²¹ so Rhea-Kybele, although assembling Dionysos, is propelled by his death, “drawn by bull-slayers”, that is, the lions associated with Herakles, the *mystēs* labouring towards apotheosis.²²² This is why Ouranos is paired in the *Hymns* not with Gaia but Nyx, each an incomplete oscillation between the other, not Earth and Sky, nor Night and Day, but non-being and vacuous potential: darkness and empty space.²²³ The bone

²¹⁴ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 30i, 37i; Bernabé, “Gods” 429-30, 440-41; García-Gasco Villarubia 112; Janko, col. XVI-XIX; Ward 130-31; Wildberg 225-31.

²¹⁵ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 4i; Casadesús Bordoy, “Castration” 378-79, 382-83; Janko, col. XIII-XV.

²¹⁶ Athanassakis & Wolkow xiv, 45i, 45.3n; Bernabé 436-37; Burges Watson, “Erotic Mysteries” 57-58; Tortorelli Ghidini 149-50. A later adaptation. See Burges Watson 51-53; Heath 165-67.

²¹⁷ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 45.5n; Georgoudi, “Dionysos” 52-54, and “Gods” 95-102; Faraone, “Gender” 314; Porres Caballero, “Maenadic Ecstasy” 178; Tortorelli Ghidini 150-51; Valdés Guía 106-07. Compare the lovers of Pan, who although rejecting yet become a part of nature, Athanassakis & Wolkow, 11.9n, 11.19n.

²¹⁸ Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 73; Christopolous 205, 208, 214-15; Henrichs, “One” 556-60; Tortorelli Ghidini 154; Valdés Guía 108-11, 114; Zabriskie 439-40.

²¹⁹ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 30i.

²²⁰ Herrero de Jáuregui, “OF” 192-93.

²²¹ OH “To Pan” 11.13-18. The same is true of Nomos (Law), see Athanassakis & Wolkow 64.2-4n.

²²² OH “To Rhea” 14.2. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 14i, 14.2n.

²²³ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 3.8-11n, 4i, 4.7n. This is explored in chapter 2.

tablets of Olbia, carved “*bíos thánatos bíos*”, read not only of a sequential interchangeability in life and death, but of the functional interdependence between them, a simultaneity.²²⁴ The leaves of Pelinna read similarly, “You have died and you have been born, thrice blessed, on this day”.²²⁵ This is the rebirth Dionysos provides.²²⁶ a Herakleitean interdependence of opposites *because* of the very tension of their opposition,²²⁷ symbolised in the consumption and regurgitation of the gods by K(h)ronos,²²⁸ the bone-white masks of the Titans standing before Dionysos-Zagreus, faces chalked with ritual gypsum,²²⁹ and even pale-faced Agriope, Orpheus’ bride who was known in the underworld as Eurydike, an epithet of Kore-Persephone.²³⁰ All represent the conflicted symbol of seen and unseen: the light of life and the pallid mask of the dead; the white and radiant cypress, tree of death and mourning, standing in the Orphic leaves beside the Lethe—of psychic Oblivion and *thus* rebirth.²³¹ This was the essence of initiation.

The initiate’s struggle is to navigate between these tensions, to submit their dreams to introspection, their desires to transfiguration.²³² They must slay the outer body of the psyche to free it, let it die so that it might be reborn, howling with bacchic frenzy.²³³ The *mystai* renounce Oblivion through disciplined askesis, to face the truth of self-perception.²³⁴ They sunder the mythically unbreakable chains of Kronos, supplanting them with the chains of virtue, binding themselves to Persephone’s blessed meadow in the very heart of Hades.²³⁵ They renounce the Kouretes’ strength,

²²⁴ OF 464, qtd. Graf 56. See also Burges Watson 57-58; Christopoulos 216; Herrero de Jáuregui 190-92; Tortorelli Ghidini 148.

²²⁵ OF 485-86, qtd. Herrero de Jáuregui 189.

²²⁶ Faraone, “Rushing” 324-25; Graf 56; Martín Hernández, “Herodotus” 252-55.

²²⁷ Wildberg, 213-15.

²²⁸ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 13.13n.

²²⁹ Christopolous 220; García-Gasco Villarubia, 113-14; Patón Cordero 119-22.

²³⁰ Christopolous 220-21. Eurydike and her relationship with Persephone is central to chapter 3.

²³¹ Christopolous 221; García-Gasco Villarubia, 115-16; Herrero de Jáuregui, “Dialogues” 289; Jiménez San Cristóbal, “Water” 165-67; Patón Cordero 121-22; Riedweg 219.

²³² Bernabé, “Imago” 102; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 78, 93-94; Herrero de Jáuregui 285; Most, “Fire” 127-28, 132; Zabriskie 440.

²³³ Burges Watson, *Mousike* 7-8; Casadesús Bordoy, “Dionysian” 397-98; Riedweg, 252-53; Schwartz 305-07, 312. Hence the mysteries of Korybas, explored in chapter 2.

²³⁴ Bernabé 123; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 74; Burges Watson, “Erotic Mysteries” 58, and *Mousike* 3; Calame 216; Casadesús Bordoy 389; Herrero de Jáuregui 281-83; Santamaría Álvarez 215; Tortorelli Ghidini 153-54; Zabriskie 442.

²³⁵ See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 13.4n. This is explored in chapter 2.

“the weapons of Ares”,²³⁶ which destroy themselves, to destroy themselves anew:

when you fret angrily over mankind,
... you ruin men themselves
... the great deep-eddying sea groans,
lofty trees are uprooted, they fall upon the earth
the noisy tremor of the leaves echoes in the sky.²³⁷

The whirling roar of Dionysos is turned against itself. Korybas is slain in order to arise.²³⁸ In short, the *Hymns* form a cyclical katabasis,²³⁹ a ring-composed sparagmos by which the fragmentary identity of individual and collective are resituated, if not restored.²⁴⁰ The *Orphikoí* thus reject the violent materialism of society to better understand the selves within it.²⁴¹ We may contemplate that when Damaskios, last scholar of the Athenian academy, wrote of the fragmentation of psyche in his commentary on Plato’s *Phaedo*, that “This is what the Titans do to us in that we too tear apart the Dionysos in us”,²⁴² perhaps he spoke against such violence inflicted upon the psychological-spiritual self, or perhaps he spoke of its necessity.

²³⁶ *OH* “To the Kouretes” 38.1. This line is repeated at 38.7, connecting the protective and destructive, 38.1-13, to the culmination, “Immortal gods, you nurture, you also destroy” (38.14).

²³⁷ *OH* 38.15-19.

²³⁸ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 39i. For Korybas is the greatest enemy of the *bákkhoi*, themselves.

²³⁹ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 38i, 39i, 69i, 87i; Graf 62; Macías Otero, “Echoes” 25-26; Riedweg 228-30, 236, 247.

²⁴⁰ Henrichs, “One” 562, 567-69.

²⁴¹ Henrichs 575-77, who writes, “we are no longer dealing with a god, but with a metaphor” (575).

²⁴² Damaskios, *In Phaedo* 1.9, qtd. Henrichs 575.

Chapter Two: KATABASIS

βίος θάνατος βίος | ἀλήθεια

“Life Death Life | Truth” — OF 463, Olbia.

The *katábasis*, the descent to the underworld, is central to Orpheus and to Orphism. This chapter examines how the ecstasies of Bakkhos, the *bákkhoi* in *The Orphic Hymns*, undertake their return to the breast of Persephone, mother of them both. They renounce Lethe for Mnemosyne and return to the primordial unity of Night, the incipient potential of being who awaits release in the tearing *sparagmós* of Dionysos. This chapter first examines how the constitutive katabasis of the *Hymns* forms a descent and return to Night, the psyche guiding itself to its distant shore. We thus encounter a longing for this Orphic darkness, understood as both intense mystic experience and psychological metaphor, by scholars and poets alike. This chapter next reveals the coincidence of both the terrors of Hades and blessed meadow of Persephone with the souls, the *psūkhaí*, of the initiates or *mystai* themselves. It thereby considers the apotropaic quality of the chthonic agents of dark Persephone, resisting themselves by simultaneously embodying their opposite. I thus explore the necessity of the *mystai*, in their own process of becoming, of conquering themselves. This tension is consequently observed in the works of Nietzsche and Jung as a significant appropriation from Orphism. Artist becomes shaman, transforming both themselves the world around them. I will argue that these authors reiterate the Orphic concept of a deconstructive harmony of opposites, that is, the *phármakon*, both poison and cure, or the *omphalós*, simultaneously sacred and illusive, permanent and ephemeral, a concept that Chapter Three will assert is likewise essential to Rilke and H.D.’s own adaptations of the Orphic katabasis.

I. Melanosis: Darkness and Despair.¹

The first step of katabasis is death. It is a return to darkness, a psychological despair, by which the old self may be undone. In ancient Greek truth was *alētheia*, “non-oblivion”: the Orphic renunciation of the waters of the Lethe. Revelation is thus remembrance, as Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal argue, the initiates’ drink at the spring of Mnemosyne, requiring a primordial unity to which they return.² In the practice of justice and moral purity by *áskēsis*, the pool of Mnemosyne reflects the “pure light” of Orphic Phanes in *The Orphic Hymns*.³ Hence we read the ritual proclamation of the *mystai* in the gold leaves: “pure I come from the pure”.⁴ In the leaves, the *mystai* face the dark and lifeless gloom of Tartaros, held back by the sacred meadow of Persephone in its heart. They escape neither suffering nor sorrow, yet revel at Hades’ very throne.⁵ The *bákkhoi* join the retinue of Bakkhos, to become themselves the light of Persephone’s meadow.⁶ The revelation of light is, in fact, a return to darkness, to non-being as the precursor of becoming. That is, in Orphic theogony, all things come from Night, and to Night, then, they return. Within the *Hymns*, as Persephone is mother to Bakkhos and *bákkhos*, so Nyx (Night), mother of bright Phanes, is herself “mother of gods and men”.⁷ Nyx is “dreadful Necessity” within the *Hymns*,⁸ the winged serpent entwining Phanes with serpentine Khronos, thus forming together the Hermetic *kērúkeion*, the twin ouroboroi of Time producing the differentiation of Khaos and Aither from Ouranos, or Substance from Space, in the descent to being, a cosmic katabasis.⁹ As mother of Eros-Phanes, Nyx is also Aphrodite, the “goddess of generation” within the *Hymns*.¹⁰ In Eleusinian equivalence she is mother to herself, “dark veiled” Tethys, the sea of potential wed to the cosmic stygian threshold, Okeanos.¹¹ In all of these manifestations, Nyx signifies

¹ These headings represent the four stages of Jungian alchemical transformation in katabasis.

² Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 75-76.

³ *OH* “To Protogonos” 6.8. As explored in chapter 1.

⁴ *OF* 488-90 qtd. Bernabé, “Imago” 98. See also 98-99, 126.

⁵ Bernabé 95-98, 122-25. Hades and Tartaros were conflated in Orphism also.

⁶ Bernabé 122-23; Casadesús Bordoy, “Dionysian” 397.

⁷ *OH* “To Night [Nyx]” 3.1. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 3.1n; Bernabé, “Gods” 434. Persephone as the mother of the *mystai* and the conflation of Bakkhos and the *bákkhoi* were explored in chapter 1.

⁸ *OH* 3.11.

⁹ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 4i, 5i, 13.3n, 55.3n. A cycle replicated with Kronos, see Most, “Fire” 118-19.

¹⁰ *OH* “To Aphrodite” 55.2. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 3.2n, 5i, 59i.

¹¹ *OH* “To the Sea [Thalassa]” 22.2. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 22i, 22.2n, 22.7n. Compare “Dark

the process of wrenching being from non-being, an emptiness that is both herald and agent of becoming. As the Derveni commentator writes, “whatever . . . dissolves, night cools and solidifies”.¹² Hence, the hymn to Hera proclaims that *pneûma*, the world-soul Hera, consolidates herself in Night, “you lodge yourself in dark hollows”.¹³ In the *Hymns* Nyx is herself revelation in the form of Selene: “lady of the stars, through your own light | shine and save, O maiden, your new initiates”.¹⁴ Night presides over *her* initiates in a way only two of the *Hymns* repeat: first to Themis, usurped chthonic prophet of Delphi, who as mother of the Moirai (Fates), is Nyx herself;¹⁵ and next in the katabasis of Demeter-Persephone,¹⁶ whose descent to darkness and transformation the *mystai* themselves embrace.

The *mystai* sought Night in the *teletai*. This darkness was essential to becoming, and thus will be essential to Romanticist and modernist adaptation, as we shall see. Menelaos Christopoulos argues that Orpheus is himself subsumed in darkness and only thus, like the blind seer Tiresias, comes to prophecy.¹⁷ The Sun, by contrast, is not only the light of the soul but of the waking day, obscuring the subtle reality of the Stars.¹⁸ To Betsy Perluss Persephone thus “tears apart her own innocence”, rejecting unknowing passivity for autonomy by willingly consuming the Dionysian pomegranate that binds her to the darkness of Hades.¹⁹ This same longing for spiritual autonomy was expressed across Romanticism, like Goethe for “Orphic, Dionysian darknesses”, that is, for an undoing in order to become. This, in turn, informs both Nietzsche and Jung.²⁰ Each represents an unfolding and dichotomous tension between nature and mystery by which the psyche both reveals the world and yet conceals it by belief, thus creating the perceptions from which actions arise.²¹ The

veiled Leto” (*OH* 35.1), mother of Apollon and Artemis. Persephone-Demeter is explored in chapter 1.

¹² Janko, col. X. She also “prophesied from the *adyton*” that is, the sanctum sanctorum (col. XI).

¹³ *OH* “To Hera” 16.1. As does Physis (Becoming), see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 10.6-7n.

¹⁴ *OH* “To Selene” 9.12. Selene is explicitly Nyx in ritual context, as likewise Artemis and Hekate, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 3.4n.

¹⁵ *OH* “To Themis” 79.11-12. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 59j, 79j, 79.7-10n.

¹⁶ *OH* “To Mother Antaia” 41.10. Any explicit narrative at all within the *Hymns* is itself “remarkable”, Athanassakis & Wolkow, 41i. See also Herrero de Jáuregui, “Poet” 227.

¹⁷ Christopoulos 210-11, 215-16. Tiresias also shares in the gender fluidity emphasised in Orphism.

¹⁸ Torallas Tovar 409.

¹⁹ Perluss 95. See also Perluss 94, 101-02; Zabriskie 430-31. This is explored in chapter 3.

²⁰ Goethe, qtd. Bishop 196. See Bishop 190-92; Nelson 11-13, 21-22; Stein 288. As also Rilke, thence Blanchot, and thence Derrida, see McKeane 111-12.

²¹ Bishop 195-97, 201-02; Blanchot 142-43; Dawson 249, 260-61; Nakajima 202-03; Stein 285-86.

Hymns had long so invoked the nymphs: “as secret as your paths, ... O chthonic nurses of Bacchos. | You nurture fruits, you haunt meadows”, conflating life and death—the meadow and cavern of both Agriope and Persephone—within a single moment.²² The nymphs, nursemaids of Dionysian ecstasy, exist in a perpetually liminal state, descending and arising reborn, and so must the *bákkhoi*.

Clearly, Orphic texts are “deliberately ambiguous”, continuously conflating initiation with death and death with liberation.²³ Each is a crossing of Okeanos, the exploration of the dream world of the psyche, somewhere between being.²⁴ The psychological interrogation of Mnemosyne liberates one from the “terrible cycle” of the wheel of life.²⁵ This transmigration of souls, *metempsychōsis*, condemns the uninitiated “to lie in the mire”, an explicitly psychological allegory in Plato,²⁶ which to Plutarch thus represents unenlightened humanity, that is, “the mob of living men ... herded together in murk and deep mire”.²⁷ The crises of initiation then, are the psychological processes by which the *mystai* face the suffering of life through a reorientation of identity, and thus transfigure the darkness of Hades, reflecting the psyche within it.²⁸ Kore’s own abduction in the *Hymns* reflects this ambiguity; she is taken to “Eleusis, where the gates of Hades are”,²⁹ an anguish which the *mystai*, wishing to reach Persephone’s realm, must cross as Akheron, the “river of woe”.³⁰ Furthermore, from the tension of Kore and Demeter Persephone is born: she who reigns free, she who rules over Hades beside him, and unlike either husband or mother, may cross its boundary at will.³¹

The sorrow of Agriope, Orpheus’ bride, is itself the initiatory snake-bite of Hekate—the alchemical *mélanōsis*—by which Eurydike attains the underworld.³² The

²² *OH* “To the Nymphs” 51.3-4. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 51.3n, 51.4n, 87i; Zabriskie 429.

²³ Bernabé, “Imago” 107. See Burges Watson, “Erotic Mysteries” 60; Riedweg 224. See chapter 3.

²⁴ Bernabé 105-07; Calame, “Gold Lamellae” 208-12; Christopolous 207; Herrero de Jáuregui, “*OF*” 190-92; Torallas Tovar 407-09. Okeanos was examined in chapter 1.

²⁵ Bernabé 98. The *argaléos kyklos* of the Thurri tablets, see Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 78-79.

²⁶ Plato, *Phaedo* 69c (*OF* 576), qtd. Bernabé 103. See Bernabé 104.

²⁷ Plutarch, *Moralia* fr. 178 (*OF* 594), qtd. Bernabé 105.

²⁸ Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 93-94; Edmonds, “Who” 83; Zabriskie 430.

²⁹ *OH* “To Plouton” 18.15. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 18.12-15n.

³⁰ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 18.10n, ie, Hades “does rest on gloomy Acheron” (*OH* 18.10).

³¹ Perluss 101-02. Compare Brimo and Brimos, the mystic birth of Eleusis examined in chapter 1. Hades, like Tartaros, is both the underworld itself and the deity who represents it.

³² Zabriskie 439.

dissolution of Hades is thus Dionysian Eubouleus, “good counsel”, and Persephone claims the transformative underworld as her own.³³ Kore’s katabasis in the *Hymns* follows upon the crescendo of Eleusinian Demeter, ensuring that her moment of crisis arrives in ecstatic culmination.³⁴ Demeter-Persephone is thus led by herself, not only as Hekate but also Eubouleus, “the innocent child of Dysaules”,³⁵ who like the Dionysian bull is a swineherd whose child is cast into the pit of Eleusis, to the depths of transformation.³⁶ The *Hymns* unfold at the crossroads of Hekate, by which *mystēs* and hierophant are collapsed into the triune faces of a singular goddess: the *boukólos*, both oxherd and ox.³⁷ Eubouleus, Hades-Dionysos, is—as is Brimo/s, the mystic birth of Persephone at Eleusis—both parent and child of their own katabasis.³⁸ Essentially, Orphic thought anticipates Hermeticism, itself so important to Jung, proclaiming: “the path upwards and the path downwards are one and the same”.³⁹ The unfolding of the imprisoned psyche in katabasis is an anthropogony as theo-cosmogony: a dissolution of one world in the creation of another, an immolation in *apothéōsis*.⁴⁰ The immediacy of death and apotheosis then, is not to reduce the arduous katabasis or torturous sparagmos into a single moment, but to present the ecstatic *bákkhoi* in an act of resolution within this simultaneity of opposites, bound inseparably, each to the other.⁴¹

II. Leukosis: Purification.

The second stage of katabasis in the *Hymns* erupts from the earth, and enacts the transition to purification by immersion in water. From the return of Persephone the *Hymns* observe the final, mortal, birth of Dionysos and ten hymns of revel—the perfect Pythagorean *tetraktys*—in the *thíasoi* of Dionysian retinue.⁴² The *Hymns* thus

³³ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 18.12n.

³⁴ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 40.18-20n. See also Zeitlin 542.

³⁵ *OH* “To Mother Antaia” 41.6. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 41j, 41.1n. Dysaules is a disciple of Demeter in the Orphic tradition. Eubouleus is also alternatively spelt as Euboulos.

³⁶ Athanassakis & Wolkow xv, 41j, 41.5-7n. We here conflate the piglet, Demophoön, and Brimo/s.

³⁷ *OH* “To Hekate” 1.1, 1.10. As explored in chapter 1.

³⁸ Compare “you bore divine Euboulos” *OH* 41.8, with “seed of Eubouleus” *OH* 42.2.

³⁹ *OF* 60, qtd. Kahle 155. I.e., “as above; so below”, as the hermetic *kērúkeion* or caduceus itself.

⁴⁰ Athanassakis & Wolkow xv-xvi; Burges Watson, *Mousike* 4-5; Kahle 155-57; Zabriskie 428-29.

⁴¹ Bassi 195; Faraone, “Rushing” 328; Herrero de Jáuregui, “Dialogues” 272, 275-79, and “*OF*” 190-92; Obbink, “Poetry” 300-01; Zeitlin 544.

⁴² *OH* 44-54. Redeeming Kronos and the earthly Titans, see Athanassakis & Wolkow xiv, 12i, 12.3n, 37i;

begin an *anábasis* of self-transfiguration, or a return from their descent, and the *bákkhoi* burst from the earth in Dionysian feasts as fluid life, as blood and wine.⁴³ The maenadic *thíasos* arises in the centre of these verses as the water Nymphs, representing relational unity through their very fluidity,⁴⁴ and the fertile madness of chthonian revel returns to the Nereids, blending earth and water. They are the parents of the *Orphikoí*, inducting their children in the chthonic mysteries, “first to show the holy rite | of sacred Bacchos and of pure Persephone, | you and mother Kalliope and Apollon the lord”.⁴⁵ They thus arise at the *bákkhoi*’s rebirth upon the path of return, proceeding from the chthonic, “inside the earth’s damp caves”.⁴⁶ The *teletai* of immersion in water was itself an apotheosis of both mother and child, and the later invocations to Leukothea and her son Palaimon within the *Hymns* thus replicate the gold leaves wherein the *mystai* emulate the nymphs.⁴⁷ So the Muses, born of the spring of Mnemosyne, also become *mainádes*: the nursemaids who first raise and then follow Nysian Bakkhos into the depths.⁴⁸ The Muses themselves blend water and air, for the Muses’ *enthousiasmós*, the *inspiration* of bacchic *ékstasis*, is the breath of pneuma, of psyche itself.⁴⁹ The Muses who unify the *bákkhoi* with divinity thus “become mistresses of the mind’s power” within the *Hymns*,⁵⁰ while the *mystai* return to the breast of both Thetis and Persephone,⁵¹ that is, Aphrodite-Nyx. This phase thus transitions to love.

Bernabé, “Imago” 432-33; Bernabé & Jimenéz San Cristóbal, 76-81; Jimenéz San Cristóbal, “Meaning” 47-49; Wildberg 225-29. That is, the spiritual monad descending to the material tetrad.

⁴³ *OH* “To Lysios Lenaios” 50.6, “To ... [Trieterikos]” 52.7-9. See Calame, “Gold Lamellae” 209; Riedweg 239-40. As wine and milk spring from the ground in Euripides *Bakkhai*. See chapter 1.

⁴⁴ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 51i, 51.8n, 51.15-16n.

⁴⁵ *OH* “To the Nereids” 24.9-11. See Athanassakis & Wolkow xviii-xix, 24.9-11n; Buxton 85; Calame, “Identities” 264-67; Morand 212; Nagy 49. Kalliope is herself first of Muses, daughter of Mnemosyne and mother of Orpheus, as per *OH* “To the Muses [Mousai]” 76.1, 76.10. See Herrero de Jáuregui, “Poet” 230-31. Apollon is also sometimes the father of Orpheus.

⁴⁶ *OH* “To the Nymphs” 51.2.

⁴⁷ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 74i, 75i; Bowersock 4, 8; Bremmer, *Initiation* 5; Cole, 272-76; Faraone, “Gender” 121-25, 129-39, and “Rushing” 322-25; Porres Caballero, “Maenadic Ecstasy” 175-76. As explored in chapter 1. Compare Thetis and Akhilleus or Olympias and Alexander.

⁴⁸ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 51i, 51.1n, 51.15-16n; Jimenéz San Cristóbal, “Dionysos” 285-87; Obbink, “Dionysos” 282.

⁴⁹ That is, both Hera-Nephele (Cloud) and Aer-Nous (Mind), as explored in chapter 1.

⁵⁰ *OH* “To the Muses [Mousai]” 76.6. See *OH* “To Mnemosyne” 77.1-2.

⁵¹ Faraone, “Gender” 131-32, and “Rushing” 323. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 22.8n.

The blending of water and air in Aphrodite reflects the transformation of the psyche. Abyssal Aphrodite, dark and oceanic, is, like her son Eros-Phanes, “a cosmic power that antedates Zeus”.⁵² She is the fluid relational unity between aspects in the *mystēs*-cosmos, from the omphalos of Poseidon to the reciprocal dynamic of Hera-Nephele (Cloud).⁵³ Aphrodite herself is both water and air. Her name is Foam-Risen, the pneumatic mist at the edge of the sea,⁵⁴ invoking the ever-shifting edges of the liminal interstices of the self. This is the mental unity of Okeanos and Aer in the Derveni Papyrus.⁵⁵ Aphrodite unifies the mysteries, across time and space.⁵⁶ To her the hierophant invokes, “Everything comes from you: you have yoked the world.”⁵⁷ She is the *mystērion* of Dionysos, the “night-long revel” of *bakkheúein* within the *Hymns* which imprisons and only thus liberates, as her own “sea-born” birth: Ouranos cast within and hence incipient in Okeanos.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Aphrodite is the Nyxian “mother of Necessity”, in the *Hymns*, who is, as we have seen, Necessity herself,⁵⁹ the serpent which in containing Eros-Phanes so gives him form.⁶⁰ At the rebirth of Persephone the joyous Kharites of Aphrodite are thus conflated with the transformative Horai of Kore-Persephone, the mothers of Eros-Phanes and Brimo/s in pantheistic simultaneity, in “blossoming meadows, |... wafted by the breezes” and “cloak[ed] ... with the dew of luxuriant flowers”.⁶¹ The Horai-Kharites, dancing at the birth of death, are the moment of bliss at the precipice of consummation-in-annihilation, sublime jouissance. This is the Dionysian *orgía* of sparagmos and so the culmination of its attainment: the transformative virtue of askesis. The initiates engulf themselves in darkness, and the chthonic waters are mastered by the winds they once imprisoned.⁶²

⁵² Athanassakis & Wolkow, 55i.

⁵³ These were all explored in chapter 1.

⁵⁴ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 55i. See also *OH* “To the Sea [Thalassa]” 22.2-3, “To Nereus” 23.1, 23.4. Hence the Nereids are Dionysian and transformative, *OH* 24.4.

⁵⁵ Janko, col. XXII-XXIII.

⁵⁶ Note the extensive list in *OH* “To Aphrodite” 55.15-25. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 55i, 55.15-28n.

⁵⁷ *OH* 55.4. See also *OH* 55.5-7.

⁵⁸ *OH* 55.2, implicating her birth from the genitals of Ouranos. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 53i, 55i, 55.1n. Note also “O venerable companion of Bacchos” (*OH* 55.7).

⁵⁹ *OH* 55.3. This refers to Adrasteia, who is Nemesis, the child of Night, rather than Ananke, mother of Phanes, who is Night herself. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 55.3n, 59i. See above.

⁶⁰ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 55.3n, 58.5-7n.

⁶¹ *OH* “To the Seasons [Horai]” 43.3-6. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 43i, 55i, 60i.

⁶² This was explored in chapter 1. The vehicle of this transformation is explored below.

The relational unity of Aphrodite must be ordered by the psyche within it,⁶³ calming “the unfathomable sea”.⁶⁴ The *Hymns* describe a reciprocal transformation in Aphrodite, whereby the psyche redeems its prison of earth. Hence the *psykhopompós*, “Hermes, offspring of Dionysos ... | and of Aphrodite”, waits beneath the earth to guide the airy *psūkhai* through the waters, “the souls you bring to their destined harbor”.⁶⁵ We witness this elemental conflux again in the Derveni papyrus, where Okeanos is Moira-Zeus, that is, “Moira is the mind of Zeus, as Ocean is his power”.⁶⁶ The Moirai (Fates) are themselves chthonio-celestial, “dwellers on the lake of heaven, where the frozen water is broken | by night’s warmth in the shady hollow of a sleek cave”.⁶⁷ These complex allusions in the *Hymns* imply that the Fates are agents of Selene, the “equal-limbed Moon”, a reference to Pythagorean theory and a circular unity between water and air.⁶⁸ The Moon is here the demesne of Persephone, bereft of the fires of life, from which her chthonic daughters, the Fates, descend as Furies. They have become the Erinyes-Eumenides, the “Airy, invisible, inexorable” *psūkhai*, the souls who wheel within metempsychosis.⁶⁹ The spiral dance of Fate which structures the cosmos thus constitutes the *bákkhoi* themselves.⁷⁰ The arbitration of the Moirai therefore represents the judgment of the Erinyes, a self-condemnation of the *mystai* between the waters of Mnemosyne (Memory) and “the sacred water of the Styx”.⁷¹ As agents of Justice, the Erinyes are themselves Sokratic *daimōnes* of self-reprobation, urging towards compassion.⁷² Like Korybas-Dionysos and Persephone

⁶³ See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 10.14-16n. Physis (subject of *OH* 10) is also Nyx, see 4.1n.

⁶⁴ *OH* “To Poseidon” 17.7. See “you are calmed by races which are gentle and smooth” (*OH* “To the Sea [Thalassa]” 22.5). Hence Helios-Phanes is “A paragon of justice, O water-loving lord of the cosmos” (*OH* “To the Sun [Helios]” 8.16).

⁶⁵ *OH* “To Chthonic Hermes” 57.3-4, 57.6. Athanassakis & Wolkow note this as the crossing of Hades itself, in the metaphor of Kharon upon the Acheron, 57.6n. Note also the similarity between Hermes and the Nymphs, *OH* “To the Nymphs”, 51.5, as per Athanassakis & Wolkow, 51.3n, 51.12n. This symbolism of psyche within the earth is repeated throughout the *Hymns*, see 25.4-8n, 27.8n, 38i, 38.2n, 45.7n, 53i, 74i, 75.6-8n, 76i, 76.2n, 80-82i.

⁶⁶ Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 90. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 59.11-14n, 73.2n; Janko, col. XVIII; Most, “Fire” 133-34. Moira brings death in the gold leaves, as Okeanos carries the *mystai* to its shore.

⁶⁷ *OH* “To the Fates [Moirai]” 59.3-4.

⁶⁸ Janko, col. XXIII. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 59i, 59.3-4n, 61i; Janko 27, col. XXIII-XXIV; Martín Hernández, “Tyche” 312-15.

⁶⁹ *OH* 59.17. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 59i, 59.3-4n, 59.17n, 59.18n, 69.9n, 69.16n. See chapter 1.

⁷⁰ *OH* “To the Seasons [Horai]” 43.7-8. The Horai and Moirai are sisters, dancing together beside Persephone, as above. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 43i.

⁷¹ *OH* “To the Erinyes” 69.4. See Athanassakis & Wolkow 59.5-6n, 61.8n, 69.4n, 77i.

⁷² Athanassakis & Wolkow. 69.15n. See also 61i, 62.2n, 62.6-7n, 69i, 70i, 70.4-5n, 70.8n, 70.9n, 70.10n;

herself, they are winged-serpents: airy, chthonic, and aquatic.⁷³ As Athanassakis and Wolkow argue, the Erinyes' names originate with Orphism, as perhaps do the Erinyes themselves,⁷⁴ and they are therefore essential to Orphic ideology.

As indicated above, the Erinyes are a self-condemnation. In the *Hymns* those “dreaded maidens of the thousand faces” are “swift as thought”.⁷⁵ The *bákkhoi* seek their transfiguration, imploring, “snake-haired ... goddesses of fate, | change my thoughts of life into gentle and soft ones”.⁷⁶ They renounce heroism, “in bold enterprise and in the sleekness of fair youth”, for kindness and concern.⁷⁷ The Moirai, the Fates, similarly condemn hubris, descending from the dead and frozen desire of icy Moon, “clothed in purple, [they] march towards men, | whose noble aims match their vain hopes”, casting a grim irony on that pretension.⁷⁸ Yet the *mystai* welcome their approbation. The chick appeasing the Eumenides in the Derveni papyrus, lost in lacunae,⁷⁹ is comparable to the cheerful death evinced by Sokrates, devoting a cock to Asklepios.⁸⁰ The Derveni *mántis* offers bloodless sacrifices of cakes, water, and milk,⁸¹ and the bird was set free, symbolising the liberation of the soul.⁸² Yet a rooster was also an apotropaic talisman of Helios, who like Asklepios was solar and shamanic Paian.⁸³ In the *Hymns*, Helios-Paian's “all-seeing eye” is possessed by both Nemesis and Dike, whose gazes send Moirai and Erinyes alike towards humanity.⁸⁴ The Erinyes are thereby summoned to prove one has not transgressed them, for it is they who ward against themselves.⁸⁵ This was the essence of the apotropaic.

Bernabé, “Imago” 108-09, 120; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 94-95. See *OH* “To Dike” 62.10-11. Hence as those *daímōnes* in the gold leaves, which guard the spring of Mnemosyne, and which the *mystai* must appease, see Most 131-32. Sokrates often speaks of his own *daímōn* as a conscience.

⁷³ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 14i, 15i, 39.8n, 40.14n, 69.16n; Bremmer, *Initiation* 169. Korybas is below.

⁷⁴ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 69.1n. All three names appear only here and in the *Orphic Argonautika*.

⁷⁵ *OH* “To the Erinyes” 69.8-9. Likewise Hermes “haunt[s] the sacred house of Persephone” as himself one of the *psūkhai*, for the *mystai* guide themselves (*OH* “To Chthonic Hermes” 57.5).

⁷⁶ *OH* 69.16-17.

⁷⁷ *OH* 69.13. See also 69.10-13, as explored in chapter 1.

⁷⁸ *OH* “To the Fates” 59.6-7. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 59.8-10n, 61.6-7n.

⁷⁹ Janko 2, col. II-III.

⁸⁰ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 67i. See Plato, *Phaedo* 118a.

⁸¹ Janko, col. VI. See also Betegh, “Derveni” 43; Calvo Martínez 372; Graf, “Text” 64. A similar sacrifice was offered to Mnemosyne, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 77i.

⁸² Calvo Martínez 373, who refers to Bernabé, cf. Edmonds, “Mystai” 33.

⁸³ Calvo Martínez 373. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 12.10n; Most, “Fire” 126. Paian is the eye of fire, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 8.12n, 11.10-12n, 11.17n, 34.1n; Herrero de Jáuregui, “Poet” 239-41.

⁸⁴ *OH* “Hymn to Nemesis” 61.2, “To Dike” 62.1. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 8.1n, 61.2n, 62.1n.

⁸⁵ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 61i, 62.9n. See also *OH* “To Nemesis” 61.10-12.

Apotrópaios represented the power to resist a thing by embodying both it and its opposite at once, a “contradictory dichotomy” Athanassakis and Wolkow argue is “essential to Greek religious thought”.⁸⁶ The concept resonates with the *phármakon* revived by Derrida, that is, both poison and cure, deepening the syncretic conflation of not only the Erinyes-Eumenides, but also those *daímōnes* as the *psūkhaí*, that is, the Fate and Fury of the *mystai* themselves.⁸⁷ So Poseidon authors and yet alleviates the quaking earth.⁸⁸ So Herakles labours towards immortality, wrestling with Thanatos (Death), yet must ultimately die to be reborn in apotheosis.⁸⁹ Thus Herakles with his “poisonous darts do ward off cruel death”, his weapons dripping with the gore of the Hydra,⁹⁰ the autochthonic serpent whose blood, like the Gorgon’s, brings first nourishment then death itself.⁹¹ Herakles is also a *phármakos*. As Apollon slays Python and thus inaugurates the Pythia of Delphi,⁹² so Herakles in slaying the serpent becomes one, as implied within the *Hymns*, “O illustrious Paion, your primordial scales gleam”.⁹³ Nyx is similarly called, “to disperse fears that glisten in the night”, warding against herself,⁹⁴ just as dead Eurydike travels beside Orpheus, not led but leading, protecting him from dread Persephone’s wrath.⁹⁵ Apollon likewise reconciles chaos, in both unification and embodiment.⁹⁶ He is the solar archer of both medicine and disease, those “flesh-eating darts of light” loosed within the *Hymns* from the chthonic Eumenides’ gaze, dwelling deep in Persephone’s dark halls.⁹⁷ The

⁸⁶ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 38.13-19n. See also 80-82i, 80.5-6n.

⁸⁷ Hence the conflation of Melinoe, the rage of Persephone, with both the Eumenides and the Kouretes-Korybantes, the *psūkhaí* and the *mystai*. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 71i, 71.11n.

⁸⁸ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 17.9-10n. This was explored in chapter 1. Compare Nike (Victory), who “alone frees man from the eagerness of contest” (*OH* 33.2), as Artemis both saves and slays both babe and beast, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 36i.

⁸⁹ See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 12.16n.

⁹⁰ *OH* “To Herakles” 12.16.

⁹¹ Zeitlin 547. Herakles is also autochthonic, the “bravest child of the earth” (*OH* “To Herakles” 12.9), who “subdued and tamed the savage races” (*OH* 12.7), that is, the *mystēs* who conquers themselves.

⁹² Athanassakis & Wolkow, 34i, 34.3n. Hence “O Titan and Pythian god” (*OH* “To Apollon” 34.3).

⁹³ *OH* 12.10. Compare Kadmos, who slays the dragon, yet becomes a serpent in Euripides’ *Bakkhai*, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 65i. The Hymns similarly invoke the Gorgonian aegis of Pallas-Athene, who assumes the identity of Pallas, a Gigantes slain by Athene, as per Athanassakis & Wolkow, 32.1n, 32.8n. Athene is also an anti-Dionysos, virginal and ill-tempered, who like Apollon brings forth Dionysos’ own revel, see *OH* “To Athene” 32.1-2, 32.7-8, 32.11-14. See chapter 1.

⁹⁴ *OH* “To Night [Nyx]” 3.14. Compare the similar attribution and alleviation of madness, in chapter 1.

⁹⁵ The identity between Persephone and Eurydike is explored in chapter 3.

⁹⁶ Versnel 34-37. See also *OH* “To Pan” 11.23, “To Artemis” 36.16, each similarly dispatching the madness and disease they bring, and each strongly associated with Apollon. See chapter 1.

⁹⁷ *OH* “To the Eumenides” 70.7 See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 34i. See chapter 1.

dichotomous conflation of *apotrópaios* explains why Sokrates is both the ascetic and yet the drunken satyr, thereby immune to the delirious bacchanalia of Plato's *Symposium*,⁹⁸ as is chaste and licentious Orpheus from the Sirens' deadly song.⁹⁹ Eros thus acts as intermediary, unifying opposites within a central harmony, mitigating excess as vulnerability: the second drop of blood which brings poison instead of health.¹⁰⁰ Eros, passion itself, must also bring restraint.¹⁰¹ As Nietzsche so famously re-stated, to gaze upon the darkness of the chthonic abyss is not only to be transformed by it, but to become it.¹⁰² This is the taboo which Orpheus is commanded to observe, and yet inevitably fails;¹⁰³ for Orpheus does not descend to conquer Hades, but to become him.

Within the Orphic *teletai*, gypsum whitens the features, reminiscent of the dead, a liminal state essential to ritual. Wearing the aspect of the alluvial Titans upon the flesh was a means of invoking them, that they may be transformed.¹⁰⁴ Yet the Titans who murder Dionysos were also *thyrsos*-bearers, bringing the child his own wand, the profane earth initiating the Bakkhos within.¹⁰⁵ The Titans thus represent the earthly aspect of the *mystai* by which a *bákkhos* is reborn. Within the *Hymns*, Persephone's own rebirth is likewise immediately preceded by the death of Korybas as "an analogue of the murdered Dionysos" struggling against his other-selves, the Korybantes.¹⁰⁶ Korybas is a bringer of horrid phantoms, of mania as dementia. As Night herself summons Day, Korybas is these phantasms' self-conquering cure: "the one of the forbidding countenance, | the nocturnal Koures who saves us from dreadful fear".¹⁰⁷ As "the greatest king of eternal earth", his death diverts the power of the

⁹⁸ Wildberg 218-220, 222-223.

⁹⁹ Burges Watson, "Erotic Mysteries" 57; Karanika 394.

¹⁰⁰ Bassi 206-08; Evans 9-13. In the Dionysia these are also over-compensatory gestures, the performance of an unreachable ideal, as per Butler. See Bassi 218-225.

¹⁰¹ *OH* "To Eros" 58.9-10, i.e., "with pure thought, | banish ... vile impulses". The same could be said for Dionysos, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 30i, while Ares is likewise invoked to "stay the rage, stay the strife, relax pain's grip on my soul" (*OH* "To Ares" 65.6).

¹⁰² Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Aphorism 146.

¹⁰³ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 18.3n; Heath 103. Compare Plouton, *OH* 18.18-19, and Hera, *OH* 16.10.

¹⁰⁴ Patón Codero 122. For the white mask of the Titans see chapter 1.

¹⁰⁵ Jiménez San Cristóbal, "Meaning" 47-49.

¹⁰⁶ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 39i. The child Kore is herself guarded, like Dionysos, by these sea-winds, the Dioskouroi-Kouretes, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 31i. They are again the "first to set up sacred rites for mortals" (*OH* "To the Kouretes" 38.6), as per the Nereids, 24.9-10, and Muses, 76.7. As chthonic *daímonēs*, the sea-winds are also invoked as agents of death and destruction, see 80i, 81i.

¹⁰⁷ *OH* "To Korybas" 39.3. See 39.2-4. Compare "in pursuit of sprightly phantoms, | you force light into

chthonic from over the psyche entombed within it.¹⁰⁸ Dionysos-Korybas is thus bound as were the Titans within the *Hymns*: “O blessed one, hear our voices, banish harsh anger, | free from fantasies souls stunned by compulsions”.¹⁰⁹ Yet Korybas is also the “savage, dark dragon”, the transformative power which “follow[s] Deo’s thinking”.¹¹⁰ He is the incipient tension of hybridity which propels her, as the *Hymns* proclaim: “you yoke your chariot to bridled dragons”.¹¹¹ Korybas-Koures is thus both *phármakon* and *phármakos*, the *mystēs* imprisoned by that which liberates, sacrificed to themselves. They hence represent the inevitability of epiphanic transformation, of life *alleviating* itself in double meaning of the word. With this, we may turn to Nietzsche and Jung, both heavily influenced by the Orphic-Bacchic mysteries, whose precepts they thus reiterate.

III. Xanthosis: Inspiration and Illumination.

The third stage of the katabasis is illumination, where after purification the *mystai* seek the revelation of the solar light. Orpheus himself worships this light, renouncing Dionysos on his return from katabasis, dedicating his Apollonian lyre to its patron. Yet the two were one. The interchangeable identification of Apollon and Dionysos as solar Phanes is evident not only within Pythagorean philosophy and Orphic ritual, but in the mutual worship of each at Delphi, the sanctuary where Apollon reunifies dismembered Dionysos.¹¹² Apollon’s undoing of the Dionysian sparagmos is the ascent to unity from the cosmic katabasis,¹¹³ that is, a harmony of Orphic *mousiké* as divine *enthousiasmós*—the individual psyche possessed by the greater whole.¹¹⁴ In the *Hymns* Apollon reconciles Dionysian dichotomy, “[to] infuse harmony into the lot

the nether world, and then again you flee” (*OH* “To Night [Nyx]” 3.9-10).

¹⁰⁸ *OH* 39.1. Hence the false appearance of “mimetic forms of demons” which must be conquered. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 39i. The ingenuity of Hephaistos also turns against itself, see 66i.

¹⁰⁹ *OH* 39.9-10. Compare with the invocation of the Titans, “to banish harsh anger, | if some earthly forefather of mine stormed your homes” (*OH* 37.7-8). See chapter 1.

¹¹⁰ *OH* 39.7-8. He changes shape, as does Nemesis, and humanity. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 61.4n.

¹¹¹ *OH* “To Eleusinian Demeter” 40.14. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 40.14n. As the chariot of Rhea and Dionysos, explored in chapter 1.

¹¹² Athanassakis & Wolkow, 8i, 34i, 34.1n, 46i, 52.11n, 56.6n; Bernabé, “Gods” 439; Suárez de la Torre, “Apollo” 61-70, 76-77, and “Delphic Key” 160-61; Tortorelli Ghidini 144, 151-56; Wildberg 220.

¹¹³ Edmonds, “Dionysos” 420, and “Orphic” 87; Suárez de la Torre, “Apollo” 64-67.

¹¹⁴ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 34.16-23n; Burges Watson, *Mousike* 4.

of men, |... an equal measure of winter and summer”.¹¹⁵ He embodies the revel of *bakkheúein*, he is the “Delphic diviner, wild, light-bringing”.¹¹⁶ The deities are a mutually reinforcing intersection.¹¹⁷ Hence, anticipating Euripides, Aeschylus presents an Orphic syncretism in his lost *Bassarai*, even naming Apollon as *bakkheiómantis*, a Bacchic prophet.¹¹⁸ In his interpretation of Aeschylus, Nietzsche emphasises this unification, despite denying its Orphic origins.¹¹⁹ As Sara Burges Watson argues, “the Delphic synthesis between Apollo and Dionysos portrayed by Aeschylus is, in fact, inseparable from the Orphic-Pythagorean intellectual context which Nietzsche rejected.”¹²⁰

Nietzsche reiterates not only the syncretism of Aeschylus, but the dynamic tension of Herakleitos. He presents Dionysos in a Herakleitean unity of opposites, a “*coincidenta oppositorum*”, that is, as the wilds of Pan, savage and sublime.¹²¹ Yet he saw Dionysos via the anguished and rebellious guise of Romanticism, “the suffering Dionysos ... experiencing in himself the agonies of individuation”.¹²² Similar precedents are witnessed for Apollon as well: an overemphasis on rationality and restraint by which the Romantic Dionysos was thereby contrasted.¹²³ Although Nietzsche inherited this discourse, his reconciliation between opposites and his “devastatingly critical” deconstruction of his peers signify his coming influence on literary theory.¹²⁴ Deconstruction was the method of the Derveni papyrus itself, as its commentator states: “Since (Orpheus) is speaking about reality in a riddling way throughout his composition, one must discuss (it) verse by verse”.¹²⁵ We observe in the Derveni commentary what Anton Bierl describes as an *Umwertung*, a Nietzschean

¹¹⁵ *OH* “To Apollon” 34.20-21. See Bernabé 439-40.

¹¹⁶ *OH* 34.5. Similar to Athene and Artemis, as above, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 32i, 36.2n.

¹¹⁷ Suárez de la Torre 58-60; Zeitlin 543-44.

¹¹⁸ Santamaría 44; Suárez de la Torre 63-64; Tortorelli Ghidini 149, 154.

¹¹⁹ Biebuyck et al. 64-70; Burges Watson 5-7.

¹²⁰ Burges Watson, *Mousike* 7.

¹²¹ Versnel 39; cf. Bierl 366, who specifically refutes *coincidenta oppositorum* in place of dynamic reciprocity—which is, of course, the Herakleitean understanding of such unification.

¹²² Nietzsche, qtd. Henrichs, “One” 573. See also Henrichs 572-75; Louis 12-13. This inspired Otto’s “god who comes” (Otto, qtd. Henrichs 572), an abstraction of cruelty and sorrow, see Bremmer, “Otto’s” 11-12, 19; Moffit 220-25. Nietzsche repudiated his own cruelty, see Henrichs, “Gods” 134.

¹²³ Henrichs, “Gods” 128; Konaris, “Dionysos” 467-70, and “Gods” 484-86, 489.

¹²⁴ Henrichs 119. See Biebuyck et al. 52-53; Bishop 189; Bremmer 18; Henrichs 118-24; Edmonds, “Mystai” 19-20; Konaris, “Dionysos” 471-77, and “Gods” 492-98; Louis 4-12. On Jung see Segal 112-14.

¹²⁵ Janko, col. XIII. See also Betegh, “Derveni” 42; Janko, col. VII. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 7.12n, 42.11n, on the deciphering of *The Orphic Hymns* themselves, as explored in chapter 1.

transvaluation of meaning, as the human capacity for truth in language is itself undone, forcing the *sunetoí* to re-evaluate the cosmos.¹²⁶ Nietzsche thus decries Orphism within the very same texts repeating their doctrines, using adaptations of their myths to articulate the tensions within his own society.¹²⁷ As Albert Henrichs argues, Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* is itself obviously not scholarship but artistic fiction, a work "of unprecedented temerity", composed of misrepresentation and falsehood in place of reference or research.¹²⁸ As a deliberate process, this profoundly post-modern approach is yet deeply reminiscent of the irony famously displayed by the Orphic *bákkhos* Euripides, unifying meaning even as it disrupts, subverts, and dissolves.¹²⁹ Henrichs thus reconceptualises Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* as itself a Euripidean drama. This statement is as consciously ironic as it is appropriate, especially when we recognise Nietzsche's avowed disgust for Euripides,¹³⁰ who, like Sokrates, is wilfully mischaracterised as their own opposite, then played against Nietzsche as Apollon against Dionysos.¹³¹ As Anne-Marie Schultz observes, "the ironic dimensions of Nietzsche portrait [sic] of Socrates themselves illustrate the extent to which Nietzsche models himself on Socrates the great ironist."¹³² Rather than Sokrates as the satyr of the *Symposium*, it is Nietzsche himself.¹³³ We may hardly be surprised to find this very method in Plato's *own* Socratic subversion of Orpheus.¹³⁴ May we not then assume the same of Nietzsche's otherwise incomprehensible inversion of Orphism, as harshly condemned as its misattributed philosophies are nevertheless praised?¹³⁵ We stray from neither Orphism or Nietzsche when we observe that the apparent conflict between opposites, as with the Apollonian and Dionysian, are not only falsely erected, but reflect conflicts entirely our own as well.¹³⁶

¹²⁶ Bierl, "Enigmatic" 394. See Janko, col. X, XXVI. See also Bierl 393; Most, "Fire" 118-20, 125, on semantics worthy of de Saussure.

¹²⁷ Henrichs, "Gods" 120-26; Konaris, "Gods" 499-502.

¹²⁸ Henrichs 125. Compare Nietzsche's own scholarship, 130-34. See also Biebuyck et al. 72-74.

¹²⁹ Foley 124-29; Zeitlin 540-44. As explored in chapter 1, notably in *Hippolytos*, *Ion*, and *The Bakkhai*.

¹³⁰ Henrichs 128-29.

¹³¹ Schultz 138-40, 144-51; Ward 133-36.

¹³² Schultz 156. See also 141-43, 154-56.

¹³³ Schultz 154-56; Ward 124. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 54.10n. For the Satyr see chapter 1.

¹³⁴ Casadesús Bordoy, "Dionysian" 386-87; Heath 178-81.

¹³⁵ See Biebuyck et al. 56-57, 63.

¹³⁶ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 61.5n; Henrichs 120; Herrero de Jáuregui, "Dialogues" 288-89; Louis 1-2,

The reconciliation of this psychological conflict is at the heart of Jung, who reflects on the psyche as Nietzsche had society. While Nietzsche had reiterated Orphic apotheosis as the transcendent *Übermensch*, for Jung the important attribute for humanity was self-awareness, an apotropaic invocation against hubris and grandiosity,¹³⁷ that is, the summoning of the Erinyes. Jung thus invokes Orphic Phanes as a means of katabasis, a regeneration of creativity, somewhere between craving and annihilation, through poetry in extensive parallelism with *The Orphic Hymns*.¹³⁸ Eros-Phanes, the son of Aphrodite-Nyx, is the “winged archer who runs swiftly on a path of fire” within the *Hymns*, implicating the transformation of Aer into Aither: psyche dissolved in the light of its revelation.¹³⁹ As Day ascends from Tartaros and Helios from Okeanos, so Jung’s solar Izdubar, an archetype of Phanes, absorbs the personal psyche which embodies humanity’s hunger for rebirth. In Izdubar, Phanes devours itself in sublimation so that humanity may be rejuvenated from the chthonic underworld, as Jung writes in *The Red Book*, “an act of the Below ... a great and dark mystery”.¹⁴⁰ This was the *mystérion* of Adonis-Dionysos, the chthonic rebirth of the deity who descends within the *Hymns* like whirling Phanes, to “vanish and then shine again.”¹⁴¹ Jung’s Izdubar thus swims in Aither, in a cyclical sea of fire:

And I was in a passion of unspeakable yearning.
 ... I swam in a sea that wrapped me in living fires –
 ... ancient and perpetually renewing myself –
 Falling from the heights to the depths,
 And whirled glowing from the depths to the heights –¹⁴²

Jung thus reiterates Phanes from the *Hymns*:

... great and ether-tossed, I call;
 born of the egg, delighting in his golden wings
 the begetter of blessed gods and moral men; ...
 ... forever in whirling motion,

14-18; Merivale 254-56. Nietzsche is once more comparable to Euripides, this time with *Sisyphos*.

¹³⁷ Stein 290.

¹³⁸ Bishop 192-95; Stein 291-94.

¹³⁹ *OH* “To Eros” 58.2. Athanassakis & Wolkow note that path of fire, from *pyridrómos*, is associated with the Stars and the Sun, hence anticipating a “sublime cosmic power” (58.2n).

¹⁴⁰ Jung, “The Sacrificial Murder” 291. See Stein 293. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 78.4-5n.

¹⁴¹ *OH* “To Adonis” 56.5. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 46i, 56i, 56.5n, 56.6n; Bishop 193-94. Hence “you dwell deep in murky Tartaros, | then again towards Olympos you carry your blossoming body” (*OH* 56.10-11), i.e. to Aither as Jung’s Izdubar “hastens away into unending space” (qtd. Stein 293).

¹⁴² Jung, “The Opening of the Egg” 286. See Stein 292.

you scattered the dark mist, ...
Flapping your wings, you whirled about throughout this world,
You brought pure light. For this I call you Phanes.¹⁴³

Jung continues, describing whirling and light-bringing Izdubar in the Orphic egg, scattering the mist of Aither throughout the cosmos, “as raining embers beating down like the foam of the surf”.¹⁴⁴ When the deity is consumed by yearning humanity in “an act of highest love”,¹⁴⁵ Jung replicates hybrid Phanes as Eros-Metis, the solar incarnation of Dionysos swallowed and absorbed by Zeus, who thus becomes humanity in Dionysian sparagmos.¹⁴⁶ With reference to the sea-foam of Aphrodite, Jung also invokes the fertility of Ouranos-Protogonos and thus the *adoñon*, that is, reverend Phanes, literally *dis-membered* by Kronos.¹⁴⁷ Jung thus reiterates not only Dionysos,¹⁴⁸ but the cyclical absorptions by Zeus of Metis (Wisdom), which Phanes represents.¹⁴⁹ Each apotheosis is intimately tied to both the individuation of Kronos and yet its transcendent reversal, as the Derveni papyrus asserts.¹⁵⁰ Thus Izdubar, like Korybas, must be slain in order to rise. Thus Paion, Herakles-Apollon, in slaying Python so becomes her, usurping chthonic Delphi, and condemns humanity to fitful dreams and invigorating nightmare, of Herculean madness and wild Bacchic revel.¹⁵¹ In this respect, for Jung, as for the *Hymns*, the potential of transformation is found within the psychological tension of crisis.

It is as artist that Orpheus unites the Dionysian pairs of opposites. The sparagmos of Izdubar reiterates Orpheus’s apotheosis, the epiphany of *ékstasis*, as Jung describes: “Through dismemberment ... the divine spark got into everything, the divine soul entered the earth.”¹⁵² Izdubar-Adonis, whose placement in the *Hymns* represents Phanes reawakened after the Dionysian revel, is himself a child of the

¹⁴³ *OH* “To Protogonos” 6.1-8

¹⁴⁴ Jung, “The Opening of the Egg” 286. See Stein 292-93. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 6.1n, 6.2n; Morand 215-18.

¹⁴⁵ Jung, “The Sacrificial Murder” 291. See Stein 293. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 52.7n.

¹⁴⁶ Bernabé, “Gods” 434; Casadesús Bordoy, “Castration” 377; Torjussen 13.

¹⁴⁷ Bernabé 426-27; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 88; Betegh, “Thurii” 223; Casadesús Bordoy 380-81; Graf, “Text” 65-66. Eros-Phanes, son and father of Aphrodite, further asserts cyclical regeneration.

¹⁴⁸ Herrero de Jáuregui, “Poet” 239-41; Lautermilch 38-39.

¹⁴⁹ Betegh 224. Zeus absorbs not only Phanes but also Metis as herself, as explored in chapter 1.

¹⁵⁰ Casadesús Bordoy 378-79, 382-83; Janko, col. XV. Hence “you are kind hearted to all gods and mortals who see your light” (*OH* “To Lysios Lenaios” 50.9), that is, redeeming the gods themselves.

¹⁵¹ See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 79i, 79.3-6n, 79.5n, 86i. Korybas was explored above. See chapter 1.

¹⁵² Jung, qtd. Zabriskie 441.

katabasis, of life and death, as the *Hymns* uniquely proclaim: “O son of Aphrodite and Eros, | born on the bed of lovely-tressed Persephone”.¹⁵³ Dionysos is likewise born to two mothers, mortal and divine—or Earth and Heaven, as the *Orphikoí* themselves.¹⁵⁴ Orpheus, as reiterated by Nietzsche and Jung,¹⁵⁵ stands between these realms. The artist works as psychopomp between Hades and Elysium, transmitting the potencies of each.¹⁵⁶ The fulfilment of the katabasis takes place in the inspiration of *enthousiasmós*: the poetic and performative, or *legómena* and *drómena*, of the mysteries are not distinct but inseparable, fulfilled in their enactment.¹⁵⁷ The *teletai* of the *Hymns* was an act of intellectual ecstasy, interpreting the oracle, resolving the tensions within the *symbolon* by which the *mystai* were themselves concealed, and thus transformed.¹⁵⁸ As Nietzsche avows of the mysteries, with characteristic hauteur: “Man is no longer an artist, he has become himself a work of art ... Do you prostrate yourselves, millions? Do you sense your maker, oh world?”¹⁵⁹ Within the *Hymns*, art as struggle, born of Athene and Nike (Victory),¹⁶⁰ thus gives way to Eros and Adonis, “ever bursting with lovely song”,¹⁶¹ erupting from the earth towards the fires of apotheosis, to the Mousai themselves, and those whose music heals.¹⁶² This is why it was the poet Orpheus who was the founder of the mysteries, and all the *teletai* within.

Within these representations of art and artist is the shadow of death.

Permeability, violation, and dissolution are essential acts of the artist as much as creation: the relational nature of the cosmos is the chorus, the fluid unity of Dionysos is Eubouleus, the tension of Eros-Thanatos.¹⁶³ The tragic gulf of Dionysos, the doom of Orpheus, is not that the perception of a deeper truth is unattainable, it is that in

¹⁵³ *OH* “To Adonis” 56.8-9. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 30.2n, 56.8-9n, 57.3-5n, 58.4n; Evans 12-16.

¹⁵⁴ The Titanic parents of the *mystai* were explored in chapter 1. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 13.6n.

¹⁵⁵ Dawson 251; Henrichs, “Gods” 122-23, 127-28; Moffitt 221-25; Segal 107-110.

¹⁵⁶ Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 70-72; Davies 214; Graf, “Text” 59-61; Heath 189-90; Moffitt 227-28; Sword 407-08; Zabriskie 428, 431-33.

¹⁵⁷ Betegh, “Derveni” 44; Calame, “Gold Lamellae” 204, 212-13; Edmonds, “Dionysos” 430; Graf 64, 67; Obbink, “Poetry” 291, 297-98, 303; Riedweg 242.

¹⁵⁸ Betegh 45-47; Graf 53, 57; Herrero de Jáuregui, “Dialogues” 285-86; Obbink 304-05; Stein 294-95; Zabriskie 438. cf. Edmonds, “Mystai” 33-34, who denies metempsychosis in place of cosmogony alone.

¹⁵⁹ Nietzsche, qtd. Moffitt 223.

¹⁶⁰ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 32.8n. Hence strife “teems with festivities” (*OH* “To Nike” 33.7), that is, the Dionysia, and its poetic “works of renown” (*OH* 33.9). This was explored in chapter 1.

¹⁶¹ *OH* “To Adonis” 56.2. See Athanassakis & Wolkow 46.4n, 46.5n, 54i, 54.3n, 54.5n, 56.2n, 58i.

¹⁶² See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 67.2n, 68.6n, 76i, 76.4n, 76.12n.

¹⁶³ Foley 131-33; Martens 225; Ward 125-30. That is, Protogonos-Hades, as explored in chapter 1.

seeing it we imprison it within our own mortality. We thus see once more through it to “the *other* night” which lies beyond, a yet deeper truth to which both artist and humanity strives.¹⁶⁴ As Helen Sword argues, this is the essential ambivalent tension of Orpheus: “both the possibility of conquering death and the futility of the attempt”.¹⁶⁵ In the *Hymns*, Fate rules all “in the realm of the dead, where glory drives her chariot on”.¹⁶⁶ As Athanassakis and Wolkow note, glory, here from *dóxa*, refers also to fancy and hence self-delusion: the arrogance of transgressing the Fates. This is a profoundly—albeit suitably—ironic observation for worshippers of Dionysos-Eleutherios, the liberator. They thus contrast *átē*, the blind infatuation of Orpheus, the ruin of hubris, with the final truth awaiting the Fates’ approach.¹⁶⁷ This is the liberation of the katabasis, the essential importance of *failure* to art and humanity, and thus the insouciance that Orpheus must learn, a trace gleefully urging towards its own deconstruction, knowing itself finally for the falsehood it is.¹⁶⁸ This is the aporia of the sublime, that the “unitary subject” is an intertextual illusion,¹⁶⁹ Nietzsche’s “shining fantasy” of Olympos which must be shattered for the sake of transcendental truth.¹⁷⁰ The apotheosis of immortality is found only in death. The artist deconstructs themselves as object, just as they deconstruct their subject. So the *Orphikoí*, as their namesake, revel at Persephone’s very lap, in yet the darkest depths of Hades.

IV. Iosis: Rebirth.

The final stage of the katabasis is rebirth. It is the alchemical creation of the tincture, the pharmakon, by which all opposites are unified as one. Thus the twins Apollon and Artemis, in Hellenic syncretisation, are not only Phanes (Sun) and Selene (Moon), but Dionysos and Persephone, as Alberto Bernabé observes, “light and darkness, life and death”.¹⁷¹ The invocation of Persephone within the *Hymns* as “mother of the

¹⁶⁴ Blanchot 171, original emphasis. See Blanchot 173-75; Fitzgerald 950.

¹⁶⁵ Sword 408, see also 407-08.

¹⁶⁶ *OH* “To the Fates [Moirai]” 59.8. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 59.8-10n.

¹⁶⁷ Athanassakis & Wolkow 59.8-10n, 61.6-7n. That is, as ever, death.

¹⁶⁸ Blanchot 171-76. That is, the *jeu libre* of Derrida.

¹⁶⁹ Kristeva, qtd. Nelson 11. See Nelson 11-12; Zabriskie 433-34, 441-44.

¹⁷⁰ Nietzsche, qtd. Louis 20. See Louis 19-24; Nelson 27-29.

¹⁷¹ Bernabé, “Gods” 440. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 34j, 36.2n; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 76-77; Obbink, “Orphism” 351-52; Suárez de la Torre, “Apollo” 58.

Erinyes, queen of the nether world, | secretly sired by Zeus in clandestine union”, implicates her serpentine birth from Demeter.¹⁷² She thus writhes within the *Hymns*, a dynamic circumlocution of the “radiant and luminous” goddess of the underworld.¹⁷³ Kore-Persephone, or Aphrodite-Nyx, is the ouroboros wound with K(h)ronos about the Orphic egg, each is the omphalos he thus absorbs, a pharmakon of “birth and decline”.¹⁷⁴ She is the juxtapositioning of Protogonos, “ineffable, hidden, brilliant”,¹⁷⁵ by which Apollon brings revelation and Artemis the light of Bacchic revel, Night tearing herself apart to “gleam in the darkness”.¹⁷⁶ This *mystérion*, the act of obfuscation and simultaneously revelation, was asserted in the Derveni papyrus, with “Orpheus ... speaking allegorically from his first word right through to his last”.¹⁷⁷ Nietzsche and Jung both echo Orphism in reiterating Damaskios and Herakleitos, in the psycho-socio-syncretism of chthonic and apotropaic humanity, ever unfolding, at odds with itself, and indivisible in its multiplicity.¹⁷⁸ By understanding the critical dichotomy of the mysteries, the *mystai* come to understand themselves.

That which illuminates the mysteries, in this construct of opposing tensions, is also that which obscures. This is the secret of rebirth, the *coincidenta oppositorum*, inseparably conflicted. It is the doom of Orpheus and Eurydike, condemned to im/mortality in a harmony of mutual deconstruction, each annihilated in apprehension. Pan is thus similarly the “weaver of playful song ... of cosmic harmony |... [inducing] fantasies of dread” within the *Hymns*.¹⁷⁹ Dionysos thus collapses Thebes, uniting its discordant forces within a singular sheathe, driven all to madness and revel. Bakkhios demands they attend to that which lies beyond, to recognise the insurmountable gulf of division he represents, and that only from

¹⁷² OH “To Persephone” 29.6-7. See also OH “To Dionysos” 30.6-7. This was explored in chapter 1.

¹⁷³ OH 29.9. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 29.12-14n; Henrichs, “One” 564.

¹⁷⁴ OH “To Kronos” 13.7. As Persephone herself nourishes and kills, 29.15, as per chapter 1.

¹⁷⁵ OH “To Protogonos” 6.5. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 6.3n, 6.8n.

¹⁷⁶ OH “To Night [Nyx]” 3.7. Compare “Titanic and Bacchic ... | torch-bearing goddess bringing light to all” (OH “To Artemis” 36.2-3), and Artemis herself “redeeming and masculine” (36.7).

¹⁷⁷ Janko, col. VII. See also col. XII, XXV-XXVI. See Most, “Fire” 123-24. Once more as per *différance*.

¹⁷⁸ Davies 213; Janko 3-5; Henrichs, “One” 575; Segal 112-17. See also Bierl, “Enigmatic” 393-97, on the grammatic technique of the Derveni papyrus on this subject, referencing Aphrodite and Ares (see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 55i, 55.8n, 65.7n), whose commentator, as Herakleitos, does not decipher the riddle, but rather elucidates its solution with riddles of his own. See Most 123. Cf. Edmonds, *Ancient Orphism* 398, who condemns the mysteries as unsophisticated, as did Jung’s contemporaries.

¹⁷⁹ OH “To Pan” 11.6. Pan both unites and separates the elements, as per chapter 1.

relational unity may the holistic self arise.¹⁸⁰ This is the purity and chaos of Okeanos within the *Hymns*: the psychopompous *kērukeion* which the *mystai* traverse.¹⁸¹ It is the unbroken chain of Kronos in endless segmentation; Phanes-Protogonos is re-sewn within himself in reiterative unity.¹⁸² It is the sacrifice of the vine to itself,¹⁸³ the feast of Dionysos Trieterikos, both anthropogony and Anthroporraistos, devoured by Titans and yet devouring the humanity thus birthed in turn, all reunited and reborn in cyclical dissolution, as the tomb both of and *of* flesh is rent asunder in the lucid dance of liberating madness.¹⁸⁴ Here stands both Orpheus: torn apart by the inspiration of the mysteries themselves; and Eurydike: the wide-rule of the underworld, consuming all, yet who in doing so but births Dionysos once more.

Melinoe represents this conflict in the *Hymns*. She is the wraith of Persephone, born in rage.¹⁸⁵ She is the “saffron-cloaked nymph of the earth”,¹⁸⁶ referencing Homer’s Eos (Dawn) and paralleling Hekate, as Athanassakis & Wolkow observe, “connecting diurnal and nocturnal light”.¹⁸⁷ She too writhes, serpentine, “now plain to the eye, now shadowy, now shining in the darkness—|... in the gloom of night”.¹⁸⁸ She gleams as both lunar Hekate and Nyx, to “disperse fears that glisten in the night”.¹⁸⁹ Like Nyx she is the transcendent, *other* night, that power of potential symbolised within the *Hymns* by the light of the moon.¹⁹⁰ Like Hekate she is mother of the dangers the *bákkhoi* must face: not only the kindly Eumenides but also Korybas, mimetic *daímōn* of Eleusis, the self-obsessed psyche which must be slain to liberate the god within, “to free from fantasies souls stunned by compulsions”.¹⁹¹ That is, “from fantasies as you wander in deserted places”, as the *Hymns* describe,¹⁹²

¹⁸⁰ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 30i, 50.3n, 50.5n, 50.8n; Foley 124-29. To Foley irreconcilable. He is yet the non-decomposable distance or body without organs of Deleuze & Guattari, arising not despite but because of disrupting the alienated composite of its constitution, see Nakajima 203-04; Davies 219-20.

¹⁸¹ As above. Hence “you dwell in the sea’s pure, restless depths” (*OH* “To Palaimon” 75.2).

¹⁸² *OH* “To Sabazios” 48.1-4, ie “son of Kronos | you sewed into your thigh Bacchic Dionysos” (48.1-2). See also Athanassakis & Wolkow 49.2n. This was explored in chapter 1.

¹⁸³ Hence “come, O blessed one, accept the gift of this sacrifice” (*OH* “To Liknites” 46.8).

¹⁸⁴ This was explored in chapter 1. See Athanassakis & Wolkow 52.5n, 52.7-8n, 52.10n.

¹⁸⁵ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 71i, 71.4-5n. As explored in chapter 1. That is, both wraith and wrath.

¹⁸⁶ *OH* “To Melinoe” 71.1.

¹⁸⁷ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 71.1n.

¹⁸⁸ *OH* 71.8-9.

¹⁸⁹ *OH* “To Night [Nyx]” 3.13. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 71.8-9n.

¹⁹⁰ Blanchot 171-74. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 1.2n, 3.4n, 9.1-2n.

¹⁹¹ *OH* “To Korybas” 39.10. See Athanassakis & Wolkow 39i, 71i. This was explored above.

¹⁹² *OH* 39.4.

the *mystēs* possessed of themselves alone in place of relational and pantheistic reality. Thus, as implored in the hymn’s culmination, “O queen of those below ...|... banish the soul’s frenzy to the ends of the earth”, Melinoe replicates the invocations of both Persephone and Rhea.¹⁹³ She is queen of Hades but also “queen of queens”, the mountain-mother of frenzy.¹⁹⁴ She is incarnation: the “two-bodied spectre” of being, the deception of Zeus in-sewn as Dionysos-Eiraphiotes within chthonic earth;¹⁹⁵ the inverted and nevertheless identical omphalos stone of Rhea, “liar, saviour, redeemer”,¹⁹⁶ whose own invocation to “send death and the filth of pollution | to the ends of the earth”¹⁹⁷ is cast across its broken line within the *Hymns* as the very sundering of K(h)ronos, first invoking that which is thus sent away. Like Melinoe, Rhea implies her own duality. She is the death of Korybas and the madness of the Kouretes, “in the train of a mother”, the Dionysian revel in cyclical rebirth, that is, im/mortality.¹⁹⁸ This is the *enthousiasmós* of Hera, who the *Hymns* invoke like Melinoe to “come with kindness on your joyous face”, the breath of pneuma which like the Erinyes-Eumenides brings madness first and second death, and only thus apotheosis.¹⁹⁹ The rage of Melinoe is the final barrier of life, sired by herself.²⁰⁰ She is the chthonic serpent, the Pythian oracle who has taken the *mystai* to the utmost precipice of rebirth and who thus lurks upon its edge—the very cliffs of Hades. She is thus the dweller on the threshold who must be slain: Korybas awaiting apotheosis; the final transformation of Herakles and the *mystai* themselves.

To arise transformed in katabasis, one must descend. The thunderbolt thus destroys to infuse with life, “an endless spiral of noise, omnivorous in its drive”,²⁰¹ the roar of Dionysos-Bromios luring Dionysos-Zagreus into being in the performance of the *Hymns* themselves, that “faces reflect the brilliance of thunder roaring” in synaesthetic mystic union.²⁰² The very syntax of the verse rends itself apart in

¹⁹³ *OH* 71.10-11. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 71.10n, 71.11n.

¹⁹⁴ *OH* “To Rhea” 14.7

¹⁹⁵ *OH* 71.5. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 71.4-5n. As explored in chapter 1.

¹⁹⁶ *OH* 14.8. The omphalos stone deceives Kronos, as above. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 14.8n.

¹⁹⁷ *OH* 14.13-14.

¹⁹⁸ *OH* “Hymn to the Kouretes” 31.6. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 31i, 38i, 39i, 71.11n.

¹⁹⁹ *OH* “To Hera” 16.10. As above. Compare “a kindly and holy face (*OH* 71.12).

²⁰⁰ That is, of Persephone and Zeus, each as serpents, as explored in chapter 1.

²⁰¹ *OH* “To Zeus the Thunderbolt [Keraunos Zeus]” 19.10.

²⁰² *OH* 19.15. Compare “resounding and illustrious” (*OH* “To Astrapaios Zeus” 20.1). See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 19i, 20i. This drives the *mystai* to rebirth, i.e. “light of life, O charioteer, | your screaming

epiphanic sparagmos: “you tear the robe | that cloaks heaven”.²⁰³ The Orphic cipher in the funerary *teletai* likewise obscures itself by repeated fragments of the words thus surrounded, that is, by “repetition with fragmentation”, which in fact, as Gábor Betegh argues, *aids* interpretation of that which is obscured.²⁰⁴ The Apolline light of prophecy obscures itself even as it reveals.²⁰⁵ Meaning is both meaningful and meaningless. This is the ambiguity of Hermes Psychopompos, the fluidity and yet rigidity of cosmic order.²⁰⁶ The *Hymns* emphasise Hermes again and again as possessing both a venerated duplicity of speech and kindness to humanity, before ending each in death: “a good end to a life of industry, | gracious talk and mindfulness”.²⁰⁷ The psychopomp undoes “the agonies of individuation” only by their very facilitation, as both Nietzsche and Jung explore.²⁰⁸ The annihilation of limitation is the release of dynamic tension, that is, the breaking of the Pythagorean circle of necessity, or metempsychosis, over which Hermes presides. The *bákkhoi* are reborn in apotheosis, and put an end to their rebirth.

Just as Jung makes Phanes into fantasy as the very means of safeguarding his psychic rejuvenation from the bitterness of those rejuvenated,²⁰⁹ so Nietzsche declares “Man is something that must be overcome” in the process of self-actualisation.²¹⁰ Thus stand Nike (Victory) and Dike (Right), flanking Orpheus in Hades.²¹¹ Individuation must be undertaken, our isolation faced, if it is to be reconciled. As Jung asserts, “The believer descends into the grave, in order to rise from the dead”.²¹² Dionysian sparagmos hence lies at either end, identical and distinct. This is why the Horai dance not with Kore, but Persephone within the

whip drives the four-horse chariot on” (*OH* “To Helios” 8.18-19), which conflates Dionysos Bromios, the whipping bullroarer of the *bákkhoi*, as whirling Protogonos, the mania of both self and cosmos, unifying the music of Apollon and Pan, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 6i, 6.1n, 6.5-7n, 8i, 8.11n, 11i, 11.5n, 11.10-12n, 30.1n, 34i, 34-24-25n; Levaniouk 175-79, 184-88

²⁰³ *OH* 19.16-17.

²⁰⁴ Betegh, “Thurii” 222. See 220-22.

²⁰⁵ Hence Loxias, “the oblique one” (Athanassakis & Wolkow, 34.7n), whose “oracular utterance is clear” (*OH* “To Apollon” 34.9).

²⁰⁶ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 28.10n; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 96.

²⁰⁷ *OH* “To Hermes” 28.11-12. See *OH* 28.4-10.

²⁰⁸ Ward 130. See Biebuyck et al. 53-55; Stein 289; Ward 130-31; Zabriskie 441-44.

²⁰⁹ Stein 291.

²¹⁰ Nietzsche, qtd. Blanchot 120. See also Davies 215.

²¹¹ Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 98.

²¹² Jung, qtd. Bishop 194, who references the *Orphic Hymn* to Dionysos Trieterikos.

Hymns,²¹³ why the Moirai are invoked in reverse, “Atropos, Lakhesis, Klotho”, undoing their work of incarnation,²¹⁴ and why the entire collection of triune Hekate ends with triple death, the sons of Night, undoing each birth of Dionysos. First to Hypnos (Sleep), who “grant[s] holy solace to our every sorrow”,²¹⁵ and like Dionysos-Lusios frees the *bákkhoi* to the twin gates of madness and inspiration, truth and falsehood. Thus Nietzsche’s unified Apollonian-Dionysian tension are the twin doors of Oneiros (Dream), “greatest prophet to mortals”.²¹⁶ That is, the Jungian unconscious. As Jung and the *Hymns* each assert, it is the self-reflection of Dream which guides humanity, “in their sleep you whisper the will of the gods; |... to show the future to silent souls | that walk the noble path”.²¹⁷ Humanity divides itself between delusion and revelation by the psychic purity attained in askesis. Unity is not asserted in the moment of sparagmos but across the entire katabasis of an *Orphikos bíos*. So the final hymn, as dawn breaks apart the night, is read to Thanatos (Death), whose “sleep tears the soul free from the body’s hold”.²¹⁸ Thus, as Athanassakis and Wolkow write, the *mystai* “struggle and suffer,” labouring as Herakles towards apotheosis, “the new day as symbolic of the transformation”.²¹⁹ Life and death, the poles of initiation and rebirth, each produce the other. This dynamic unity, the pharmakon, defines both katabasis and sparagmos. The *mystai* thus strive towards “that readier death which is our destiny”, as Rilke proclaims, “and already the moment is at hand”,²²⁰ a point we shall explore in Chapter Three.

²¹³ OH 43 “To the Seasons [Horai]” 43.7-8. As explored above.

²¹⁴ OH “To the Fates [Moirai]” 59.16. They are normally Klotho: Spinner; Lakhesis: Alotter; and Atropos: Irreversible. The thread of life, allotted, measured, and cut at death, Athanassakis & Wolkow 59.16n.

²¹⁵ OH “To Sleep [Hypnos]” 85.6.

²¹⁶ OH “To Dream [Oneiros]” 86.2. See Most, “Fire” 127-28. For Lusios (Loosener) see chapter 1.

²¹⁷ OH 86.5-7. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 86i, 86.18n; Stein 286; Zabriskie 438. As per the Derveni *mántis*, see Janko 19-20, col. V.

²¹⁸ OH “To Death [Thanatos]” 87.3. As the funeral pyre the body, see Most 133.

²¹⁹ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 87.12n, who observe the *Hymns* to “unabashedly focus on the material blessings of the here and now [...] and show, interestingly enough, no interest in the fate of the soul.” Cf. Morand, who notes εὔ [eũ] as specifically addressing divine agency, that hence “The gods are able to manifest themselves in human life and with gruesome effect” (216), and that the over-emphasis on kindness and light in turn “betray fears, serious rites and mysteries” (217). Each regards the psyche, whether spirit or mind, as central to this transformation. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow xviii.

²²⁰ Rilke, qtd. Blanchot 145.

Chapter Three: PHARMAKON

νῦν ἔθανες καὶ νῦν ἐγένου, τρισόλβιε, ἄματι τῶιδε. εἰπεῖν Περσεφόνοι σ' ὅτι Βάκχιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε.

“Now you have died and now you have come into being, o thrice happy one, on this day. Tell Persephone that Bakkhios himself has set you free.” — OF 487, Pelinna.

A *phármakon* brings life or death, or both at once, alleviating that which it inflicts. This chapter first reiterates the pantheistic nature of *The Orphic Hymns* to contextualise their final verses: the triple death of the initiate in Hypnos (Sleep), Oneiros (Dream), and Thanatos (Death). This deliberate conflation was fundamental to initiation, by which the *bákkhoi* enacted *phármaka*, the magic of the *pharmakon*, and became the sacrifice which enables their rebirth. As Persephone is mother to Bakkhos and the *bákkhoi*, so the *mystai* become mother to Dionysos within themselves. I thus explore the psychological transformation of the *mystai* towards both relational unity and autonomy to examine the conception of Kore-Persephone as autophagous, consuming and transforming herself in devouring the pomegranate of her child's Dionysian blood. Persephone thus binds herself to Hades in the prototype of the rebirth over which she herself presides. I thus secondly explore the relationship of Persephone to Eurydike in light of the complex syncretic techniques of *The Orphic Hymns*, arguing that each was always an aspect of the other. Within all of these examinations, Persephone-Eurydike is both *psykhē* and *psykhopompós*, the *mystai* guiding herself through her own transformation. To conclude, I compare the ideologies of Orphic philosophy explored so far with the modern adaptations of Rainer Maria Rilke's "Orpheus. Eurydike. Hermes", and Hilda Doolittle (H.D.)'s "Eurydice" to argue that each is both fundamentally and functionally consonant with Orphism itself. Their relationships between life and death are conflicted and inverted, and yet this conflict facilitates psychological rebirth within a pantheistic continuum.

I. Apotheosis Autophagia

In Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* the poet displaces the transitory and temporal as an *apothéōsis* of art, a literal immolation of the artist by which their disjunction from nature is extinguished: a harmony of life and death.¹ Rilke thus reiterates the mysteries of sparagmos:

O you, lost god! You, infinite trace!
By dismembering you the hostile forces had to disperse you
to make of us now hearers and a mouth of Nature."²

This pantheism, a moment of artistic ecstasy as a means of self-revelation, or *alétheia*, was typical of the Hellenistic era, but its roots descend to Orphism's very depths.³ In *The Orphic Hymns* unity is a function of the cosmos revealed in the epiphany of the *mystai*, who, immolated by thunderbolt thus recognise: "the anger of the sea waves, | the anger of the mountain peaks—we all know your power".⁴

Self-immolation, the apotheosis by thunderbolt, is a metaphor of mysticism and the conflation of *mousikós* and *bákkhos*, transformed in death. Within the *Hymns* death is but deeper sleep, "Bringing the long slumber, the endless one, to the living".⁵ The dreaming *mystai* are thus *psykhopompoí*, wielding the *kērúkeion* wand of Hermes which leads the *bákkhoi* back and forth across the transformative precipice, "with your sacred wand, you give them sleep | from which you rouse them again".⁶ Kore thus plucks the narcissus and crocus at the precipice of her *katábasis*, those flowers which bewitch and excite, healing and empowering with sibylline prophecy, or else condemning to death.⁷ Like Rilke's artist in the *Sonnets*, the *mágoi*'s wand is cast upon themselves, luring the *mystai* within themselves in oneiromantic revelation.⁸

¹ Martens 216-22. As within Rilke's Orphic katabasis, discussed below. See Blanchot 172.

² Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus*, qtd. Blanchot 143.

³ Versnel 43-44. As per the Derveni papyrus: "all the immortals, blessed gods and goddesses, | the rivers, lovely springs and all the rest, | all that had then been born; he himself alone became" (Janko, col. XVI). See Bernabé, "Gods" 431, 440. See also Henrichs, "One" 466 on Egyptian syncretism, and Calame, "Gold Lamellae" 203; Casadesús Bordoy, "Dionysian" 390, 395, within the Orphic *teletai*.

⁴ *OH* "To Zeus the Thunderbolt [Keraunios Zeus]" 19.18-19. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 10.14-16n, 11.17n, 37.5n, 73.4n, 78.11-12n.

⁵ *OH* "To Death [Thanatos]" 87.5. See Athanassakis & Wolkow 85.8n.

⁶ *OH* "To Chthonic Hermes" 57.7-8. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 57i, 57.7-8n. Hence Dionysos "puts to sleep and wakes up the years" (*OH* "To the God of Annual Feasts" 53.7).

⁷ Calame, "Identities" 259, 263; Rigoglioso 19-20, 25-27. We may compare the sirens, whose deadly song lures Odysseus with secret knowledge, and who in Euripides' *Helene* beseech the Dread Queen to reciprocate Helene's own song of mourning, see Obbink 301-02.

⁸ Lautermilch 37-38; Nelson 33-34. We may again compare Lacan.

The thunderbolt descends to katabatic crescendo, a purification by fire of the psyche in an epiphany of “ethereal and blazing Zeus, whose racing fire shines through the air”.⁹ The *mystai* encounter a syntactic loading preceding release, a flood of information before its reconciliation arrives, as with the epiphany of sparagmos itself: “Father Zeus, sublime is the course of the blazing cosmos you drive on | ethereal and lofty the flash of your lightning”.¹⁰ So Rilke’s Orphic dancer wheels within her flames, spun by sound and motion into “these innumerable warmths”, the sensual, or experienced directly, and synaesthetic unity of light.¹¹

The unity of im/mortality in apotheosis is an explicit *kátharsis*, renouncing the Oblivion of material incarnation in a “liberation from the cycle”, that is, the Orphic-Pythagorean wheel of *metempsychōsis*.¹² The Orphic leaves thus read “fate has overpowered me and he, who throws the thunderbolt with his lightning. | But I have flown out of the cycle of deep affliction and grief”.¹³ The thunderbolt of Zeus here not only purifies by fire, but resolves a suspension of divinity, as Christoph Riedweg observes, “Μοῖρα [Moirā (Fate)] then does not designate the mournful lot of death, but rather of mortality”.¹⁴ In the practice of askesis, the *bákkhoi* supplant one fire for another. Their immolation is the creative fire of the psyche, *seeking* individuation, in psychological terms, by its *metaphysical* renunciation: awakened to conscious autonomy in the recognition of relational identity. Each *bákkhos* walks the lonely path of initiation, of death, to rejoin the communal unity of the symposium in Persephone’s halls.¹⁵ Although their potential is incipient, the *mystai* must actualise it

⁹ *OH* “To Astrapaios Zeus” 20.2. See Athanassakis & Wolkow 19i, 20i. Psyche is air, as per chapter 1.

¹⁰ *OH* “To [Keraunios] Zeus ...” 19.1-2, i.e. “Zeũ páter, huphíbroton pursaugéa kósmon elaúnōn, | stráptōn aitheríou steropēs panupértaton aíglen”. Compare the division and alliteration in the hymns to Phanes and Persephone, discussed in chapter 1. See Morand 215-16.

¹¹ Rilke, qtd. Martens 218, who compares *Sonnet II/18* and Rilke’s *Spanish Dancer* to Orphic singing.

¹² Proclus, *OF* 348, qtd. Bernabé, “Gods”, 438. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 87.3-4n; Bernabé, “Imago” 97-98; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 74, 78-79; Burges Watson, “Erotic Mysteries” 58-59, and *Mousike* 3; Calame, “Gold Lamellae” 215; Edmonds, “Orphic” 80; Jiménez San Cristóbal, “Water” 165-66; Riedweg 223, 232-35; Santamaría Álvarez 213, 216-17; Tortorelli Ghidini 145. Hence the Thracian women who dismember Orpheus are marked upon their flesh, imprisoned by the desires of their bodies, as the Titans who mark themselves with themselves, with clay. See Burges Watson 59.

¹³ *OF* 487, qtd. Riedweg 232.

¹⁴ Riedweg 233. See 233-34. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 37.3n; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 80, 89-90; Obbink, “Poetry” 304. Thus the fire of Hephaistos is summoned against itself to “end the savage rage of untiring fire | as nature itself burns in our own bodies” (*OH* “To Hephaistos” 66.12-13). See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 66.12n.

¹⁵ Bernabé, “Gods” 432-33; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 70, 81-82; Edmonds, “Festivals” 186-88.

themselves.¹⁶ This is why the labours of Herakles are so important to the *Hymns*, a self-apotheosis as “Herakles builds his own pyre and immolates himself” at the culmination of his labours, his life of virtue.¹⁷ The *Hymns* invoke Semele, the mortal mother of Dionysos: “For all mortal men reenact your travail for your son Bacchos: |... the ritual of the holy mysteries”.¹⁸ Yet it is *Dionysos* who descends to the underworld for *Semele*. Semele’s own travail, her death at the birth of Dionysos, is the inverse of Persephone’s motherhood: the raising of *divine* Dionysos within Semele’s *mortal* flesh. Semele is reborn in the same moment as Dionysos, that is, in her death “by the blazing thunderbolt”.¹⁹

The reciprocal rebirth of Semele and Dionysos completes the metaphor which begins and ends with birth from Persephone.²⁰ As we shall see, Rilke replicates that “elan of release” found in the *Hymns*,²¹ where the *mystai* continuously ask for a specific death, emphasising transformation.²² The *bákkhoi* revel in the enthusiastic Lenaia, joining the triumphant procession of Iakkhos as he undoes himself in descent to Hades.²³ In joyous dissolution the *mystai* are reabsorbed into the light of Phanes, returning to the remembrance of Mnemosyne, their holistic identity attained in self-reflection.²⁴ In the *Hymns*, Mnemosyne is both mother and member of the “harmony of the Muses”,²⁵ a superpositioning which similarly unites the maenads, possessed by the Muses, “in your manifold holiness”, by which the *mystai* allude to Hagne (Holy) as an epithet of both Kalliope, Muse and mother of Orpheus, and Persephone, whose adoption they assert.²⁶ From the drink of Mnemosyne all that lies ahead is death.

¹⁶ Bernabé, “Imago” 130; Calame 211; Herrero de Jáuregui, “Dialogues” 217; Obbink 301.

¹⁷ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 12i. Hence the similarly ambiguous death of Orpheus. See Heath 166.

¹⁸ *OH* “To Semele” 44.8-9.

¹⁹ *OH* 44.4. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 44i, 44.6-9n. Thence Dionysos is sewn in the thigh of Zeus.

²⁰ *OF* 487. See Edmonds, “Orphic” 91-92; Faraone, “Rushing” 310-12; Herrero de Jauregui, “*OF*” 193-94; Riedweg 241-42. That is, Eleusinian Brimo/s and the *teletai* of the gold leaves, rushing into milk.

²¹ Fitzgerald 963. As within *OH* “To the Fates [Moirai]” 59.20, and “To Daimon” 73.5-9, where Daimon is strongly associated with Tykhe, fortune. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 59i, 73i.

²² See *OH* “To Pan” 11.22, “To Kronos” 13.10, “To Astrapaios Zeus” 20.5-6, “To Proteus” 25.11, “To Hermes” 28.11-12, “To Persephone” 29.19-20, “To Chthonic Hermes” 57.11, “To Dike” 62.10-11, “To Nomos” 64.7, “To Hephaistos” 66.12-13, “To Asklepios” 67.4, 67.8, “To Daimon” 73.7-9, “To Sleep [Hypnos]” 85.5-8, “To Dream [Oneiros]” 86.9-10, 86.12, and “To Death [Thanatos]” 87.3-5.

²³ Valdés Guía 100-01, 105-06, 115.

²⁴ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 77i; Riedweg 237. As the fragmentation of the leaves is reassembled within their own psyches, so cosmic order, hence “send forth memory of you” (*OH* “To Nomos [Law]” 64.13).

²⁵ *OF* 415, qtd. Athanassakis & Wolkow 77i. I.e. the Pythagorean dodecad as triad unified to ennead.

²⁶ *OH* “To the Muses [Mousai]” 76.11. see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 76i, 76.1n, 76.8-10n. Compare also

The potential of Nyx's embrace is encountered through the *renunciation* of Oblivion. Rilke had yearned for a "language of absence", by which the presence beyond may be revealed.²⁷ In contrast, H.D.'s Orpheus manages only to transform longing for Eurydike into hurt, a descent from which each need to free themselves once more.²⁸ In H.D.'s poem, as we shall see, Orpheus renders Eurydike as an undead shade, caught with him between worlds.²⁹ The song of Orpheus murders her, replacing her as art. Yet in doing so Orpheus supplants not only Eurydike, but himself, becoming an artist who needs art outside of himself to be.³⁰ In the terms of the psychoanalyst Ferenczi, a colleague of Jung, Orpheus as artist becomes his own *Orpha*, "the False Self [which] not only protects the True Self from recurring fear of breakdown and annihilation, but also prevents any revival of it".³¹ Orpheus' return is, ultimately, not the culmination of katabasis but the depth of its descent: his crisis of transformation is incomplete, awaiting his coming sparagmos.

Persephone undertakes that transformation on her own. The yoke of Demeter within the *Hymns* imprisons the Dionysian bull, yet that self-reflection of Titanic earth nurtures the Dionysian youth thereby imprisoned.³² The child of Demeter is mother in turn of Eubouleus, that is, Phanes, each serpentine birth reiterating the previous in ouroboric simultaneity.³³ Persephone shrugs aside the yoke of Demeter, she devours the pomegranate in Hades, the blood of Dionysos, her child, into whom she is reborn.³⁴ In examining this transformation, Tatsuhiro Nakajima observes the tension between Persephone and Demeter as *bíos* and *zōē*: a unity between life and psychic death, the individual in reconciliation with the community, that is, "external wilderness ... [and] the intrapsychic reality of psychoanalysis".³⁵ Deanna Holtzman

"lovely, wise, and pure mothers of joy" (*OH* "To the Graces [Kharites]" 60.4), ie, "*kharmosynēs* ... *eúphrones*" as the divided-self of Euphrosyne in the previous line (*OH* 60.3), that is, the reiterative mother of themselves. Mnemosyne is hence "many-shaped" (*OH* 76.3), as is Eubouleus, see *OH* "To Dionysos" 29.8, and "To Adonis" 56.3. As in the gold leaves.

²⁷ Rilke, qtd. Blanchot 142.

²⁸ Dawson 257, 260-63; Sword 410-16, 422.

²⁹ Blanchot 173-74; Zabriskie 443-44.

³⁰ Bruzelius 450, 457; Davies 212, 218; Gurevich 328-29; Heath 184, 189-90; Sword 408-09, 418-19.

³¹ Gurevich 328. *Orpha* is used by Elizabeth Severn, akin to the animus of Jung, see 327.

³² Athanassakis & Wolkow, 40.2n, 40.8-9n. As likewise Aphrodite, see *OH* "To Aphrodite" 55.9-14.

³³ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 29.7-8n. Compare Gaia, forming alliance with each new generation against the previous until finally producing the intellect in Athene, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 26i, 26.1n.

³⁴ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 39i, 41i. As per the *Orphic Fragments*, *OF* 379-402.

³⁵ Nakajima 196. See also Nakajima 197-98; Zabriskie 437-38.

and Nancy Kulish also argue for the importance of this Persephone myth in psychology, rejecting the male-centric Oedipal analogy.³⁶ They present a tension in Persephone between her sexual sovereignty in Hades and the permitted innocence of Kore in the world of the mother.³⁷ Holtzman and Kulish describe an ongoing tension within Persephone, whose boundary with her mother remains permeable. The mother's symbolic relationship is complicated as both heterosexual rival and primary caregiver: the figure of Persephone thus disavows her conscious agency in the dangers of explicit conflict, her impulse for autonomy safely shrouded in fantasies of abduction.³⁸ Where Oedipus denies, Persephone externalises.³⁹ This tension is equally traced to Jung, and the inverse expansion of Demeter into Persephone, who “tears apart her own innocence”,⁴⁰ as Betsy Perluss writes, where Demeter “becomes a mother, rages and grieves over Kore who was ravished *in her own being*”.⁴¹ Persephone is born from the tensions within herself, she ingests the pomegranate as the assertion of her awakening to autonomy by which she devours her past-selves, whether Demeter or Kore.⁴² Persephone thus rules the underworld in mastering the psyche. She is Eurydike, the “Wide-Rule” of the Dread Queen who leads Orpheus to her very throne, yet only after descending there herself.⁴³

II. Eurydike Psykhopompos

Eurydike is transfixed and usurped by the gaze of Orpheus, alienating and reducing not only her but himself: an artist self-defined by art, inevitably and irreconcilably distinct from himself.⁴⁴ Yet the failure of Orpheus reveals them both. The common thread of Orpheus in all respects is failure, a failure in which both lovers are suspended *despite* the victorious triumph of Orpheus' art,⁴⁵ a failure which

³⁶ Holtzman & Kulish, “Aggression” 1147-48, and “Separation” 1414-16.

³⁷ Holtzman & Kulish, “Separation” 1414-16.

³⁸ Holtzman & Kulish, “Aggression, 1128-30, 1144-45, and “Separation” 1418-20.

³⁹ Holtzman & Kulish, “Separation” 1433-34. The ignorance of this distinction, they argue, leads to the clinical infantilization of women as pre-Oedipal.

⁴⁰ Perluss 95. See also 94.

⁴¹ Kerényi, qtd. Perluss 95. Original emphasis. This was explored in chapter 2.

⁴² Perluss 101-04.

⁴³ See Perluss 96; Sorenson 454; Zabriskie 431-32, 439-40. This is explored below.

⁴⁴ Bruzelius 447-50, 456-57. For comparison with Pygmalion see Bruzelius 450-55; Zabriskie 434.

⁴⁵ Heath 164-65, 182-88; Zabriskie 431-35, 443-44. See also Sorenson 452-54, where Orpheus' gaze is itself lost in Rilke, annihilating even itself.

scholarship finds at the heart of his ambiguous katabasis.⁴⁶ As Aeschylus wrote, alone of the gods, Death desires no gifts; as Athanassakis and Wolkow write of the *Hymns*, “Eurydike, ‘wide justice,’ remains in the world below”.⁴⁷ Yet Orpheus’ descent to abscond with a soul from its victorious respite would be absurd in the context of Orphic metempsychosis, a profoundly cruel imprisonment in the body-tomb of *sōma-sēma*, as Sara Burges Watson asserts.⁴⁸ It may, however, make sense in the context of Eleusis, and, as Helen Sword presupposed, Persephone’s rebirth.⁴⁹ Thus, while Eurydike appears to be “a mythological nobody”,⁵⁰ or just “a vehicle for [Orpheus’] quest to Hades”,⁵¹ her *continued* absence is telling. Orpheus’ wife was the nymph Agriope, dancing in the sunlit glades as did Kore herself.⁵² He descends as psychopomp with the souls of the *mystai*, leading them not away but towards Persephone’s dark throne.⁵³ Eurydike never appears. In explaining her absence from both Nysian meadows and Elysian fields Menelaos Christopoulos argues, “For there is no Eurydice, she has never really existed”; that is, she is the alter-ego of Orpheus himself, his fractured soul in its descent to darkness.⁵⁴ Yet we should expect to see even such an abstract figure in iconography, as we see in the *psūkhai* as the Erinyes-Eumenides. We do not. Instead we hear again and again that Orpheus arrives at the palace of Persephone in Hades, and it is Persephone he stands besides, flanked by dozens of others and none his wife.⁵⁵ Thus, of course “Orpheus’ wife exists only in Hades”,⁵⁶ that is, in Persephone’s domain: for there she stands, beside him, all along.

Let us qualify this syncretism. The conflation of deities as aspects of each other within a fluid continuum was typical to a profound degree in Orphism, as we have explored.⁵⁷ According to both Herodotos and Plutarch, the further conflation

⁴⁶ Burges Watson, “Erotic Mysteries” 64; Heath 163, 194.

⁴⁷ Athanassakis & Wolkow xiv. Death is ineluctable, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 87.9n; Heath 168-78.

⁴⁸ Burges Watson 63-65. The Orphic doctrine of *sōma-sēma* was explored in chapter 1.

⁴⁹ Burges Watson 65; Sword 408. See also Christopoulos 216.

⁵⁰ Sword 408.

⁵¹ Heath 183.

⁵² Bremmer, *Initiation* 60; Burges Watson 47; Christopoulos 208-09; Heath 183-84.

⁵³ Bernabé, “Imago” 112-15; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 96-97; Tortorelli Ghidini 153.

⁵⁴ Christopoulos 212.

⁵⁵ Bernabé 113, 116-18; Heath 167, 189-90.

⁵⁶ Christopoulos 209.

⁵⁷ Athanassakis & Wolkow xiii; Bremmer, *Initiation* 176-77; Edmonds, “Orphic” 89-91 and “Sacred Scripture” 261; Henrichs, “One” 554, 564-65, 570-71; Versnel 36-37. As for Persephone, Hekate, Selene, Artemis, and Tykhe, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 9.6n, 36i, 36.6n, 36.8n, 62i, 72.2n; Bernabé,

with the Egyptian mysteries of Isis and Osiris rests on ritual similitude,⁵⁸ which Radcliffe Edmonds terms an “imagistic” valuation.⁵⁹ The similarities in myth and practice between Dionysos-Phanes and Osiris-Apis overshadowed any differences between them.⁶⁰ While Edmonds proposes a disregard of doctrinal identity, we may instead consider that ritual and symbolism held greater significance for deities whose nature was shrouded as *mystērion*, as Herodotos asserts, and thus must be reinterpreted.⁶¹ As Christopher Faraone shows in the example of the Nymphs as nursemaids of Dionysos, a conflux of imagistic mimesis formed the basis of the *teletai*, re-enacted by the *mystai*.⁶²

The *Hymns* construct a complex impression of Persephone. Anne-France Morand details the connection therein between Dionysos and Athene, born in light from Metis-Phanes.⁶³ Athene is thus invoked as the “she-dragon of the many shapes”,⁶⁴ alluding to Dionysos-Phanes reborn as Mise, that is, the chthonic serpent

“Gods” 424-25, 439-41. For Demeter, Rhea, Hera, Gaia, Hestia, and Kybele, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 14i, 14.3n, 27i, 27.12n, 31i, 38.20-21n, 41.1n, 41.1-2n, 84i, 84.8n; Bernabé, “Gods” 425; Janko, col. XX-XXII; Henrichs 565-66; Tortorelli Ghidini 146-147. For those with Nyx and Aphrodite, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 7.2n, 7.3n, 10.1n, 29.1n, 55.4-7n, 55.15-28n, 68.2n, 73i, 79i; Boned 36-39. For Apollon, Helios, Herakles, Kronos, and Pan, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 6.9n, 8i, 8.1n, 8.11n, 8.12n, 11i, 11.10-12n, 12i, 12.1n, 12.3n, 12.10n, 34i, 34.1n, 34.2n, 34.24-25n; Bernabé, “Gods” 439-41. Finally, for those again with Dionysos, Adonis, Iakkhos, Phanes, Zeus, Zagreus, and Hades, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 6i, 6.1n, 6.4n, 6.5-7n, 12.5n, 15i, 18.12n, 19.16-17n, 21i, 30i, 30.2n, 30.6n, 30.8n, 31i, 31.5n, 32i, 34.7n, 39i, 46i, 46.2-3n, 47i, 48i, 49i, 52.4n, 52.6n, 52.11n, 56i, 72.4n, 79.7-10n; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 69; Edmonds, “Dionysos” 431; Jiménez San Cristóbal, “Dionysos” 276-81, and “Water” 168-69; Henrichs 555-56; Tortorelli Ghidini 146-147. This possibly extends to Hermes, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 58i; Bassi 205; Jiménez San Cristóbal, “Water” 169. For the extensive imagistic identity of Adonis and Dionysos see also *OH* “To Adonis” 56.1-2, 56.4-8, 56.10-11, “To Persephone” 29.8, “To Dionysos” 30.2-3, 30.6-7, “To Mise” 42.4, “To Liknites” 46.2-3, 46.6-7.

⁵⁸ Edmonds, “Dionysos” 415-16, 422-27, 431. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 34.2n, 39i, 42.9-10n, 55.15-28n, 73i; Bassi 205; Boned 36-37; Bowden 77-79; Henrichs, “One” 566; Jiménez San Cristóbal 168-69; Martín Hernández, “Herodotus” 256-58. Edmonds further asserts Epaphie in the *Hymns* references Apophis, see 415, 431. This is omitted by Athanassakis & Wolkow by ellipsis (*OH* “To Lysios Lenaios” 50.7) but is elsewhere transcribed as *epháptor*.

⁵⁹ Edmonds, *Ancient Orphism* 395, and “Dionysos” 416. See also Martín Hernández 258.

⁶⁰ Edmonds, “Dionysos” 417-19, 422-29, 431; Martín Hernández 256-57. That is, both sparagmos and bacchanal, their tombs in Delphi and Memphis, the woven *líknon*, the *thyrsos*, and the bull.

⁶¹ Hence Herodotos’ reticence to discuss them, as he would break his oath in revealing a mystery, see Bremmer 73; Burges Watson, “Erotic Mysteries” 61; Betegh, “Derveni” 49; Edmonds, “Dionysos” 417, 426-27; Graf, “Text” 55-56; Martín Hernández 251-55; Tortorelli Ghidini 148-49. That deities were identified primarily by ritual was true outside of the mysteries also, see Georgoudi, “Dionysos” 52-54.

⁶² Faraone, “Rushing” 319-21. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 24i, 24.2-3n, 24.9-11n, 51i, 75i, 75.1n. Hence the importance of the bacchanal, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 34.6n, 45.4n, 47i, 47.1n.

⁶³ Morand 221-22. See *OH* “To Zeus” 15.3-5.

⁶⁴ *OH* “To Athene” 32.11. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 32i, 32.4-5n, 32.11n, 42.1n. Persephone and Korymbas are both serpents, while Dionysos as Phanes is also Metis, each as per chapter 2.

Persephone-Korybas, or Brimo/s, the *mystai* in psychic self-reflection. This imago-ritualist syncretism is perhaps most significant in the example of the Erinyes. They howl in bacchic fury within the *Hymns*, hair bedecked with serpents in chthonic gloom, “Nocturnal and clandestine”.⁶⁵ That the hymns to the Erinyes-Eumenides, the *psūkhai* of the *mystai* themselves, are followed by Melinoe, the twin-bodied and serpentine spectre of Persephone,⁶⁶ clarifies the placement of the hymns to the Kouretes, the *bákkhoi*, who similarly link the Titans to Korybas and Eleusinian Demeter, and once more Dionysos to Athene.⁶⁷ In each case, the revelling maenads are transfigured by incarnation to become the serpent, that which entombs Eurydike, sending her to the depths of katabasis.⁶⁸ This is the Lady of Hades found in Homer,⁶⁹ “awful Persephone”,⁷⁰ “hateful Persephone”,⁷¹ the inverse *ourobóros*, the serpent fleeing itself, as Demeter and Persephone flee the serpent Zeus, and Demeter flees her serpent-child Persephone,⁷² that is, the spirit of the earth, in abject terror of being.

Let us explore the imagistic significance of Persephone in the *Hymns*. As Kore she dances in the lee of the Kallikhoron well of Eleusis, a *bákkhos* in ecstatic dance with her train of Nymphai, those nursemaids of Bakkhos in their Nysian meadow.⁷³ She is also surrounded by the Horai who will celebrate her return, “the companions of holy Persephone, ...|... come forth to the light”.⁷⁴ The Nymphai-Nereids or Horai-Kharites as we have seen are a transformation of pantheistic nature, of cosmic law, indicating their importance in raising Dionysos.⁷⁵ At Kallikhoron Persephone is at the precipice of her descent to Hades, reaching for the narcissus in the moment before Oblivion.⁷⁶ Agriope, surrounded by her own dancing “Hamadryad maidens”, likewise transitions in an abrupt moment from wedding to wake, bliss to

⁶⁵ *OH* “To the Erinyes” 69.3, as per *OH* 69.6-7, 16. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 69.2n.

⁶⁶ *OH* “To Melinoe” 71.4-9. See chapter 2.

⁶⁷ *OH* 29-32, 37-40. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 31i.

⁶⁸ That is, by the snakebite of Hekate, leading to her initiation-death, made famous in Vergil.

⁶⁹ Bernabé, “Gods” 437, and “Imago” 112; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 90.

⁷⁰ Hesiod, *Theogony* 1.774, qtd. Edmonds, “Who” 85.

⁷¹ *IMilet* [Inscription], Merkelbach & Stauber trans., qtd. Jiménez San Cristóbal, “Water” 166.

⁷² See Athanassakis & Wolkow 29i, 29.9-11n, 46.7n. This was explored in chapter 2.

⁷³ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 46.2-3n; Calame, “Identities” 264-67.

⁷⁴ *OH* “To the Seasons [Horai]” 43.7-8, see Athanassakis & Wolkow, 29.9n.

⁷⁵ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 36i, 42.10n, 51.3n, 51.8n, 60i, 76.7n. Thus inducting the *bákkhoi* in “the sacred and mystic rites you taught to mortals” (*OH* “To the Muses” 76.7). See chapter 2.

⁷⁶ Levaniouk 172-74.

bereaved.⁷⁷ Agriope-Eurydike, like Kore-Persephone, forms two of the faces of triune Hekate, the “saffron-cloaked nymph of the earth” who is both Morn and Moon, Dawn and Descent.⁷⁸ Hekate is herself the “tomb spirit revelling in the souls of the dead |... haunting deserted places”⁷⁹ as the nymphs likewise “haunt meadows”, anticipating the Queen of the Dead.⁸⁰ As Marguerite Rigoglioso explains, Persephone is the “silent Goddess of Life and Death”,⁸¹ the blood-red lake of Sicilian Pergusa, both womb and tomb.⁸² Her liminality is the very image of silent Eurydike, standing at the utmost precipice of Night.⁸³

The evocative image of sudden transformation is essential to understanding Orpheus and Eurydike. An ecstatic moment links the return of Persephone to the reconstitution of Dionysos, whose dismembered pieces are gathered, like Kore from Hades, by Hekate and Demeter—in other words, by Persephone herself.⁸⁴ The ecstasy of *Persephone*, rather than Dionysos, thus links the transfiguration of Orpheus to the cyclical loss of Eurydike. As John Heath writes, “She lives *again* and dies *again*”, an explicit expression of Persephone’s own cyclicity in direct contrast with the linear apotheosis of Semele.⁸⁵ This mortal mother of Dionysos, like Kore become Persephone and Ino become Leukothea, is reborn as Thyone: each as significant in the Orphic *teletai* as the ritual *kykeōn* drunk at Eleusis.⁸⁶

Orpheus reiterates these katabases, founding the *teletai*: the ritual mimesis whereby the *mystai* prepare to be adopted—as was Semele—by Persephone herself.⁸⁷

⁷⁷ *OH* “To the Nymphs” 51.14. See Zabriskie 430.

⁷⁸ *OH* “To Melinoe” 71.1. Compare “saffron-cloaked” (*OH* “To Hekate” 1.2), “nymph” (*OH* 1.8), and Persephone herself as “brilliant and horned” (*OH* 29.11). See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 29.9-11n, 71.1n.

⁷⁹ *OH* 1.3-4.

⁸⁰ *OH* 51.4. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 18.12-15n, 51.4n. Her third face is the “Herder of bulls, queen and mistress of the whole world” (*OH* 1.7), that is, Rhea-Kybele, ecstatic and triumphant. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 14.6n, 42.6n.

⁸¹ Zuntz, qtd. Rigoglioso 12.

⁸² Rigoglioso 6-7, 9-11. Hence the site of her abduction in Ovid. See also Valdés Guía 110.

⁸³ Hence “you force light into the nether world, and then again you flee | into Hades, for dreadful Necessity governs all things” (*OH* “To Night [Nyx]” 3.10-11). See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 72i.

⁸⁴ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 1i, 40i, 40.16n, 41.5-7n; Edmonds, “Dionysos” 419-20, and “Orphic” 83-86; Johnston 124-25. Persephone as Demeter was explored in chapters 1 and 2.

⁸⁵ Heath 184, original emphasis. See Heath 189-91. Herself thus “queen of all” (*OH* “To Semele” 44.1).

⁸⁶ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 41.4n, 44i, 44.6-9n, 74i; Faraone, “Gender” 127-32, and “Rushing” 313-14, 318-25; Evans 5-6; Heath 191; Rigoglioso 17-19. Hence “all mortal men reenact your travail” (*OH* 44.8), as above. See also Edmonds, “Who” 91-92; Obbink, “Poetry” 296-97.

⁸⁷ Bernabé, “Gods” 437, 441; Riedweg 226, 230-32; See also Edmonds, “Dionysos” 421.

Orpheus' own rebirth was found in sparagmos. He assumes the identity of Dionysos, dies and is reborn. Dionysos, we remember, is at once Hades-Eubouleus, son and sombre husband of Persephone.⁸⁸ As son-husband he thus anticipates Adonis, beloved and adopted by Persephone, entombed in earth, and blossoming towards rebirth.⁸⁹ To H.D., Adonis reconciles transformation between psyche and society, striving for autonomy, liberating art from artist.⁹⁰ In the *Hymns* he is the ritual conflation of both Kore and Dionysos, the "Two-horned spirit of growth, much loved and wept for".⁹¹ He is the child self which dies, both the manifold blossom of Demeter, plucked by Kore at the edge of transformation, and the contraceptive pomegranate of her own child's blood, facilitating her autonomy.⁹²

Eurydike, then, is not an irrelevant vehicle for the awakening of Orpheus, but an expression of relational becoming, a mutual transformation between Dionysos and Persephone, who herself dances like Agriope in the Nysian glade, and whose withdrawal to Hades is the very agency of her absolute dominion.⁹³ The fate of Eurydike, like Orpheus, can thus only ever end in death, each transformed in initiation. Given the chthonic significance of Eurydike as an epithet referring to the "wide-rule" of Persephone over supplicant mortality, it is no surprise we find no mention of that specific name within the *Hymns*, in accordance with the ancient taboo of invoking the dreaded gaze of the underworld, that is, the very power by which Orpheus fails, and Eurydike returns unto the depths.⁹⁴

A final figure must be examined before turning in full to Rilke and H.D., and that is Hermes Psykhopompos. In her aspect as Hekate-Selene (Moon), Persephone-

⁸⁸ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 6i, 18.12n, 30.6n, 41.8n; Bernabé, "Gods" 440, and "Imago" 111. As per Herakleitos, see Janko 4; Valdés Guía 101; Wildberg 205-06. See also Obbink 299-300. This also reiterates Dionysos-Zeus from the Derveni papyrus, see Bernabé, "Gods" 425; Bierl 394; Janko, col. XXII, XXV-XXVI; Graf, "Text" 63-64; Porres Caballero, "Rebirth" 127; Torjussen 15.

⁸⁹ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 29.6n, 46.6-7n, 56i. Hence the Horai "bring perfect seasons for the growth of goodly fruit" (*OH* "To the Seasons [Horai]" 43.11), at the arrival of Persephone, thresher of grain.

⁹⁰ Bruzelius 451-52.

⁹¹ *OH* "To Adonis" 56.6. See Athanassakis & Wolkow 42i; Valdés Guía 108-09.

⁹² Rigoglioso 15-16. See also Athanassakis & Wolkow, 68.1n. Hence "an only daughter, but you have many children ... | The variety of flowers reflect your myriad faces and your sacred blossoms" (*OH* "To Eleusinian Demeter" 40.16-17), while Persephone herself is "sole offspring | of Demeter" (*OH* "To Persephone" 28.1-2), i.e. The contradiction draws attention to the metaphor, as aspect of herself.

⁹³ Christopoulos 209. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 29i, 29.4n, 29.5n; Bernabé, "Imago" 111-13, 119; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 95; Casadesús Bordoy, "Dionysian" 389-90; Edmonds, "Who" 77; Faraone, "*Orphic Hymn*" 402; Herrero de Jáuregui, "Dialogues" 274-75, and "Dionysos" 244-45.

⁹⁴ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 18.3n; Perluss 96; Zabriskie 432, 439-40.

Eurydike is psychopompous herself. As the “long-cloaked marshal of the stars” her light presides over the *daímōnes* of the *teletai*, leading all to revel and rebirth.⁹⁵ Within Orphism, then, Hermes role as psychopomp is understated. Instead, he is abstracted, as Athanassakis and Wolkow note, “to one essential idea: the ability to negotiate boundaries”.⁹⁶ Yet we may observe a further *mystérion* in his divided identity. As psychopomp, Chthonic Hermes is unmoving: “You dwell on the road all must take” the *Hymns* intone, “the road of no return”.⁹⁷ It is the living Hermes in another hymn that ushers the *mystai* to rebirth. He is the “judge of contests”, that is, the *teletai* of the *Hymns* which end in death, overseen by the Stars.⁹⁸ It is he who is also “Argeiphontes ... the guide”, psychopomp and slayer of watchdogs, implying the defeat of Kerberos at the door to Hades.⁹⁹ This Hermes of speech ushers the reciting *mystai* to Persephone within the sequence of the *Hymns*, as the psychopomp leads the *psūkhai*. Rebirth is found by the living, not the dead.¹⁰⁰ Thus, while Chthonic Hermes “guide[s] the souls of mortals to the nether gloom”,¹⁰¹ Persephone herself guides the living *mystai* to Okeanos and initiation, as the ferry of Kharon upon the Styx, bestowing “a splendid old age to him who is sailing”,¹⁰² that is, not those who *will* enter her realm, but who float upon those waters even now.

The image of Eurydike as not only transformer but *transformed* defines Rilke and H.D. While most Romanticists portrayed Persephone as naïve, or bitterly resigned,¹⁰³ it is no surprise that Mary Shelley, daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft, has Proserpina (Persephone) representing *both* rebellion against the internalised norms of Ceres (Demeter) and Ceres’ own rage at the greater injustices of Jove (Zeus).¹⁰⁴ Modernists later presented Persephone as the Orphic-Bacchic rejuvenation of an

⁹⁵ *OH* “To Selene” 9.10. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 9.4n, 9.10n. Hence she is invoked to “shine and save” the *mystai* (9.12), as a “lover of horses” (9.4), that is, the *psūkhai*, as per Helios. See chapter 2.

⁹⁶ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 28i. See also 57i.

⁹⁷ *OH* “To Chthonic Hermes” 57.1. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 57.1n.

⁹⁸ *OH* “To Hermes” 28.2. Athanassakis & Wolkow argue this likely refers to the culmination of metaphorical death of the initiates achieved in the *teletai*, see 28.2n, 87.12n. See chapter 1.

⁹⁹ *OH* 28.3. Athanassakis & Wolkow note “slayer of Argos” refers to watchdogs in general, 28.3n.

¹⁰⁰ *OH* 28-30. As the gold leaves themselves. See Calame, “Gold Lamellae” 212; Obbink, “Poetry” 296.

¹⁰¹ *OH* 57.2.

¹⁰² *OH* “To Persephone” 29.19. See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 29.19n. Okeanos was discussed above.

¹⁰³ Goebel 148-49; Louis 36.

¹⁰⁴ Louis 35; Purinton 395-400. H.D. presented Kore in a similar tension, see Louis 125-132.

alienated psyche.¹⁰⁵ This reconciliation-via-complication of Persephone's stygian autophagy explains the tensions Helen Sword examines within the poetry of Rilke and H.D., of Persephone as both the transformation of the artist, and yet raging against Orpheus-Dis (Hades) at an altar of his own aggrandised darkness: the male poets who appropriated the creative underworld for themselves alone.¹⁰⁶ H.D., like Mary Shelley, like Jung, emphasised creativity as the Eleusinian hybridity of male-female, a dynamic and Herakleitean unity of opposites.¹⁰⁷ In this respect, H.D. and Rilke are the same. As Steven Lautermilch once argued of Rilke's Herakleitean dynamic, "Rilke's Orpheus and Nietzsche's Zarathustra worship at the same shrine: the temple not only of beauty but destruction".¹⁰⁸ Yet Eurydike not only transforms herself and Orpheus in creative rebirth, but her realisation of autonomy disrupts the project of colonisation cast upon her.¹⁰⁹ Eurydike is both the deeper truth to which the *mystēs-mousikós* submit, and yet the creative aspect seeking it herself. It is our societies' own troubling discourses on gender which have obscured her in *her* own darkness. As Lyndon Davies notes of the truth sought by Orpheus: "To turn directly to it would be to have to acknowledge that there is a void where the validating principle had seemed to be."¹¹⁰ We have validated our own myths. We must, like Persephone, tear them apart in our rage.

III. H.D.'s "Eurydice" and Rilke's "Orpheus. Eurydike. Hermes."

Let us thus return to the depths, to tear apart these myths and yet reconstitute them anew, inviolate and intact. Like Kalliope in Homer's *Illiad*, H.D.'s song begins with rage. Rage is the essence of "Eurydice", published in a 1917 at the centre of H.D.'s own descent to despair.¹¹¹ She undertakes a similar conflation to her predecessors. If

¹⁰⁵ Louis 109, 112-113.

¹⁰⁶ Sword 408-09, 418-21. Note the relationship of abuse and hypocrisy performed by these poets against H.D. herself, in the explicit appropriation of Orpheus. See Louis 117-118; Sword 410-16.

¹⁰⁷ Louis 124; Sword 422; Zabriskie 440-44. Shelley's Bacchus is also returned to Orphic depiction as male-female, see Purinton 392-93.

¹⁰⁸ Lautermilch 38. See Fitzgerald 952-54, 963-64. Compare the similar comparison of Rilke as "the poet of the world-view of which Nietzsche is the first philosopher" (Thatcher, qtd. Merivale 251). See also Lautermilch 40, Merivale 253. These ideas, of course, were Herakleitean long before Nietzsche.

¹⁰⁹ Davies 219-22; Nelson 31-33. Davies here compares the deterritorialization of Deleuze & Guattari.

¹¹⁰ Davies 222. We may once more invoke the founding principles of post-structuralism.

¹¹¹ Bruzelius 456; Sword 410-14.

Orpheus is a Dionysos-Dis, then Eurydike is Kore, grasped while gathering blossoms on the Nysian plain. “So you have swept me back,” she begins, “I who could have slept among the live flowers | at last;”¹¹² Orpheus is thus Hades himself, “you who passed across the light | and reached | ruthless”.¹¹³ He is also the Apolline poet, worshipping at his own shrine, as H.D. makes clear, “you who have your own light, | who are to yourself presence”.¹¹⁴ If Hades has become light, then Eurydike is left to claim the darkness of non-being:

so for your arrogance
I am broken at last,
I who had lived unconscious,
who was almost forgot.¹¹⁵

Each has an identity based on artistic conception. The Orphic inversion of life is itself inverted. Mnemosyne damns the self to live, while Oblivion allows release. Thus H.D. writes that the memory of loss is worse than Oblivion itself:

everything is lost
...
and worse than black,
this colourless light.¹¹⁶

Yet Earth and the terrifying absence of Hades are re-conflated, the Orphic philosophy re-established:

such loss is no loss,
such terror, such coils and strands and pitfalls
of blackness,
such terror
is no loss.¹¹⁷

Like Orphism, the poem “Eurydice” renounces earth and Oblivion at once. H.D. presents Persephone in her aspect of Hekate, the coiled serpent upon the precipice of Hades. These katabases, too, are overseen by the triptych Titan.¹¹⁸

¹¹² H.D. 1.1.1-5.

¹¹³ H.D. 5.1.6-8. Note again the conflation of “the flowers of the earth” with this image (5.1.4).

¹¹⁴ H.D. 5.2.1-2. The next verse continues her rage, “yet for all your arrogance | and your glance, | I tell you this” (5.3.1-3). The modernist conflation of Orpheus-Dis was explored above.

¹¹⁵ H.D. 1.3.1-4.

¹¹⁶ H.D. 3.2.1-5. See also “flowers, | if I could have taken once my breath of them, | enough of them, | more than earth, | even than of the upper earth, | had passed with me | beneath the earth” (4.2.1-7).

¹¹⁷ H.D. 5.4.1-5.

¹¹⁸ In Rilke it is the hound, see 4.9-10. Hence “... as if split in two: | while his sight ran out like a dog before him”. We may compare each to Melinoe, the twin-bodied spectre of Persephone-Hekate.

Rilke's "Orpheus. Eurydike. Hermes" from 1904 predates his *Sonnets to Orpheus*.¹¹⁹ His katabasis presents a pantheistic omphalos, a nexus of nature and being which finds its well-spring in the darkness of Nyx, the heart of un-being:

That was the strange mine of souls
Like veins of silent silver ore
they wound through its darkness. Between roots
welled up the blood that flows forth to mankind.¹²⁰

The "veins" of ore in the opening lines already imply the "blood" of line four, the idea birthing its child, as does the chthonic potential of Nyx, mother of Phanes, who like Selene flashes in the darkness of the *Hymns*.¹²¹ Like Adonis life blossoms from the dirt; like blood-red Eros-Phanes he erupts from darkness. The soul returns, crystallised as is the frozen air of Moon in the Fates' chthonic descent,¹²² "seeming heavy as porphyry in the dark. | Otherwise nothing was red."¹²³ The absolute is found only in the depths of non-being, which, like apotropaic and chthonic Hekate, or the blood of the Gorgon, turns life to stone, and thus stone to life.¹²⁴

H.D. undertakes a similar pantheistic conflation in "Eurydice", where the self reflects nature:

What had my face to offer
but reflex of the earth,
hyacinth colour
caught from the raw fissure in the rock
where the light struck.¹²⁵

Eurydike's own face is "the colour of azure crocuses | and the bright surface of gold crocuses", that is, not only the upper air, but the specific flowers gathered by Kore: the pharmakon, the bewitching salve, medicinal and deadly.¹²⁶ H.D. further collapses life and death in the invocation of hyacinth in earth, "and of the wind-flower" who in similar imagery to Rilke is "swift in its veins as lightning | and as white."¹²⁷ While this presents a pharmakon in the guise of vivifying and annihilating lightning—the

¹¹⁹ I use Helen Sword's 1994 translation, whose own article to H.D. is cited above.

¹²⁰ Rilke 1.1-4.

¹²¹ *OH* "To Night [Nyx]" 3.7. That is, "you gleam in the darkness", as explored in chapter 2.

¹²² As discussed in chapter 2. We may likewise compare Tartaros.

¹²³ Rilke 1.5-6.

¹²⁴ As explored in the apotheosis of Herakles, see chapter 2.

¹²⁵ H.D. 2.5.1-5.

¹²⁶ H.D. 2.5.6-7. This was discussed above.

¹²⁷ H.D. 2.5.8-10.

thunderbolt of Zeus trapped within the Titanic body of humanity—Hyakinthos was himself murdered by stone for his beauty by the jealous winds, who are also the parents of Eros.¹²⁸ That Hyakinthos was the beloved of Apollon completes this metaphor, so that the cold and lifeless underworld of Hades is the catastrophe and culmination of solar fire, the Apolline passion of Orpheus, “where dead lichens drip | dead cinders upon moss of ash”.¹²⁹ Fire, instead of leading to rebirth, has reduced itself to nothing. So sings her rage.¹³⁰

If H.D. twice inverts Orphism, Rilke presents a more direct discourse on Orphic doctrine. Life is death. “Rocks were there | and unreal forests, bridges over emptiness”.¹³¹ Life, not death, is the pale Homeric shade, the underworld as eternal non-being. From the monad of unifying absolutes, Rilke transitions to the dyad:

And between meadows, soft and full of patience,
appeared the pale strip of the single path,
laid out like linen left to bleach.¹³²

The Elysian fields of Persephone, feminine and free, are broken by the rigidity of being, a strip of bone nurtured by the Apolline sun, both domesticity and death. The omphalos, or transition between life and death, is a pharmakon, leading to either or to both. Hence Rilke reiterates Orphic theology by jeopardising its cosmology:

and that great grey blind pool,
that hung over its distant bed
like a rainy sky over a landscape.¹³³

The rains of the Nephelai, rather than bringing life to birth, are withdrawn in unviolated potential, overseeing an empty lake. The all-seeing eye of Moon is blind, while reflection and reality are conflated as are life and death, *sōma* and *sēma*, body and tomb.¹³⁴ Life itself is the prison of life.

H.D.’s Eurydike strives for freedom in the Dionysian transformation of opposites. She divides hybrid Phanes, “flame upon flame” become “streaks of black

¹²⁸ See Athanassakis & Wolkow, 81i.

¹²⁹ H.D. 1.2.4-5.

¹³⁰ Again condemnation, “so for your arrogance | and your ruthlessness | I am swept back” (1.2.1-3). Yet, as cinders may be rekindled, so the hope for rebirth in H.D. is yet to come, as below.

¹³¹ Rilke 2.1-2.

¹³² Rilke 2.6-8.

¹³³ Rilke 2.3-5.

¹³⁴ The rains of pneuma, *sōma* and *sēma*, and the all-seeing eye were discussed in chapter 1.

and light | grown colourless”.¹³⁵ She sings of “wild saffron that has bent | over the sharp edge of earth”,¹³⁶ that is, of Kore upon the precipice, bending like the saffron-cloaked Moon of Hekate-Selene unto the depths of Hades. H.D.’s Moon is thus suspended like Rilke’s own. Kore’s descent, as we have seen, is self-willed. Her aspects war against each other:

crocuses, walled against blue of themselves,
blue of that upper earth,
blue of the depth upon depth ...
lost.¹³⁷

The beauty of Kore-Eurydike is a prison and draws the attention of Orpheus-Hades. Her aspects retain their potential, of sky, of ocean, and indeed cavern, deep and full. They are, however, filled with loss, their meaning stolen by another. She continues:

hell is no worse than your earth
above the earth,
...
no, nor your flowers
nor your veins of light
nor your presence,
a loss.¹³⁸

The protagonist realises her own wholeness. The illusions of Orpheus slay only themselves, though they be suspended in the aporia of denial, phantasms of self-delusion, as Eurydike demands of Orpheus:

what was it that crossed my face
with the light from yours
and your glance?
...
the light of your own face,
the fire of your own presence?¹³⁹

She thus condemns him to his own self-damnation:

my hell is no worse than yours
though you pass among the flowers and speak
with the spirits above earth.¹⁴⁰

Orpheus is Korybas, the illusion of his own artistry entombing the real, Apollon

¹³⁵ H.D. 2.1.1-4.

¹³⁶ H.D. 3.1.2-3. This is discussed above.

¹³⁷ H.D. 4.1.3-6.

¹³⁸ H.D. 5.5.1-7.

¹³⁹ H.D. 2.4.1-6.

¹⁴⁰ H.D. 5.6.1-3.

obscuring the light of Selene with his own, which thus must be undone.

In Rilke, Orpheus' conflict is embodied in Hermes, the pentad, "the god of motion and of distant message, | the travelling hood above bright eyes".¹⁴¹ The hood both frames and yet conceals the all-important gaze of Hermes, the central protagonist in Rilke,¹⁴² just as the light of life is housed within a body which reveals and yet conceals it. His oscillation between intimacy and distance is emphasised in message, partaking of each. Yet Hermes, "wings beating about the ankles" is confined by his role as psychopomp, the soul-guide, "and entrusted to his left hand: *she*."¹⁴³ Eurydike, as yet unnamed, is bound to the left hand of Hemes, as the lyre is bound to the left hand of Orpheus:

and knew no more of the light lyre
grown into the left hand like tendrils
of rose in the branches of the olive tree.¹⁴⁴

The lyre is unplayed, the rose now both ornamental and parasitic, subverting the peace of the olive bough as passivity and death, an anathema to the musician, mute.

In Rilke's simultaneity, Orpheus is already undergoing Dionysian sparagmos. He is already defined by the glance which ends his katabasis, "...the slender man in the blue cloak | gazing ahead, mute and impatient".¹⁴⁵ He is thus divided:

And his senses were as if split in two:
while his sight ran out like a dog before him,
...
his hearing stayed like a scent behind him.¹⁴⁶

His obsession with the past is disguised by obsession with the future, the scent of the past appearing abandoned, yet enthralling both Orpheus and the canine metaphor used by Rilke.¹⁴⁷ These senses are divided not only from each other, but within themselves, "turned around, returned, and again stood | distant and waiting at the path's next curve—".¹⁴⁸ Divided, he undertakes his own determined autophagia:

His steps devoured the path in great bites
without chewing; his hands hung

¹⁴¹ Rilke 5.9-10. (German text 5.1-2).

¹⁴² See Sorenson 455-56.

¹⁴³ Rilke 5.11-13 (German text 5.3-5).

¹⁴⁴ Rilke 4.6-8.

¹⁴⁵ Rilke 4.1-2.

¹⁴⁶ Rilke 4.9-13.

¹⁴⁷ This, we remember, is the beast which must be slain by Hermes to pass the underworld's gates.

¹⁴⁸ Rilke 4.11-12.

heavy and clenched from the falling folds
and knew no more of the light lyre.¹⁴⁹

He consumes himself upon the path leading to rebirth, setting aside the harmony of his Apolline lyre. He is described in negation: we imply his obsession not in his thoughts but in their removal from the world. He is the Pythagorean tetrad, the material cosmos which is the prison of the Orphic *psūkhai*. He is thus revealed only by the cloak he has draped himself in: by the body, heavy, rigid, and ambivalent, selfish and yet self-loathing in outward grasping fascination. This is the tension of *alētheia*, the *mystai* who must renounce Lethe, the Oblivion of materiality, and instead thirst for Mnemosyne.

Rilke's Orpheus projects his own phantasms upon Eurydike, in desperate reconciliation with the unknown, seeking:

...those other two
who should be following this whole ascent.
Then again it was just his climb's echo
and his cloak's wind that were behind him.¹⁵⁰

The cloak of flesh is enthused, as within the *Hymns*, by the wind of airy Nous. While Helen Sword's translation now moves this cumbersome verse into the fifth stanza, the German text continues in the fourth, the material tetrad culminating as the death of Orpheus, the voice which moved the lords of death and the very stones to weeping, now an empty, hollow thing, "But he told himself: they still were coming; | said it loud and heard it die away."¹⁵¹ His art is lost. Korybas is finally slain. Orpheus' disjunction again reiterates the tension of *alētheia*, not between known and unknown, but between once-known and forgotten, "They still were coming, only they were two | who walked with dreadful lightness...".¹⁵² This knowledge is effected in the mind of the observer, implicating the psychopompous Hermes who is about to arrive in the text, similarly dislocated in time:

...Dared he
once to turn around (if looking back
were not the ruin of this entire deed
still to be accomplished), he would have to see them.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Rilke 4.3-6.

¹⁵⁰ Rilke 4.15-18.

¹⁵¹ Rilke 5.1-2 (German text 4.19-20).

¹⁵² Rilke 5.3-4 (German text 4.21-22).

¹⁵³ Rilke 5.4-7 (German text 4.22-25).

In the consistent appearance of Hermes, usually absent from the myth, Rilke accentuates the role he represents and that Orpheus and Eurydike in fact undertake for each other: a psychopomp, leading both to the threshold of rebirth. Rilke underscores the relational dynamic of identity, irrespective of recognition, that is, “the two gentle ones who followed him in silence”.¹⁵⁴ This dynamic and relational identity is the essence of sparagmos.

For each poet, life is the agonising cycle of the Orphic leaves. H.D’s Eurydike thus longs for Oblivion: “if you had let me rest with the dead, | I had forgot you, and the past”.¹⁵⁵ Yet she resituates herself in undertaking her inquisition of Orpheus:

why did you turn back,
that hell should be reinhabited
of myself thus
swept into nothingness?.¹⁵⁶

She is not a lost soul but a chthonic being interrogating the supplicant in Hades, an Erinyes, who in Orphism was already one and the same. Her interrogation reveals the crisis of Orpheus:

why did you hesitate for that moment?
why did you bend your face
caught with the flame of the upper earth,
above my face?¹⁵⁷

Orpheus’ glance is not careless, but deliberate, a moment taken after self-reflection, destroying the subject of his art in passionate conflagration, that only the tragic art itself remains. This is reiterated in the final passages:

if I should tell you,
you would turn from your own fit paths
toward hell
turn again and glance back
and I would sink into a place
even more terrible than this.¹⁵⁸

Thus, the hunger of Orpheus pursues Eurydike to Oblivion, but her truth is ever deeper. She is torn apart, like Dionysos by the jealous Titans, providing the apotheosis of each.

¹⁵⁴ Rilke 5.8 (German text 4.26).

¹⁵⁵ H.D. 1.4.4-6.

¹⁵⁶ H.D. 2.2.1-4.

¹⁵⁷ H.D. 2.3.2-5.

¹⁵⁸ H.D. 6.2.2-7.

A valuation of art over its subject is similarly evident in Rilke, who writes of Eurydike: “She, so beloved, that from one lyre | more mourning came than from any woman mourners”.¹⁵⁹ The women’s grief, which in ancient Greece could admittedly be hired,¹⁶⁰ is inefficient. The ideal world of the artist, as in Pythagorean conception, is more real than the material, “so that a world was formed from mourning”¹⁶¹. Yet the creation is flawed, reflecting the flaws in its creation:

and so that around this mourning-world,
just as around that other earth, a sun
and a starry silent heaven turned,
a mourning-heaven with distorted stars.¹⁶²

While this perhaps reflects the tensions in modern scholarship’s analysis of the cosmologies in the *Hymns*,¹⁶³ it is more importantly a representation of the ideal making manifest the real. The verse is thus held in abeyance, the hexad as the union of opposites in divided tension, the harmony of the triad confounded by the aporia of the dyad, and thus at once both united and broken. In finishing his verse, “she, so beloved”, Rilke demands we recognise that the origins of these flaws are flaws in our understanding of love.¹⁶⁴

Each poet presents the same answer to this tension: *pantheïsmós*. H.D. utilises the Eleusinian mysteries. Kore-Persephone becomes Demeter, mourning loss, as do the *mystai* in mystic union, an *enthousiasmós* of pneuma:

if I could have caught up from the earth,
the whole of the flowers of the earth,
if once I could have breathed into myself
...
the whole of the great fragrance,
I could have dared the loss.¹⁶⁵

She, like Demeter in her grief, wishes to withhold nature within her own body. H.D. was familiar with Eleusis, and her Eurydike thus readies to give birth to herself.¹⁶⁶ In

¹⁵⁹ Rilke 6.1-2.

¹⁶⁰ See Zabriskie 429.

¹⁶¹ Rilke 6.3.

¹⁶² Rilke 6.6-9.

¹⁶³ That is, between Ptolemy and Anaxagoras, or geocentrism vs heliocentrism. I argue for Anaxagoras, although this lengthy and interesting discussion is outside the scope of this thesis.

¹⁶⁴ Rilke 6.10. Compare H.D. 6.2.1, “and the flowers” recollecting both the self-willed descent of Persephone, and the murder of Hyakinthos.

¹⁶⁵ H.D. 4.3.1-9.

¹⁶⁶ These explicit references to Eleusis were discussed above.

enthousiasmós she ascends to revel:

Against the black
I have more fervor
than you in all the splendor of that place,
against the blackness
and the stark grey
I have more light.¹⁶⁷

H.D. swerves the contrast between Orpheus and Eurydike, implying not only the brightness of Eurydike, but the silhouette of Orpheus against the light. As the *bákkhoi* in Persephone's halls, the *mystēs* becomes her own light in the underworld of her transformation.

Rilke similarly depicts Eurydike as a *mystēs* reaching apotheosis, shrouded in the mysteries of death:

She, though, walked at this god's hand,
her steps hindered by long funereal shrouds,
uncertain, gentle and without impatience.¹⁶⁸

Where Orpheus is defined by his cloak, Eurydike has begun to transcend it. Her shroud is as permeable as she, obscuring and entrapping the spirit within, and yet is met with equanimity and ambivalence. Eurydike, as the heptad, destabilises aporia and thus presents the opportunity for reconciliation. She is Hekate, the occult-self:

She was in herself, like a woman with child,
and thought not of the man who walked before her
and not of the path ascending into life.¹⁶⁹

She too, prepares to birth herself in Eleusinian revelation: "She was in herself. And being dead | had filled her up like fullness."¹⁷⁰ She is already that apotheosis of Night, as Rilke writes:

As a fruit is full of sweetness and darkness,
so she was full of her great death,
still so new that she grasped nothing.¹⁷¹

She is Kore, her lips upon the pomegranate, transforming herself into Persephone. Although Rilke uses the unfortunate and hegemonic symbolism of virginity, "a new

¹⁶⁷ H.D. 6.1.1-6.

¹⁶⁸ Rilke 7.1-3.

¹⁶⁹ Rilke 7.4-6.

¹⁷⁰ Rilke 7.7-8.

¹⁷¹ Rilke 7.9-11.

maidenhood”, as self-autonomy, this is in keeping with the mysteries of Artemis.¹⁷²
She thus rejects that same hegemony, becoming unwedded to Orpheus:

She was already no longer this blonde woman
who sounded sometimes in the poet’s songs,
...
and this man’s possession no longer.¹⁷³

Her transformative epiphany thrusts her rapidly through the progression of stanzas, from death and initiation to the perfection of the *tetraktys*, the pantheistic cosmos.¹⁷⁴ She is not the echo of art, but psyche drinking deep of Mnemosyne, remembering itself in full, thus reversing sorrowful metaphysical individuation in reiteration, taking upon herself the identity of pneuma:

She was already loosened like long hair
and given forth like fallen rain
and dealt out like a hundredfold position.¹⁷⁵

She erupts in sparagmos, both Lusios and Eleutherios, not maenad nor *mystēs* but the transcendent deity itself: “She was already root”,¹⁷⁶ unified with the underworld which opened Rilke’s katabasis.

The poets replicate the triumph of the mysteries. H.D’s Eurydike reaches her own autonomous epiphany:

At least I have the flowers of myself,
... no god
can take that;
I have the fervor of myself for a presence
and my own spirit for light.¹⁷⁷

The *bákkhos* is self-fulfilled, and in Persephone’s darkness undergoes apotheosis. Yet here Rilke once more swerves: like Eurydike the text has forgotten Orpheus until the moment of his loss:

And when abruptly
the god halted her and with pain
in his cry spoke the words: he has turned around,
she grasped nothing and said softly: who?¹⁷⁸

¹⁷² Rilke 8.1. This was discussed in chapter 2.

¹⁷³ Rilke 9.1-4.

¹⁷⁴ That is, the Pythagorean ogdoad and ennead. The *tetraktys* was discussed in chapter 2.

¹⁷⁵ Rilke 10.1-3.

¹⁷⁶ Rilke 11.1.

¹⁷⁷ H.D. 7.1.1-5.

¹⁷⁸ Rilke 12.1-4.

Once more Hermes both provides a relational symbiosis between the two and yet separates them, so that they have not so much transformed each other as simultaneously transformed themselves. Orpheus is altogether obscured. Yet the dodecad, the twelve labours of Herakles, is the perfection of the cosmos, as the decad or *tetraktys* is of the self. Orpheus thus strides upon the wheel of Stars, brought forth by their mutual labours. He must descend to his own Night, as has Eurydike. The cycle thus begins anew:

But distant, dark before the clear exit,
stood someone or other whose countenance
could not be recognised. He stood and saw.¹⁷⁹

We cannot know Orpheus' thoughts, we cannot see his face, any more than we are usually allowed Eurydike's. He is obscured by both light and darkness. We are only allowed the recognition of relational unity between them. Hermes is thus inverted, leading psyche but following pneuma:

the messenger god with sorrowful look
silently turned to follow the figure
returning already by this same path.¹⁸⁰

Like Orpheus, the goddess is veiled, yet her veil is a reiteration, a symbol of eternal unity: "her steps hindered by long funereal shrouds, | uncertain, gentle and without impatience."¹⁸¹ In veiling Eurydike, Rilke lifts the veil of Hekate. The path of those who descend or who arise transformed are conflicted and yet conflated, discernable only to themselves, yet are both unified and unifying. This is the triumph of H.D.:

though small against the black,
small against the formless rocks,
hell must break before I am lost.¹⁸²

The *mystai* is the blossoming of herself. H.D. thus likewise swerves within an imperceptible moment:

before I am lost
hell must open like a red rose
for the dead to pass.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ Rilke 13.1-3.

¹⁸⁰ Rilke 13.5-7.

¹⁸¹ Rilke 13.8-9. These lines replicate exactly 7.2-3.

¹⁸² H.D. 7.2.3-5.

¹⁸³ H.D. 7.2.6-8.

These clauses are profoundly ambivalent; a semantic shift inverts their meanings. She once was lost. Hell will open, a blossom of fire and love. The dead will stride across.

Rilke and H.D. have reiterated concepts at the heart of Orphism. The pharmakon is life and death. It is the transformation of the sparagmos, the rebirth of the katabasis. The conflation of initiation as the triple death of the *teletai*—of liminal formlessness, between the dissolution of Hades and the oneiromancy of dream—is not only allegorical but actual, it is functional:¹⁸⁴ the *bákkhos* is a *mousikós* in artistic transfiguration, and a *mágos* in mastery of the *agónia* thus brought to bear.¹⁸⁵ Like Eurydike they are reborn in death, like Orpheus transformed by art. They enact *phármaka*, poison and panacea, upon themselves, that the *bákkhoi* become *phármakoí*, sacrificing themselves to Dionysos as Kore to Persephone. They thereby invoke the *ékstasis* by which they may forget themselves, allowing the spiritual recollection of *alētheia* in its place.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 85i, 86i, 87i; Bernabé, “Imago” 105-07; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 100; Betegh, “Derveni” 49; Edmonds, “Sacred Scripture” 268-69; Faraone, “Gender” 127-28, and “Rushing” 322-25; Graf, “Text” 62-63; Herrero de Jáuregui, “Poet” 243; Morand 214; Obbink, “Poetry” 295-97; Riedweg 238; Torallas Tovar 405-06, 410. As per Janko, col. IV-V.

¹⁸⁵ Calvo Martínez 374; Edmonds, “Mystai” 34-35; García-Gasco Villarubia 113-16; Herrero de Jáuregui, “Dialogues” 287, and “Poet” 235-36; Levaniouk, 165-72; Patón Cordero 119-121.

¹⁸⁶ Athanassakis & Wolkow, 30i; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 82-84; Calame 210; Edmonds 26; Faraone, “Rushing” 325-26; Porres Caballero, “Maenadic Ecstasy” 169-71. See chapter 2.

Afterword

*τίσι δὴ μαντεύεται Ἡράκλειτος ὁ Ἐφέσιος; νυκτιπόλοις, μάγοις, βάκχοις, λήναις, μύσταις·
τούτοις ἀπειλεῖ τὰ μετὰ θάνατον, τούτοις μαντεύεται τὸ πῦρ.*

*“For whom does Heraclitus of Ephesus prophesy? ‘For night-wanderers, wizards,
bacchants, lenaeans, initiates.’ These are the ones he threatens with the things that
come after death, for these he prophesies fire.” — Clement of Alexandria,
Protrepticus 22.2 (OF 587).*

Our world is broken and inhospitable. Our societies hate themselves, and all the manifest members within it. We commit atrocities against each other with careless abandon, and yet those pale in comparison with the atrocities we commit against the other members of the earth, driven to the edge of extinction, or else tortured and devoured. We do not deserve the beauty of this place. It is perhaps this tension between self-destruction and beauty which drew me to the mysteries. If we are to overcome ourselves, we must learn to develop a willingness to destroy ourselves, to face in self-reflection the horrid truths of our being, and then perhaps we may embrace our beauty.

Nietzsche will never fill the place my heart holds for Jung, although Rilke and H.D. have now usurped one for their own. That grave injustice can lead to transformation for all of these writers is inspiring, and I hope, a truth. My attempts to draw their ideologies within the origins of Orphism is not to deflate them, as to recognise the heart of that ideology, a singular continuum of which the diversity of us all is formed.

When I began this research, I was expecting the metaphors of mysticism, the psychological process of union with the world and the willingness to transform ourselves. Yet similarities with post-structuralism seemed immediately apparent. Although this has ultimately fallen outside my scope, it opens the possibility for further research. Derrida, we know, often spoke in terms of the Greeks. He also avows his own influence from Nietzsche, and, coincidentally, from Blanchot, who wrote extensively on Rilke. The connections between Derrida and Herakleitos would be a fascinating study.

To Herakleitos, the *bákkhos* is reborn to the dichotomous mysteries as the child Aion, whose play is ignorant at best.¹ To redeem the earth, to reach the immolation by fire, the *mystēs* must master the specifically textual wisdom of Orpheus. This is, in one way, their drink from Mnemosyne.² In another, Mnemosyne represents the unity of the *thíasoi*, the initiates spiritually unified but tragically distinct from the pantheistic cosmos, as the lovers Orpheus and Eurydike from themselves, a single step and all the world apart. This is the tragedy of Orpheus, of failure upon the very precipice of success, he whose katabasis both begins and ends in death, as do the *Hymns* themselves.

At the end of the *Hymns* all there is is death. The *bákkhoi* reverse their individuation, the descent of *pneûma* to the earth, “the dust from your feet, as you march briskly, | reaches the clouds”.³ They invert sparagmos by enacting it once more. Orphism is in one sense an aporia, a life in denial of life. Yet this meaning is reversed and reversed and reversed. It ends in failure and death because it is supposed to, that is, in the perpetual cyclicity of Herakleitean transformation. To be dissolved in fire had a very different meaning to Herakleitos than it did to the bishop of Alexandria.⁴ To Herakleitos, the fire of Eros-Phanes was all there was. As Plutarch poetically observes, “for Love alone of the gods Death does as he is told”.⁵ If the mysteries teach of anything, it is Love. We may thus examine the *bákkhoi* within our own struggles for social justice, in a world not only rent asunder but aching for unity. We too are bent before the Lethe, drinking deep its waters of Oblivion.

¹ Most, “Heraclitus” 106-08. While in stark contrast to Derridean *jeu livre*, epistemologically identical.

² Athanassakis & Wolkow, 77i; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 77-78.

³ *OH* “To the Kouretes” 38.12-13.

⁴ The relationship of katabasis and sparagmos, that is, transformation and rebirth, as understood within Christianity itself also falls outside of the scope of this thesis. Several works not cited do explore this, as well as connections with Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism. These all present rich fields of further analysis.

⁵ *OF* 998.

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Glossary

Abbreviations.

OF = *Orphic Fragment* (Bernabé, ed. *Poetae Epici Graeci*).

OH = *Orphic Hymn* (Athanasakis & Wolkow, trans.).

Greek Terms and Deities.¹

Ádōnis [Ἄδωνις] – “Lord”. Son and lover of both Aphrodite and Persephone.

Murdered and reborn, as Dionysos-Korybas.

agōnía [ἀγωνία] – “agony”. Contest, conflict. Physical or mental struggle. Anguish.

Agriópē [Ἀγριόπη] – “Pale-Faced”. A nymph. The bride of Orpheus, who in the underworld became known as Eurydike.

aidōion [αἰδοῖον] – “genitals” or “revered”. A debated translation in the Derveni papyrus, either as “reverend one” or “phallus”.

Aithēr [Αἰθήρ] – “Upper-Air”. Aether. The cold fire, light. The spiritual fire of the psyche, existing within all living things.

Akhérōn [Ἀχέρων] – “River-of-Woe”. The gulf separating Hades from the living.

alētheia [ἀλήθεια] – “not-oblivion”. Truth, revelation. The renunciation of the Lethe.

Amphietoūs [Ἀμφιετοῦς] – “Annual”. An epithet of Dionysos in rebirth.

anábasis [ἀνάβασις] – “ascent”. A return from the underworld, an inverted katabasis.

Anánkē [Ἀνάγκη] – “Necessity”. Inevitability, the serpent wound with Khronos.

Also the chthonic **Adrasteia**, or Inescapable. A nurse of Dionysos, and the Fates.

¹ These terms are compiled from the works cited and cross-referenced with the Liddell-Scott-Jones Ancient Greek lexicon. I follow the transliteration of X/χ (khi) as kh, not ch, in agreement with K/κ (kappa) as k, not c. For consistency with familiar terms, I alternate Y/υ (upsilon) between y and u, favouring y when acute and u when following a vowel.

Anthrōporrhhaístēs [Ἀνθρωπορραίστης] – “Man-Render”. An epithet of Dionysos.

Aphrodītē [Ἀφροδίτη] – “Foam-Risen”. Goddess of love, especially romantic or sexual. In Orphism an aspect of Nyx, as the fertility of the heavens.

Apollōn [Ἀπόλλων] – “Not-Many”. Sun-god of healing, music, and prophecy. Principle god of the Pythagoreans. Worshipped by Orpheus post-katabasis in place of Dionysos, with whom Apollon shared the sanctuary of Delphi.

apothēōsis [ἀποθέωσις] – “deify”. To transcend mortality, to become a god. If semi-divine more accurately heroization.

apotrópaios [ἀποτρόπαιος] – “warding”. The quality of a deity to embody one thing through simultaneously embodying its opposite.

Árēs [Ἄρης] – “Ruin”. Violence and destruction. At times the lover of Aphrodite, representing a tension between opposites.

aretē [ἀρετή] – “virtue”. Excellence, with traditional connotations of machismo.

argaléos kyklos [ἀργαλέος κύκλος] – “agonising cycle”. Metempsychosis, rebirth.

Ártemis [Ἄρτεμις] – “Pure”. Goddess of nature, both virgin and mother. First-born twin sister of Apollon. An aspect of Hekate-Selene-Persephone.

áskēsis [ἄσκησις] – “exercise”. Discipline or practice. Hence **askētēs**, an ascetic.

Asklēpiós [Ἀσκληπιός] – “Healer”. A son of Apollon, and Apollon himself, as Paian.

Astrapaíos [Ἀστραπαίος] – “Of-Lightning”. An epithet of Zeus.

átē [ἄτη] – “folly” or “ruin”. Delusion or obsession, leading to hubris.

Athēnē [Ἀθήνη] – “Divine-Mind”. Warrior-goddess, leader of the Kouretes and the divine thiasoi. Born from Metis (Wisdom), absorbed by Zeus. Hence **Tritogéneia**, born-for-three, the inverse and immanent Dionysos. Known also as Pallas.

bákkhē [βάκχη] – “reveller”. Feminine of bákkhos. Plural **bákkhai**. A maenad.

bakkheiómantis [βακχειόμαντις] – “revelling-prophet”. Used for Apollon.

bakkheúein [βακχεύειν] – “revelry”. The quality or experience of the **bákkhoi**.

Bákkhios [Βάκχιος] – “revelling”. Alternatively **Bákkheios**. The bringer of **bákkhos** to the **bákkhoi**, an epithet of Dionysos.

bákkhos [βάκχος] – “reveller”. An ecstatic. Plural **bákkhoi**.

Bákkhos [Βάκχος] – “Reveller”. Dionysos, himself one of the ecstatics, ecstasy itself, supplanting **Bakkhios**.

Bassareús [Βασσαρεύς] – “Fox-Robed”. Dionysos of the **bassarids**, the Thracian maenads who dismember Orpheus.

bíos [βίος] – “life”. Especially the personal, as the good life.

Boréas [Βορέας] – “Boreal”. God of the cold and violent north wind, of Thrake.

boukólos [βουκόλος] – “ox-herder”. A hierophant of Dionysos.

Brímo [Βρίμο] – “Rage”. Melinoe, Demeter-Hekate-Persephone, the Eleusinian triune goddess.

Brímos [Βρίμος] – “Strength”. Iakkhos, the child of Persephone post-katabasis, Dionysos-Mise.

Bromíos [Βρομίος] – “Roarer”. An epithet of Dionysos. Herald of the thunderbolt.

daímōn [δαίμων] – “dispenser”. Plural **daímōnes**. A divine spirit, at times a soul or personal guardian. **Agathós Daímōn** (“Good Spirit”), as an epithet of Moira-Zeus.

Dēmētēr [Δημήτηρ] – “Earth-Mother”. Goddess of fertility and mother of Kore-Persephone. Subject of the mysteries of Eleusis.

dēmiourgós [δημιουργός] – “artisan”. The demiurge, creator of the universe. Both Hephaistos and Proteus are implicated in this role, as is Zeus.

Díkē [Δίκη] – “Right”. Closely associated with **Dikaíosúnē** (Justice), often conflated. One of the most important virtues in Orphism.

Dionysia [Διονύσια] – “of-Dionysos”. The festivals of Dionysos, especially the rural and city Dionysia, associated with Athens. Hence Dionysiac, a participant.

Equivalents to the Latin bacchanalia and bacchant.

Diónyos [Διώνυσος] – “Zeus-of-Nysa”. The thrice-born god of ecstasy, hybridity, and liberation. Supplicant of his mother Persephone in Hades for the apotheosis of the bákkhoi. Recipient of sparagmos. The pharmakon, the omphalos.

Dióskouroi [Διόσκουροι] – “Zeus-Youths”. The Twins **Kástōr** and **Polydeúkēs**, mortal and divine. Argonauts, accompanying Orpheus. Brothers of Helene of Troy.

dóxa [δόξα] – “opinion”. Either glory or fancy, the seeming of a thing.

drómena [δρώμενα] – “done-things”. The mimesis of ritual action.

drómos [δρόμος] – “racetrack”. A course or path, a progression.

Eiraphiótēs [Εἰραφιότης] – “In-Sewn”. An epithet of Dionysos, referring to his birth from the thigh of Zeus.

ékstasis [ἐκστασις] – “displaced”. Ecstasy. The possession of the ecstatic in enthousiasmós, the experience of bakkheúein.

Eleuthérios [Ελευθέριος] – “Liberator”. An epithet of Dionysos.

émpsykhos [ἐμψυχος] – “with-soul”. Inhabited by a psyche, sentient.

enthousiasmós [ἐνθουσιασμός] – “in-divine-essence”. Possession, inspiration.

Ēós [Ἠώς] – “Dawn”. Transition. Mother of the winds.

Érebos [Ἔρεβος] – “Darkness”. Brother and lover of Nyx. The lower air.

Ērikepaĩos [Ἠρικεπαῖος] – “Giver-of-Life”. An epithet of Phanes and Dionysos.

Erīnyes [Ἐρινύες] – “Avengers”. The Furies. Agents of Fate. Described as the bákkhoi themselves, as per the Eumenides. Likewise daughters of Persephone.

Érōs [Ἔρως] – “Love”. An aspect of Phanes. Child of Nyx in cosmic aspect, terrestrially of Aphrodite. That which unifies. The desire of Metis.

Eubouleús [Εὐβουλεύς] – “Wise-Counsel”. Also spelt **Euboulos**. An epithet of Protogonos, Dionysos, Helios, and Hades. Related to the katabasis of Eleusis. As Phanes the sum-total, both life and death, the central fire.

Eumenídes [Εὐμενίδες] – “Kindly-Disposed”. Normally gracious, although in the hymns chthonic and Stygian. In the Derveni papyrus souls of the dead themselves.

Eurydíkē [Εὐρυδίκη] – “Wide-Justice”. An epithet of both Persephone and Agriope. The transformation of the underworld.

Gaīa [Γαῖα] – “Earth”. Also **Gē**. Form, substance, matter, or the Earth itself.

gnōsis [γνώσις] – “knowledge”. Knowledge as being, the pervasion of Nous.

Hádēs [Ἅδης] – “Unseen”. The god of the underworld, and the underworld itself.

Hagné [Ἁγνή] – “Holy”. An epithet of Persephone and Kalliope.

Hekátē [Ἑκάτη] – “Far-Reaching”. Triple-goddess of the underworld, magic, and the moon. The Dionysian ox-herd, hierophant of the mysteries.

Hélios [Ἥλιος] – “Sun”. The physical sun and eternal eye of Zeus, deliberately conflated with Hyperion, Phanes, and Apollon. Brother to Selene-Artemis.

Hēméra [Ἡμέρα] – “Day”. Daughter and counterpart to Nyx.

Héphaistos [Ἥφαιστος] – “Fiery”. The creative fire, a Promethean artisan, both Aither and demiurge. The light of civilisation, and its self-destructive potential.

Héra [Ἥρα] – “Air”. The world-soul of the pneuma within the individual psyche. The intermediary of Aither and Aer. The bestower of divine madness, inspiration.

Hēraklēs [Ἡρακλῆς] – “Hera’s-Glory”. The initiate Alkaion, blessed by Hera. In Orphism importantly references his labours, as they span across the Zodiac, hence the Titan K(h)ronos and the sun.

Hermaphróditos [Ἑρμαφρόδιτος] – “Hermes-Aphrodite”. The child of the nominal deities, a unity of male and female. Associated with the hybridity of Dionysos.

Hermēs [Ἑρμῆς] – “Boundary”. God of messages, the intellect, cunning, contest, and travel. The psychopomp, the simultaneous transgression and assertion of limitation.

Hestia [Ἑστία] – “Hearth”. The central fire, of the cosmos and of humanity.

hierophántēs [ἱεροφάντης] – “sacred-shower”. A hierophant. The leader of the mysteries, especially those of Eleusis.

Hōrai [ῥῶραι] – “Hours”. The Seasons. The division or ordering of time. The goddesses or daímōnes which surround Persephone on her return.

hūbris [ὕβρις] – “insolence”. Presumptiveness, especially towards the gods.

hylē [ὕλη] – “matter”. The sea of undifferentiated substance, Proteus-Gaia.

Hygeía [Ἵγεία] – “Health”. Daughter and wife of Asklepios.

Hyperbóreos [Ἵπερβόρειος] – “Beyond-North”. A utopia of non-being. Nirvana.

Hypnos [Ἵπνος] – “Sleep”. Brother to Death. Liberation from sorrow and suffering. Hence escape from rebirth. The dichotomy of Oblivion, either blessing or curse.

Íakkhos [Ἰακχος] – “Cry”. The ritual cry of Eleusis made flesh. Dionysos-Brimos, child of Persephone-Brimo. Descends to Hades, as Hades. Eubouleus.

íōsis [ἰώσις] – “refinement”. The process creating the pharmakon. The alchemical rubedo, or reddening. Rebirth.

Kalliópē [Καλλιόπη] – “Beautiful-Voice”. Highest Muse and mother of Orpheus.

katábasis [κατάβασις] – “travel-down”. A descent to the underworld, implying return.

kátharsis [κάθαρσις] – “cleansing”. Purification. The psychological release of crisis. Emphasised in the mysteries of Eleusis and the órgia of Dionysos.

Keraunós [Κεραυνός] – “Thunderbolt”. An epithet of Zeus. A synaesthesia of sound and light, at once destroying and deifying. Epiphanic simultaneity. Fate.

kērúkeion [κηρύκειον] – “herald’s-staff.” The caduceus wand of Hermes, the psychopomp, wound with intertwined serpents, often winged. The interplay of opposites, especially of life and death. Dynamic transformation.

Kháos [Χάος] – “Abyss”. Yawning and infinite. The tension between being and non-being by which Nyx manifests Phanes in Aither.

Khárites [Χάριτες] – “Graces”. The attendants of Aphrodite, agents of cosmic order.

Khárōn [Χάρων] – “Keen-Gaze”. The boatman of the dead upon the Akheron.

Khrónos [Χρόνος] – “Time”. Syncretised with Kronos. Transformation. The Zodiac. Father of Aither and Khaos. The serpent wound about the cosmic egg of Phanes.

khthónios [χθόνιος] – “beneath-earth”. Chthonic. Relating to the earth and underworld, of both death and fertility, and thus rebirth.

khthónios hyménaios [χθόνιος ὑμέναιος] – “chthonic membrane”. The gate of the underworld, the marriage of Hades and Persephone.

kléos [κλέος] – “glory”. Fame, the victory of the warrior, associated with heroization and thus death by thunderbolt.

Kōkytós [Κωκυτός] – “Lamentation”. The river in Hades by which stands Hermes, the psychopomp. The passage to rebirth.

Kórē [Κόρη] – “Maiden”. Persephone, especially prior to her katabasis.

Korybas [Κορύβας] – “Mountainous”. The eldest of the Korybantēs, ecstatics of Kybele. Murdered by his brothers to be reborn in apotheosis. A daímōn of Eleusis and dragon of the Earth, Dionysos-Adonis.

Kourētes [Κουρήτες] – “Youthful-Ones”. Ecstatic dancers and warrior-priests worshipping Rhea in Krete, who protect infant Zeus and again Dionysos. Equated with the Phrygian Korybantēs, and the Samothracian Kabeiroi and Dioskouroi.

kosmogonía [κοσμογονία] – “order-birth”. Cosmogony. The universe from Khaos.

Krónos [Κρόνος] – “Strike-[with]-mind”. Syncretised with Khronos. Analysis and thus synthesis; dissolution and rebirth. Deliberate or willed transformation. The labours of Herakles across the cosmic wheel.

Kybélē [Κυβέλη] – “Mountain-Mother”. Gaia-Rhea and Hera-Demeter. Bringer of madness and mother of Korybas, foremost of her warrior-priests, the Korybantes.

kykeón [κυκεών] – “mix”. The ritual drink at Eleusis, of barley and wine.

legómena [λεγόμενα] – “said-things”. The ritual address of the hierophant.

Lēnaíos [Ληναίος] – “Of-the-Wine-Press”. An epithet of Dionysos. Derived from **lēnos**, wine press, related to **lēnai**, a maenad, and the festival **Lēnaia**.

Léthē [Λήθη] – “Oblivion”. The river of forgetfulness in Hades, leading to rebirth, which the mystai must renounce for the spring of Mnemosyne.

leúkōsis [λεύκωσις] – “whitening”. Also **leúkansis**. The alchemical albedo. Purification. The washing away of impurities.

Leukothéa [Λευκοθέα] – “White-Goddess”. Ino, sister of Semele, and who nursed Dionysos in turn. Reached apotheosis in the sea, of which she became a goddess.

Liknítēs [Λικνίτης] – “Winnower”. From **líknon**, the winnowing fan or woven cradle. An epithet of Dionysos, worshipped at Delphi, perhaps as Python.

Lusíos [Λυσίος] – “Loosener”. Also **Lysíos**. Liberator, redeemer. Both madness and revel. An epithet of Dionysos.

lyristēs [λυριστής] – “lyrist”. A musician of the lyre.

mágos [μάγος] – “magician”. The magus or magician-priest. Plural **mágoi**.

maínades [μαῖνάδες] – “mad-ones”. The maenads, the revelling bákkhōi.

mántis [μάγος] – “maddened”. A diviner, oneiromancer, or seer. Plural **mántes**.

mélanōsis [μέλανωσις] – “blackening”. The alchemical nigredo, putrefaction. Death and decomposition, leading to purification, illumination, and rebirth.

Mēlinōē [Μηλινόη] – “Ill-Coloured”. The rage of Persephone, fathered by Zeus at the mouth of the Kokytos, beachhead of Hermes Psykhopompos. The dualistic crime and yet necessity of rebirth.

metempsychōsis [μετεμψύχωσις] – “transmigration-of-souls.” Reincarnation.

Mētēr Antaía [Μήτηρ Ανταία] – “Mother of Opposition”. Besought with Prayers. Demeter in katabasis for, and thus reborn as, Persephone. Kybele, Rhea-Hekate.

Mētēr Theōn [Μήτηρ Θεῶν] – “Mother of the Gods”. Kybele, Rhea. A complex syncretism, including Hestia and Hera. Also known as Hipta, nurse of Dionysos.

Mētis [Μήτις] – “Wisdom”. An aspect of Phanes. Wife of Zeus, reborn as Athene. That which synthesises, the intelligence of Eros.

mímēsis [μίμησις] – “imitation”. Mimicry, simulating another. In the mysteries a ritual of identification by analogy. A process of becoming.

Mísē [Μίσση] – “Hate”. The feminine Dionysos-Iakkhos. Brimos born of Brimo, the rebirth of Demeter-Persephone. The mystēs herself.

Mnēmosynē [Μνημοσύνη] – “Memory”. Mother of the Muses and the ward of Oblivion. The spring in Hades for which the mystai renounce Lethe and rebirth.

Moīrai [Μοῖραι] – “Apportioners”. The Fates. Sisters of the Erinyes, daughters of Nyx-Aphrodite. The agents of chthonic vengeance and the revelation of death. Strongly associated with Hekate-Selene-Persephone. Singular Moira as Zeus.

Moūsai [Μοῦσαι] – “Arts”. The Muses. The inspiration of the psyche by the divine.

mousiké [μουσική] – “muses’-[skill]”. Art, especially lyric poetry.

mousikós [μουσικός] – “artist”. One who practices mousiké. Plural **mousikoí**.

mystérion [μύστηριον] – “mystery-object”. A subject of the mysteries. A riddle.

mystēs [μύστης] – “initiate”. An initiate of the mysteries. Plural **mystai**.

Némesis [Νέμεσις] – “Retribution”. Associated with both Fates and Furies. Equated with Ananke and Adrasteia. The self-destruction of the arrogant.

Nephélai [Νεφέλαι] – “Clouds”. The cyclical transmutation between water and air, mediated by fire. Singular **Nephélé** as a manifestation of Hera, formed by Zeus.

Nēreús [Νηρεύς] – “Wet-One”. Old Man of the Sea. Shapeshifter and prophet. Father of the Nereids, the water-nymphs who initiate the bákkhoi.

Níkē [Νίκη] – “Victory”. The crown of askesis. Stands beside Dike in Hades.

Nómos [Νόμος] – “Law”. The cosmic force of natural law, and the ethical principles of humanity. An emphasis on balance and the importance of virtue.

Nótos [Νότος] – “South”. God of the south wind, bringer of rain. Dissolution.

Noūs [Νοῦς] – “Mind”. Zeus-Metis. The intellect of the cosmos.

Nysa [Νῦσα] – “[of-Dionysos]”. A tautology. An axis-mundi, an omphalos, comparable to Olympos, Yggdrasil, or Shambhala. Both the meadow of Kore and the nursing ground of Dionysos. Anatolia, an eastern land both near and far.

Nyx [Νύξ] – “Night”. Non-being. Primordial mother, lover, and child of Phanes. Cosmo-chthonic mother of the Fates, and of Death, Dream, and Sleep.

Ōkeanós [Ὠκεανός] – “[Serpent]-Lying-Upon-[the-Waters]”. The fluid boundary between being and non-being, life and death. As per Nyx exists within several generations, both primordial and manifest. A circle enfolding the cosmos.

ōmophagia [ὠμοφαγία] – “raw-[flesh]-eating”. The quality of Dionysos as **Ōmádios** or **Ōméstes**, the taker or eater of raw flesh, and the crime of eating flesh itself.

omphalós [ὀμφαλός] – “navel”. The connection between, hence metaphorically of divine and mundane. In myth the stone swallowed by Kronos in place of Zeus, in practice an altar sacred to Poseidon at the heart of Delphi.

Óneiros [ὄνειρος] – “Dream”. The state between, as of life and death, truth or falsehood, reflecting desire for good or ill. Hence the importance of ritual purity in the interpretation of revelation for the mystai.

órgia [ὄργια] – “passions”. Mystic rites, especially that of Dionysos.

Orpheús [Ὀρφεύς] – “Orphaned”. Bereft, Transformed, the darkness of Hades. The Thracian singer, poet, and priest of Dionysos and Apollon, founder of the mysteries and teletai, and performer of the katabasis. Wed to Agriope/Eurydike.

Orphiká [Ὀρφικά] – “Orphic-[texts]”. The works attributed to Orpheus.

Orphikoí [Ὀρφικοί] – “Orphics”. Followers of Orphism.

Orphikos bíos [Ὀρφικὸς βίος] – “Orphic life”. The practice of ritual purity, of áskēsis towards bakkheúein, typified in vegetarianism, non-violence, and study.

Ouranós [Οὐρανός] “Sky” or “Heavens”. Space, the child of Aither, or substance. Father of the Titans with Gaia. An aspect of Protogonos.

ourobóros [οὐροβόρος] – “tail-devouring”. The autophagous and infinite serpent, the endless cycle, that which both destroys and replenishes itself.

ousía [οὐσία] – “essence”. Being. The philosophical abstraction of Physis.

Paián [Παιάν] – “Shaman”. Also **Paion**. The healer. An epithet of Apollon, Asklepios, Helios, Herakles, Pan, and Dionysos.

Paláimōn [Παλαίμων] – “Wrestler”. Comparable to the Dioskouroi. Drowned as the mortal Melikertes by his mother Ino-Leukothea, driven mad by Hera.

Pán [Πάν] – “All”. God of woodlands, or of nature itself. Associated with Hermes, Dionysos, and Rhea-Kybele. In cosmic aspect as Zeus, the entire cosmos.

Pandóra [Πανδώρα] – “All-gifts”. Chthonic duality, both fertility and death. Constructed by Hephaistos and Aphrodite. Attended by the Kharites and Horai.

pantheïsmós [πανθειϊσμός] – “all-divine”. The Pythagorean monad, unifying reality.

Perikiónios [Περικιόνιος] – “Pillar-Twined”. An epithet of Dionysos, as he binds the ruins of the house of Kadmos in Thebes, calming the damage he earlier caused.

P(h)ersephónē [Φ/Περσεφόνη] – “Bringer-of-Death” or “Thresher”. The maiden Kore reborn in the underworld. Queen of the dead, mistress of Hades, daughter of Demeter, and mother of Dionysos and the mystai. Central to the Eleusinian mysteries.

Phánēs [Φάνης] – “Light-Bringing”. Eros-Metis and Protogonos. The Orphic male-female, bringer of life. The manifestation of the gods, of being. Dionysos.

phármakon [φάρμακον] – “drug”. Both poison and cure. The divine inspiration of madness and liberation. Plural **phármaka**. Hence the derived **pharmakós**, a purification by sacrifice, and **pharmakeía**, magic.

Physis [Φύσις] – “Growth”. Also Phúsis. Nature, a process of continual becoming.

Plóútōn [Πλούτων] – “Wealth”. An epithet for Hades, referring to fertility, and avoiding the taboo of naming a chthonic power. The duality of life and death. The abductor of Persephone, and her loving and devoted partner.

pneūma [πνεῦμα] – “breath” or “spirit”. The world-soul. An aspect of Hera.

Poseidōn [Ποσειδῶν] – “Master-of-Waters”. God of the sea, horses, and earthquakes. The driving of desire, of passion, disrupting the body and either imprisoning or liberating the mind.

Prothyraía [Προθυραία] – “At-Door-Way”. Epithet of **Eileíthya** (Deliverer), Artemis, and Hekate. Associates birth with the underworld, the kthónios hyménaios.

Prōteús [Πρωτεύς] – “First”. The potential of formlessness made manifest in the sea of matter, hylē. A demiurge, creating all things out of himself.

Prōtogónos [Πρωτογόνος] – “First-Born”. Phanes. Thus Eros-Metis, Eubouleus, and Erikepaios. Dionysos. Applied to several deities in syncretism.

psykhē [ψυχή] – “soul”, “ghost”, or “mind”. From **psychō**, blow. Plural **psūkhai**.

psykhopompós [ψυχοπομπός] – “soul-guide”. A psychopomp, guide of the dead. An epithet of Hermes, although others can take the role. Plural **psykhopompoí**.

Pythía [Πυθία] – “of-Python”. High priestess and oracle of Apollo in Delphi.

Rhēa [Ῥέα] – “Flow”. Meter Theon, mother of the gods. Worshipped by the Kouretes who guard the infant Dionysos. Syncretically conflated with Kybele and Gaia.

Sabázios [Σαβάζιος] – “Satyr-Deity”. The Phrygian/Thracian Zeus-Dionysos.

Selēnē [Σελήνη] – “Moon-Light”. The Moon, both goddess and astronomical object. An aspect of Hekate-Persephone-Artemis. Sister to Helios.

Silēnós [Σιληνός] – “Treading-of the-Wine-Press”. Grandfather of the satyrs, foster father and tutor of Dionysos. The wisdom of nature or of fools. Sylvan Pan.

sōma [σῶμα] – “body”. In Plato derived from **sēma**, tomb, and **sōizo**, kept.

sparagmós [σπαραγμός] – “tearing”. The ritual dismemberment of Dionysos.

sphragís [σφραγίς] – “seal”. A literary device revealing the identity of the author in a cryptic but recognisable manner, which implicates the text within a larger body.

Styx [Στύξ] – “Hate” or “Gloom”. The sacred waters of the underworld, by which the Olympians swear oaths.

sunetoí [συνετοί] – “synthesisers”. Those of understanding. Initiates.

symbolon [σύμβολον] – “watchword”. Symbol. A riddle within the mysteries by which one thing was alluded by another, understood only by the initiated.

Tártaros [Τάρταρος] – “of Tartessos”. Tartessos was a necropolis, beyond the setting sun. Primordial Khaos, the darkest abyss of Hades, prison of the Titans.

teletē [τελετη] – “rite [of initiation]”. Plural teletai, thus as the mysteries.

Tēthys [Τηθύς] – “Nurturer”. The sea, Thalassa. The generative potential of formlessness.

tetraktys [τετρακτύς] – “fourth-type”. The Pythagorean triangle formed of four rows, the monad through tetrad, and thus totalling ten, considered perfect.

Thálassa [Θάλασσα] – “Sea”. Wife of Okeanos and mother of Aphrodite.

Thánatos [Θάνατος] – “Death”. Last of the triple Death, following Sleep and Dream. Son of Nyx. Identical brother of the winged youth Eros.

Thémis [Θέμις] – “Order”. Goddess of law and Titan of the earth. Prophet of Delphi preceding Apollon.

Thesmophóros [Θεσμοφόρος] – “Law-Bringer”. An epithet of Demeter, Persephone, and Mise-Kore.

thíasos [θίασος] – “retinue”. The ecstatic revellers following Dionysos. Triumphal, of either bákkhoi or divinities. Plural **thíasoi**.

thusía [θυσία] – “sacrifice”. Often the burnt offering, a blood sacrifice, but can refer to bloodless sacrifices, such as cakes or wine.

thyrsos [θύρσος] – “vine-stalk”. The ritual wand of Bakkhos, a fennel stalk wreathed in ivy and vine, topped with a pine-cone. A phallus, chthonic fertility.

Trietērikós [Τριετηρικός] – “Triennial”. An epithet of Dionysos in the biennial feast, or triennial, counting inclusively. Leader of revels and devourer of men.

Tykhē [Τύχη] – “Fortune”. Goddess of luck, an aspect of Artemis.

xánthōsis [ξάνθωσις] – “yellowing”. The alchemical citrinitas. The revelation of the solar light.

xénos [ξένος] – “foreign”. A stranger, especially a house-guest receiving hospitality, thus any guest or host, including family.

Zagreús [Ζαγρεύς] – “[Pit]-Trapper”. Eubouleus, the chthonic Hades-Dionysos, child victim of the sparagmos. The individuation of humanity within Titanic earth.

Zéphyros [Ζέφυρος] – “Western” or “Dark”. God of the gentle west wind, blowing upon Okeanos. Alternatively storm or salvation. Duality. At times the father of Eros.

Zeús [Ζεὺς] – “Sky-God”. A diverse name, often as divinity itself. In Orphic cosmology Zeus is Pan and Protogonos, creating the cosmos in his own being, an all-pervading spiritual mind, uniting Phanes and Dionysos within a cyclical identity.

zōē [ζωή] – “life”. Especially the universal, as life-force.

Historical Figures.

Sólōn [Σόλων] (c. 630 – c. 560 BCE). The reformer. A complicated Athenian legislator, whose reforms simultaneously persecuted and liberated, yet were interrupted by the tyrant Peisistratos.

Kleisthénēs [Κλεισθένης] (c. 570 – c. 508 BCE). Grandson of the tyrant Kleisthenes of Sikyon, the elder an ally of Peisistratos. In turn helped overthrow the Peisistratids, establishing Athenian democracy, profoundly corrupt from its very inception.

Pythagóras [Πυθαγόρας] (c. 570 – c. 495 BCE). A semi-mythical Sicilian philosopher associated with Orphism who taught mathematics, metempsychosis, vegetarianism, and askesis. Reportedly claimed to be an avatar of Apollon.

Hērakleitos [Ἡράκλειτος] (c. 535 – c. 475 BCE). A philosopher famous for concepts of a dynamic unity of opposites, of becoming, and of the suffering inherent to life.

Anaxagóras [Αναξαγόρας] (c. 510 – c. 428 BCE). A philosopher proposing an early heliocentric model ordered by Nous (Mind). Associated with several Orphic texts.

Empedoklēs [Ἐμπεδοκλῆς] (c. 494 – c. 434 BCE). An Orphic philosopher who united ideas from Pythagoras, Herakleitos, and Anaxagoras. Proposed four states of matter.

Aiskhylos [Αἰσχύλος] (c. 525 – c. 456 BCE). Aeschylus. A tragedian, who claimed to have been commanded to write by Dionysos himself.

Eurīpídēs [Εὐριπίδης] (c. 480 – c. 406 BCE). A subversive and ironic playwright, who was initiated in the mysteries, practiced askesis, and collected Orphic texts.

Hēródotos [Ἡρόδοτος] (c. 484 – c. 425 BCE). Father of history. Initiated in several mysteries, claiming they originated in Egypt, about which he wrote extensively.

Ploútarkhos [Πλούταρχος] (c. 46 – 120 CE). Plutarch. A Greek biographer and historian in the Roman empire, and later a priest of Delphi.

Damáskios [Δαμάσκιος] (c. 458 – c. 538 CE). Last scholar of the Athenian Academy. Wrote several commentaries on Plato, presenting Dionysos as a psychological metaphor.

Pythagorean Numerology.²

monás [μονάς]. The monad. Singularity. Unity within multiplicity, the cosmos as a totality. Being incipient in non-being. Both Mnemosyne and Lethe. Abyss.

duás [δύας]. The duad or dyad. Dynamic tension. Cause. Opposition. Duality.

triás [τριάς]. The triad. The union of two as one. Divinity. Sequentiality. Harmony.

tetrás [τετράς]. The tetrad. The duad reflecting itself. Stability. Materiality. Being.

pentás [πεντάς]. The pentad. The monad within manifestation. Harmony within duality. Aither above earth. Transformation. Unity.

hexás [έξάς]. The hexad. Perfection, the triad in self-reflection. The psyche. Division.

heptás [έπτάς]. The heptad. The material and metaphysical. Fate. Reunification.

ogdoás [όγδοάς]. The ogdoad. Endless division. Matter bound by itself. Death.

enneás [έννεάς]. The ennead. The precipice of perfection. Consummation. Epiphany.

dekás [δεκάς]. The decad. The perfect self. Sum-total of the tetraktys. The cosmos.

héndekás [ένδεκάς]. The hendecad. The destabilisation of unity by itself. Cyclicity.

dódekás [δώδεκάς]. The dodecad. The perfection of the cosmos. The cosmic wheel.

² These definitions are compiled with reference to Taylor's *Theoretic Arithmetic*, whose own 1792 translation of *The Orphic Hymns* in lyrical verse was widely influential in Romanticist Europe.