A COMPARISON BETWEEN PLATO AND ZOROASTER – ASPECTS OF THE PHILOSOPHY IN THE *TIMAEUS* AND THE *GATHAS*

by

D S Viviers

Thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (Ancient Near Eastern Studies)
at the University of Stellenbosch

Supervisor:

Prof J Cook

September 2001

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously submitted it, in part or in its entirety, at any other university for a degree.

22 November 2001

ABSTRACT

The analysis of the system of speculative thought of Plato and Zoroaster, as found in Plato's *Timaeus* and Zoroaster's *Gathas*, seeks to compare a well-known philosophy, that of Plato, to a lesser known and often misunderstood system of speculative thought within a religion, namely Zoroastrianism. The purpose of such a comparison is to show that the speculative thought found in religion is often comparable to philosophy, as is the case in the doctrines postulated in the *Gathas*. It serves to illuminate the philosophy within a lesser known religion (Zoroastrianism) by comparing it to a well-known philosophy (that of Plato), and in doing so, to cast new light on both.

The comparison of Plato and Zoroaster has been proposed and sometimes executed by other scholars as well. The main problem in these other comparisons, thus far, has been the fact that no historical contact or definite doctrinal influence of Zoroaster on Plato has been or is likely to be established. Though Plato might well have been familiar with Zoroastrian doctrines, this cannot be satisfactorily proven. This study does not depend on historical contact or doctrinal influence (though the possibility of the latter has been discussed), but compares the two doctrines independent of historical factors and is based solely on the striking similarities between these two systems of thought.

This study has focussed on some of the basic concepts within the two doctrines, such as creation, the soul, and dualism. In this study I have emphasised the philosophical aspect of Zoroastrianism, though it is classified as a religion, because I believe that much of what has been classified as religion also incorporates speculative thought that can be analysed separately, and as a system of speculative thought it is comparable to other traditions of speculative thought, such as Greek philosophy. This comparison therefore seeks to counteract some of the assumptions about religions, and how they are studied, by focusing on the philosophical basis underlying the doctrines in the Zoroastrian religion.

Another aspect to the comparison is a focus on the similarities of doctrine originating in two cultures previously held to be vastly different, namely Persian and Greek.

There has previously been a tendency to consider the cultures of the classical and the ancient Near Eastern world as separate and completely distinct from each other, and in doing so, ignoring important historical contact. Although the historical interaction between these two areas has received increased attention, comparative investigations have emphasised the differences between the cultures of these regions, although similarities do abound and the comparison of analogous aspects of the various cultures could prove valuable to the study of the ancient world. Recognition of the larger context within which the various cultures of the ancient world operated can only add to the understanding of the ancient world, and pave the way for reassessing the traditions and world-views of various cultures.

OPSOMMING

Die analise van die spekulatiewe denkstelsels van Plato en Zoroaster, soos uitgelê in Plato se *Timaeus* en Zoroaster se *Gathas*, beoog om 'n bekende filosofie te vergelyk met 'n minder bekende en dikwels wangeïnterpreteerde spekulatiewe denkstelsel binne 'n religie, naamlik Zoroastrisme. Die doel van so 'n vergelyking is om te demonstreer dat die spekulatiewe denkstelsel wat binne 'n religie gevind kan word dikwels vergelykbaar is met 'n filosofie, soos die geval is met die leerstellings/denkstelsels wat uitgelê word in die *Gathas*. Dit dien om die filosofiese binne 'n relatief onbekende religie (Zoroastrisme) uit te lig deur dit te vergelyk met 'n bekende filosofie (dié van Plato), en in die proses is dit moontlik dat daar nuwe lig gewerp kan word op albei.

Die vergelyking tussen Plato en Zoroaster is al deur verskeie academici voorgestel en soms uitgevoer. Die hoofprobleem in al die vorige vergelykings is dat daar tot dusver by Zoroaster geen historiese kontak met of invloed op die leerstellings van Plato vasgestel kon word nie. Alhoewel Plato heel moontlik bekend kon gewees het met Zoroaster se leerstellings, kan dit nie bo alle twyfel bewys word nie. Hierdie studie voorveronderstel geen historiese kontak tussen of beïnvloeding deur die leerstellings van Zoroaster en Plato nie (hoewel die moontlikheid van laasgenoemde bespreek word). Dit is 'n vergelyking wat slegs gemotiveer is deur die treffende ooreenkomste tussen hierdie twee denkstelsels.

My studie fokus op 'n aantal basiese konsepte binne die twee leerstellings, soos skepping, die siel, en dualisme. Ten spyte van die feit dat Zoroastrisme as 'n religie geklassifiseer word, word die filosofiese aspek van Zoroastrisme in hierdie studie beklemtoon, want ek glo dat baie sisteme wat as religieë geklassifiseer word spekulatiewe denke inkorporeer wat onafhanklik van die religie self as 'n spekulatiewe denkstelsel soos filosofie geanaliseer kan word, en verder ook vergelyk kan word met ander tradisies van spekulatiewe denkstelsels, soos die oud-Griekse filosofie. Hierdie vergelyking poog om die aannames oor religieë, insluitend aannames oor hoe religieë bestudeer moet word, teen te werk deur te fokus op die onderliggende filosofiese basis in die leerstellings van Zoroastrisme.

'n Ander aspek van die vergelyking is 'n fokus op die ooreenkomste tussen leerstellings wat hul oorsprong het in twee kulture (die Persiese en Griekse onderskeidelik) wat voorheen as heeltemal uiteenlopend en verskillend beskou is, en in die proses is die belangrike historiese kontak geïgnoreer. Alhoewel die historiese interaksie tussen die twee areas toenemend aandag geniet, word die kulturele verskille beklemtoon ten spyte van die feit dat daar veelvuldige ooreenkomste is en dat 'n vergelyking van ooreenkomste tussen verskeie kulture baie waardevol kan wees vir die studie van die antieke wêreld. 'n Waardering van die wyer konteks waarbinne die verskeie kulture van die antieke wêreld gefunksioneer het, kan net bydra tot 'n beter begrip van die antieke wêreld en die weg baan vir 'n herevaluering van die tradisies en wêreldbeskouings van die betrokke kulture.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 – METHODOLOGY

1. Hypothesis

Many scholars have noted that various concepts in the writings of Plato and Zoroaster are comparable and some have attempted an analysis of these comparable aspects in their doctrines. Previous comparisons between Plato and Zoroaster have tended to fall into two categories, firstly those who seek to deny any similarity between the two philosophers, and secondly those who wish to overemphasize the possible influence Zoroaster (or Zoroastrianism) had on Plato's philosophy, or vice versa. One of the main problems in such a comparison is the lack of evidence for historical contact and influence.

This study seeks to approach a comparison of the doctrines of Plato and Zoroaster on the basis of the similarity in their thought, independent of a historical context, because of the premise that all human minds, and therefore all human thinking, operate on the same basis, and a comparison of human thought that transcends time and space contexts is therefore possible. This study does not ignore the individual environment of each philosopher and the influence it exerted on their philosophies, but nevertheless it does not rely on a premise of contact or influence.

The respective doctrines of Plato and Zoroaster are systems of thought that incorporate both philosophical and religious elements. The emphasis in this study will be placed on the philosophical aspects of the two doctrines, though the religious aspects are not excluded owing to perceived problems with methodology and epistemology concerning religion. The purpose of the comparison is to facilitate a better understanding of the system of speculative thought underlying Zoroastrianism by comparing it to Plato's philosophy, which is better known, and in doing so, re-evaluate the philosophy of Plato itself. The main focus will be on Zoroastrianism, for the very reason that Plato's philosophy is better known and has been thoroughly analysed by various scholars.

1

2. Methodology defined

Methodology, as it follows on a statement of intention, is essentially a statement of the validity of the method employed to accomplish this intention and the reason for employing this method. Therefore, firstly, the aims of the various methods that could be employed in this study, and their validity, will be discussed. Secondly, one method is often a reaction to previous methods, and these will be mentioned as influencing factors. Thirdly, a working method which is consonant with the intention of the study will be suggested and elaborated on, discussing its validity and the reason for its employment.

The basic problems in the field of epistemology and methodology, according to Deist & Le Roux (1987:11-19), may be presented as follows:

- firstly, the question whether certain knowledge is possible;
- secondly, the opposition between the human and the natural sciences;
- thirdly, defining 'man' as primarily spiritual, natural/material or rational (further implications of any of these would be the question of what laws govern, what patterns are observable in, or what determination of future or reconstruction of past events is detectable in 'man's' behaviour);
- fourthly, which approach to adopt in studying 'man', his behaviour and his history, for instance objective or subjective, general or specific;
- fifthly, whether the study of history is valid/useful/possible.

To add to Deist and Le Roux's list, I would like to mention some other important factors, such as the influence exerted on methodological interpretation by the current situation (e.g. political, economic, religious, and so forth), as can be seen in Naturalism or Marxism, for example. Current trends in methodology are also influenced by previous methodologies and are often shaped solely as a reaction to their predecessors. The elements that are retained should also be noted.

The methods that could be used in the study of Zoroastrian religion pertain to both the study of religion and the study of history. The various schools of thought within these

2

fields, including the approaches that will be employed and those that will be rejected, will be discussed briefly.

3. Methodology in the study of religion

3.1. Problems in defining religion

More problems are encountered when defining the phenomenon of religion than in defining any other cultural domain. The main problem is the fact that most cultural-anthropological definitions are unacceptable to the people who actually experience the phenomenon of religion 'spiritually' (or subjectively/emotionally). There seems to be a pervasive attempt to reconcile specific definitions (e.g. scientific, anthropological, psychological and so forth) with the definitions of the actual practitioners of religion. This constant attempt at accommodation is not present in the study of other cultural systems in which the findings are not invalidated by the question of whether or not the participants agree with the findings. But even within the attempts of the social sciences to define religion there is dissension. I shall discuss the definitions and delineations of religion by Geertz, King and Selby consecutively.

Geertz (1979:79-80) pays special attention to religious symbolism as a vehicle for the cultural conceptualisations of the world and man's place in it. He defines religion as:

> ".a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating a conception of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic."

This definition could apply to all emotive and propagandistic phenomena, such as patriotism, and ignores the speculative tradition within (or underlying) religion.

According to Geertz (1979:81), religion is both a model *of* 'reality' and a model *for* 'reality', thus being an ideal *of* reality as the culture represents its physical incarnation, but also an ideal *for* reality as the culture should function by religious dictates. Geertz (1979:82-83) also touches on the theme of chaos vs. order in the universe, and man's fear of chaos, which is manifested when situations cannot be interpreted, cause suffering, or pose a moral dilemma and push man's cognitive

3

analytical capacities, his powers of endurance, and his moral integrity and insights beyond their limits. Religion thus recognises the "inescapability of ignorance, pain and injustice" in the human experience, but simultaneously denies that these problems or "irrationalities" are the *status quo* of existence (Geertz 1979:84-85). Geertz (1979:89) finally sums up his anthropological approach as necessitating the elucidation of the relation of systems of meaning (embodied in symbols) to structural and psychological processes in society.

It is perhaps a case of two opposing views: one in which society forms religion and is thus reflected in it owing to its authorship, vs. the other in which religion, in turn, is the basis of society and society thus conforms to religious dictates. It is a case of the chicken or the egg, depending on perspective. In terms of religion, society can thus be seen as either the shaper or that which is shaped.

Geertz (1979:83) also includes among the chaotic experiences dilemmas that "push man's cognitive capacities.beyond their limits", e.g. problems that cannot be simply observed or inferred. This would necessarily lead to speculation and it could well be that the system for attaining and offering explanations of chaos and assigning meaning to existence, or to structural and psychological processes in society, is a speculative system like philosophy. There are many similarities between the speculative thought found in philosophical and religious systems, and it would appear that the speculative thought of either system could be profitably compared to the other.

King (1987:282-283) focuses on the incongruities that arise from an attempt to describe and define religion from a "Western theistic dichotomous" point of view and identifies various problems: firstly, the assumptions of theism permeate linguistic structures that shape Western thought; secondly, it is not certain whether its criteria are applicable for what should be seen as religious/sacred or profane, nor if this distinction is applicable in all instances; thirdly, defining that which is seen as the source for religion, bearing in mind the differences between theism, universalism, etc., is a point of contention; fourthly, there are problems that arise from trying to define a religious community, for example the geographic togetherness of a synagogue vs. the cultic togetherness of a tribal society.

4

These problems of categorisation also affect systems which are analogous to the 'Western theistic dichotomy', but still suffer from inadequate elucidation – for example Zoroastrianism, a tradition which has been grossly misunderstood by many scholars and which has only recently been viewed as even analogous to other religions of the western tradition, despite its obvious influence on Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Some scholars believe that aspects vital to Zoroastrianism, such as the Amesha Spentas, are still not understood adequately.

There is also a problem concerning the accuracy and acceptability of a definition of religion; consensus between those who study it and those who participate in it is rare. There is always a social, historical, economic, geographical and cultural context within which religion operates, and within the same scientific-humanist context of the social science factors mentioned, a psychological aspect, which deals with the mechanisms and motivational forces resulting from human self-consciousness and which stresses experiential inwardness, is also encountered (King 1987:284).

This problem is not encountered in any other cultural domain, such as economy, where the study of Marxism is not solely dependent on whether inferences about the system would be approved of by a Marxist. I believe this approach of extreme accommodation is a false paradigm for the study of religion, as the believers' points of view should form only part of the analysis, not dictate the conclusion. The social science factors mentioned, such as the psychological factors in the religious beliefs of a culture, are very interesting and illuminating to the question of religion, but would perhaps be more so if the believers' points of view were more critically analysed.

Attempts have been made to avoid the 'reductionism' present in the sociological and psychological disciplines that reduce religion to its component factors. One such approach is the analysis of religions of a varied nature in terms of the presence of an awareness of the sacred or holy, often seen as awe, or a blend of "fear and fascination", as described by the Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament (King 1987:284). Such an attempt, however, ignores the absence of fascination in favour of fear in 'primitive' religions, as well as the practically non-existent awareness of a radically 'Other' or 'Ultimate Being' in favour of man's oneness with his 'environing' universe in Asian religions (King 1987:284).

Selby (1981:129), in turn, focuses on the function of religion and describes religion in human life as:

> ".made up of those aspects of the life situation to which humans cannot remain indifferent or cannot evade and which they cannot control or adjust to through the ordinary techniques and attitudes of practical utilitarian life".

This implies that religion is that which man cannot grasp or fully conceptualise and act upon. Religion can, however, be viewed as that which man *has* attempted to grasp and interpret, otherwise it would amount to no more than an amorphous mass of fears and hopes.

Selby (1981:129) also argues that the most striking of all events, and one that no human can evade, is his/her own death. Although I have reservations regarding the tenability of most of Selby's anthropological substantiations owing to their oversimplification, I concur with his view of the importance of uncontrollable experiences, such as death and the unknowable that follows, which prompt religious beliefs as well as philosophical issues, and is thus a paramount concern in terms of speculation. This concern with the finality of death vs. the immortality of (at least) the spiritual aspect of man may manifest itself in many forms in different cultures. Such beliefs include malignant or benign forefather spirits of the dead regulating current societal welfare, a religious expression of a psychological desire to 'live forever', a genetic need for survival expressed in the spiritual by belief in the perpetuation of the soul, or a cultural regulation of order relying on the religious sanction of behavioural codes and mores or reflecting a divinely preordained order.

Thus, not only is the definition of religion fraught with problems, but the function of religion in a cultural system is also as complex as the definition itself. There is no aspect of culture where religion does not come into play, either as an influence on or as a reflection of cultural systems. It is not only present in political systems as divinely sanctioned authority and victories, but it also has a role in shaping how history is viewed and written. There is also an economic involvement, as the church was often a great landowner and provider of jobs, as well as an intermediary between God and man for successful crops. The formulations of justice and laws, morality, stratification, ethos and morale in a society all owe a great debt to its religion. Also, culture reflects religion, and its accomplishments have often been greatly influenced

6

and even prompted by religion, as seen in art, architecture, literature, music, and so forth.

Religion permeates all cultural domains, but as a cultural domain itself it is no different from any other cultural domain, such as politics or economy. Cultural domains are necessarily interrelated, and form a unified whole not because they are the sum of the cultural domains that make up the culture as a whole, but because they are connected and related. Religion is but another aspect of the web which is culture, and it is no more nor less intertwined than any of the other domains. This is why religion cannot be ignored in this study, but one aspect of it will be emphasised, namely the speculative aspect or philosophy within religion. Since religion is inescapable in this particular analysis, not only because the *Gathas* are religious texts but also because religion is important for the study of many aspects of culture in general, I shall briefly discuss the methodological approaches used to study religion as well as the aspects of these methods that will be employed.

3.2. Methodological approaches

3.2.1. Comparative Religion

Comparative Religion is synonymous with 'The Science of Religion' and is centred on the application of a comparative method of analysis of the data provided by the study of different religions, wherein each religion is placed within a general scheme of progress, development, evolution, and value (Sharpe 1987:578). Evolutionism was the main inspirational theory behind Comparative Religion, and what would otherwise have been a positive step forward for the study of both religion and evolution, became a categorisation based on judgements of religions as, for instance, 'inferior', 'primitive' or 'superior'. Ideally, however, it was a cultural-historical comparison of the various religions in terms of religious development.

Evolutionism contended mainly with the theory of diffusion, which was historically evidenced by documented contact (through trade, conquest, missionary activities, etc.), but difficult to trace prehistorically (Sharpe 1987:579). The 'Myth and Ritual School' of the 1930's, however, concentrated on the theory of diffusion, discussed

7

below. After World War I, the Evolutionism that had hitherto shaped Comparative Religion fell from favour, and although the term 'Comparative Religion' was still in use, the subject splintered into various related approaches which focussed on specific aspects of society, such as history, sociology, psychology, phenomenology, etc. (Sharpe 1987:579).

What has been taken from this approach is the comparison of religions, although the Evolutionism approach has been discarded. Yet Evolutionism has not been altogether abandoned, as inherent value judgements are reflected in, for instance, the reluctance to view religion as anything but a subjective experience by the 'believer', which can only be described instead of treating it as another aspect or cultural domain, interacting with and being acted upon by other cultural domains. It is no longer overtly stated that Evolutionism is applied to religions, but it is often applied in the process of comparison.

3.2.2. The Myth and Ritual school

The Myth and Ritual School arose partly as a reaction to the Evolutionism approach to the study of ancient religions and partly as result of a growing recognition of the importance of ritual acts and of the accompanying texts or myths in ancient religions, which were, according to the Myth and Ritual School, "at the heart of an ancient society's self-understanding" (Harrelson 1987:282). The Myth and Ritual School not only offered substantial criticism of the perspectives Evolutionism employed in, amongst others, Comparative Religion, and continually stressed the need to regard the actual practices of a religion as seriously as its religious ideas and literary heritage, but the Myth and Ritual School also did much to replace the criticised comparative approach with a new method of comparison (Harrelson 1987:284).

The accent on the importance of the non-literary tradition within religion has been incorporated in the study of religions, and Boyce is one scholar who has incorporated ancient and modern religious practices and ritual texts in her studies as aids to the examination of religious texts. Although the Myth and Ritual school was a reaction against Evolutionism, evolution does come into play when non-literary aspects are studied, especially when it is an anthropologically based study of present practices to

8

illuminate their ancient equivalents. Evolution must be taken into account in these instances because change *has* taken place in religious traditions (e.g. they have evolved, as cultures do). Yet it is often not fully recognised that change takes place in any given tradition, and that the modern and the ancient data should be examined with this variable of difference and evolution in mind.

3.2.3. The History of Religions

The discipline of the History of Religions is characterised, according to Bianchi (1987:400), by empirical method and an ongoing historical investigation which is the result of "the dialectical relationship that exists between the object of study and its methods of research". These methods are "inductive and intended to grasp religion in its concreteness, in its historical creativity, and in its meaningfulness for the cultural, social, and individual lives with which it is interwoven" (Bianchi 1987:400). This approach to the history of religions is also often contrasted with that of other disciplines, such as the hermeneutical or phenomenological approach (Bianchi 1987:400).

The phenomenological approach attempts to extract the meaning of religious phenomena without "committing itself to an analysis of the historical, cultural, social, geographical and psychological settings of those phenomena and thus neglects the diachronic, formative processes of a religious phenomenon"; the sequence of change and development, of evolution and revolution, is therefore ignored (Bianchi 1987:400). The a-historical nature of this method, though useful and often very enlightening, is only meaningful within the context of a larger framework of methodological approaches that take the dynamic influence of time into account.

The History of Religions approach necessarily regards religion as a historical phenomenon, but Bianchi (1987:400) notes that religion is not reduced to a historical phenomenon only, as is the case with Historicism. Historicism opposes the phenomenological approach, according to Bianchi (1987:400), because it criticises the inadequacy of countering "the historical reductionism with an appeal to the irreducible character of religion as perceived by the subjective, experiential sensitivity of the phenomenologist". Bianchi (1987:400) believes that in both cases there is "an

9

illegitimate appeal to an *a priori* conception of religion" which is incompatible with the positive, inductive, comparative-historical approach of History of Religions and its dialectic between tentative interpretation and current research.

The search for universal definitions and approaches can lead to *a priori* reductionism, and the History of Religions approach necessitates an 'analogical', as opposed to a 'univocal', method, stressing the importance of an ongoing dialectic that takes into account both what is interpreted and the possible reasons for such an interpretation (Bianchi 1987:400-402). A historical typology of religion therefore attempts to "map specific sets of analogically related affinities that are not merely conceptual or phenomenological but historical", carefully avoiding isolated classificatory and analytical observations on the one hand, and subjective and selective intuition on the other, both of which have proved ethnocentric and reductionist (Bianchi 1987:404).

This dialectic approach is more informative in a historical context than it is problematic, as it recognises both the changing record of history and the changing interpretation of it, and the approach could be valid for the study of the history of philosophy as well as religion. An example of such an approach would be to study the 'analogically related affinity' between the philosophies of Plato and Zoroaster, as I shall attempt, with the added advantage of conforming the method of study to the preferred method of Plato himself, namely dialectic. The historical aspect of the approach will only be employed to take cogniscance of the historical context within which Plato and Zoroaster functioned, however, not to analyse any possibility of historical contact.

3.2.4. Phenomenology of Religion

Yet another approach, mentioned already, is the Phenomenology of Religion. In the term phenomenology (from the Greek word *phainomenon* – "that which shows itself") scientists usually emphasise the descriptive rather than the explanatory, according to Allen (1987:273), and in the Phenomenology of Religion this emphasis on describing (rather than explaining) the nature of religious phenomena is also adhered to. This is an example of non-philosophical phenomenology, but the term is mainly associated with philosophical phenomenology and identified with philosophers such as Hegel

10

and Kant (Allen 1987:273). Kant specifically accentuated "phenomena" as data of experience, data which appear to, or are formulated by our minds, and believed these phenomena could therefore be studied with the mind, i.e. rationally, scientifically and objectively (Allen 1987:273). Philosophical phenomenology differs substantially from religious phenomenology, but there are some characteristics of philosophical phenomenology that have influenced religious phenomenology extensively, and have particular relevance to the Phenomenology of Religion. I shall list and critically discuss these influences on the Phenomenology of Religion below:

i. Its "*descriptive nature*" is marked by a dismissal of philosophical theories and concepts in favour of an employment of direct intuition and description of the phenomena as they appear in immediate experience (Allen 1987:274). This, of course, is highly subjective and, although it denounces preconceived ideas, ignores the presence of 'outside' influences (cultural, psychological, etc.) and the inevitable shaping of or dictating to the construction of results by the observer as well as the observed, because of preconceived ideas.

ii. Its "*opposition to reductionism*" attempts to counteract the oversimplification of traditional empiricism and other forms of reductionism, and aims to deal with phenomena "as phenomena" and in this way to become aware of what they "reveal in their full intentionality" (Allen 1987:274-275). Yet in this aim they practise their own form of reductionism by reducing religious phenomena to just an experience and a description, ignoring phenomena such as origin, change, application and, most importantly, different interpretations and insights.

iii. Its "*intentionality*", which refers to the property of all consciousness as consciousness of something, because a subject "intends" an object, is a way of describing how consciousness constitutes phenomena (Allen 1987:275). Here, to some degree, many phenomenologists fall into the trap of reducing the "meaning" of religion to that which is a construct of the minds that seek (or will) its meaning. It is not clear whether this is considered contrary to their approach to religion. It is certainly contrary to their aim of empathy and sympathy for the religious phenomena studied, as many religions assume that the ultimate and essential "meaning" of their religion cannot be fully grasped,

11

and almost all would object to the interpretation that religious phenomena are exclusively dictated by intentionality.

iv. Its *"bracketing"*, or an anti-reductionist insistence on the irreducability of intentional immediate experience, entails the phenomenological *epoche* (the Greek word for "abstention from or suspension of judgement"), and its goal is to free the phenomenologist from unexamined presuppositions, or of rendering explicit and clarifying presuppositions (Allen 1987:275). Sadly, these presuppositions are an integral part of any theory, and are often ignored, mostly because they are not obvious. Thus, their examination is an essential aspect of a successful theory, and their complete avoidance is impossible. This is where history is valuable, as presuppositions and their influence on observations are often clarified (and are often informative) in retrospect.

v. Its *"eidetic vision"* (from the Greek word *"eidos"*), which Husserl adopted from the Platonic word designating "universal essences", is based on the assumption that such essences express the "whatness" of things, the "necessary and invariant features of phenomena" that allow the observers to recognise them as phenomena of a certain type (Allen 1987:275). Yet the rest of the meaning that Plato ascribed to *eidos* entails its unattainability, owing to the constraints on and imperfections of human observation and representation. It is therefore possible to experience the *eidos*/essence of something in its actual state, but even in this unlikely event it will be impossible to describe or express it accurately. Here we return to the fallibility of a subjective-descriptive rendering of a controversial subject which ignores the influences and contexts of both the subject and the observer. This approach thus falls into a sort of nihilism as regards epistemology.

Of the five characteristics mentioned above, "intentionality" and "bracketing" have not been accepted by all phenomenologists, but the majority of phenomenologists support a descriptive phenomenology which is anti-reductionist and which involves insight into essential structures (Allen 1987:275).

Though Phenomenology of Religion has made another attempt at combatting reductionism, it has failed by perpetuating its own reductionism in that it focuses on description and precludes analysis. It also fails to take into account the various factors

12

that influence and are influenced by religion. Zoroastrianism, if it is to be described phenomenologically, could not be said to be a reaction against paganism in Iran, nor could it be described as anything but an experience which revealed itself to one individual (Zoroaster). This experience has been perpetuated by all the other Zoroastrians by proxy through the doctrines Zoroaster propounded rather than through their own personal experience.

It is difficult to separate one approach to the study of religion from another in terms of which is right or wrong - mainly because they overlap to a great extent, but also because they are all in some way inadequate. No approach is (or can ever be) perfect, but no approach must be dismissed. There are some common problems which could prove valuable in highlighting certain criteria for an adequate approach:

i.   Objective vs. subjective observation, which is obviously currently lacking in synthesis and mutual recognition, is a problem that needs to be addressed.

ii.   Reductionism, which will always be present and which is unavoidable, whether overtly/intentionally or covertly/unintentionally, must be studied and there must be a constant and ongoing awareness of the danger of reductionism in any research. It would be better if, given such a preliminary awareness, it were determined as "specific" rather than "reductive".

iii.   Influences, of any kind, on both theorist and subject are still under-emphasised, be they cultural, social, historical, political, psychological or geographical. These must be analysed, as much as reductionism should be checked and analysed.

iv.   Empathetic understanding of all and even seemingly insignificant aspects or elements associated with any religion, has been greatly neglected. Though the Myth and Ritual School tried to rectify the situation by attempting to reinstate myths and rituals to their proper and equal importance, they also failed to see that every element is as cardinally important, if not as prominent, as the next.

Furthermore, although Evolutionism was discarded after the First World War, I do not see sense in discarding the theory of evolution as well, as the two are completely different terms and concepts, although related. Evolution has been interpreted as a process of changing or evolving from "primitive" or "rudimentary" to "advanced" or

"complex", and was applied to the study of religion in terms of derogatory marginalisation of non-western religions. This interpretation of a linear progression and improvement is a misinterpretation of what evolution is. Evolution is merely the process of continual change and adaptation (not necessarily to something better, or there would be no extinction). Adaptation happens because of changing circumstances and is therefore adaptation to external forces and internal needs (which are both interrelated and mutually affected).

Nothing, however, happens or can be understood without the application of change in external forces or internal needs. Therefore, to treat something as a completely separate and thereby intelligible phenomenon, is impossible without acknowledging other factors. I concur with Kant's view on the possibility of rationally understanding all phenomena by means of objective scientific observation, but also concur with his theory on the individual and the community. In the latter he postulates that everything is in perpetual community with other things and is affected by them. Thus nothing is beyond influence.

Evolution of traditions is taken into account, not only in the shaping of both systems of philosophy (Plato's and Zoroaster's), but also in the later tradition of Zoroastrianism (as well as Platonism, though this will not be discussed). Where the data are sufficient (as, possibly, in Plato's case) one could attempt an investigation into possible individual evolution (which certainly happened, but which must be discovered in the text, if possible), though this is largely beyond the scope of this study.

3.3. Conclusion

What can be gained from these methodologies will be applied, as I have indicated above, but my purpose is specifically to interpret the Zoroastrian religion according to its speculative basis (as thought out by Zoroaster and as seen in the *Gathas*). The philosophical system inherent in this religion is not overtly stated, however, but must be gleaned from the *Gathas* as the *a priori* philosophical structure on which the religious text was based, and which can be seen reflected in the religious views held on topics such as cosmology, dualism and metaphysics.

Religion and philosophy are related, hence the field 'Philosophy of Religion'; but this is a modern movement within philosophy, and no attempt has yet been made (to my knowledge) to study whether the ancients had a similar philosophical field. It may even have been a religion of philosophy instead of a philosophy of religion. But it is often not acknowledged that the study of religion does have a speculative component, both in religion itself and in the method of studying it.

The question remains, however, whether or not religion has a cognitive component. Religion comes from a system of beliefs centred around that about which man is uncertain, and it should therefore by logical inference be a field in which thinking predominates, for there is nothing like the seemingly inexplicable to fascinate the human intellect. An unthinking and accepting tradition within religion exists, however, and has been placed at the very core of our thinking about religion. This has led to the emphasis being placed on belief and experience as paramount, and speculative traditions within religion being misinterpreted, if they have been interpreted at all, according to this emphasis on belief, which is an incorrect criterion to use for speculation if it is to be seen as axial to such a study.

Even if religion does not have a cognitive component, nothing prevents us from thinking about it, from any point of departure, for if people can study religion on the assumption that it is all a Divine Truth, and others can equally legitimately study it on the grounds that God does not exist and that religion is the 'opiate of the masses', keeping people repressed under a detrimental economic *status quo*, then one can study religion as if it were a philosophy.

Therefore, although religion is an aspect of this study, the methodological approaches generally employed to study it form an inadequate basis, given the reasons above, and can only be used secondarily, when questions pertaining to the religious domain are analysed. Another method should therefore be sought as primary to this study. Two related movements in the study of history partially satisfy the need for a broader methodology: Historicism, and Neo-Historicism or Narrativism.

4. Methodology in the study of history

4.1. Historicism

Historicism drew from previous and contemporaneous sources of method to substantiate its approach. Deist (1993:385) notes that it accepted that established methods of dating and classification had to be employed in the analysis of historical documents, it viewed the human mind as the only instrument capable of grasping with coherence the complexities of human experience (of whatever date – present or past), in accordance with Vico's argument, and it viewed individual cultures as monads, based on Leibniz's theory.

Historicism further believed that, in order to obtain access to the essential nature of a cultural monad, one has to immerse oneself to the point of mental transference to that time and place, tuiting the unifying idea/essential nature of the culture and thereby to understand it 'wie es eigentlich gewesen' (Deist 1993:385). This was hermeneutically possible, according to Deist (1993:386), because Dilthey substituted 'historical reason' for Kant's 'critical reason', having elaborated on Schleiermacher's idea of a 'substratum of general human nature', which incorporated Hegel's idea of the historicity of thought, and which underpinned the possibility of a communication of ideas across space and time.

The link between past and present is therefore mental, for Deist (1993:386) argues that the nature of human experience and expression is universal and the motivations for actions in the past would be comprehensible in the present through a rational 'reconstruction' (a term coined by Dilthey) or 're-enactment' (Collingwood's term). Deist (1993:386) further points out that there is no way to be certain if the historicist's interpretation or reconstruction/re-enactment of the past resembled the past at all, as it is quite possible that historical subjects might have employed a logic very different from the historicist's.

The ontological implication of this theory is very valuable, however, especially in artefact analysis. Working from the premise that interpretation is not a function of the human mind but a condition of human existence, Deist (1993:387) argues that one

16

should regard objects from a culture not as static and isolated objects in need of interpretation, but as expressions of interpretation (by the ancients themselves). Two such examples of interpretation are Plato's *Timaeus* and Zoroaster's *Gathas*. The validity of a current comprehension of these works (according to the above-mentioned premise of the human mind as 'substratum of general human nature') is also the validation of a comparison between the two, as they too embody the workings of the mind within this 'substratum'. The mental link between past and present is also a link with the future; and present interpretation, like past interpretation, is therefore part of an ongoing dialectical process of history. This dialectical process was seen as a narrative by Neo-Historicism, which I shall discuss below.

The scientific explanations that Historicism employed were derived from a positivist method, namely Popper & Hempel's Covering Law Model (Deist 1993:388), a formula for describing actions and reactions (given certain factors) in history via mathematical equations, functioning like statistics to predict an outcome (or the preceding factors). The Covering Law Model failed to secure a scientific status of reliable predictability, however, and Deist (1993:390) argues that it possibly failed on account of the lack of information input in relation to such a simplified system, or because of the large margin of possible error. The other possible cause for failure is that too many variables cannot be accounted for. This ties in directly with the Romanticist argument for the unpredictability of human behaviour as a result of free will, thereby introducing such incalculable variables. At best the attempt at a Covering Law Model was an illustration of statistical probability factors.

4.2. Narrativism/Neo-Historicism

Deist (1993:390) notes that Neo-Historicism had the same premise as Historicism, that of endorsing empirically ascertained and 'reliable' facts, but that it utilised these facts in a narrative. Essentially this would be a partially creative construct of the narrator/historian's mind working the 'facts', according to Deist (1993:390), into possible scenarios while accentuating the strangeness of the other culture as experienced by the narrators/historians submerging themselves in the scene. An important factor is that neo-historicists do not treat the 'understanding of the past' as a passive re-enactment of the gist of the ancient cultures, but their point of departure is

17

also an attempt at understanding the past "from within" (Deist 1993:390-391). They thereby recognise the historians' preconceptions, biases and prejudices which may influence their interpretation and selection of foci, or rather their "construction" of coherence among the facts about the past (Deist 1993:391). To this one could add taking cognisance of the biases, motives and prejudices of the ancient authors themselves.

The method employed for establishing coherence from the disparate items within the record is also significant. Deist (1993:391) distinguished three ways in which this is achieved: firstly, items may be categorised philosophically, according to their 'essence' or 'nature'; secondly, they may be classified scientifically, with reference to general laws and theories; and thirdly, they may be ordered configurationally, with reference to the context of their occurrence, also referred to as their 'configurational coherence'. Deist (1993:391) further notes that it is therefore the historian's duty to assign to the disparate items or 'facts' in the record a place and function within the "complicated network of inter-connected events". The establishment of such a 'configurational coherence' necessitates the use of 'synoptic judgement' on the part of the historian, who must construct a logical framework within which to assign appropriate functions to the facts for the particular situation (Deist 1993:391).

This raises the problem of how to assign 'importance' to the factors involved. Deist (1993:392) argues that, in this context, "the significance of a particular incident is thus dependent not on its 'inherent meaning' or the 'intention of the actors', but on the place and function assigned to it by the historical narrative", and notes that Dray refers to this process as the 'history-constituting act of selection' or the 'explanation-injecting feature of narrative construction'. The Covering Law Model (or its 'probabilistic reformulation') is also employed to assist in, or is a 'handy heuristic tool' for the recognition of events as significant or important 'facts', since a covering law developed from the observation of human behaviour (by the study of, for instance, psychology, sociology or anthropology) could enhance the historian's synoptic judgement and the validity of the interpretation or even suggest "colligatory concepts" for the construction of narratives spanning a large amount of time and therefore significant change (Deist 1993:393).

18

The approach here is essentially the *coherence* approach, as opposed to the *correspondence* approach (Renfrew & Bahn 1994:432). The coherence approach, however, is not very impartial and is inclined to gross selection of facets to be accounted for, rather than forcing the historian to approach all the data collectively and holistically, thereby taking into account all the facets (configurationally coherent or not). There is no doubt that this selection of facts will tell much as (and if) it surfaces in the archaeological record later. It can never be regarded as indisputable fact, however, because it so blatantly emphasises the creative process of the narrative at the cost of the investigation of a culture for the purpose of finding as close an approximation to its past reality as possible. This approach is nonetheless valid, because it is virtually impossible to incorporate all data holistically, and emphasis is necessary as long as it is recognised as a partial reconstruction which must be seen as one possible interpretation among many.

4.3. Conclusion

Although there are many points of criticism that can be raised in objection to the approaches of Historicism and Neo-Historicism, both are valid and indeed valuable contributions to methods of interpretation. Thanks to the accent on interpretation via a wide range of social sciences and theories of the postprocessual approach (Preucel & Hodder 1996:7-8; Renfrew & Bahn 1994:426, 430-432) many advances have been made in methodology and epistemology. This includes the recognition of the coexistence of concepts such as 'validity' and 'relativity', which in the past were judged unscientific and therefore of no value. But even science has had to recognise not only the unavoidable links between almost all disciplines (including the human and natural sciences), but also the mutability of what we "know", given time and new information and/or (re)interpretation.

Yet one cannot ignore the great danger of giving so much licence for free interpretation to the historian, as is often done in the 'coherence' (as opposed to the 'correspondence') approach. The reality that is constructed by this procedure is influenced by many unnecessary factors not pertaining to the search for 'truth' in the study of history. Although the supposition is valid that these factors exercise

19

influence anyway, they should at least be minimised or properly evaluated and investigated by taking them into account overtly and specifically.

Historicism recognises these influences, but fails to compensate for them, thereby falling prey to a sort of nihilism. This same pseudo-nihilism, as seen in New Archaeology and the Critical Theory (Renfrew & Bahn 1994:432), has been the logical conclusion to the neo-historicist premise that there is no 'absolute truth', but only the truth you construct for yourself. Some therefore believe objectivity is an impossibility. The search for truth then becomes a moot point. In this ultra-relativist conclusion that relegates the argument of the validity of the study of history to the negative conclusion of Scientism which it sought to oppose, lies the danger of too much licence in interpretation. The search for as close an approximation to 'truth' as possible is achievable, but is encumbered by too much selectiveness, creative licence, unaccounted-for biases, and so forth.

Historicism and Neo-Historicism are not 'right' or 'wrong', however, and by their own assertion, there is no right or wrong. Neither are these approaches without merit, but much should be recognised as creative possibilities rather than be assigned the status of theoretical probabilities. It is not 'absolute truth', but neither does it claim to be: it overtly recognises the relativity and selectivity of its postulation, thereby enhancing our knowledge rather than hampering it either with unchallenged postulates that are excessive in their subjectivity, or with purely creative constructions masquerading as the study of history. But a more specific methodological approach employed in this field of study, e.g. the method used in the study of the history of Iranian religion (including comparative materials), is needed, since this field of study has its own unique set of circumstances and problems.

5. Methodology employed in the study of the history of Iranian religions

5.1. Comparative materials

De Jong (1997:18-19) notes that the work currently being done on the Achaemenian empire, the reshifting of the focus of interest and redress of some of the fundamental questions concerning this field with the help of indigenous sources and archaeological

excavations, as well as rigorously redefined methodologies, has alerted scholars to the problems with the previous construct of Achaemenian history, which primarily derives its inspiration from Greek views of the history of their Persian neighbours and of themselves.

De Jong (1997:19) notes that the current work on these matters has shown to what extent Greek perceptions of history and elements from the Greek cultural ideologies have decided scholarly interpretation of Iranian history, and indicates that a study of all the sources and a renewal of their interpretation could rectify this situation. The sources on Iranian religion are themselves problematic, especially the Zoroastrian texts, and De Jong (1997:19-20) argues that this limits historical investigation and is the reason for the lack of attention that the field of history of Iranian religions has received to date. Such limitations on historical investigation imposed by the texts will not, however, affect the proposed comparison of the two philosophies in this work.

As regards comparative materials, Iranianists often have to draw on various sources such as Vedic literature and contemporary Zoroastrian practices, a procedure which De Jong (1997:21) notes could surprise or even irritate Classicists. The reason for such eclectic sources in the study of Iranian religions is because of the limitations of these texts, specifically regarding dating, which necessitates the use of any and all material that could supplement understanding, even though the relevance of some sources (such as the ninth century Pahlavi texts) is contested (De Jong 1997:21-22). The use of such varied sources is not the result of a belief that the religious tradition never changed, but they are employed as a way, and at present the only way, of making sense of "otherwise unintelligible information" (De Jong 1997:21).

Therefore, this 'irritating' aspect of the study of Zoroastrianism is necessary because of, firstly, its antiquity and, secondly, its poorly preserved written tradition. These two factors necessarily relegate the study of Zoroastrianism to far more diverse methods of reconstruction, used for periods such as this, as they need such diverse methods of reconstruction to make them understandable. This comparative method of including diverse sources in interpretation, although new to the study of Iranian religions, is characteristic of archaeology, and the archaeological method for combining diverse data and piecing together how they relate is fully developed. The

archaeological methods incorporate many other disciplines, such as anthropology, which enables a relation to be established between practices then and practices now. Methods and techniques therefore exist for dealing with sections in history which are not adequately documented, materially or textually, and these would be more appropriate to the study of Zoroastrianism than the methods employed by scholars of periods in history that are better represented in the historical record. This consideration is often forgotten by researchers in areas of research that have a wealth of textual material, which they proceed to examine in virtual isolation from all the other factors involved, giving the textual material an exaggerated status in the larger whole of the archaeological reconstruction of history. Therefore, no excuses will be made for using comparative sources in the study of Zoroastrianism.

Though comparative methods exist in the study of Greek philosophy, I believe they are still rather conservatively employed, because the field of Greek philosophy has for so long been studied according to a very specific outlook, even in comparison to other traditions, and it is still treated as the pinnacle of human reason in the ancient world (if not the only instance of reason), as an atheist scientist's heaven, and as a superior manner of thinking (because it is a similar to modern Western thought). The reason that non-textual or inadequate textual data are viewed as unintelligible is simply a disregard for the bigger picture of reconstruction, and for the part that textual sources play in reconstruction. The record without the texts is not unintelligible but simply incomplete – as all data and research of the past must necessarily be.

De Jong (1997:22) states that "the present state of knowledge about Iranian religions is such that anything that can possibly contribute to our image of Zoroastrianism must be considered", and in this study many different sources will be used. One of the sources I shall draw on is Plato's philosophy, though this is an a-historical source of comparison. Sources of historical information that cannot be ignored, however, are the Greek historians, as has been mentioned above with reference to the Achaemenian history, and these will be discussed briefly below.

5.2. Greek sources

Greek writers have been described as using a "rhetoric of otherness" when talking of any non-Greek peoples and Greek authors often exploited the Greek xenophobia as a contrasting device to show up Greek culture in a better light (De Jong 1997:26-27), but the antithesis between Greek and barbarian is still being constantly accentuated even outside literary circles. De Jong (1997:27) argues that there are two important elements in the development of the antithesis between Greek and barbarian: first of all, it is commonly assumed that this notion of "Greek ethnic self-consciousness", though present in earlier periods, was intensified and elaborated on as a result of the Persian wars, during which time the Persians came to represent the barbarian *par excellence*; and in the second place, most barbarians known to the Greek mainland were slaves, which led to the characterisation of barbarians as "servile" or "obsessed with despotism" which was juxtaposed with the characterisation of the Greeks as "democrats and lovers of freedom". The contrast of Oriental despotism and submission to Greek freedom which, more than anything else, came to represent the Greek cultural ideal, according to De Jong (1997:28), was perpetuated as a favourite image in Greek literature, and represents one of the aspects of what De Jong calls "Greek Orientalism", by which is meant the "stereotyped representations of an Oriental people in order to activate Greek cultural awareness and a sense of moral as well as physical superiority".

This wartime propaganda, necessarily the most blatant attack on a rival group (which was preceded by acute xenophobia and anti-barbarian propaganda), became the standard treatment of non-Greek speaking people. This evolved into the negative usage of 'barbarian', which originally just meant 'a person who does not speak Greek'. This is very much a commonly held opinion, and until recently it has been accepted without any further thought. The picture of oriental excesses and despotism is still present in preconceived notions not overtly stated in any method, and visible in the approach to any subject about the classical world. The biased treatment of Persia by the Greek sources has been discredited, but the bias still lingers. This will be discussed further in the Introduction (chapter 2).

23

6. Methodology to be employed in this study

Now that some of the methodological approaches pertaining to the study of the history of religion have been discussed – methods for studying religion and history and the specific problems addressed and conclusions drawn or advancements made in the method employed for the study of the history of Iranian religion, specifically – it remains to be stated what aspects of these will be employed in the methodological approach of the present study. This study is concerned with but an aspect of the cultural domains it touches upon, which are in turn but an aspect of the cultures of Greece and Persia themselves. Therefore, a methodological approach must necessarily incorporate several different fields of study in its emphasis, while at the same time being rather specifically tailored to the focus of the present study. I shall therefore draw upon aspects of many of the relevant approaches to the study of religion and history, but not adhere to one in its entirety or exclusively. The main tenets of the method employed in this study are as follows:

i.   That a multidisciplinary approach will be employed, incorporating fields such as religion, philosophy and history.

ii.   That comparison is possible, because of the human mind forming a link between ancient and modern thought, for the study of ancient cultures from the perspective of the modern era. The same assumption about the operation of the human mind can therefore also suggest a link between two different philosophies previously not compared because of their lack of historical contact and influence. Through the underlying unity of human thought, this link enables one to compare artefacts of two different cultures and two different cultural domains as an exercise in multidisciplinary study. Such an approach poses a challenge to a too narrow employment of artificial categories and of separations of cultural phenomena, and a challenge to the methodologies and interpretations of both by shedding new light on possibly underemphasised or overemphasised areas of study through the comparison of how the two artefacts have been interpreted.

iii.   That the 'mental' link mentioned above has further implications for the validity of studying the past, since it is thereby inherently linked to the present and the future. A study of the past is therefore as valid as any study of the present.

iv.   That this approach is best illustrated by the method of archaeology, rather than any other method that I am aware of, though Historicism and Narrativism come close. It fulfils multidisciplinary requirements, it deals with culture as a whole and it assigns to each cultural area's artefacts a measure of importance according to the views held by the culture itself, their occurrence in the record as relative to other artefacts, and so forth. But it also recognises the necessity of working specifically, and it has many specialised fields on which it draws to fill in the bigger picture. As such, comparison is the main source of information for many things, including artefact classification and dating. This applies to texts as well, and they need not be the product of historical contact to be similar and comparable. All the data are relevant and all the data are related to other data as well.

Moreover, this study cannot be anything but a very specific view of a very short period of time, informed by two individuals, representing a small portion of the general population within their cultures, and is not a universal or even a broad investigation of all the aspects of those cultures. It does not mean that this detracts from its possible value, however, since a more specific and focussed view of any field serves to give intensive attention to some aspects of a larger whole, thereby advancing interesting and possibly valuable interpretations of a more focussed nature rather than only approaching a culture generally.

CHAPTER 2 – INTRODUCTION

Plato

1. Plato's combination of philosophy, science, myth and religion

It is a general perception that Western philosophy originated in Greece with 'philosophers' such as Thales and Democritus, as well as moral reformers such as Protagoras and Socrates. If one wishes to study Plato's doctrines one must necessarily take these philosophies into account, simply because Plato came out of this specific environment of thought and was shaped by these theories. But Plato was not only a philosopher, he was also an early scientist, a 'mythologist', and a religious and social reformer. Studying Plato as yet another in a long line of Greek philosophers is therefore inadequate.

Although in the Greek-speaking world there were some interesting attempts at scientific explanation, and the not-so-novel idea of looking for an initial cause of, or substance to, the whole universe, there is little that can be called a coherent system of philosophy or science before Plato. But if there is any question as to whether or not these theories were philosophy, there is no doubt as to the effect of these philosophies on a society that had practically no systematic or formal religion, only cults and superstitions. The pervading ideas of most of this 'early philosophy' tended towards atheism or at least towards an impersonal power or force instead of a personalised god.

The same situation occurred with the introduction of Darwin's theory of evolution. Darwin did not deny the existence of God, but his introduction of a force of abstract nature was immediately interpreted as a direct threat to the personal God of the Bible. This perceived threat might not be far-fetched, even if it is without reason, for society is not so far evolved from an animistic and impersonal concept to be safe from a return to it and a rejection of the idea of a personal god. Yet opposition between philosophy and science, on the one hand, and religion, on the other, has biased the interpretation and perception of some of the early Greek philosophers, and the study

26

of early Greek philosophy largely ignores the religious and mythological conceptions that the Greeks had at that time, including the philosophers. By religious and mythological conceptions I am not referring to a rigid and national tradition (which did not exist in Greece at the time), nor to Homer or Hesiod's concepts (though they, too, are religious and mythological), but rather to the way in which some of the Greek philosophers interpreted and employed these concepts. One example of an incorporation of a system of faith and myth is to be found in Plato's philosophy.

Plato not only revived old religious concepts, in cosmology, in myth, and even in education, but also postulated the first coherent system of faith in Greece. The Greeks at that time did not even have a word for religion, piety (*eusebia*) being the closest approximation to the term 'religion'. The Greeks also had a rather amoral pantheon of gods whose failings were an exaggeration of human failures. But Plato never had the opportunity of seeing his ideal society (as proposed in the *Republic*) in action, and therefore he could not put his religious reforms into practice. He could only contemplate the creator through his metaphysics in the *Timaeus*, and speculate about a national religion and a new pantheon in the *Laws*.

Plato's religious reforms are called 'theism', however, and his myths are similarly relegated to mere metaphor and dismissed as nothing more than illustrations of his philosophical theories. Plato's science, on the other hand, is analysed with vigour mostly because of its accidental accuracy and similarity with modern science, but his political reforms are treated as interesting but impracticable postulates. Most importantly, these fields are not often treated holistically.

I argue that Plato did not only write philosophic dialogues, but also embarked on systematised scientific theory and revived and (re)created myth and religion. He obviously knew his predecessors' works (in philosophy/science and mythology) well, and, furthermore, could extract from them what was meaningful and combine it in a coherent and complex system of his own. Plato's doctrine therefore belongs, in a sense, to a period before philosophy and science split off from religion and mythology. However, there is a tendency to analyse Plato's doctrines from the vantage-point of current society in which those concepts are almost irrevocably incompatible.

27

I shall therefore be analysing the *Timaeus*, not with a view to picking out the Pre-Socratic influences and discussing the tentative speculations about physics, geometry and physiology, but as a work that combines Plato's 'theism' and myths with his philosophy, science and politics, showing us how they interact and are inseparable. Plato's theories are also comparable to Zoroaster's doctrines, and both perspectives will be compared in the hope that the comparison in itself provides a new perspective on the doctrines of both philosophers.

This type of approach necessarily demands some understanding of the environment from which the system of thought sprung, as it was not only a development from, but also often a reaction to it. Moreover, this context is not limited to chronological events surrounding Plato's life, but could rather be interpreted as a development from the earliest Greek traditions, perhaps even as old as the Aryan invaders who first settled in Greece. There are even elements in Plato's metaphysics that are strongly reminiscent of shamanistic activity, a sense of the otherworldly that subsequently survived predominantly in Eastern religions.

Although no study of Plato is complete without taking these aspects into account, the scope of the present work does not allow for a discussion of the historical, mythological and philosophical contexts and their influences on Plato. The dialogue form that Plato employed cannot be analysed within the constraints of this work either. These aspects of the study of Plato's philosophy have been documented and analysed extensively and further interpretation in this work is therefore unnecessary. Cognisance must, however, be taken of Plato's metaphysics.

2. Studying Plato's metaphysics

Plato's metaphysics is an area which should by rights enjoy the most attention, as it illuminates problems in every possible field of his doctrines, for his concept of the world of Forms or Ideas as an ultimate reality underlies all his other postulates, and he viewed it as an all-encompassing standard by which all else operates and can be known. Plato's metaphysics is often viewed as an obscure or inaccessible part of his theories, but in fact it reflects an almost universal cultural concept. Some philosophers and scientists, and many a shaman or priest in every culture, had a

concept of something more ultimate, some inaccessible truth, that can be grasped only in a specific state of mind. As such, metaphysics is an integral part not only of the study of Plato, but of the study of any system of speculative thought.

Although many scholars have studied Plato's metaphysics, the discussion of Plato's metaphysical theory can never be complete. I have not pursued a discussion of Plato's metaphysics in this work. Yet no analysis of Plato's philosophy can ignore his metaphysics completely, and this study largely presupposes a general knowledge of Plato's metaphysical precepts, as they form the basis for all his speculation. Plato's Forms are also viewed as analogous to the Amesha Spentas in Zoroaster's doctrine, for the Amesha Spentas form the metaphysical basis for Zoroaster's views as well. Both Plato and Zoroaster can therefore be said to have postulated their doctrines on the creation, its inherent dualism of good and evil, and the state of the soul within it, according to a system of metaphysics.

Such metaphysical speculation is meaningless, however, unless it relates to the physical world in some way. It must also deal with everyday occurrences and explain phenomena, and have implications for the afterlife and the immortality of the soul, as well as the soul's immediate morality and the more macrocosmic ramifications of this morality for society in general. Above all, it must serve to stimulate speculation and motivate the individual to think, and thereby also to choose to act correctly.

Plato discusses in the *Timaeus* how his metaphysics (the world of "Forms" or "Ideas") are related to and interact with the cosmos and its creator. Here one gets a glimpse of what Plato thought about the order of the universe, and who was responsible for it. In the *Timaeus*, Plato discusses both the physical aspects of the creation and "phenomenal" or abstract subjects such as metaphysics, epistemology, the soul, and good and evil. In the *Gathas*, Zoroaster also related all his views on the abstract subjects mentioned above, and the physical aspects of creation, to the abstract forms he referred to as the Amesha Spentas. The correlation between the Amesha Spentas and the Forms is striking, for both are abstractions of values and concepts, operating in a non-material realm to which the current existence of the creation is directly related.

29

Firstly, however, some clarification is necessary as to what the Amesha Spentas are, and how both the Amesha Spentas and the Platonic Forms will be referred to. The concept of the Amesha Spentas is rather complex, and their status seems to have changed drastically in the later Zoroastrian literature. In the *Gathas*, however, they appear to serve the dual purpose of indicating abstract ideas and values, as well as personifying these ideas and values both in the spiritual and the material worlds. They are also 'aspects' of God, or his emanations, and as such represent (or epitomise) the concept or force of "the Good". There are seven Amesha Spentas who emanate from God (Ahura Mazda), namely Spenta Mainyu (Beneficent or Good Spirit), Vohu Manah (Good Mind or Good Thinking), Armaiti (Piety or Devotion), Asha (Order or Divine Law) Khshathra (Dominion or Might and Majesty), Haurvatat (Perfection or Well-Being) and Ameretat (Immortality).

The term 'Amesha Spentas' (Blessed Immortals) only occurs in the later Zoroastrian literature, but all seven emanations form the basis of the doctrines in the *Gathas* and can be said to form a distinct group of abstract concepts central to Zoroaster's thought. The term 'Amesha Spentas' is therefore commonly employed in the study of Iranian religions as a convenient way of referring to this group of concepts in Zoroastrianism. Although the Amesha Spentas form a definite group in the *Gathas*, and are certainly personified in many instances, the use of personal pronouns to refer to the Amesha Spentas can be misleading, for their names are the same as the words for the abstract concepts which they personify.

Obscurities in the language of the *Gathas* often make it unclear, when an abstract value or concept (such as order) is mentioned, whether Zoroaster meant the Amesha Spenta as a personified being, the Amesha Spenta as the ultimate embodiment of an abstract value or idea, or merely the abstract concept itself, whether in the spiritual or the physical realm. It is even possible that Zoroaster meant all of the above, in some instances, and relied on the ambiguity in the usage of abstract terms to imply a resonance between all the spheres of existence in which the concept operates. Asha could therefore denote the Divine Law or Order ordained by God, the abstract concept of order operating in the creation, or order as a moral concept to be emulated.

30

Although there is no consensus about when to interpret an abstract concept as an Amesha Spenta or as an abstraction only, I have used the lower case when discussing a concept in the non-personified sense of the term. This is solely to facilitate the distinction between a personification and an abstraction of a term in the discussion of the text. All nouns should by rights be capitalised, however, as that is how they appear in the *Gathas*, a convention similar to that used in German.

So far I have made a distinction between a personification and an abstraction, and pointed out that the *Gathas* do not indicate which meaning is applicable to an abstract concept. This might imply that an abstract term must denote either a personification or an abstraction, but this is not the case. There is no way of knowing whether Zoroaster meant to differentiate between a personification and an abstraction in the use of abstract terms. It may well be that Zoroaster meant to incorporate all the various meanings into an abstract concept. This would mean that, when a term such as 'order' is used, it could be interpreted as a personification and an abstraction simultaneously.

Order, as a personification, would therefore be the Amesha Spenta called Asha (Order), in his spiritual form as well as his earthly or material manifestation. This is analogous to Plato's Forms in their 'mental' or 'spiritual' existence as distinct from the physical creation, as well as their presence in the physical creation by virtue of creation's emulation of the Forms. Order, as an abstraction, would therefore be an abstract term that can be applied to describe a quality in the soul, the society, the physical environment, or the state of mind or morality of an individual. This is analogous to Plato's Forms in their 'mental' or 'spiritual' aspects discernible in human existence.

3. Problems with analysing the *Timaeus*

The analysis of the *Timaeus* is riddled with problems. There is, for instance, the problem of accurately placing or dating the dialogue. Its chronological place among Plato's other dialogues is the source of much scholarly speculation (*cf.* Owen 1953; Cherniss 1957). Although I have treated it as part of Plato's later dialogues, none of

31

the main postulates within this study rely on the chronological position of the *Timaeus*.

For the purposes of this study, further assumptions are made as well. Firstly, I believe that the *Timaeus* follows the *Republic* and is followed by the *Laws*, perhaps not chronologically, but certainly in terms of continuity of thought. In fact, the necessity of giving a synopsis of the *Republic* at the start of the *Timaeus* seems to indicate that these two works do not follow each other chronologically. The similarity of the themes in the *Critias* and the *Laws* also suggests that the *Critias's* interrupted line of thought was completed, with some changes, by the *Laws*. There are various elements that link the *Critias* and the *Laws*, but this has never been accepted in Platonic studies, although Owen (1953:337) believes that the ideas in the unfinished *Critias* can be found in the *Laws*.

The main difference between the themes of the *Timaeus-Critias* and the *Laws* is that Plato seems to have become more pessimistic towards the end of his life, when the *Laws* was written. He wrote the *Timaeus* for the top philosophers whom he hoped existed, as a theoretical exercise, a feast of ideas and speculations upon which there can be infinite elaboration. In the *Laws* Plato continued to write for philosophers, but with a definite practical purpose, that of reforming the state. He no longer understated the practical aspect of his reform, nor did he assume that knowledge of the Forms would result in good actions (in philosophers specifically or the masses in general), but he overtly stated what needed to be done, practically, to reform society for the good.

This pessimism seems to have come from a recognition that there are no ideal philosopher-kings. In the *Timaeus* the summary of the ideal state is devoid of the mention of philosopher-kings. This role can be said to be fulfilled by Timaeus himself, but Timaeus never existed, and Plato must have come to realise that no one like that could ever exist. He therefore had to turn his attention to divinely inspired laws instead of divinely guided philosophers.

The *Laws* is therefore the answer to what should have been the ideal state in action. There are no philosopher-kings, and the guardians and proletariat are all subjected to

rigorous religious laws (*Laws* 907c-910c). God, not man, is the measure of all things, and the state becomes a theocracy (*Laws* 713a-718a, 966b-968a). Completely isolated (with no foreign contact via war or otherwise) and self-sufficient, running on a subsistence economy as far as is possible, Magnesia is protected from outside corruption, and its citizens never have the opportunity to dig trenches and expose themselves to the world, like the Atlanteans (*Laws* 842b-850c, 950c-951a). Thus, even the people who will never be intellectual philosophers, who can grasp and act on the ideal metaphysics, can be partially guarded from evil (foreign or bodily) by insulation, asceticism, morality and stable harmony under divine law.

By accepting these assumptions, the analysis of the problems within society which Plato sought to address, as well as the question of the audience at which he was aiming this address, becomes clear. Yet there are innumerable plausible possibilities, and an examination of all is not possible here. I have chosen what seems most plausible to me, but acknowledge the multitude of other existing and possible theories concerning this dialogue.

The important aspects within this study are that Plato conceived of a system of order in the universe, related this to his theories on metaphysics, and postulated a creative process. All of the aspects mentioned above had implications for the individual and for society at large (including its politics), which Plato apparently sought to reform. In this, Plato's philosophy is strangely analogous to Zoroaster's 'religious speculation'. I shall attempt to discuss why a comparison between these systems of thought should be undertaken, and shall briefly discuss the problems of such a study.

Zoroaster

1. Why a comparison between Zoroaster and Plato?

1.1. Zoroastrianism as a philosophy

Some of the most distinguished scholars have sought to minimise the importance of Zoroaster's doctrines, either doubting their antiquity or their authenticity. Duchesne-Guillemin (1979:2-3), in the introduction to his own translation of the *Gathas*, quotes

Darmesteter (who translated the *Gathas* into French in 1892) as asking: "How is one to accept that a man who lived at least six centuries before the current era, far away from Greece, could have expressed his views on God and the world in philosophical language, using abstract notions which recall those of the Gnostics and the Neo-Platonists? These discourses must, therefore, be forgeries composed even seven or eight centuries after the time of the prophet to whom they are attributed". The linguistic argument which Darmesteter employed to demonstrate the *Gathas* to be forgeries "convinced nobody" (Duchesne-Guillemin 1979:3), yet the incredulity regarding their value and meaning did not diminish, but merely took on a different form.

It is perhaps fortunate that the philosophical nature of the *Gathas* was first commented upon, and its antiquity questioned, for this indirectly established the recognition of their philosophical content as unquestionable. Once the antiquity of the tradition had been established, attempts to refute its philosophical nature in later interpretation were rendered ridiculous. Despite this, some scholars refused to accept both the antiquity and the philosophical nature of the *Gathas*. Duchesne-Guillemin (1979:3) refers to Nyberg as one such scholar who, without questioning the antiquity of the doctrine, attempted to prove that it lacked any philosophical character. Although, as Duchesne-Guillemin (1979:3) points out, Nyberg presented Zoroaster as "a kind of shaman.[or] Mongol sorcerer who intoxicated himself with hemp fumes", his work was original and important, and could therefore not be ignored by the expert scholars since they were unwilling to refute it. This apparent impasse, resulting neither in a refutation of the claims of the antiquity of and philosophy in the *Gathas* nor in a proper appreciation of its doctrines, is well summarised by Duchesne-Guillemin, who quotes Simone Pètrement as saying:

> "I do not know why scholars avoid with a kind of horror representing Zoroaster as a philosopher or as having anything, however little, to do with philosophy. Yet if there is an abstract and philosophical religion, it is indeed his. Why should one not want to recognise it? Because it is very ancient? Everything is more ancient than one thinks, even, and especially, philosophy" (Duchesne-Guillemin 1979:3).

Examples do exist, however, of scholars who view Zoroaster's *Gathas* as having an underlying structure of a philosophical nature, such as Jackson (1965:6), Geiger

34

(1977:52; 54), Eliade (1976:312; 314), and Haug (1971), who states that the *Gathas* clearly express philosophical and abstract thoughts about metaphysical subjects (Haug 1971:142-143), and who describes Zoroaster's doctrines as a system of moral philosophy (Haug 1971:300).

That Zoroaster did have a fully worked-out philosophy in mind seems likely, but that he intended to transfer this philosophy to his disciples is doubtful, for his intentions were to propound religious convictions based on his philosophical postulates, not the philosophical postulates themselves, and his documents (the *Gathas*) were for an audience of believers, not philosophers. Precisely because the philosophy of Zoroaster has to be discovered within the Gathic religion, Geiger (1977:52) states that there can be no claims to be able to represent faultlessly all the individual traits of the philosophical system which Zoroaster had established for himself. It is important to note, however, that such a system of philosophy must have existed, is visible in the *Gathas* as premises underlying his religious conclusions or convictions, and can, at least partially, be discovered.

It is possible that Zoroaster had not fully developed his system of philosophy, but Haug (1971:300) argues that this cannot even be said of Plato, and that Zoroaster, moreover, postulated his philosophy long before the Greeks became aware of anything.like philosophical speculation. Zoroaster's achievement, in the light of his remoteness in time and space, would be remarkable in itself, but his philosophical ideas show him to be a profound contributor to philosophy and an equal of many later philosophers. Haug (1971:300-301) argues that Zoroaster's philosophical ideas show him to have been a "great and deep thinker.and the great fame he enjoyed, even among the ancient Greeks and Romans who were so proud of their own learning and wisdom, is sufficient proof of the pre-eminent position he must once have occupied in the history of the progress of the human mind".

Zoroaster's status in the Greek and Roman sources is varied, however, and serve not so much to depict what his accomplishments were as to show to what extent the Greeks and Romans revered him. Zoroaster was variously considered a sage, prophet, philosopher, scientist or magician, and is often mentioned as philosopher so-and-so's teacher or as author of various books. Jackson (1965:7) refers to some classical

authors (Lucian, *Dialog.*; Cicero, *de Finibus* 5.29; Valerius Maximus, 8.7; Pliny, *H.N.*30.2.1; Apuleius, *Florid.* p.19; Porphyrius, *Vita Pythagorae*, 41; Lactantius, *Institutiones*, 4.2; Iamblichus, *Vita Pythagorae*, 19; Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata*, i.357) who claim that Pythagoras studied Magian lore in Babylon, which Jackson considers to be not without foundation. Plato is purported to have been anxious to visit the Orient and to study with the Magi, but the Persian Wars prevented him (Diogenes Laertius, *Philosoph. Vit*, 3.7; Apuleius, *de Doctrin. Plat. Phil.*, p.569. The *Anonym. Vit. Plat.* adds that in Phoenicia Plato met Persians who introduced him to Zoroastrian lore) (Jackson 1965:7-8). There is also a claim that a certain Magian teacher, Gobryas, instructed Socrates (Jackson 1965:8).

Moreover, there are a number of classical references to books Zoroaster is supposed to have authored, some of which Jackson (1965:8) mentions, such as a work bearing the name of Zoroaster by Heraclides Ponticus, a pupil of Plato and Aristotle, which is mentioned in Plutarch (*Adv. Colot.*, 1115 A). The followers of the sophist Prodicus, a contemporary of Socrates, apparently claimed to be in possession of secret writings of Zoroaster; and Aristotle, Deinon, Eudoxus of Cnidus, and especially Theopompus, were familiar with Zoroastrian tenets (Jackson 1965:8). Jackson (1965:95) also states that the records of antiquity imply that the Zoroastrian books, because of their "encyclopaedic character, stood for many sides of life", which is not surprising if one takes into account that some of the original *Nasks* (books) of the *Avesta*, which were unfortunately lost, are reported to have had entirely scientific contents, and that the Greeks attribute the authorship of books on physics, the stars, and precious stones, to Zoroaster.

Many of these references cannot be verified, but these references, whether accurate or not, illustrate that Zoroaster was considered to be more than a religious reformer. An unfortunate result of an inaccurate description of Zoroaster is that he was considered, as Jackson (1965:6) puts it, the "arch-representative of the Magi", and that he was famed more for magic arts than for the "depth and breadth of his philosophy and legislation, or for his religious and moral teaching". The true Zoroastrian doctrine seems likely to have reached the classical world partially intact at least, and probably at an early age, since it is the Zoroastrian tenets of dualism and metaphysics which

can be discerned in the works of philosophers such as Plato and some Pre-Socratics, rather than the misinformation about Persian magic which marked the later literature.

Eliade (1976:314) believes it is not surprising that Greek antiquity regarded Zoroaster as a philosopher, master of initiation and author of hermetic and alchemical treatises, for he argues that the spiritual and philosophical nature of Zoroaster's religion is "striking". Eliade (1976:314) further argues that Zoroaster displays "creative imagination" and "a capacity for rigorous reflection". This is evidenced by the fact that Zoroaster "transmuted" some of the main Aryan deities to form the Amesha Spentas, entities that are Ahura Mazda's entourage, but also embody abstract values (such as Power, Truth and Order) and cosmic elements (such as Fire, Water and Earth) (Eliade 1976:314). The Amesha Spentas are therefore defined by Zoroaster as intermediaries between God and his creation (Eliade 1976:314).

Eliade (1976:314) also argues that Zoroaster, by calling God 'wise' and extolling the importance of the virtues of 'truth' and 'good thought', repeatedly emphasises the value of "wisdom, that is, of science, of accurate and useful knowledge". Eliade (1976:314) does not mean science in the modern sense of the word, but of "creative thought that discovers and at the same time creates the structures of the world and the universe of values that is their correlative", and as such, Zoroaster's doctrines may be compared to the meditations in the *Upanishads*, the authors of which also revolutionised the Vedic world view.

If there is doubt as to whether Zoroaster had a clear system of philosophy, a different evaluation would be to call Zoroaster's doctrines 'well thought-out'. Zaehner (1961:50) views the *Gathas* as giving the impression of having been deeply thought out, and Henning (1951:46) sees Zoroaster's view of Man not as something reached by "nebulous feeling or by the dreams that may come to one in a drugged stupor", but as something which can only be reached by "very clear thinking". It is perhaps even misleading to say that there is 'doubt' regarding the philosophical nature of Zoroaster's thought, and the originality and depth of thought that confronts scholars from such antiquity should rather be described, in Zaehner's (1961:49) words, as "disconcerting".

The Zoroastrian religion differed in many ways from the commonly held beliefs within the society, and Zoroaster himself said that his doctrine contained "Secret Mysteries" (*Yasna* 48.3) and "unheard words" (*Yasna* 31.1). Geiger (1977:29) argues that, for Zoroaster, his revelation was no longer "merely undefined presentiment and conception of the Godhead, but a matter of intellect, of spiritual perception and knowledge", which Geiger considers to be "of great importance, for there are probably not many religions of such a high antiquity in which this fundamental doctrine, that religion is a knowledge or learning, a science of what is true, is so precisely declared as in the tenets of the *Gathas*". The constant accent which Zoroaster placed on knowledge and the cognitive, although he pays an equal amount of attention to the spiritual, is almost peculiar within a system of faith and seems to belong, more properly, to a system of philosophy. Zoroaster's belief that it is only through exercising the mind (or Vohu Manah) that one can properly know, and therefore choose, the good and the true (*Yasna* 49.5) is indeed reminiscent of Plato's philosophy specifically, and has many more parallels in other philosophies than it does in other religions.

There are many other references in the *Gathas* which propound the universal importance of Good Mind (Vohu Manah), including many verses that pertain specifically to the wisdom of the individual as well, such as *Yasna* 30.3, where it is the wise who choose the good, and the unwise who choose evil. Geiger (1977:29) translates this verse as meaning that it is the unbelieving that are unknowing, and the believing, on the contrary, are "learned, because they have penetrated into this knowledge [of the good]", but notes that it is also possible to distinguish between good and evil spiritually (*Yasna* 44.15). In the same vein, it is Piety (Armaiti) who stands by to help those "perplexed by doubt" (*Yasna* 31.12). It was expected of every person not only to choose between good and evil, but to make that choice for themselves (*Yasna* 30.2), or as Geiger (1977:30) interprets it, "man for man shall the people examine or test whatever the prophet has announced to them, and learn the truth thereof".

It could be argued that, in Zoroastrianism, the good was philosophically accessible to those who sought to employ Good Mind, and spiritually (through Piety) to those who did not or could not. This is similar, once again, to Plato's theory that the populace of

38

his Magnesian society who believed in God did good, and it was only the unbeliever who chose incorrectly (*Laws* Bk. X 885b), whereas the philosopher he describes in the fifth book of the *Republic* (476d-478e) sought and emulated the Good through his employment of knowledge (which was clearly juxtaposed to 'belief' throughout the discussion, but this 'belief' is not to be confused with ignorance, *Republic* 477b).

The stress Zoroaster placed on both the freedom of choice in the individual and the exercise of thinking, or knowledge, in order to make this choice led Geiger (1977:30) to argue that this constituted an "open breach with the old national religion", since there is no longer a reliance on unknown and often unknowable higher powers and superstitions, but an "independent penetration into the perception of the divine truth which was [to Zoroaster] a mystery before then". This breach with the old religion, although forming a new one, was in some senses a breach with religion itself, at least as it was known until then. Even if it is not accepted that Zoroaster's doctrines can be interpreted, not only as a very contemplative or philosophical religion, but also *as* a philosophy, it is still possible to compare his doctrines *with* a philosophy, for instance Plato's philosophy.

1.2. Previous comparisons between Zoroaster and Plato

Many have compared Zoroaster's doctrines to the teachings of the Greek philosophers, especially to the doctrines of Plato, a connection perceived throughout the ages (from Plato's pupils, through the Renaissance, to today). Their doctrines have a surprisingly similar ring to them, though no comparison has yet been deemed satisfactory by scholarly consensus (*cf.* Chroust 1980, Afnan 1965). I shall only briefly mention some examples, as the Zoroastrian influence on Greek philosophy is a subject that is all but inexhaustible.

The earliest authenticated classical allusion to Zoroaster by name seems to be the reference in the Platonic *Alcibiades* (*Alcibiades* I, 122, p.131, ed. Schanz), although according to Diogenes Laertius (*Proem.* 2), he was mentioned by the earlier Xanthus of Lydia (Jackson 1965:9). Zoroastrian teaching, at least in its general features, was definitely known to the ancient Greek scholars, such as Plato, Eudoxus, Aristotle, Plutarch, Diogenes Laertius and others (Dandamaev 1994:297). The opinion has been

expressed (Dandamaev 1994:297) that the basic tenets of Zoroastrian teaching exerted a "definite influence on the philosophical conceptions of the ancient Greeks", and a resemblance between the thought of Zoroaster and Plato is specifically noted (Dandamaev 1994:326). Scholars researching both Judaism and Greek philosophy suggest that Zoroastrian influence began to be exerted on these and other cultures in the ancient world as early as the sixth century BCE (Boyce 1982:xii).

It is commonly assumed, according to Dannenfeld (1952:435), that the belief during the Renaissance was that true civilisation began with the Greeks and that everything that preceded the classical age was consequently ignored, but the 'intellectual leaders' of the Renaissance were well aware of the ancient oriental civilisations, although they did emphasise Greek and Roman culture. The debt that Greece and Rome owed to the 'oriental civilisations' was not ignored either, and a scrutiny of the classical traditions necessarily led to a scrutiny of the cultures with which they interacted and which influenced them and which they influenced in turn. One example of this recognition was Ficino's postulate of a continuous philosophical tradition, which included many great thinkers, such as Plato and Zoroaster.

This theory came about because of the revival of Platonism during the Renaissance, which was greatly stimulated by the arrival at the Councils of Ferrara and Florence (1438-1442) of the Platonist Plethon (Dannenfeld 1952:437). Cosimo de Medici, enamoured with Platonism, sought to make Florence the centre of Platonic studies, and appointed Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) as head of the New Academy in 1462 (Dannenfeld 1952:437). Ficino, although a philosopher in his own right, derived most of his concepts from Plato and the Neo-Platonists and was influenced by Plethon, as was Cosimo de Medici (Dannenfeld 1952:438). Along with Plethon, Ficino believed in a continuous philosophical tradition that began with Zoroaster, and could be traced through wise men such as Eumolpos, the giver of the Eleusian Mysteries, King Minos of Crete, Lycurgos the Spartan Lawgiver, the Brahmans of India, the Magi of the Medes and Hermes Trismegistus of Egypt, and from these, in turn, the tradition continued its procession of learning through Orpheus, Pythagoras and Plato to the Neo-Platonists, Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus and Proclus (Dannenfeld 1952:438).

Ficino believed it was as if by "divine providence" that this particular philosophy originated with Zoroaster among the Persians and Mercurius among the Egyptians, to be adopted by Orpheus, developed later by Pythagoras and perfected by Plato (Dannenfeld 1952:438-439). Although the Chaldean Oracles found in the writings of the Gnostics and Neo-Platonists, and attributed to Zoroaster, played an important role in Ficino's doctrines, there were other sources of classical writers who had written about or mentioned Zoroaster, as well as the works and chronicles of the early church historians, such as Eusebius, Orosius and Augustine, available to Ficino at the time (Dannenfeld 1952:439). Although Zoroaster's original doctrine, as it is expressed in the *Gathas*, was not known, many Gathic concepts filtered down into other sources, such as Gnosticism, and Ficino's understanding of Zoroastrianism would therefore not be devoid of any relation to reality, nor would his comparisons between the ancient Persian and Greek philosophies be without merit.

Afnan (1965:xiv) believes that the Greek and Zoroastrian philosophies are fully complementary. Duchesne-Guillemin (1958:70) notes that there undoubtedly are "striking similarities of doctrine" between Iran and Greece, leading him to confess that he finds it "difficult entirely to resist the temptation of a comparison of Zoroastrianism with other great minds and with other religious movements" (Duchesne-Guillemin 1979:159).

Cornford (1957:176) states that "whether one accepts or not the hypothesis of a direct influence of Persia on the Ionians in the sixth century, no student of Orphic or Pythagorean thought will fail to see between it and the Persian religion such close resemblances that we can regard both systems as expressions of one and the same conception of life, and use either of them to interpret the other". It is, according to Duchesne-Guillemin (1958:71), perhaps analogous to Aristotle's perception of a connection between the dualism of the Magi and Plato's system, for although it is not certain whether Aristotle meant to indicate a historical connection, it serves at least to illustrate that he thought the two systems analogous.

It has often been assumed that similarity must necessarily imply historical contact and influence, and attempts have been made to place Zoroaster and Plato within reasonable chronological concurrence with each other, for instance, Herzfeld and

others argued for a link between Zoroaster's patron Vishtaspa and Darius's father, Vishtaspa's namesake (Herzfeld 1947:161, 204).

Another instance of an attempt at postulating a historical influence of one on the other was Darmesteter ("Le Zend-Avesta" vol. iii p. iii (1892) *Histoire des Etudes Zoroastriennes*) who saw the *Gathas* as suspiciously similar to Platonic philosophy and therefore postulated a later date for the *Gathas* as a corpus of Platonic ideas and not an Iranian religious text at all (Moulton 1972:9). Most scholars rejected Darmesteter's theory, such as Moulton, who states that James Darmesteter "startled the world of scholarship with his daring paradox, according to which the *Gathas* must be regarded as owing their most central conceptions to Philo of Alexandria, or to a school of thought of which Philo is the leading exponent" (Moulton 1972:9).

Darmesteter also speculated that the system of abstract entities surrounding *Ahura Mazda* was to him so 'redolent' of Neo-Platonism that the *Gathas* must be late forgeries composed under the influence of Hellenising Jews, like Philo of Alexandria (Duchesne-Guillemin 1958:24). Dandamaev (1994:324) notes that modern scholars unanimously reject Darmesteter's view that the terms expressing abstract concepts that characterise the *Gathas* must have been influenced by the ideas of Plato and Philo, and therefore must be dated to the first century BCE or later.

Both Herzfeld's and Darmesteter's views have, in fact, been universally refuted. Yet the problem persists whether or not Plato's and Zoroaster's works are comparable, and if so, how to compare them. It has proven impossible to relate them historically on the evidence gathered to date, but their philosophical ideas may still be compared as an example of two systems of thought dealing with the same universal questions, such as those of cosmology, metaphysics, dualism and teleology. That is why I have chosen to compare Plato and Zoroaster in terms of their philosophy.

Philosophy and religion are related in many ways, and I view the various methodological approaches commonly used to study religion as under-emphasising its philosophical aspect, if not preventing such an interpretation outright. This has been discussed in chapter 1 (Methodology). I believe that there is philosophical speculation at the basis of Zoroaster's views on religion, as there is in Plato's views

on the subject, and I shall proceed to interpret the philosophical aspect of the *Gathas*, and the philosophical aspect only, since ample literature is available on the religious and historical aspects of the text. History and religion must be taken into account, however, since both texts have a historical context and deal mainly with 'religious' topics such as a creator and the life of the soul after death. Another factor that should be kept in mind is the contribution that Plato and Zoroaster have made to the Western tradition in terms of philosophy and religion.

1.3. Plato and Zoroaster as contributors to the Western tradition

Both Plato and Zoroaster have been seen as great contributors to the Western tradition, and are particularly well known for their dualism. But Plato has radically influenced the entire Western tradition of philosophy, and to a degree, of religion, whereas Zoroaster has influenced the entire western tradition of religion, and to a degree, of philosophy. The influence of Plato is widely known, whereas Zoroaster's role is still relatively obscure.

European culture and philosophy, according to Duchesne-Guillemin (1979:1), was shaped and moulded by Greek and Jewish thought, which in turn were influenced by Zoroastrianism. Duchesne-Guillemin (1979:1-2) bases this thesis not on the ancient astrology attributed to Zoroaster's authority or the legend of the three Magi who followed the star to Bethlehem, but on what he calls the "more important contacts" which must have influenced both traditions greatly, specifically dualism in Greek philosophy, to have inspired Eudoxus of Cnidus, both Plato's contemporary and disciple, to compare Plato to Zoroaster. Zoroastrianism's extensive influence on Judaism, and the possible reciprocal exchange of thought, has also received more attention recently (*cf.* Louw 1998; Barr 1985).

A notable contribution that Zoroastrianism made to the Jewish tradition was the concept of linear time, although there is some contention as to whether the concept was already known to them. Eliade (1976:302) argues that, linear time aside, many other religious concepts originated in Iran, such as: the formulation of several dualistic systems (cosmological, ethical, religious), the myth of a saviour, a concept of what is referred to as an "optimistic eschatology" – heavenly reward and punishment

in hell, as opposed to a uniform fate of semi-existence in Hades, and a proclamation of the final triumph of Good and universal salvation, the doctrine of the resurrection of bodies, very probably, certain Gnostic myths, and the mythology of the Magi, re-elaborated during the Renaissance, both by the Italian Neo-Platonists and by Paracelsus.

The influence of Zoroastrianism on the modern view of philosophy was also considerable, if indirect. The word *dualismus*, from the Latin *dualis* ("containing two"), was coined by Thomas Hyde (*The Ancient Persian Religions*) in 1700 to characterise the conflict between good and evil, or of Ohrmazd and Ahriman, in later Zoroastrianism (Reese 1980:136). Duchesne-Guillemin (1958:71) notes that the term was subsequently taken over by Bayle and Leibnitz, and Christian Wolff (Kant's master) extended its use to metaphysics, applying it to the Cartesian system which viewed thought and matter as mutually independent substances. Kant reacted against this dualism, as Spinoza had before, and it was then Fichte and Hegel who opposed the concept with idealism, as did the positivists with materialism (Duchesne-Guillemin 1958:71). The Cartesian attitude, Duchesne-Guillemin (1958:71) argues, may in turn be considered as a revival of the Platonic reaction which deposed the Aristotelian scholasticism during the Renaissance; the entire tradition of Western philosophy, he claims, can be viewed as an alternation of dualism and monism, beginning with Aristotle's reaction of monism against Plato's dualism, and Aristotle's and the Stoics' monism was in turn ousted by a period of pagan and Christian neo-Platonism up to the Aristotelian revival in the twelfth century.

The term 'dualism' has since been applied to many types of polarity in religion, metaphysics and epistemology (Reese 1980:136). Dualism in religion refers to the opposition of good and evil, as it occurs in Manichaeism and Gnosticism, generally, although it is also applied to the Taoist and neo-Confucian contrast of *Yin* and *Yang*, for example (Reese 1980:136). The earliest instance of a complete metaphysical dualism is found in the philosophy of Plato, who attributed true existence to "Ideas", but additionally recognised an inferior and opposing principle, and whose dualism was ethical insofar as he identified "the Good" with the Ideas and evil with the opposing principle (Reese 1980:136).

44

There is also the dualism of God and the world, the divine and the corporeal, the soul and the body. The concept of the soul in the body as being the divine in the corporeal, a concept that is often expressed as the result of a primordial sacrifice (either of a bull, as in India and Iran, or of a god, as in Greece) left the person in a state of mixture between these two elements (Duchesne-Guillemin 1958:81). The goal, Duchesne-Guillemin (1958:81) argues, was to separate again what had been mixed (an attitude which he notes was to be typical of Manichaeism) and so free the soul to return to its heavenly home. It was believed, however, that the method of freeing the soul could be bought from "wandering sorcerers, sellers of charms, etc.". But Duchesne-Guillemin (1958:81) argues that Plato rejected and condemned these means in favour of a purely contemplative process of salvation. This accent on the contemplative as a means of salvation was common to Plato and Zoroaster.

Both Plato and Zoroaster believed that the attainment of the divine was by means of the emulation of the divine, as Duchesne-Guillemin (1958:81) notes, but since Plato, influenced by Anaxagoras and Xenophanes, emphasised the spiritual and non-corporeal nature of God, he perhaps inadvertently caused an opposition between God and creation like that of good and evil. This was not the case in Zoroastrianism, as the material world was not evil *per se*, and the spiritual was the only realm in which evil could have any existence. The Zoroastrian 'Forms' (Amesha Spentas), moreover, were not only abstract concepts to be pondered and emulated, but also had physical manifestations in creation, much like Plato's Forms are visible on earth.

Zoroaster did not view creation as a misleading copy of the Ideal, but simply in an imperfect thing in the process of being perfected. The imperfection of creation was the result of destructive activity by the forces of evil. Perfection could be attained for creation through emulation of the Good, however. The creation is therefore in an intermediate state of becoming perfect, and care of the creation as the physical domains of the Amesha Spentas, furthered the perfection of creation and was an emulation of the Good. This is analogous to Plato's views of the corporeal as imperfect, although he took a more negative view of the corporeal and did not believe it could be perfected. Despite this negative view of the material, Plato believed that proper care of the environment surrounding man was positive, and calls "anything that

45

harms or destroys a thing evil, and anything that preserves and benefits it good" (*Republic* 608e).

The similarities between the doctrines of Zoroaster and Plato, especially the accent on the contemplative, are what catches the eye, not the differences, and it could be argued that Plato and Zoroaster were both part of what appears to be an intellectual flowering throughout the ancient world, and their contributions stand alongside many other influential thinkers. Gnuse (1997:210) states that the blossoming of the intellectual in the "civilised centres of the Old World" has been referred to by modern scholars studying the social, religious, philosophical and technological achievements of this period as the "Axial Age" (approximately 800-400 BCE). Gnuse (1997:210) further notes that this period was the bedrock on which the intellectual and religious heritage of today was built, during which important concepts such as monotheism emerged.

This is evidenced by the fact that, as Gnuse (1997:210) states, this period saw the fruition of great traditions such as "the teachings of Confucius and Lao-Tzu in China; the final collections of the *Rig-Veda* and the *Atharva-Veda* from the Brahmanic priestly circles in India; the *Upanishads* from the great *sunnyasi* and other intellectuals in India; Siddharta Gautama (the Buddha), the most successful Upanishadic teacher in India and founder of Buddhism; perhaps Zoroaster in Persia (unless he lived earlier); the great intellectual tradition of the Greek historians (Hecataeus, Herodotus, Thucydides, etc.), playwrights (Sophocles, Aeschylus, Euripides, Aristophanes, etc.), and philosophers (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, etc.); as well as the Jewish faith and scriptures in the exile and early Second Temple period". This period in history is reminiscent of the great revival of thought during the Renaissance, which indeed sought to copy at least part of the original flowering of the Axial Age, and has something of Jung's synchronicity about it. Just as the Renaissance, if seen holistically, appears all the richer for such a comparison, so could the Axial Age, if a comparison were attempted.

46

2. Problems in this study

2.1. Problems with studying Zoroastrianism

The study of the history of Zoroastrianism is a discipline that involves "great efforts of speculation and imagination", according to De Jong (1997:39), and it has been an academic "battlefield" with no concord in sight, although some subjects have been agreed upon. There appears to be agreement, for instance, on the date of Zoroaster (around 1 000 BCE) and on the fact that the religion of the Achaemenian dynasts is related, at least, to Zoroastrianism, but other issues remain points of contention, such as the reconstruction of the pre-Gathic religion, the status of Zurvanism, use of Vedic literature or contemporary Iranian religions as comparative evidence, and the relation between linguistic and historical interpretation, amongst others (De Jong 1997:39).

This lack of agreement on even the basic 'facts' of Zoroastrianism has led De Jong (1997:39-40) to comment that, although there are numerous introductory works published in this field of study, "a comparison between two of these would easily lead the non-specialist reader to the conclusion that a balanced view of Zoroastrianism is impossible". The situation is compounded by the lack of objective discussion in these works of the validity of the arguments that propose different interpretations, since opposing views are usually dismissed as "unhistorical" or "methodologically deficient", although the absence of homogeneity serves to illustrate, according to De Jong (1997:40), the difficulty of the subject. Zoroastrianism is still misrepresented, however, even by scholars who study it.

Of all the great religions of the world, Zaehner (1961:15) writes, Zoroastrianism presents the "most intractable problems". Zaehner (1961:15) argues that the principle of Zoroastrianism, that there is one true God, was not well received in the traditionally polytheistic society in which Zoroaster lived, and therefore a "modified version of the older religion was grafted onto Zoroaster's doctrines", and modified yet again when it was later accepted as the official religion by the first Persian Empire and came under the control of the Magi priestly caste.

"Never has a.religious thinker been more grossly travestied" either, argues Zaehner (1961:19): firstly by his own disciples who obscured the purity of what Zaehner believes was Zoroaster's monotheistic vision; secondly by the Magi who presented Zoroaster to the Graeco-Roman world "not only as the author of a rigid religious dualism which made good and evil two rival and co-eternal principles, but also as a magician, astrologer, and quack"; thirdly by Nietzsche who "fathered on him doctrines he would have found little to his taste"; and lastly by scholars today "whose fuddled imaginations have seen in him either a witch-doctor bemusing himself with the fumes of Indian hemp or a political intriguer plotting behind the scenes at the court of the Persian kings" (Zaehner 1961:19).

It is most unfortunate that scholars, who have neither religious beliefs nor artistic licence as an excuse, should misinterpret Zoroaster to such an extent, and surprising that a negative reaction instead of an objective analysis should happen so often and so vehemently. That the points of view scholars have about Zoroaster have often been far from complimentary, is perhaps best illustrated by Herzfeld and Nyberg's descriptions of him. Henning (1951:13) remarks that although Herzfeld and Nyberg worked with the same sources, they nevertheless arrived at vastly different reconstructions of Zoroaster, but both opinions were resoundingly negative. Herzfeld's Zoroaster is "a backstairs politician, an exiled nobleman who goes to the races when not engaged in malicious gossip", and Nyberg's Zoroaster is "a prehistoric man, a drunken witch-doctor muttering gibberish on his ludicrous Maga [trance]" (Henning 1951:13). Henning's conclusion (1951:13-14) is that these scholars' opinions, which are either extremely patronising or scornful, are based on opinion devoid of supporting fact, and that they leave the student perplexed rather than enlightened. What Henning fails to note is that views on Zoroaster and his teachings still often unintentionally reflect rather biased perspectives, even though bias is overtly rejected.

Moreover, there is often an emphasis, in comparisons of 'Eastern' and 'Western' traditions, on the differences between the secular and the religious. This emphasis on differences has been a problem in the comparisons between human and natural sciences as well, and belies a basic assumption of the fundamental incompatibility of science, philosophy and religion, resulting in an ever-widening gap between these

fields and their methods of interpretation as well as an increased antagonism between their various proponents. The religious reaction (not only of Creationists) against Darwin's theory of evolution is a case in point. I believe one possibility is that this opposition was aggravated from the Renaissance and Enlightenment movement onwards, and has yet to be resolved, because it has not been fully recognised as a pertinent problem that will persist as long as this division is inherent in even the most basic education.

2.2. The problem of comparing philosophy, religion, and science

Religion/mythology, philosophy and science are interrelated in that they pose the same universal questions (in order to make sense of the world that surrounds us) and only differ in their method of achieving answers and in their purposes for doing so. It is a basic interrelationship between the physical world of sense perception and natural phenomena, the mental world of reason and rationalisation and cognitive phenomena, and the spiritual world of myth, belief and supernatural phenomena. These categories (artificial though they are) must once have been aspects of the same thing, religion/myth splitting from philosophy/science in the fifth century with the Greek thinkers' secular approach to nature, and philosophy and science splitting in the seventeenth century CE, although the scientists of that age still called their field of study a 'Philosophy of Nature'.

I believe that not only are philosophy, religion and science mutually very compatible, but that they are united in the doctrines of Plato and Zoroaster. Current thinking, however, has not facilitated the study of such a unity between these spheres. Moreover, this perceived opposition between human and natural sciences continues to be a problem in methodology – as has been mentioned among the problems listed by Deist & Le Roux (1993:11-19) in the previous chapter on methodology. Other aspects have also hindered this interpretation, such as Phenomenology of Religion, which precludes comparing religion with anything critically for Phenomenology of Religion advocates a mere description of religious phenomena, in case value judgements are made. This, interestingly, implies two things, though: firstly, that if religion is critically investigated it will be found lacking: and secondly, that the terms 'value judgements' and 'critical thinking' are *not* examples of an oxymoron.

49

Another aspect is the perceived superiority of philosophy over religion (which started with our post-medieval view of Greek philosophy as distinct from Greek religion), and the more recently perceived superiority of science over both religion and philosophy (as can be seen in the conflict between the human and the natural sciences). A tendency to unify these concepts is found in both Plato and Zoroaster, who each observed their surroundings, concluded mind is the only possible method for assigning meaning and coherence to the physical phenomena, and inferred that there must be a similar characteristic in the higher being they postulated as creator. Not only do these fields all occur in the same doctrine, but they are related to each other as well.

Therefore, in this study I shall not treat religion as sacrosanct, but interpret it in terms of one of its aspects, namely philosophy. This is necessarily rather tentative, but I believe large parts of many religions consists of philosophy (including the Zoroastrian religion). The two need not be mutually exclusive, although they have been seen to be because of the (untenable) opinion that Greek philosophy and Greek religion are separate and incompatible. One very obvious instance contrary to this perceived incompatibility is, of course, Indian philosophy, which was initially separate from religion, but which became fully incorporated into the religious tradition. It is on the basis that Zoroaster must have had a well thought-out concept of metaphysics and cosmology before he composed the *Gathas* that I wish to compare two philosophers and their respective philosophies.

Although similar to other comparisons of Zoroastrianism to related fields such as the Iranian pagan religion with the Vedic Indian religion, the *Avesta* with the *Rigveda*, ancient Zoroastrianism with modern Zoroastrianism, and so on, the comparison of Zoroaster with Plato is a-historical, and necessarily excludes any need for historical contact and influence. Another way of seeing it is as a comparison of philosophies in the Platonic sense, e.g. as simply another dialogue of the philosophical tradition, and such an approach could be described for convenience's sake as a 'Platonic' reading of Zoroastrianism.

CHAPTER 3 – THE CREATOR AND THE CREATION

Plato

1. Identifying the Creator

To identify the Creator is a task that even Plato complains about. He states that the Demiurge is not easily discovered, and even if he is, to tell all men about it would be impossible (*Timaeus* 28c). But by following the descriptions of the creator and his activities, one can piece together the general idea that Plato had in mind. The creator is not a dogmatic figure to be worshipped, however, and Plato wisely leaves most conclusions about the creator to whomsoever chooses to contemplate him. What can be safely inferred will be discussed below.

Whether or not Plato sought to depict his Demiurge as anthropomorphic is unclear. As Bevan (1962:224) notes, the Platonic school certainly saw the traditional concept of an anthropomorphic deity as symbolic of a reality which could only be apprehended by "Mind", and therefore had no characteristics perceivable by the senses. Platonically, things apprehended by Mind could not be seen with the senses, only imperfect imitations had concrete physical existence. So, even if the Demiurge were to be anthropomorphic he could not have physical existence, for it would imply imperfection. But the tradition of anthropomorphic gods was neither negated nor affirmed by Plato's concept of the Creator nor of the traditional Greek pantheon.

Although the Creator and the gods he creates all display anthropomorphic characteristics, the human form resembles the divine only in the spherical microcosm of the soul, centred in the cranium. The rest of the human form is created in addition to the spherical microcosm of the soul, only to aid in the six different motions as a navigational mechanism or "convenient vehicle" under the direction of the soul (*Timaeus* 44d). The concept of creating, although referring to a type of craftsmanship and a physical cutting and shaping of materials, does not imply any anthropomorphic characteristics in terms of physical appearance (other than the visible spherical planets that are gods).

51

The question of morality and religion necessarily arises when contemplating Plato's Demiurge, but his role in these two spheres is very obscure. Although it could be argued that a division between these two domains is apparent in fifth-century Athens, religion and morality are inherently associated in most cultures, and it is likely to have been the case (however subtly) in Greece. Stewart (1960:76-77) argues that the God of religious consciousness is first and foremost a separate individual, and that the idea of a separate individuality or personality of God is as important to the religious consciousness as the idea of a separate individuality or personality of the 'Self' is to the moral consciousness, and they are irrevocably dependent upon and linked to each other. It is therefore also important that the creator's relation to the 'Self' be considered.

Although the Demiurge is not portrayed as an individual, nor as a power that involves itself further than creation, he is repeatedly associated with the Good, or creating the best. Plato might not have commented much on a type of personal god, but morality and the fate of the soul were concerns that he did address at length. Regarding the fate of the soul (and morality, which seems intertwined with it), the idea of the Good repeatedly arises. Having the Good in mind (grasping it philosophically) is all the soul needs to do to attain 'salvation' from its physical trap, for knowing the Good will necessarily make the actions initiated by the soul moral and good (according to Plato, and to Socrates before him). The Demiurge is perhaps not an individual 'Self' (in the moral or religious tradition), but he is axial to the salvation of the Platonic soul in that he is not only associated with the Good, but also the creator of the best of all possible physical worlds that are to reflect the Forms, and he can thus be contemplated along with the Forms.

How he must be contemplated is not made clear, although the detail Plato gives to the process of creating the physical world from the Forms seems to be a practical suggestion of how to accomplish the task. Why he should be contemplated is not stated explicitly either, but, once again, Plato supplies an example rather than the reason in that in the *Timaeus* the discussion of how the Forms were used as model for the creation of the physical world is given even more contemplation and detailed attention than the discussion of the Forms. Moreover, the Demiurge is associated

52

with the Form of the Good, and as such both are the culmination of what should be realised in terms of contemplation and action.

The process of creation seems to be very important in the *Timaeus* as well, but to the question why this was the focus, there is no definite answer. I suggest that, keeping in mind that Plato himself calls it a myth (*Timaeus* 29c, 48c), the mythical concept of creation should be explored further. Creating the ideal soul in oneself is the first step to creating the ideal 'soul' for society, or rather a perfect polity, like the Demiurge creating the ideal universe. The ultimate goal Plato has in addressing a philosopher is, after all, to provoke action, not passive reception, and the creation-theme is well suited for the purpose of inciting action for the good.

The creator himself does not appear to have a soul, however, and is rather identified with the higher principle, Mind, which is the route to the improvement of the soul. Hackforth (1936:439), from the descriptions of *nous* (intelligence) in the *Philebus* (23c-30e) and the *Timaeus* (34c), and of *psyche* (soul) in the *Philebus* (30b) and the *Timaeus* (29a), infers that the creator is identified with Reason or Intelligence (*nous*), and it seems that, contrary to popular belief, he is not identified with Soul (*psyche*).

The description of *nous* (intelligence) in the *Philebus* (23c-30e), which is the cause that combines *peras* (limit) and *apeiron* (the boundless), corresponds to the Demiurge in the *Timaeus* (29a), who brings chaos into order by "Forms and Numbers". The description of *psyche* in the *Philebus* (30b), that the Soul of the Universe is distinct from the *nous* that created it, corresponds to the Demiurge in the *Timaeus* (34c), who is described as devising a soul for the world as well as a body. The *Timaeus* (34c) does postulate that the gods have souls, but these are the planetary gods whom the Demiurge has made, and whose souls he created. The Demiurge, by contrast, is not described as having a soul, but as making souls.

Hackforth (1936:439) draws two conclusions from these correlations, namely that the Demiurge is to be identified with *nous* (reason), i.e. that he is the "mythical" equivalent of reason, and that *nous* is a more ultimate principle than the *psyche* of the cosmos. Hackforth (1936:439-440), considering in his analysis how these factors in the *Philebus* and the *Timaeus* tally with Plato's argument to refute atheists in the *Laws*

53

X, believes that the same relation between the World-Soul and Reason is present in all three dialogues, and that Plutarch's argument for a hierarchy of souls culminating in a single supreme soul is absent from Plato's theories entirely.

Whether or not the good and evil World-Souls exist, the creator does not seem to be identified with "soul" at all. In order to establish where Plato's theism fits in with these indications, for the identification of the creator is complicated by Plato's wide application of the term *theos* (god or divinity), Hackforth (1936:440-441) proposes two dogmatic criteria for his identification of Plato's God: firstly, God must have independent, not derivative, existence, and secondly, he must be the source, or cause, of all that is "good, orderly and rational" in the universe, but not of anything that is "evil, disorderly or irrational".

Hackforth's first criterion (1936:441-442) cannot be satisfied by *psyche*, for *psyche* is asserted to be (or have) a *genesis*, or "participate in birth" (*Laws* 892c, 967d). This application of the term *genesis* to *psyche* does not imply creation in time any more than the application of *genesis* in the *Timaeus* (28b) means that the Universe was created in time; rather, the meaning in both cases is that they are "derivative existents", and their being is therefore dependent on a more ultimate principle (Hackforth 1936: 442).

Hackforth (1936:442) argues that the reason scholars have disregarded the attribution of *genesis* to *psyche* is that they have assumed that Plato set out to prove that the gods of the *Laws* (Bk. X) are ultimate principles, but Hackforth points out that Plato did not intend to communicate his "full metaphysical theories, or even his philosophy of religion, in the *Laws*", but rather to create a sound basis of religion and morality for the greater population with the minimum philosophical doctrine. Hackforth (1936:442) also points out that what Plato considered "impossible" in the *Timaeus* (28c) cannot be expected to be executed by a rather simplistic argument in the *Laws*, and the complex issue of the relation of *nous* to the Universe or to *psyche* should not be sought in the *Laws*.

In fact, the arguments refuting atheism in the *Laws* (Bk. X) postulate gods that are very similar to the gods that are the heavenly bodies in the *Timaeus*. The argument in

the *Laws* (Bk. X) establishes the processes of the universe as dependent upon movement, and further establishes soul as the only self-mover (896a), which means that the universe is directed by souls, good or bad. As Hackforth points out (1936:442), it is not specified whether there is one good soul or many, nor whether there is one bad soul or many, but merely that there must be at least two souls, one good and one bad. Furthermore, there is no indication that the good soul or souls control the bad soul or souls, but it is said (*Laws* 897c-898c) that the regular movements of the heaven and "all that is in it" (such as the stars, sun, moon, and planets) are controlled by "one soul, or more than one, possessing all excellence" (898c) (Hackforth 1936:442-443).

The gods of the *Timaeus* have heavenly spheres for bodies, but their movements are directed by the movements of their souls, the regularity of which are to form "time" as a "moving image of eternity" (37c-39d). In the *Timaeus* these souls were created, and therefore the gods of the *Laws* could be viewed as the creations of the Demiurge of the *Timaeus*, although it would have been unnecessary to point this out in the *Laws*. It is only reasonable to assume that the gods used for proof in the *Laws* are to be worshipped by the common people, but that the ultimate deity of the *Timaeus* cannot be proven, and need not be proven to the non-philosophers of Plato's Magnesian society. The Demiurge is to be contemplated only by those who are philosophers, such as Timaeus, although they themselves cannot hope to fully understand the creator himself. The concept of God in the *Timaeus* leaves room for doubt if, even if contemplated by the philosopher, and could not possibly serve as a watertight argument for unbelievers in the *Laws*.

The elite audience for whom the *Timaeus* was intended is linked with the inaccessibility of the Demiurge, even to philosophical enquiry, and this inaccessibility certainly seems to explain the complete exclusion of the Demiurge from the practical manifesto of the *Laws*. Furthermore, the Demiurge in the *Timaeus* was also the creator of the *psyche*, and most likely therefore did not have a soul himself. The sovereignty of the souls of the gods in the *Laws* (897c-898c) therefore refers to the sovereignty granted by the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* to the souls of the gods he created (*Timaeus* 37c-40c), and does not imply that the Demiurge himself is to be identified with soul. Hackforth (1936:443) argues that the creator, as described in the

Philebus, *Timaeus*, and *Laws*, cannot be or have a *psyche*, for *psyche* does not satisfy the first criterion he set, namely that God must have independent, not derivative, existence, and therefore the Demiurge must not be identified with *psyche*, but with *nous*. It remains to be seen whether or not *psyche* satisfies Hackforth's second criterion, that it cannot be the author of evil but solely of good.

Hackforth (1936:443-444) notes that, in the *Laws*, the movements belonging to *psyche* itself include wish, deliberation, tendency, true and false judgement, love and hate, etc. (*Laws* 897a), but it is carefully added that the *psyche* is good or bad in accordance with its association with *nous* or its lack of association with *nous* respectively. This correlates to the section in the *Philebus* (30b), which says that cause devises *psyche*, and the section in the *Timaeus* (29e-30b), which states that God wanted to make all things as good as possible, and hence "as like himself as possible" (29e), and therefore planted *nous* (reason) into *psyche* (soul) and soul into body to ensure that his work would result in the highest and best nature (Hackforth 1936:444).

Hackforth (1936:444) concludes that Reason and Soul are both found in the universe, owing to the action of God, but God himself is identified with Reason, and the universe remains good and rational as far as God's reason and goodness are imparted to it, whereas the absence of these factors causes the universe to be evil and irrational. It is therefore *nous* and not *psyche* that satisfies both criteria relating to the nature of Plato's God.

2. Reason/Intelligence and the Persuasion of Necessity in Creation

Timaeus's account of the world is divided into three sections. The first describes the work of reason and the construction of the soul of the world by the Demiurge (*Timaeus* 30c-47e); the second explains the role of necessity (*Timaeus* 48a-68e); and the third attempts to explain the reconciliation of reason and necessity in the objects and persons of the phenomenal world (*Timaeus* 69a-92c).

It has already been established that the creator is to be identified with *nous* (Reason or Intelligence), but we must now examine how Reason operates, and thereby discover how the creator operates. Plato states that Necessity was "persuaded" by Intelligence

to form the orderly cosmos (*Timaeus* 48a). According to Morrow (1950:421), this passage (the second part of the division mentioned above) is generally regarded as asserting something of central importance in Plato's cosmology, but exactly what it asserts is not always clear. The identification of Reason with the creator aids understanding, however.

Morrow (1950:421) argues that the "latent personification" of *Ananke* (Necessity), *Peitho* (Persuasion), and *Nous* (Mind or Reason) is suggestive of mythology. Plato indeed describes the entire dialogue as myth (*Timaeus* 29c), but Morrow (1950:421) notes that it is perhaps referred to as myth or allegory for, if concepts such as the "persuasion of nature" are taken literally, they create a logical paradox. However, Morrow (1950:421-423) argues that these difficulties in interpretation dissipate, and a lucid doctrine emerges from the *Timaeus*, if they are seen in the light of the problem that confronts Plato in the *Timaeus*, namely how to make "the working of intelligence intelligible".

Certain assumptions are clearly made by Plato, such as the assumption of intelligent design in the cosmos, and these assumptions are open to two types of criticism, as Morrow (1950:421-422) argues any conception of the cosmos that makes teleology fundamental must be, arising from "difficulties of faith and difficulties of logic". Plato perceives the cosmos to be "the fairest of creations", a living and intelligent entity which conforms to the pattern of and consciously imitates in space and time the divine and supersensible world of Ideas (as far as it is possible) (*Timaeus* 29a, 30d, 38b, 39c). The likeness of creation to the divine pattern is exhibited in the mathematical perfection of its spherical form (*Timaeus* 34b) and in the orderliness of the celestial movements that form the "moving image" of eternity, namely time (*Timaeus* 37c-38b). The various parts of this visible cosmos are also made with a view to the best (*Timaeus* 30a), including man, who is given a soul that is intelligent and akin to the soul of the cosmos (*Timaeus* 41d). Man's soul is also in a body, but it is trapped there, and his physical state exposes him to confusion, shock and damage, yet still provides the means to facilitate the mastery of intelligence over disorder (*Timaeus* 42a-43d).

Not all sensations that the body is capable of confuse man, however, since the organs of vision were given to man to enable him to behold the celestial movements of the planetary gods and so attain to philosophy (*Timaeus* 46d-47a), and vision is called "the greatest gift the gods have given or ever will give to mortals" (*Timaeus* 47a). Speech and hearing can also serve as allies of reason against the corporeal confusion, and creating order and harmony in the corporeal world, just as the Demiurge created order and harmony in the cosmos, allows man to imitate the divine according to the intelligent design (*Timaeus* 46a-47d). Now, if intelligent design is a genuine cause of natural processes, the problem that remained for Plato was to formulate its relation to the other causes involved in these processes, or, as Morrow (1950:423) puts it, "the problem of how to make the working of intelligence intelligible".

Morrow (1950:423) argues that nature is demonstrably causal and follows what seems to be a pattern of predictability, which is intelligible, and which, furthermore, can be successfully combined with a concept of "designing intelligence" without destroying the intelligibility of the whole. Morrow (1950:423) believes that the inherent causality of nature, "more than any absence of cosmic emotion or cosmic faith, is the real reason why philosophers and scientists today are reluctant to make commitments to teleology". To be able to demonstrate the presence or absence of cosmic purpose, it must first be demonstrated that purposive activity is thinkable, but cosmic teleology cannot be ruled out simply by assuming that causality and purpose are mutually exclusive, although this non-teleological view of nature persists (Morrow 1950:423-424).

Morrow (1950:424) argues that a similar dilemma confronted Plato's contemporaries and predecessors, and believes that the pre-Platonic cosmologists, from Thales to Democritus, have not unfairly been described as exhibiting a steady development from "animism" to "mechanism". Morrow (1950:424) states that, although this interest in the mechanisms of nature cannot be said to have been universal or even clear to those who propounded it, in the later pre-Platonic cosmologies, such as those of Leucippus and Democritus, it received "clear formulation and exclusive importance", for their atomic theories picture the cosmos as an inevitable and unintended or undesigned result of the collisions between eternally moving particles, a cosmos that operates, in short, by necessity rather than design.

Morrow (1950:424) notes that Democritus also constructed an ethical system, but it seems to bear little resemblance to his theories on physics and is a set of basic maxims advising moderation and other precepts that credit people with a degree of freedom and intelligent self-control, a concept which his physics would rule out. Democritus, says Morrow (1950:424), "exhibits the same order of confusion that may be found amongst any well-bred scientist of today". Plato's *Timaeus* could therefore be viewed as a partial answer to this "confusing" problem of combining causality and purpose.

The accent in the *Timaeus* on the process of creation, rather than the creator, could also be explained if the *Timaeus* is viewed as a reaction to the mechanistic views of nature mentioned above. Plato's dissatisfaction with the animistic and mechanistic theories about the cosmos is attested to in the *Phaedo* (96a-99c), where Socrates relates his early interest in "that branch of learning which is called natural science", but says that he was dissatisfied with them because it took no account of the universal good. This passage, according to Morrow (1950:424), contains most of the principles that Plato was later to use in the *Timaeus*.

The distinction in the *Phaedo* (99b) is between real cause and the conditions "without which the cause would not be a cause". This is illustrated by Socrates when he argues that the seemingly objective observations of natural phenomena are relative (*Phaedo* 99d-101a), and his remaining to drink the hemlock is because he "thought it better to sit here and more right to stay and submit [to the process of justice]", not because his sinews and bones are currently in this specific position (*Phaedo* 98e), the latter being the total interpretation that observation of natural science could offer. In fact, Socrates says that his bones and sinews "would have been in the neighbourhood of Megara or Boetia long ago (impelled by a conviction of what is best!)", if he did not judge it best to remain. The implication is that the non-physical cause of Socrates's judgement controls the physical.

It is important to note, however, that the physical conditions that enable the cause to act are not unimportant to the process, although they do not dictate the outcome. Without the bones and sinews, Socrates admits that he could not do what he deemed best, for they enable him to act, but to say that the physical conditions are the true cause, and not his choice or judgement in the matter, "would be a very lax and

inaccurate form of expression" (*Phaedo* 98e). Morrow (1950:424) argues that this not only indicates that these secondary causes are necessary, but that it implies that a knowledge of them is a good thing to have.

Socrates extends the analogy to the cosmos, which he argues has been interpreted as operating on physical causes, such as Anaxagoras's vortex, which are not sufficient causes for the reason of the operation of the cosmos (*Phaedo* 99b-c). In both cases, an account of the good is necessary for an adequate understanding, and it is goodness which binds everything together (*Phaedo* 99c). Socrates does not elaborate on this operation of the good, but Morrow (1950:425) argues that its use becomes clear and fully adumbrated in the *Timaeus*. Morrow (1950:425) also argues that the distinction made in the *Phaedo* between the true cause and the conditions enabling that cause becomes in the *Timaeus* a distinction between two different causes, for the corporeal is a cause as well, although merely an auxiliary cause devoid of intelligence (*Timaeus* 46c-e).

The true cause of the *Timaeus*, sometimes called the divine or intelligent cause, is an agency working for the best, and is conceived of as a craftsman (Demiurge), a designation which has often been described as poetical or mythical, but which Morrow (1950:425) believes has a very literal meaning. The Demiurge, as a craftsman, uses materials whose natures play a part in determining the product that the Demiurge is to fashion. In this way they are causes as well, although only in a secondary sense, for they are said to be "auxiliary causes" (*Timaeus* 46c-d, 68e, 76d). Timaeus states that both kinds of cause must be dealt with, "keeping those that operate intelligently and produce results that are good separate from those that operate without reason and produce effects which are causal and random" (*Timaeus* 46d).

This is the programme of inquiry that Timaeus follows, and it is done, according to Morrow (1950:425), in a manner so emphatic as to show itself in the very structure of the dialogue. This can be seen when the stages of the discussion are analysed. In the first part of his discourse, Timaeus is primarily concerned with the operations and intentions of the Demiurge, and the reason that operates according to a pattern. The discussion centres around the reason the Demiurge created the world and why he

made only one world, made it spherical and gave it a soul which is guided by intelligence (*Timaeus* 29d-31b).

The discussion continues with an account of the World-Soul and its character, the creation of man and the good intentions of the Demiurge that can be deduced from the harmonious and ordered proportions of man's body and soul (*Timaeus* 31b-37b, 39d-47c). Having discussed these works of intelligence adequately, Plato continues with an analysis of the materials with which the Demiurge has worked thus far (*Timaeus* 47c-48d), and therefore with a discussion of the secondary causes. At this point (*Timaeus* 48a) Timaeus retraces his steps and must "begin again from the beginning" in order to take account of "the indeterminate cause" and to consider what is "the nature of fire, water, earth and air before the beginning of the world and what their state was then" (*Timaeus* 48b).

These elements are the causes of the cosmos according to the Pre-Socratics, but Plato calls them "indeterminate", refers to their operations as the "work of necessity", and views them as causes secondary or auxiliary to the prime cause in the cosmos, the Demiurge. The third section in the dialogue (*Timaeus* 68d-92c) is a demonstration of how the works of intelligence, the primary cause, and the works of necessity, the secondary causes, cooperate to produce the cosmos according to the pattern which intelligence or reason seeks to follow.

According to Morrow (1950:426), Plato, much like his predecessors, conceives of the initial state of these materials and their powers as a world "in unstable equilibrium and in continuous motion, with things being pushed by others and being compelled, for there is no void, to push others in turn". The four traditional elements of fire, air, earth, and water, as well as the familiar opposites of pre-Socratic thought, the wet and dry, hot and cold, dense and rare, are present, as Morrow (1950:426) notes. The continuous motion of these elements results in the dense and heavy things separating from the rare and light things, and each additionally has the tendency to move or be thrust towards its kindred element, causing perpetual motion in the elements, "rather like the contents of a winnowing basket" (*Timaeus* 52d-53b).

Plato's theory of the elements included a postulate that Morrow (1950:427) calls a "novelty", namely that the elements had inherent geometric structures, such as a cube form for earth atoms and a pyramid structure for fire particles. Plato also viewed the differences in the character of these elements as inherently connected to their geometry, and postulated that they could combine to form new geometric figures (and therefore one element could transform into another element), which would explain their continuous motion as well (*Timaeus* 53c-61b). The constant movement and transformation of the elements meant that they caused each other to form and disband, and is part of the cause that Plato refers to as "necessity", but what Plato means by the term "necessity" is more complicated than the formations of the various elements.

Necessity, according to Morrow (1950:427), refers to the causal effect which A has on B, and therefore, if B is to be in the state that it is, it needs A, and the necessity that characterises this world before intelligence comes into play is therefore simply its necessity as a means to the ends that intelligence would produce. Furthermore, Morrow (1950:428) points out that there is a "definite dependable structure and behaviour" of the elements, which must be a characteristic of these means if they are to be usable for the creator's ends, and it is therefore also the dependable nature and regularity of the effects the elements produce upon each other that Plato means by "necessity".

The proof that this is Plato's meaning, according to Morrow (1950:428), is the amount of attention he gives (from page 48 to almost the end of the *Timaeus*) to the analysis of the works of necessity. Plato discussed everything from the elements themselves to their transformation into each other; the formation of the various fluids, metals, and other substances; their operation in the phenomena of melting and cooling, freezing and thawing; in the production of qualities of hot and cold, heavy and light; as well as tastes, smells, sounds, colours, and sensations of pleasure and pain. Plato also explains their involvement in the structure of the human body, with specific reference to internal anatomy, such as the structure of bone and sinew, the flow of blood and air, and the various afflictions that are possible. In short, the world on which the creator sets to work "is characterised by necessity in the sense that specific effects follow regularly from specific causes. It is because this is true that the creator can use these works of necessity for his purpose" (Morrow 1950:428).

By the same logic, necessity, which is a neutral motion of cause and effect, is infused with intelligence and ordered according to a design by the creator for good. The creator creates from these materials a world that interacts on their inherent laws, but by the same token is limited by these inherent laws and cannot make a perfect or exact 'moving copy' of the Forms. Therefore, necessity is also the secondary cause of all that occurs, for good or evil. But before one attributes evil to matter, one must note that necessity is not matter, but the way in which matter causally interacts without purpose or intelligence. This is reminiscent of human acts of morality or immorality, for a person acts morally when he has knowledge about what is best, but if his actions are devoid of this intelligence, they are purposeless and could be immoral. The moralor immoral behaviour of man is therefore analogous to the good or evil working of necessity, when it is either infused with or devoid of intelligence.

The question that remains is how the Demiurge (as the intelligent cause) uses the works of necessity to accomplish his purposes. Here we must come to terms with the metaphor of the craftsman whose purpose is reflected in the cosmic design, because the problem, according to Morrow (1950:428-429), is explaining how intelligent purpose relates to causal order, and the analogy of the craftsman is an instance of just such an intelligent design and purpose. Morrow (1950:429) argues that the origin of Plato's analogy comes from "universal and familiar human experience in guiding the works of necessity to an end we regard as good", and the problem of how to make this experience intelligible is solved by showing that craftsmanship is possible anywhere, in however limited a measure. This analogy is possible because the microcosm inevitably reflects the macrocosm, no matter how imperfectly, and the same principles can be applied to (and purposive and creative activity can be inferred from) everyday experiences, which would help to clarify the method of such activity and help relate it to the activity of the Demiurge in the creation of the cosmos.

How intelligence "persuades" necessity seems to be another metaphor, according to Morrow (1950:429), but the precise meaning of this persuasion needs clarification. Persuasion is contrasted with compulsion, and Morrow (1950:429) argues that "every competent craftsman knows that he cannot force material to take on forms or perform functions that go against their nature". The description of persuasion would therefore appear to refer to the existing characteristics of the elements which the craftsman has

to utilise to his own ends, but which he cannot alter, only employ intelligently. To serve certain purposes, however, some materials are more suited than others, Morrow (1950:429) argues, and the innate qualities of the materials must be used, while their shortcomings must be suppressed as far as possible. The Demiurge can therefore use the innate qualities of the elements themselves in a mechanistic way, such as employing opposites to regulate effects, but all is done with reason persuading necessity to cooperate in fulfilment of the design and purpose.

Importantly, intelligence is responsible not for the specific effects of any given power or set of powers, but for bringing together these specific powers into such juxtapositions and collocations that their joint natural effects are good. Persuasion is therefore the technique of intelligence, in the sense that it is the "proper means for accomplishing what we will with others – whether inanimate materials or thinking men – by understanding them so thoroughly that we can use the forces inherent in them to bring about the end we desire" (Morrow 1950:430-431). According to this analysis, then, we can interpret the roles in the *Timaeus* of necessity and intelligence in the creation.

When the craftsman finds "the visible universe in a state not of rest but of inharmonious and disorderly motion.[and reduces it] to order from disorder" (*Timaeus* 30a), the elements of the material world are in a state of disorder because the causal process has no harmony or purpose, and therefore works to a counter-purpose or no purpose. Necessity is also called the "wandering", "errant" or "indeterminate" cause (*Timaeus* 48a) and it produces effects which are "causal and random" (*Timaeus* 46e), yet it is not a state of primordial chaos without any observable pattern, for there is some form of causal operation in the motions of the elements, determined by their physical states. Nevertheless, all this causal and random activity is devoid of intelligence, for causality does not preclude randomness (or chance), and the motion remains devoid of purpose.

Morrow (1950:432) argues, from *Timaeus* 46e, that it is not the lack of intelligence which makes this state chaotic, but the combination of necessity and chance, an emphasis on chance which Plato describes as a feature of the pre-Platonic materialist

cosmologies in the *Laws* Bk. X. 'Chance' (*tuche*), along with 'nature' (*phusis*) and 'matter' (*soma*), are opposed to 'soul' (*psyche*) and 'design' (*techne*) (*Laws* 888c-890b), but 'chance', as it appears in the *Timaeus*, could also be viewed as exactly the opposite of reason, insofar as reason is connected with purpose or design, which is the operation of reason. This causal motion, which is random insofar as it is devoid of intelligence and thus devoid of purpose or plan, is therefore the basic material from which the creator observes the causal structure and then orders it with intelligence according to its predictable interactions.

Morrow (1950:433) argues that necessity is represented by causal sequences, whereas chance is the intersection and conjunction of these causal sequences, whether relevant to a purpose or not, because they are unplanned. Thus, when intelligence enters the equation, according to Morrow (1950:434), certain sequences, which are not necessarily connected, occur together and occur habitually, therefore ruling out their occurrence as chance, producing effects that could not have been predetermined by their chance interaction, but only from their continual collective occurrence. This means that the repeated occurrence follows a pattern, and that this pattern is the result of reason or intelligence persuading necessity to conform to it. The reason for the specific pattern which necessity follows is directly related to the good of the effect produced, according to Morrow (1950:434), for it is the good that "binds things together", as Plato states in the *Phaedo* (99d). The purpose is therefore good, and so the effect of applying this purpose to necessity makes the outcome good as well.

It is not only the purpose that is good, however, as Plato also indicates in the *Timaeus* that the good is realised by persuasion. Morrow (1950:436) argues that this is a good distinct from the outcome of persuasion, since persuasion is a process that encourages cooperation between indifferent forces, and by this process of persuasion the creator makes the forces or elements into a unity that has "acquired concord" (*Timaeus* 32c, 88e), producing not only the foundation for higher ends, but an intrinsic good, "the kind of good that is essential to any community".

The cooperation of materials as a means to the good, and an end in itself, can be seen in the *Timaeus* as a cooperation of the cosmic materials, but Morrow (1950:437) argues that the analogy extends to the proposed trilogy, the *Critias* and *Hermocrates*,

and is carried out in the *Laws*. Morrow (1950:437) believes that, if it is kept in mind that the two later sections of the intended trilogy were to deal with human history and politics, the problem confronting the statesman is essentially one of bringing about concord and cooperation among his "human materials", at which he will succeed, according to Plato (*Laws* 708d-712b), if he uses "persuasion" to guide the state, be it in the form of legislation or moral prerequisites.

The divine craftsman therefore sets the example and provides the setting for the activity of the intelligent statesman, by bringing into being a cosmos built upon the friendly cooperation of its varied parts (Morrow 1950:437). It is not insignificant, I believe, that the dialogues of the proposed *Timaeus-Critias-Hermocrates* trilogy have a pervading theme of intelligence that persuades necessity, and was abandoned halfway into the *Critias* only to be taken up again in the *Laws*. It is more than probable that the theme of the creation of the ideal cosmos that led to the theme of the creation of the ideal state was discussed in the *Timaeus* and the *Laws* respectively, as many coinciding details bear out.

The completion of the *Critias* in the *Laws* is not necessarily an indication of chronological order, however, although both the *Timaeus* and the *Laws* belong to the latter years of Plato's life. There is a very strong suggestion that continuity of thought is traceable, however, with the activity of intelligence as the theme of both the *Timaeus* and the *Laws*. In the *Timaeus* it has a theoretical application (contemplation of the Forms and deductions about the well-ordered and harmonious cosmos) and in the *Laws* it has a practical application (contemplation of justice leading to just laws and a well-run and harmonious state). The role of Plato's philosopher-statesman is well-known, and it is not difficult to conceive of how he is to bring harmony and order to the state, but his cosmic counterpart in the *Timaeus*, the Demiurge, is a far more obscure figure, and although the Demiurge may be compared to the philosopher-ruler, the analogy is limited, and certain assumptions must be made about both the Demiurge and the cosmos.

3. Creation as modelled on the Creature (Forms)

The *Timaeus* (29a-31b) states that since the Demiurge is entirely good and desired all things to be like himself, he set about creating order in the chaotic universe. The Demiurge created the cosmos from a model, which ties in well with his status as craftsman. This model had to consist of the ideal of which all living beings "individually and generically are parts, and which comprises in itself all intelligible beings, just as this world contains ourselves and all visible creatures", and as such, the model was the highest and most completely perfect of intelligible things itself, and therefore the Demiurge created its copy as "a single living being containing all living beings of the same natural order" (*Timaeus* 30b). The creation of only one world also conforms with the fact that the model is singular because it is unique, or "one" and "whole", and therefore the copy must also be singular (*Timaeus* 30c, 55d, 92c).

There is a constant correlation between the intelligible world of Forms and the phenomenal world, although the latter is an imperfect copy and only imitates the intelligible world as closely as its material allows. McCabe (1994:163) argues that, because of the imitation of the model by the Demiurge, the cosmos can be explained teleologically, and, furthermore, that in order to understand the visible cosmos (or copy), the intelligible universe (or original model) must be kept in mind. Another factor to be considered is that the Demiurge, desiring the good, creates the world in imitation of the model, and is therefore an analogy for any purposive activity in the sense that the model or ideal must be imitated if the good is to be attained. The correlation between the world of Forms and the corporeal world extends to a correlation of the microcosm and the macrocosm, and an interrelation between the parts of the whole.

What Timaeus means by describing the universe as "whole", as well as its related description of being "one", needs clarification, however. McCabe (1994:165) argues that Aristotle (*Politics* III.2) saw the "one" and "whole" as "syncategorematic expressions, incomplete without some qualifier", but it becomes apparent that their meaning entails a lot more than that, which becomes clear if the passage is analysed in its entirety. McCabe (1994:164) interprets this qualifying aspect of the terms "one" and "whole" as a problem that is to be understood not contextually, but internally.

The term "whole" refers to the universe as a whole because it entails everything, and excludes nothing, which means that it not only includes all possible forms or "visible copies" of every intelligible thing that exists, but also that it does not leave any visible copy of an intelligible thing out of its "whole". It is therefore exhaustive and all-inclusive, according to McCabe (1994:164-165), and the use of the term is absolute, for it also implies an internal coherence in the complex whole, and its internal parts are well ordered to form a coherent whole.

The wholeness of the cosmos (and the model) in turn implies that it is "one", because if it is to be whole, and leaves no aspect unaccounted for and every aspect within it is well ordered, it must therefore also be one and not many, as many would need a bigger whole to account for the multiplicity of their existence as many worlds. Like "whole", the expression of it being "one" is absolute and complete. This analysis of the entire universe and its model could also apply equally to the constituent parts and to individuals, and therefore it is also a general statement. It is perhaps possible that what is expressed as one and whole could be better described as having singularity and unity. It is also possible to describe the unity and singularity of the universe in terms of both external context and internal constitution. By comparison, Timaeus's description of the material world also has the same two aspects that lend credence to the interpretation of context and content.

Timaeus's discussion (*Timaeus* 31b) deals with the visible cosmos, and therefore with its material constitution, for, as McCabe (1994:165) points out, since it is visible, it must be fiery, since it is tangible it must be earthy, since it is three-dimensional, it must have geometrical proportion, since it is geometrically proportioned it needs two "middle terms" to act as bonds, and thus it has air and water. The creator constructed the world in this way to ensure that it is a complete living being, a whole of complete parts, and further, that it should be single, and there should be nothing left over out of which another such whole could come into being (*Timaeus* 31b-33a). Again the argument about internal constitution and external context is applicable.

Firstly, the cosmos is a unity "from within" by virtue of the internal order of its parts, an account of it being an individual, which is markedly Eleatic, according to McCabe (1994:166), who specifically refers to the description of the spherical shape as ideal

68

(*Timaeus* 33b) and the fact that the universe is single-generated (*Timaeus* 92c) as concepts which correlate to the Eleatic *sphairoeides* and *mounogenes* respectively. Parmenides argued that his "one" is one and the same as itself because of its internal consistency and coherence (DK28B8.22-30, 42-49), and he infers from that premise that it is the only "individual" there is. Elsewhere Parmenides also provides Plato with a discussion of the questions of how many things there are and how each counts as one (*cf. Parmenides* 137ff, *Sophist* 244ff). If we understand 'being one' in this way, we treat individuation absolutely (McCabe 1994:166).

Secondly, the cosmos is a unity of something from without by virtue of its exhaustion of all the materials from which universes are made, for exhausting the "without", or the possibility of anything that could be external ensures unity ensured (McCabe 1994:166). Therefore context is important to individuation, and McCabe (1994:166-167) argues that individuation is relative because of this context, and interprets Timaeus's argument that the cosmos is one because it exhausts all there is around it, in spirit at least, as an argument for "context-relative individuation".

McCabe (1994:167) substantiates this by saying Timaeus suggests "not that we can count the universe by sorting universes, but that we can count it by looking at the context in which it exists and by considering its possible differences from everything else". Because the context is exhausted, according to McCabe (1994:167), there is no possibility but to have one universe only, and the two perspectives on individuation, one internal and absolute, the other external and context-relative, are complementary.

If the assumption of a context is explored further, one must necessarily arrive at the factor of the interrelatedness in the cosmos, and specifically between its "parts", again returning to the relation between microcosm and macrocosm. The interrelatedness of the parts of the physical world is also connected with the bond that ties together these parts and pervades the world, namely the substance of soul. Once again, this aspect of creation can be related to the unity and singularity of the internal constitution and external exhaustion of the cosmos.

The section in the *Timaeus* that deals with the creation of the soul (34c-37c) describes the Demiurge creating soul out of a mixture of intermediate Existence, Sameness and

Difference, which is then divided and cut into strips which infuse and permeate the cosmos in strands of World-Soul. This explains the teleology and unity of the world, according to McCabe (1994:168), as well as the cognitive capacities of the universe, because the World-Soul can identify Sameness, Difference, Existence, and the interrelatedness of all of these. The earlier argument of the universe being one and whole is now offered in equivalent form regarding its self-identity – namely, that it is one and the same because it has the appropriate layers of the right sort of Sameness, Difference, and Existence (McCabe 1994:168).

The Platonic concepts of Sameness and Difference probably originated with the Greek idea that reasoning consisted essentially of discriminating between sameness (affirmation) and difference (negation) (Lee 1977:47), and the Platonic concepts therefore imply a context-relative meaning. Because identity is also fundamentally context-relative, as has been argued by McCabe (1994:167), it is easy to assume that individuation relies on the differences and similarities that aid in the identification of individuals, but McCabe (1994:169) also points out that Timaeus approaches Sameness and Difference otherwise, and treats Sameness, Difference, and Existence as "extended quasi-material ingredients" and absolutes (the latter in the sense of his absolute treatment of the terms "whole" and "one").

The intermediate Sameness and Difference that are parts of the cosmic *psyche* are therefore not relative (the same as one thing, different from another) but absolute, just Sameness, Difference "simpliciter" (McCabe 1994:169). Once again the account of the identity of the World-Soul can be seen as having general application to accounting for any identity within the world (or World-Soul). The emphasis that Timaeus places on the analogy between the things in the world and the world itself recurs many times (*Timaeus* 30c, 32d, 33a, 34b, 55d). Individuation, therefore, operates on the level of both macrocosm and microcosm.

In dealing with the creation of soul and the problem of individuation, Timaeus now limits the previous qualification of the context-relative individuation of the physical world to the absolute individuation of the World-Soul. The reason for this becomes apparent as soon as one remembers that the soul's constituents of being Same and Different enable the cognitive capacities to operate in terms of identification of

70

sameness and difference in specific instances. Individuation was previously satisfied by a context-relative identification, but if everything is context-relative, one succumbs to the ultimate relativism of the Sophists, and only through absolute individuation can there be any standard or final measure from which context-relativity can operate.

Thus, there must be a standard that is not context-specific or dependent on anything. It follows that the material cannot fulfil these criteria, and material needs to be ordered by intelligence into an association with the standard (Forms) in order for material to be in any way good, or individual. This individuality remains derivative, however. The elements, therefore, as candidates for the basic principles of the universe, despite their central role in some earlier cosmologies as well as in Plato's cosmology, are not the ultimately basic principles that the pre-Socratic philosophers assumed they were. Instead, they are described as constantly changing into one another, and because of this flux they are not only impermanent but they cannot be described in speech, nor can they be the principles of order in the universe.

In the identification of an element (for instance, fire), McCabe (1994:178) argues that the first impulse is to identify it as fire, but when it changes into air it can neither be said that it *is* fire (for it has ceased to be fire and become air) nor can it be said that it *is* air (for it has only just become air) (*cf.* the discussion of the "process of cyclic transformation" of the elements in *Timaeus* 49c-d). The transitory nature of the elements does not enable them to suffice as principles, and the search for what is basic (the underlying principle) is therefore still unresolved. This search, as McCabe (1994:178) describes it, is for "what came first in time (what underlies cosmogony), and also for what comes first in constitution (what underlies what is here and now)".

Put differently, this can be described as the search for what is "one" (and thus first) and "whole", or has unity (and is thus fundamental to the phenomenal). According to McCabe (1994:178), Heraclitus (*Theaetetus* 183a-b) faced similar difficulties with the instability of the elements and their failure to supply an adequate solution to the problem that for the world to be arranged properly, it needs to be based on fixed elements, and likewise, if speech is possible, there must be a proper subject to speak about. The elements also defy reason because they are neither Same nor Different, and have no Existence or Being, for they are constantly becoming.

71

4. The Receptacle

This problem is solved by Timaeus with the introduction of the receptacle (*Timaeus* 48d-51b), the "nurse of becoming" (*Timaeus* 52c), which serves as the underlying principle by which these problems may be solved. This substrate, also described as space, underlies all change, but does not change itself. It is the basis in which non-basic qualities such as fire can inhere. The receptacle of becoming performs several functions, such as allowing something to persist through change and providing the space in which change can occur, as well as being a referent for sensible speech by providing the "this", without which sentences cannot be constructed, or the constant, from which the perpetual change can be described.

In the receptacle, McCabe (1994:180) notes, the imitations of the intelligible Forms come to be, change and perish, while the substrate remains changeless throughout because it itself has no qualities or properties save indeterminacy. This lack of properties is likened to the odourless liquid which forms the base of perfume, or to gold that can be moulded into shapes, for the receptacle provides the *tabula rasa* for change and difference, while it remains constant itself (*Timaeus* 50d-51b). McCabe (1994:180-182) describes the receptacle as "itself remaining just 'this' and nothing else", thus by elimination, the receptacle is self-identical and non-identical with anything else, it is individual – just itself and no more.

The individuation of the receptacle is also absolute, therefore, but in being characteristically characterless, it is difficult to describe. Its existence is really only conceivable (and therefore attested to) by the need for something which underlies the changing elements and what they form, without being subject to this flux itself. By satisfying these criteria, it must itself display criteria such as indeterminateness and unqualified existence of absolute individualism. Although the criteria are logically deductible, there can be no description because of these selfsame criteria.

Yet, like soul, albeit for a different function, the receptacle has to have absolute individuation. Because of the relation between the parts of the phenomenal world, for which the bond is the World-Soul, there also has to be a spatial bond, which is fulfilled by the receptacle. Both the World-Soul and the receptacle are described as

72

individuals and entities in themselves, and both perform a function in the visible universe according to the wishes of the Demiurge and the plan of the intelligible universe.

According to McCabe (1994:184), it could be argued against this that, although myth is readily profligate with its entities, science and philosophy are "parsimonious", which results in the philosopher, in reading a myth, perhaps being inclined to be skeptical about its claims and rethinking the assumptions it makes, as well as the ontology it proposes. The *Timaeus*, however, which is described as a myth, was not written as a manifesto, or the dialogue form would not have been chosen, no matter how like a manifesto the section by Timaeus is, nor would the various references have been made to the provisional character of the discourse. It was written in order to prompt speculation, even skepticism, and especially rethinking.

The Receptacle has also been associated with the concept of chaos in the Septuagint version of Genesis, a result of possible Platonic influence on ancient authors such as Philo Judaeus and Clemens of Alexandria, as well as modern scholars, such as Gerleman, Hengel, Sandelin and Deist, who accentuate the influence of Greek philosophy (and especially cosmology) on these texts (Cook 1998:180). Against this argument of the influence of Greek philosophy at the cost of the recognition of the unique ideological aspects of the Septuagint, Cook (1998:177-189) argues that the Greek influence has been overestimated.

Zoroaster

Zoroaster inherited some beliefs about cosmology from his predecessors, and also seems to have partially incorporated them, much as in the case of Plato. Yet in the case of both, there was a radical shift from the previous tradition in that there is a hitherto unique combination of factors: there is a supreme creator, the creator creates the universe for a good purpose, and this is done through intelligence. Both describe how this is discovered, and this discovery of the order of the universe in turn pertains to the discovery of order within the human sphere. I shall therefore discuss Zoroaster's thoughts on the process of creation and the creator, as well as the problem

73

of evil in creation, and lastly discuss how the presence of a creator influenced both Plato's and Zoroaster's philosophies.

1. Creation

Zoroaster seems to have held to the ancient belief in the sevenfold creation that he inherited from the pagan Iranian mythological tradition. Yet Zoroaster made some fundamental alterations as well. Collinson (1994:6) summarises the ancient tradition of the sevenfold creation as a cosmology in which there was first the enclosing shell of the sky, made of stone, with the world created within it, then water added to the shell, followed by the earth flat upon it, the creation of a plant, an animal and a man in the centre of the earth. The pagan tradition also states that there was a primordial sacrifice of the animal and human creation by the gods, thereby causing their multiplication and beginning the cycle of life and death (Collinson 1994:6).

Zoroaster diverged from this tradition in that he postulated one God, and also from the divine sacrifice of the primordial bull and man, in that he postulated the one God as the sole creator, though the later Zoroastrian tradition revived the concept of the primordial sacrifice, believing it to be an evil act committed by Ahriman, which is then turned to good by the benevolent Ahura Mazda, who creates earthly life from death. This later Zoroastrian concept is not readily apparent in the *Gathas*, although it is stated that the *daevas* and Ako Manah (Evil Mind) have defrauded mankind of the good life and of Immortality (*Yasna* 32.3-5).

The *Gathas* describe this loss of the good life and immortality as the result of false and distorted doctrines, spread by false teachers, that rob the devout of the desire for the possession of Good Mind, a situation which will be rectified at the final Ordeal of Fire, when only the true doctrine (i.e. of Ahura Mazda) will remain (*Yasna* 32.6-9). Yet nowhere do the *Gathas* mention the primordial sacrifice, though they claim that the universe will return to an unmoving primordial state at the end of time. It is stated, however, that life and non-life were created when the Twin Spirits (Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu) first met (*Yasna* 30.4), and it is implied that evil entered the world as a corrupting force against the good. The possibility of the origin of the concept that Angra Mainyu is responsible for the sacrifice of the first life (and the

74

implied sacrifice of immortality) will be discussed later in this chapter, along with the problems of the origin of evil in the universe.

Another important aspect of the creation account of the *Gathas* is in the fact that the creation, which is made by one God only, for the furtherance of the Good, is executed through intelligence. God is the artisan who does not simply fashion existence, but does so through the workings of the mind, with wisdom and purpose. As Duchesne-Guillemin (1979:17) points out, Zoroaster purged his cosmology of the sacrifice of the primordial ox, just as he had proscribed blood sacrifices, and therefore expounded that the world was created by God "who was conceived not merely as an artisan but as acting directly through the mind". But before the creator is discovered, however, the creation will be discussed.

It is said in *Yasna* 44.7 that creation is a free act of the divine goodness of Ahura Mazda. He has created the universe through his wisdom and rules it through wisdom. In the beginning, when he lived in his supreme self-sufficiency, he conceived the thought to clothe the heavenly realm with light (*Yasna* 31.7). He created light, and darkness was there, for darkness shadows light (*Yasna* 44.5). He upholds the earth and the firmament from falling (*Yasna* 44.4). He made the moon wax and wane, and determined the path of the sun and stars (*Yasna* 44.3). He yoked swiftness to the winds and clouds (*Yasna* 44.4). He made morning, noon, and night (*Yasna* 44.5). It is important to note that in *Yasna* 44.5, the shadow (which is identified with evil) enters as soon as light is created. This could indicate that the advent of evil coincides with the advent of creation, although creation is not evil per se.

He created kine, waters and plants (*Yasna* 44.4; 48.6; 51.7). The joy-giving cattle and this universe (i.e. earth and its inhabitants, for cattle stand for all animals) are his creations (*Yasna* 44.6; 50.11). He created human beings and their spirits, breathed life into their bodies and endowed them with the freedom of will (*Yasna* 31.11; 46.6). He inspired love between father and son (*Yasna* 44.7). He made sleep and wakefulness (*Yasna* 44.5). He is the beneficent dispenser of blessings on mankind (*Yasna* 28.5; 33.11; 48.3). Weal and woe are ordained by him (*Yasna* 45.9). He is the father and creator of Vohu Manah (*Yasna* 31.8; 44.4; 45.4), of Asha (*Yasna* 31.7-8; 44.3; 47.2), of Khshathra (*Yasna* 44.7), of Armaiti (*Yasna* 31.9; 44.7; 45.4), of

75

Haurvatat and Ameretat (*Yasna* 51.7), and of Geush Tashan (the Architect of Creation) (*Yasna* 29.1-11; 31.9; 46.9; 47.3).

The *Gathas* also indicate that at the end of time, when evil is finally defeated, the evolution of creation will have reached its culmination and the cycle of change will be ended and perfection attained (*Yasna* 43.5; 51.6). The process of creation will then come to the Final Consummation ordained by Ahura Mazda at the beginning of creation and stop its progress, having reached the desired ultimate perfection (Panthaki 1999:2). This end of creation is linked to the Zoroastrian belief in the progress of sacred time, and in the eventual end of time. The belief among Zoroastrians today, according to Shapero (1995a:1), is that the collective good acts of humanity will gradually transform the evil-ridden, and therefore imperfect, material world into its heavenly ideal, a process known as the *frasho-kereti* (making-fresh or renewal). Shapero (1995a:2) also notes that this process of perfection is interpreted by Zoroastrians as implying that every individual will be purified along with creation, even the souls in hell, and that hell is therefore not eternal.

This Final Consummation of creation is the last in three stages of the Zoroastrian cosmogony, as Gnoli (1987:584) notes, the first two being the creation of the world and the revelation of Mazda's "good religion". Gnoli (1987:584) further argues that, like most ancient texts, the cosmogonic doctrine is not systematically worked out in the *Gathas*, although all three stages are mentioned, and it is only later, in the *Pahlavi* texts, that these three stages, respectively the *Bundahishn* (creation), *Gumezishn* (the mingling of the two opposing spirits in the corporeal realm that is situated between them), and *Wizarishn* (their final separation) are fully adumbrated.

Gnoli (1987:584) also notes that everything that exists does so in a "double state", the physical or material (Avestan *geithya*, Pahlavi *getig*) and the mental or spiritual (Avestan *mainyava*, Pahlavi *menog*), and that the spiritual state possesses an "embryonic, seminal value" in relation to the material one, which reflects it. Evil, however, only has a spiritual or mental existence, and according to the Pahlavi literature, evil is "incapable of transforming its creation from the spiritual to the physical state because it is innately sterile and destructive" (Gnoli 1987:584). Unlike most dualistic concepts of the material and the spiritual, Zoroastrianism does not

76

regard the material existence as evil itself, but rather as being, according to later literature, in a state of "mixture", contaminated by destructive evil (Gnoli 1987:584). The *Gathas* also speak of this negative quality of evil, which opposes the creation of life by the good force with a negation of life, or non-life (*Yasna* 30.4) (Gnoli 1987:584).

2. The Creator

The first consideration in the problem of identifying the nature of Zoroaster's creator is in establishing what Ahura Mazda was before he became the supreme God in the *Gathas*, or whether antecedents can be found for Zoroaster's deity. There is much uncertainty regarding this problem, and even regarding the name "Ahura Mazda", which generally is translated as "Lord Wisdom", but still seems to be a concept of which the antiquity and the meaning cannot be readily ascertained. Boyce (1975:38-40) discusses the possible meanings of the word "*mazda*" and the various interpretations that scholars have given, which I shall briefly mention below.

Boyce (1975:38) states that the word *mazda* has been a problematic term for grammarians because the inflection is irregular, though they unite in regarding it as an adjective meaning "wise". Jackson, as early as the late nineteenth century, had interpreted the term *mazda* as a substantive, corresponding to the Vedic feminine noun *medha-* ("mental vigour, perceptive power, wisdom"), and therefore translated Ahura Mazda's name as "Lord Wisdom" (Boyce 1975:38). Many other scholars, Boyce (1975:38) notes, adopted this interpretation, including Benveniste, who argued that the concept must be an ancient one originating with the *asuras* of Vedic literature, a view which was seconded by Konow (1937:217-222).

Konow (1937:218) proposed the terms "insight", "wisdom" and "prudence" as adequate English translations of the Vedic *medha-*, terms apparently abstract but for the fact that an independent existence was often attributed to such terms (Boyce 1975:38-39), much like Plato's Forms were abstract concepts that had their own existence. Boyce (1975:39) notes that Konow and Jackson both concluded that "Mazda" was the name of the Iranian supreme deity, from the ancient Aryan term denoting the mental, "a highly valued and important factor in life". There was,

77

however, no deification of the concept in Vedic which led to Konow's assumption (unlike Benveniste) that Zoroaster's own "inspiration" led to the deification of the principle *mazda* as the highest principle, Lord Wisdom, an argument supported by Zoroaster's similar treatment of the "abstract" Amesha Spentas (Boyce 1975:39).

Boyce (1975:39) notes that Konow's interpretation was rejected by Humbach and Kuiper, who argued that Ahura Mazda was an ancient god and was worshipped before Zoroaster's reformation, whereas Thieme and Benveniste were in agreement with Konow's interpretation and connected Ahura Mazda with the nameless but supreme Asura of the *Rigveda*. Thieme further suggested that in naming the unnamed Asura of the *Rigveda* Ahura Mazda, the irregularities in grammar may have arisen from attempts to distinguish the inflection of the proper name belonging to a masculine god from the feminine abstract noun (Boyce 1975:39).

Support for this argument may be found in the fact that the abstract noun *mazda* (meaning "memory" or "recollection"), occurs once in the *Avesta*, in the *Yasna Haptanhaiti*, where it is in immediate juxtaposition to Ahura Mazda's own name, just as *mithra* is juxtaposed to Mithra's name in his *Yasht* (hymn) (*Yasht* 10.3) (Boyce 1975:39). Boyce (1975:40) also mentions that the associated verb *mazda-* ("fix in one's thoughts, remember"), which has a number of archaic elements, occurs in the *Gathas* (*Yasna* 45.1) and in the *Hom Yasht* (*Yasna* 9.31), and the Gathic noun *mazdatha-* ("a memorable thing") also occurs once in the *Gathas* (*Yasna* 30.1). Boyce (1975:40) argues that the verb and nouns mentioned might all have vanished from common use because of Zoroaster's reform and a possibly greater sanctity being attached to Ahura Mazda's name.

Whatever the preceding meaning of the term, however, Ahura Mazda as the supreme deity and creator (specifically of order) in the *Gathas* appears to have a striking resemblance to the Jewish deity Jehovah. Geiger (1977:34-35) notes that there is a correspondence between the religious ideas in Yasna 44.3-5, 7 and Psalm 104, namely the conformity to law in nature, such as the course of the stars, the waxing and the waning of the moon, and the succession of the day-time during which man's activity is fixed, which is unique to both the *Gathas* and the *Psalms*, and in both cases the supreme deity is the creator of the Order of the world. As such Mazda is freely and

frequently mentioned in the *Gathas*: he is "the essential Creator of the Order of the World" in *Yasna* 31.8, an appellation that must be emphasised if Ahura Mazda's relation to the Amesha Spentas is to be understood (Geiger 1977:35).

Geiger (1977:35) further argues that if Ahura Mazda is the Creator of the world, he too deserves all those attributes that are ascribed to Jehovah in the Old Testament. Geiger lists some epithets to illustrate the point:

> "Ahura Mazda is the *Holy* and *All-just*; he hates the evil or wicked, and punishes them in this world and the next according to their due; but he takes the pious under his protection, and bestows eternal life upon them. He is the *Immutable*, who is 'also now the same' (*Yasna* 31.7) as he has been from eternity; he is the *Almighty*, who does what he wills (*Yasna* 43.1); he is the *All-knowing*, who looks down upon man from heaven, and watches all their projects and designs which are open or secret (*Yasna* 31.13). Furthermore, Ahura Mazda is a *Spirit*; he is a Being, who cannot be invested with human traits of character; he is the *Spenishta Mainyu*, "Most Bountiful Spirit" (*Yasna* 43.2), the Absolute Goodness or Bounty. In fact, anthropomorphic ideas or representations are very rare in the *Gathas*. Where such ideas occur, they are to be interpreted as the simple result of poetical usage or licence. To Zoroaster Ahura Mazda was doubtless as much a spiritual, supersensible, incomprehensible and indescribable Being as Jehovah was to the poets of the Psalms" (Geiger 1977:35-36).

Although it is apparent that Ahura Mazda and Jehovah share many characteristics, it seems the latter's inconceivability (presumably resulting in the aniconic tradition) does not seem to be an absolute characteristic of the Gathic creator. Ahura Mazda, although he seems only sensible in the sense of the sum of his characteristics (the Amesha Spentas), is also the Lord of Wisdom, and operates through this wisdom, making him comprehensible through wisdom, a concept which is partly the philosophical principle of a mind being able to fathom universal reason which is its like. This is also found in Plato's doctrine, though he too denies that ultimate understanding of the creator is possible.

Zoroaster himself states, however, that Ahura Mazda is grasped through Vohu Manah (Good Mind) (*Yasna* 28.2; 31.8), and God's might and majesty shall reach man and grow within him through the same Vohu Manah (*Yasna* 31.5; 32.1). God's virtue can be attained by emulation of the virtues embodied in the Amesha Spentas (*Yasna* 30.9),

and this will lead to the attainment of the Kingdom of the Good Mind along the straight paths of Asha (Cosmic Law and Order or Truth), where the most wise and living God himself is found (*Yasna* 33.5).

It seems, however, that God as the creator and supreme artificer is not immanent in the universe but transcendent to creation (Afnan 1960:121), as immanence was perhaps a concept too closely linked to the immanence of divinity found in the nature-worship that Zoroaster sought to counteract. If the Creator and the created are considered to be separate, as Afnan (1960:121) argues, it gives rise to the problem of the contact between such a transcendent God and humanity, which must understand his purpose and reach his ideals. Dhalla (1938:158) believes that there is a "quasi-independent spirit intermediary between the godhead and the universe", e.g. between Ahura Mazda and the creation, namely Spenta Mainyu, and that this in turn has influenced Greek thinking on an intermediate principle.

Dhalla (1938:158) argues that this principle of intermediate existence can be observed in Anaxagoras's *nous* and Plato's World-Soul (*Timaeus* 36d), as well as in the Hellenising of some Old Testament doctrines, such as Philo Judaeus's *Logos* (*De Somniis* I 182, 228-239), the first-born son of God who acts as vice-regent, and in whose image all men are created. According to Dhalla (1938:158), *Logos* is most like Spenta Mainyu because he is actively creative, and that neither are personal beings, but are sometimes identified with and at other times separate attributes of God.

The postulate that Spenta Mainyu embodies God's creative activity, if accepted, would partially answer the question of how the process of creation, and perhaps its creator, are to be discovered. God's activity of creation is therefore discovered through his creative aspect. It seems that Spenta Mainyu is indeed the link or intermediary spirit between the Creator and his creation, although the possibility of discovering the Creator himself and his Order in the universe seems to entail not only Spenta Mainyu, but all the Amesha Spentas, and some natural phenomena as well. For God is reflected in all his creation, and only the sum of the good things visible and thinkable can approximate God.

3. Discovering the creator and his creation

Although God is visible in 'parts' through his attributes, the Amesha Spentas, he is primarily conceived of through one of them, Vohu Manah (Good Mind), or its presence in the human mind. This relates to the fact that God is the Lord Wisdom, who created through mind, and is thereby recognisable. It is Vohu Manah (Good Mind) and Asha (Cosmic Order, Truth and Reality) who are mentioned most frequently, and are intimately connected to the discovery of God and his purpose.

Eliade (1976:309) argues that the Ahura Mazda's creation in the *Gathas* of the world by thought (*Yasna* 31.7.11) is equivalent to a *creatio ex nihilo*. Eliade (1976:309) also points out that Zoroaster declares that he "recognised" Ahura Mazda "by thought", "as the first and the last" (*Yasna* 31.8). Stated differently by Kotwal & Boyd (1982:xii), Zoroaster therefore 'saw', or conceived of, the Lord Wisdom through Good Mind (Vohu Manah). This would therefore imply that the basis for existence is thought, whether pertaining to God, creation, or the ability to apprehend either, and to function successfully within such a system.

Although God is transcendent, he is visible through the workings of the mind (his and his creations'). God is therefore, as Carus (1996:464) describes it, that feature in the world which "conditions and produces reason, and reason, in turn, is nothing but a reflection of the world-order", which in the Zoroastrian philosophy is known as Asha. Carus (1996:464) concludes that "the cosmic order of existence, the harmony of its laws, its systematic regularity, makes intelligence possible, and sentient beings will naturally develop into minds". Regarding the order of the universe and the conception of this order as the result of a beneficent creator, as opposed to other views regarding universal order, more will be said later in a discussion on how this concept influences the philosophy (of both Zoroaster and Plato) that takes a creator into account.

The order in the universe is also displayed on a physical level, through the ordered movements of creation itself. Therefore, many of these ordered phenomenal instances are seen as proof of divinity or even as divine powers themselves. Both the sun and the moon are visible spiritual powers (*yazads*) to whom litanies are to be recited, and

81

who are described as shining, like the stars, with a radiant glory, similar to the consecrated fire and are therefore "sparks of the infinite light of Ahura Mazda himself and are replete with divine presence" (Kotwal & Boyd 1982:xiv-xv).

This doctrine is, of course, reminiscent of the planets that Plato describes as visible deities, which he uses as proof of the existence of the divine. They too are aspects of the divine order in the creation, but Plato attributes disorder to matter, whereas Zoroaster attributes the disorder of the universe not to matter (which is considered as inherently good because it was made by the good creator, unlike the existing material which the Demiurge ordered), but to evil in the creation. The doctrine that Zoroaster held on good and evil will be more fully discussed in chapter 5 (Dualism), and a brief discussion of the role of evil in creation will suffice here.

4. Evil in creation

Verryn (1982:162) is of the opinion that later Zoroastrianism has always sought to "safeguard God from the accusation of having created the Evil One", which is achieved by claiming that both Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu are uncreated. Verryn further points out that this has led to certain heretical sects and movements in Zoroastrian history positing the same eternal quality for the future, e.g. that the conflict between good and evil will simply go on forever, since the two Contestants are both eternal. Orthodox Zoroastrianism, however, believes that evil will be vanquished, despite assigning to both Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu existence from eternity and therefore presumably an indestructible mode of being.

The *Gathas*, however, oppose Angra Mainyu not with Ahura Mazda himself, but with Spenta Mainyu, and it is because of the loss of division between Spenta Mainyu and Ahura Mazda in later Zoroastrianism that the coeval and coeternal nature of the good and the evil was postulated, because Ahura Mazda is eternal, and Angra Mainyu (having become his equal and opposite) therefore became regarded as eternal as well. Yet evil was held to have had an origin, that the later Zoroastrian proposition could not explain. The dilemma regarding the origin of evil led to the formation of Zurvanism, which sought to solve this dilemma by postulating an amoral creator for Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu, called Zurvan or 'Time'. More importantly,

however, these equal and opposite forces of good and evil would cast doubt on the Zoroastrian eschatology and the doctrine that evil will be eradicated. In the interpretation of the *Gathas*, however, the basic problem lies in the question of Spenta Mainyu's relation to Ahura Mazda.

In the *Gathas*, Spenta Mainyu seems to be as much an attribute of God as are the other Amesha Spentas, and specifically God's creative aspect, as it is stated that God created all through his Holy Spirit, Spenta Mainyu (*Yasna* 47.3). Spenta Mainyu is also referred to as the son of God (*Yasna* 47.3), although Armaiti (*Yasna* 45.4), Asha (*Yasna* 47.2), Vohu Manah (*Yasna* 31.8, 45.4) are also thus referred to, whereas God is said to have created Khshathra (*Yasna* 44.7), Haurvetat and Ameretat (*Yasna* 51.7). There are also two references in the *Gathas* (*Yasna* 30.9 and 31.4) that mention Ahura Mazda in the plural, indicating that he forms a unity with the sum of his powers or attributes. Importantly, all of the attributes of God are good, and there is little reason to believe that there would be an evil attribute originating from a God who is perpetually described as wholly good himself.

The *Gathas* also contain a passage describing the twin spirits who chose good and evil respectively (*Yasna* 30), and the evil (Angra) spirit (Mainyu) is contrasted to the good (Spenta) spirit (Mainyu), not to Ahura Mazda, although by opposing Ahura Mazda's Good Spirit, the Evil Spirit opposes Ahura Mazda and all that he created, because of the unity mentioned above. It is this passage that has caused some problems of interpretation in the later Zoroastrian tradition, as Spenta Mainyu became synonymous with Ahura Mazda. As Pangborn (1983:16) points out, this would constitute and ethical as well as theological dualism, but as Ahura Mazda is referred to as the good spirit's father (*Yasna* 47.3), it would lead to the idea that Ahura Mazda had created both with the free will to choose good or evil. This belief is reminiscent of the Zurvanite heresy, which postulated the same situation, but replacing the Gathic position of Ahura Mazda with the amoral Zurvan, and demoting Ahura Mazda to the opposite of the evil spirit.

The *Gathas* therefore have a different doctrine to the later Zoroastrian belief in the opposition of Ahura Mazda and Ahriman, in that the opposition is one between Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu, and nowhere is God's authority challenged, other

83

than through an opposition to his creative aspect. The connection of evil with creation, in that it opposes creation because it opposes Spenta Mainyu and as it is also referred to as the Destructive Spirit, will be discussed below. This opposition of Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu, however, still leaves open the question as to where Angra Mainyu comes from if he was not created by nor eternal like God.

One possibility is that this entity is to be seen as a negative rather than an opposing concept. The reference in the *Gathas* to the spirits being 'twins' is mostly interpreted as signifying that they are exactly equal though opposite, and not as an indication that they had the same progenitor. The concept of 'twin' may not signify their opposite and equal status only, however, but also indicates an opposition of functions, namely a creative and a destructive function. This has further implications, such as an opposition of Truth to the Lie, which relates to morality and is necessarily an opposition to Asha (who is Truth). This, however, is in turn connected to the creation in that the epithets of Asha are Truth as Order, or rather Cosmic Order.

Malandra (1983:12) points out that the concept of 'truth' or the 'true' in the Old Iranian religion (Avestan *haithya*, Old Persian *hashya*), directly corresponds to the Old Indian concept *satya* ('true', 'truth'), literally 'that which is related, that which corresponds to the real (*sat*)'. This correspondence has further implications, as Malandra (1983:12) shows: the real '*sat*' ('being', hence 'the real', 'the cosmos') was opposed to the unreal '*asat*', not absolute non-being, but rather non-being in the sense of 'non-ordered being', 'the unreal', 'chaos'. The opposition, therefore, of Truth and the Lie not only has moral implications, but is directly related to the reality of the cosmos against chaos. It is safe to assume that this was the principle of evil, a force that counteracted creation and order. In this sense, Angra Mainyu only became a fixed personification in later Zoroastrianism, and the opposition between the twin spirits in the *Gathas* is one of creation versus chaos, which is the destruction of creation. The destruction will end when creation returns to its primordial state of static being, before non-ordered being brought mortality and change. It is therefore the Lie and Chaos that define Evil. Interestingly, in the sixth book of the *Republic* Plato also mentions the Good as the source of both truth (508d) and reality (509b).

To add to the abstract nature of the opposing forces, the epithets in the *Gathas* (only really attained in the later doctrines by the evil entities) speak of evil not as evil in itself, but as an opposite to the good, devoid of an own existence other than a counter-existence to a good creation. Nothing evil is created, only good creations are marred, but nothing of this is said in the *Gathas*, other than the destruction of cattle, which might refer to the earth as a whole, or to all living things. It therefore seems that evil, which is always described as the opposite of good creation, is somehow dependent on creation for existence, and in being so related, it is not eternal, and can be vanquished.

The twin spirits are called into being "in the beginning" (which is mostly taken to refer to their eternity), but given that Zoroastrianism has a clear doctrine of linear time that begins with creation, it is not inconceivable that the beginning refers to this moment at the beginning of time. If this is the case, the spirits (being entities of creation and destruction) could have arisen as a result of the intention to create, and the resulting resistance in the execution of such a purpose, respectively. The destruction does not appear before the creation, that is for certain, and it most certainly ceases according to the *Gathas*, when the earth is made anew, i.e. without the chaos of flux. When, and how, the twin spirits came to be is uncertain, but the *Gathas* clearly state that Ahura Mazda is "the First and the Last for all eternity" (*Yasna* 31.8). The twin spirits may also serve to illustrate the moral choice facing every individual, and the centrality of the concept of free will in the *Gathas* would seem to support this possibility.

The *Gathas* repeatedly state that the choice in favour of evil and destruction is made by the unenlightened and the misled, by the "wilfully deaf.[and] blind" (*Yasna* 32.15), but, despite the manifestly better choice of the good, Pangborn (1983:114) speculates that it was Zoroaster's perception that society persistently chose evil and destruction. Pangborn (1983:114-116) argues that this destruction which Zoroaster lamented belies features of a "socio-economic revolution" and was directly related to the abuse of the natural order which was life-giving. The care for the order of the life-giving creation (personified as an ox) was in many ways the model of Zoroaster's teachings about order in society, as the importance of the bovine (the mainstay of the settled agrarian economy) in the *Gathas* attests to. Evil (often related to the invading

nomads who pillaged settlements) acts on society as it does on nature, and must be opposed.

The problem of evil, its societal as well as cosmic presence, its origin and function, is a philosophical problem that has never been and possibly can never be solved, however, and many scholars conclude that in order to have a concept of the good, a concept of evil is a necessary opposite qualification. Carus (1996:483) is one such scholar who believes in the connectedness of good and evil, to the point of their interdependence, and he has taken his premise that God and the Devil are relative terms to its logical conclusion by stating that God would cease to be God if there were no Devil. This subject will be discussed more fully in chapter 5 (Dualism). What concerns this chapter, however, is ultimately how a doctrine of creation affects philosophy, especially philosophy that pertains to the reformation of culture.

5. The concept of Creation and its effect on philosophy

Afnan (1960:252) identifies three main outlooks on life: the skeptic, the naturalistic, which is essentially immanential, and the spiritualistic, or rather mytho-philosophical, which is transcendent. Afnan (1960:252) considers the skeptic viewpoint a weak stand from the point of view of culture, for he argues that there can be no system of thought or high cultural values that can afford to disregard ultimate issues such as the nature of God, and the reality and destiny of man, as skeptics do, and the consequences of a skeptical attitude towards such basic principles is detrimental to such elements in society for it does not admit a purpose to life or recognise an absolute source of human values and norms of conduct.

Zoroaster's doctrine is diametrically opposite to a skeptical point of view, since he proposes a highly ethical system that is dependent on an ultimate and objective standard of the Good. Plato likewise proposed such an external and absolute standard, and overtly rejected skeptical views such as those held by the Sophists. Both Zoroaster's and Plato's doctrines postulated a separate and autonomous existence of the values to be emulated, and both proposed that the values were to be discovered through contemplation, but Afnan (1960:252) believes that values generate from, or rather are recognised by, the interaction between the creative purpose that

directs human conduct, on the one hand, and the intervening circumstances that help or hinder its realisation, on the other. This, too, can be seen in both Zoroaster's and Plato's beliefs, as Zoroaster postulated the existence of evil that wishes to undo and oppose the good in creation, and Plato postulated the existence of chaos or evil that reigns if anything does not realise the order that comes from the Good. Most importantly, however, the values which, if deviated from, would cause evil, were abstract ideals or what Afnan (1960:252) calls "higher values" that were perceived by (or perhaps the product of) reasoning, not skepticism.

According to Afnan (1960:252), a skeptical attitude towards "ultimate issues of life and being" cannot advance any goal or purpose that would give the "higher values", such as goodness, justice, truth and beauty, the significance, unity and orientation they require, nor can it advance the certainty of those principles as ruling elements in a 'good' existence. Afnan (1960:252-253) argues that no culture can sustain any system of moral laws, social institutions or aesthetic ideals if the major premises of belief for such systems are "enshrouded in doubt", or if the nature of the reality whose ideals and interests are to be reflected and promoted, is not known.

Doubt in the major premises vitiates all systems of reasoning deduced from them (Afnan 1960:253), and that is why skepticism will not serve to illustrate the problem of the interaction of philosophy with science and religion, as (in a sense) it negates all three. One example of a non-theistic system is that of Marxism, but it has replaced what would have been religious convictions with a very strong system of secular beliefs that dictates its culture's moral, legal and even artistic traditions. Therefore, though negating the premise of a creator, it substitutes the role of creator with the state, and religious ideology with political and economic ideology. Skepticism of all beliefs, however, whether religious or political or economic, will cause chaos within any group.

As skepticism is unable to form the basis for a cultural system of belief and values, Afnan (1960:253) believes that man is therefore forced to choose between the naturalistic, immanent and the spiritualistic, transcendent systems of value, based upon "antithetical conceptions of the nature of God and the reality and destiny of man". The purpose of human existence cannot be known and basic cultural values

cannot be formulated until society subscribes to either the naturalistic belief system, which is based on the premise that ultimate reality is immanent in nature as mind, or identical with it as matter itself, or to the transcendental system of belief, which is based on the premise that there exists a transcendent God who is the Prime Mover and Efficient Cause of all physical and spiritual phenomena (Afnan 1960:253).

Furthermore, Afnan (1960:253) argues that the standpoint of the observer, as naturalistic philosophy assumes, gives ground for uncertainty and skepticism, whereas the standpoint of the creator does not vitiate or impair its system of thought or contaminate it with doubt. Afnan argues that Plato considered both these points of view in the *Republic* and the *Timaeus* respectively. In the *Republic*, while seeking the Idea of the different values such as justice, Plato assumes the role of the observer and Afnan (1960:253) believes that, although Plato does not overtly state this as his intention, he tries to arrive at the universal and eternal via the particulars of experience. In the *Timaeus*, on the other hand, Plato deals with creation and takes up the standpoint of the creator, according to Afnan (1960:253-254), since he identifies God with the universal Idea of the good and as the supreme artificer who conceives the Idea as a pattern and executes it accordingly.

Following Afnan's classifications, one could argue that both Plato and Zoroaster postulated philosophies that operated from the vantage point of the creator, since both transcend empiricism and its accent on the role of the observer and his sense-perception in favour of a mental observation of the creation's purpose and the metaphysical reality that necessarily transcends the physical. Both philosophers only consider nature insofar as it is a representative of the metaphysical value that they sought to contemplate, although Zoroaster's attitude towards the corporeal was less negative than Plato's. Neither could be said to have favoured the observational role if such a role is confined to sense-perception, but they both advocated observation through the mind.

The creativity of the creator, in the *Timaeus* as well as in the *Gathas*, starts with a mentally perceived plan or purpose entirely free from the material. Afnan (1960:254) argues that this purpose, when it has proceeded to the stage of 'will' and is objectified, encounters "outside intervening forces" that obstruct the creative process.

In the case of the *Timaeus*, the creator must understand these forces and the problems they present, as well as conceive of a way in which to harness them to his purpose (Afnan 1960:254). In the case of the *Gathas*, the creator has created something that has become corrupt as well, but instead of harnessing the corruption to his own purposes, the doctrine postulates that creation itself must choose to oppose it. This could possibly imply that the creation itself, as in the *Timaeus*, is the source of the problem. However, the purpose in the *Gathas* is not to escape the imperfection of creation as it is in the *Timaeus*, but to perfect itself with the exercise of free will. This further implies that the corruption of creation was the result of free will, and creation becomes the stage for the perfection of creation, not the punishment of imperfection, which souls must free themselves of.

Afnan (1960:254) argues that creative activity, unlike theoretical understanding that underlies it, does not abstract itself completely from sensual considerations, although it transcends them, and theoretical knowledge, therefore, is still in an elevated position above sense perception, although both are instrumental in creative activity. This can be seen in Plato's as well as Zoroaster's doctrines on the creation, which as a process necessarily comes into contact and even conflicts with chaos (or evil), and which can be subjugated by the same process by which creation was intended and executed itself, namely reason.

Afnan (1960:254-255) points out the possibility that theoretical knowledge is obtained primarily in answer to the questions that creative purpose poses, just as sense perception obtains significance only in the light of queries that abstract speculation, or theoretical thought, presents to it. The interconnected nature of thought and matter is postulated in Zoroastrianism, but Plato's doctrines only conceive of an influence of thought or the Ideas on matter, not vice versa. Plato does, however, believe that a certain lifestyle will improve the individual's morality, such as the Spartan lifestyle he proposed for the Guardians in the *Republic*, a concept he possibly inherited from the Pythagoreans.

Afnan (1960:255) argues that it is the supreme purpose of man to improve his cultural environment and achieve cultural growth, a purpose he believes has stimulated philosophers to produce their systems of thought, and that it is only by keeping this

purpose in mind that one can understand their philosophies. Afnan (1960:255) further believes that it is through creative expression that this purpose is realised, and that man's purpose, which gives meaning to his theoretical knowledge (and through the latter, having been expressed in creative activity, significance to his sensory perception), frees him from skepticism.

The implications of Afnan's argument lead him to conclude that true objects of knowledge are the result of the formal aspects of things, or rather their 'forms', and it logically follows that the Form is better known to him who "originally conceived it, purposed and willed its realisation, and effected its production, or imposition upon matter, to create that individual object", than by someone merely observing, through sense perception, the individual instance from which the universal is inferred (Afnan 1960:255). The conclusion is therefore that divine purpose is a higher truth than what observation can provide, and a belief in the good purpose of the Creator will aid the discovery of the 'form' Good, more than sense perception will aid the observer to infer such good, for this could lead to skepticism, though the creative truth of God and the observed instances of truth in sense perception are not mutually exclusive if both operate on the assumption of purpose and design.

Afnan (1960:255-256) states that "in an age when the intellect of man was militantly against organised religion and its basic precepts", philosophy could not regard anything from the point of view of the creator, for the creator was 'anathema' in philosophical circles. Even the idea of creation was discredited, and all religious phenomena were interpreted according to naturalism which dominated the thinking of the age (Afnan 1960:256). This led to the sole aspect that remained interesting to philosophy, i.e. the Greek emphasis on the observer who discovers the laws of nature empirically, and this exaggeration of the role of the observer influenced interpretations such as Hume's study of the principle of causation, which Afnan believes could not have resulted in anything but the doubt that it cast (Afnan 1960:256).

Afnan (1960:256) believes this skepticism is justified, for he argues that man had not entered "the age of invention and creation, to which that accumulated theoretical knowledge was a mere prelude", and likens the situation to that of the observer of a

chemical compound, to whom the substances, purpose and cause of the composition remain a mystery, whereas the chemist who has produced it, followed a purpose, combined the chemicals according to theoretical knowledge, and expects an outcome which can be confirmed by sense perception, but this empirical verification is the only means of understanding available to the mere observer who is separated from divining the purpose. Afnan (1960:256) also notes that a creative process not only implies a purpose, but a conclusion to that purpose, or a "destiny" that is the certain outcome if the purpose is pursued, the will to pursue it is "mustered", and the intervening forces that determine it are "envisaged and harnessed".

These stages in the "causal entailment" and the principles involved all proceed from the purpose of the creator, according to Afnan (1960:256), and they become essential conditions which the observer has to assume in order to interpret the creative purpose he observes. Smith (1978:xxxvii) notes that Kant concluded that more ultimate principles must be assumed by reason if sense is to be made of observation, for Kant was in agreement with Hume's conclusion that the principle of causation is "neither self-evident nor capable of logical demonstration", and that this is true of all principles fundamental to science and philosophy. Smith (1978:xxxvii) also notes that "Kant further agreed that inductive inference from the data of experience is only possible upon the prior acceptance of rational principles independently established; and that we may not, therefore, look to experience for proof of their validity".

Causation and other principles fundamental to science and philosophy still remain fraught with doubt, for philosophy, according to Afnan (1960:257), still does not study nature and the moral and cultural evolution of man from the standpoint of the creator. Afnan (1960:257) argues that that these principles seem like dogma because of doubt, but knowledge of these principles in fact "exists at first solely in the form of propensity to influences of the kind that they justify". It is by reflecting upon such inferences, Afnan (1960:257) argues, that these principles are made explicit, and it is by the use of logical technique that they are improved, for they are known in the same sense that we generalise in accordance with them.

Although the creator is primary in the system of thought that Afnan discusses, the observer is also an integral part of the process. The observer is necessarily connected

to the role of the mind and the purpose of understanding, which has commonly been identified with a movement away from belief and myth. Yet what is observed by the mind in creation (including the implied creator) is transcendental, and only a portion can be glimpsed through sense-perception. Even if intuition and reason are employed, the only understanding that can be drawn is a verisimilar picture, and this is a return to the sphere of myth (though belief is not necessarily involved). Myth is meant not in the sense of blind acceptance, but of inquiry into the metaphysical (in all senses) and an attempt at its understanding and expiation in order to improve our own knowledge and direct our own actions. This is an aspect of philosophy that is found in both Plato's and Zoroaster's doctrines, in which the creator is transcendental, but mind is the agent with which to interpret creative purpose and with which to react.

CHAPTER 4 – THE SOUL

Plato

1. The discovery of the subject: the *psyche*

Towards the end of the fifth century BCE the concept of the 'soul' had progressed, according to Havelock (1963:197), from being viewed as some sort of natural force, for instance, a fragment of the atmosphere or as a cosmic life force, to being viewed as an autonomous entity and personality. This change of perspective was initially only accessible to the more sophisticated intellectual elite, as there is evidence to show that as late as the last quarter of the fifth century the majority of people did not understand the concept, but that it had filtered down into common consciousness by the end of the fourth century (Havelock 1963:197).

The emergence of this concept is often connected with Socrates (*cf.* Brumbaugh 1964:46, Havelock 1963:197) and the change introduced by him in the meaning of the word *psyche*. Instead of signifying a man's "ghost or wraith, a man's breath or life blood, a thing devoid of sense and self-consciousness", it came to mean "the ghost that thinks", capable of scientific cognition and moral judgement, and therefore morally responsible (Havelock 1963:197). Most importantly, however, the soul was something unique to the person (Havelock 1963:197), perhaps best described once more as a person's essence, though not devoid of individuality and mental capacity as the original use of the term implied.

The idea of a *psyche* as connected to an individual, specifically with a sense of morality, or at least a capacity for guilt, was known before in the sphere of mystery cults, however. These cults offered a system by which only the initiated can save his soul through the proper rituals, but these cult teachings were a secret kept from the uninitiated, and therefore no accurate and public knowledge of their concept of the soul could have existed. Three popularly known notions of the 'Self' did predate Socrates, and his interest in the 'Self', according to Brumbaugh (1964:46-47), led

93

logically from a questioning of the various other interpretations with which he was dissatisfied.

Firstly, Brumbaugh (1964:46) notes that the Homeric heroes possessed a *psyche* which survived the body at death to descend to Hades as a breath or powerless shadow, but Homer does not elaborate on the *psyche* and says nothing of its insubstantial nature, nor of the operation of Fate. The fate of the *psyche* after death could not have been believed to be a pleasant one, or Homer (*Odyssey* Bk.XI.485), would not have mentioned Achilles's lament that he "would rather work the soil as a serf on hire to some landless impoverished peasant than be King of all these lifeless dead". There is, therefore, mention of the afterlife, but reward and punishment are not included, and no standard of morality is set, bar the set forms of behaviour appropriate to the individual's specific social status.

Secondly, Brumbaugh (1964:46-47) mentions that the Ionian scientists believed that the *psyche* was a natural force, although they all had diverse ideas of its substance, such as a dry breath, a cosmic spark or a source of magnetism, and human conduct would therefore be governed by the natural laws they were discovering, and as such would be not only predictable, but also determined. This, once again, relieves the individual of all moral responsibility and reduces the soul to something governed by deterministic fatalism or amoral and inherent nature, leaving little room for speculation about an afterlife other than in the capacity of the natural force it was believed to be. Brumbaugh (1964:36) also notes that, as an elaboration of the scientific substance of the *psyche*, Pythagoras believed that the soul is a harmony, an "accompaniment or overtone of the mechanical operations of the body, as music springs from the vibrating strings of the lyre". Both the Ionian and the Pythagorean descriptions of the *psyche* maintain a link between the soul and the material world, as both believe it to be part of or affected by the physical.

Socrates, on the other hand, saw the soul as the driving force and direct cause of the behaviour of the body, as Brumbaugh (1964:37) notes, rather than a passive reflection of the physical. Brumbaugh summarises the Socratic counterpoint according to Plato as follows:

94

"As against the 'harmony of the body' hypothesis, we must recognise that a soul (1) directs the body; (2) is able to know truths that are unchanging; (3) feels the attraction of "ideals" – it has some "divination" or "vision" of wisdom, courage, and justice as qualities that have intrinsic value; (4) realises, reflecting on this, that its true identity as a human soul lies in the unchanging realm of ideals and ideas; these are the causes, not merely the conditions of a good human life. Seen in this way, the soul is different in kind from any physical process, and its nature must reach beyond the immediate adventures of the body; and insofar as a man's true identity is an unchanging ideal goal, he can claim immortality." (Brumbaugh 1964:38).

Thirdly, Brumbaugh (1964:47) argues that Sophistry, despite its stress on the uniqueness of individual experience, ignored the issue of the destiny of the soul after death, which is not surprising, considering that the Sophists' concern was for the acquisition of material rewards and avoidance of punishment in the here and now, not the hereafter. Socrates's contribution to the evolving concept of the *psyche* was, according to Brumbaugh (1964:47), to show how inadequate the previous viewpoints were in explaining the subjective experience and outer behaviour of human beings. Socrates himself had a theory about the *psyche*, as Brumbaugh (1964:47) notes, and believed that the soul desires the good, and that all actions in a person are motivated by the soul's search for it, although he recognised that not all individuals are always capable of recognising the good and therefore sometimes do wrong involuntarily and out of ignorance (*cf. Sophist* 228c, *Laws* 860d)

Brumbaugh (1964:48) summarises four points in illustration of the theory of and implications of Socrates's theory of 'self':

1) "I have a natural desire to attain something intrinsically good;

2) I evidently have freedom to act on the basis of incomplete or incorrect belief;

3) I am surrounded by appearances that seem good yet are not really so;

4) I am able, if I put my mind to it, to discover at least some of the differences between appearances and reality – both as to what is 'good' objectively and what is 'good' for me."

95

In fact, it is probably more accurate to say that while the discovery was affirmed and exploited by Socrates, the concept was the slow creation of many minds among his predecessors and contemporaries, such as Heraclitus and Democritus.

The doctrine of an autonomous *psyche* is also a counterpart of the rejection of the oral culture, where *psyche* is not autonomous, and the subjective identification with the oral tradition is encouraged, as opposed to the objective and critical analysis encouraged by the speculative tradition responsible for the concept of an autonomous *psyche*. This discovery of the self was of the thinking self, and the 'personality' could no longer be that nexus of motor responses, unconscious reflexes, and passions or emotions which had been mobilised for countless times in the service of the mnemonic process. On the contrary, it was precisely these that were seen to be an obstacle to realisation of a self-consciousness emancipated from the condition of an oral culture. The soul as thinker had further implications, specifically in terms of the discovery of inquiry and reason.

This is attested to by the upsurge in the last quarter of the fifth century of words such as 'thought' and 'thinking' accompanying 'soul' and 'self', and in other syntactical contexts the word *psyche* was used as a verb of cognition, an antithesis to 'body' or 'corpse' (Havelock 1963:198). The change in syntax betrays a change in thinking, signifying the 'thought revolution' from the Homeric to the Platonic state of mind, and this novelty expresses a possibility that the psychic mechanism which exploited memorisation through association was being replaced by a mechanism of reasoned calculation (Havelock 1963:198-201).

The next implication of the discovery of the 'subject' (since it was a thinking subject that would imply something to think about) was the 'object' (the object being that which can be known or thought about by the subject). This led to the abstraction of knowledge and influenced Plato's metaphysics and epistemology.

2. The Nature and Divisions of the Soul

The tripartite division of the soul by Plato, into the upper reason, middle spirit and lower appetite, may well have had Pythagorean antecedents, according to Bevan

96

(1962:174). The soul is also referred to in some passages as a dichotomy, however, and Bevan (1962:174-175) argues that this is not such a stretch of the imagination if one contrasts reason with the other two parts in the trichotomy to form the opposition between the rational and the irrational. Plato himself described the middle spirit as of intermediary status, which could ally itself with the baser appetites but should properly aid the reason (*Timaeus* 70a-c). The division of the soul, whether into two or three parts, leads to the implication that certain forms of behaviour are caused by certain parts of the soul, and raises interesting questions about whether the entire soul is good and therefore immortal, or only parts of it, as Plato postulated in the *Timaeus* (69d-73a). Yet the divisions of the soul seem to indicate that the status of its goodness depends on many factors, which results in some of the "charioteers and horses" being good and others "a mixture of good and bad" (*Phaedrus* 246a).

Although Plato propounds a tripartite division of the soul, Havelock (1963:203) argues that, without falling into a dichotomy, the soul can nonetheless be divided into two main categories: the 'calculative' or 'rational', and the 'appetitive capacities', the third part or intermediary being the spirit or will, which is "potentially the ally of either". Plato intended his psychological doctrine to support his moral doctrine, and this would therefore also translate into the instance of the soul's reason being supported by the soul's will, and together controlling the baser appetites and unifying the *psyche* into a "harmonised and unified condition", within which each faculty performs its proper functions (Havelock 1963:203). This naturally would have applications further afield than the microcosm of the soul, but the spirit does not always properly ally itself to reason, and this raises the question of irrationality in, amongst other things, the soul.

The appetites are, in fact, seen as the fall of the soul, and the two remaining aspects of the soul need to work in unison to be able to attain salvation, failing which, the process of reincarnation simply repeats itself. Stewart (1960:8) states that the concept of the fall and redemption of the soul had antecedents in ancient Greek culture, originating with primitive totemic clans who believed in descent from divine ancestors, and it comes to the fore in historic Greece with the 'disappearances' and 'new births' of Dionysus, part of the Orphic doctrine that was incorporated into philosophy by Empedocles, Pythagoras, and others.

The main questions raised by Guthrie (1971:231) about Plato's views on the nature of the soul are whether Plato considered the soul as simple or composite in essence, and if the latter were the case, whether he believed that the soul was immortal in its entirety or only its highest part. Before these questions can be examined, however, there are some things that Guthrie (1971:230) assumes about Plato and his philosophy which will be discussed below.

Firstly, Guthrie (1971:230), like Dodds (1971:207), believes that it must be taken into account that neither Socrates's nor Plato's philosophy was fully developed and set out before being committed to writing, but was an "organic thing which changed", partly as a result of internal development and partly in response to external stimuli. Secondly, Guthrie (1971:230) argues that Plato believed there are two levels of truth, which Guthrie calls "truths of religion and truths of reason", and which are necessarily explained differently, for Guthrie believes that "there will always be some truths, and those the highest, which cannot be proven didactically but must be conveyed in the form of myth, the details of which can claim only probability, not precise accuracy". As an example of how Plato distinguished between these two truths, Guthrie (1971:231) explains that Plato viewed the immortality of the soul as rationally provable, whereas the destiny of the soul after death "could only be hinted at in a sacred story (*hieros logos*)".

Plato's idea of the soul was also influenced by Socrates, and Guthrie (1971:231) gives a synoptic view of the influence that Socrates exerted. Guthrie (1971:231) argues that Plato learnt from Socrates that the primary purpose of man is to tend to the well-being of his soul, and that this care of the soul is "an art acquired by rigorous self-examination and an understanding of the meaning of ethical terms". This, in turn, is gained by the method of dialogue, or the question and answer formula which both Plato and Socrates employed (Guthrie 1971:231). Plato was also influenced by Socrates's belief that understanding would inevitably reveal itself in right action, that virtue is knowledge and that nobody therefore sins willingly, for both believed that understanding edified the soul, and that the part of the soul that should therefore be cultivated is clearly the mind or understanding (*nous*), and the life extolled is the rational life (Guthrie 1971:231).

Guthrie (1971:230) states that the *Phaedo* "reads like a defence of this Socratic view", but adds that the doctrine in the *Phaedo* "goes far beyond anything Socrates himself is likely to have said". Guthrie (1971:231-232) further notes that Plato emphasised aspects such as the supremacy of the soul, the importance of the intellect and the necessity of cultivating the intellect to enable the soul to escape the fetters of the body, but, most importantly, Plato renders the immortality of the soul dependent on "its singleness of nature", for anything composite cannot be indestructible or immortal (*Phaedo* 78c). This is in apparent contrast to some of his later dialogues, which will be discussed below.

The idea of a composite soul is found repeatedly in the *Republic* (Bk. X) and also in the *Gorgias* (503f). Plato employs an analogy with the crafts, and has Socrates describe the process of manufacturing an artefact as a process of arranging and fitting different parts together according to a structure, forming of a "new whole" which is to be a "regularly ordered product" (Guthrie 1971:232). Just as trainers "regulate" the body and set it "in order", so the health or well-being of the soul depends on order and regulation, which implies, as Guthrie (1971:232) points out, the presence of parts within it.

In the *Republic* (Bk. IV 434d-449a), Plato likens the justice of the state to the justice of the individual, and describes both as having a tripartite division of three natural constituents. In the case of the soul, these are reason, the intermediate spirit and the base appetites, and Plato further believes that reason should be supreme, and supported by or allied with the other two constituents. This correlates with another section in the *Republic* (Bk. X 611b), in which Plato states that it is impossible to believe that the soul is in a state of internal conflict, or variable and unstable in its essential nature, and that one cannot suppose that anything "made up of many ill-assorted parts" can be eternal.

The soul in its entirety, therefore, is made up of constituent parts, and so cannot be immortal, according to Plato's previous postulate in the *Phaedo* (78c). But Plato argues that the soul is, in fact, immortal, although this immortal soul is seen in a deformed state, because of its association with the body and other evils, and is described as "encrusted" with a "strange and earthy shell" (*Republic* 612a). The soul,

in its true nature, is therefore not composite, but a lover of truth or wisdom, akin to the "divine and immortal and eternal" (*Republic* 611c, *Phaedo* 79d). The only reasonable conclusion, Guthrie (1971:232-233) argues, is that the soul, for Plato, is still in essence simple, and only appears composite as the result of its association with the body.

In the *Timaeus*, the idea of the composition of the soul is quite lengthily described (69c-73b), and Plato also discusses related issues, such as the destructibility of a composite creation (*Timaeus* 41a), in detail. This is to be expected from a dialogue that seeks to incorporate all the important metaphysical and eschatological theories. Plato also discusses in the *Timaeus* which part of the soul is immortal, and expresses there essentially the same theory as is found in the *Republic*. The soul is an immortal principle, but when it is incarnated in a mortal body, the mortal form of soul is attached to it (*Timaeus* 69c). The mortal soul is located in the lower regions of the body, whereas the head is the seat of that part which Plato calls divine (*Timaeus* 44d). Plato also says (*Timaeus* 90a) that the immortal part of the soul has been given by god as a guardian spirit, or *daimon*, attaching the individual to heaven by the head.

Guthrie (1971:234) argues that when Plato wrote the *Phaedo*, the "twin currents of intellectualism and puritanism" still influenced him, and he therefore assigned only reason to the soul, holding in contempt passion and emotion, as well as physical appetite, as the work of the body attempting to drag down the soul to its own level. This led to Plato's theory that the base appetites and emotions must be repressed, in order for the rational soul to be properly cultivated in preparation for its disembodied future (Guthrie 1971:234). Plato later developed the doctrine of the immortal soul more fully, and in the *Republic* the conflict advances to within the soul itself, a concept which is also discussed in the *Sophist* (228b). This, Guthrie (1971:234) argues, leads to a change of emphasis in practice as well as in theory, as the passions and appetites are acknowledged to have an influence on existence, and the attention is therefore directed to their regulation rather than to their complete suppression.

Reason, as the immortal part of the soul, is still afflicted by the body, however, since the baser parts of the soul, as they are described in Plato's later doctrine, are still connected with the body (*cf. Republic* Bk. X; *Timaeus* 41c-45a, 69c-73a). In the

Timaeus (86a-90c), Plato also discusses how diseases of the body can affect the soul, as well as how the soul and body should be in harmony, although he still identifies the immortal soul solely with reason. Guthrie (1971:234) suggests that reason as a term is too "cold" to convey the full import of a philosophy based on *Eros*, as Plato's is, and considers it better to describe this immortality as the result of that part of the soul which strives constantly after wisdom and knowledge (and the necessary accompanying ethical goodness) and which can, in so doing, belong to the eternal world.

The identification of reason as the only immortal part of the soul seems plausible, and Guthrie (1971:234) adds that it is difficult to think of a disembodied soul retaining its appetites, as these are linked with bodily organs and serve the purpose of the body alone. The theory that the highest part of the soul is the only immortal part, instead of all three levels being immortal, also correlates more closely with Plato's other theories, specifically that reason, and reason alone, is the way to attain immortality, and that reason is the only definite link between the individual and the eternal world of Forms, while other elements such as the sensory world are merely auxiliary to reasoned contemplation.

Just as the soul is connected with reason, so both are related to the afterlife and to reincarnation, because of Plato's theory that knowledge is recollection, as propounded in the *Meno*, the *Phaedo*, the *Republic* and the *Timaeus*. The *Phaedrus*, however, offers a different condition for the immortality of the soul, according to Guthrie (1971:235), namely its self-motion, a unique attribute of the soul, as Plato believed the soul to be the ultimate cause of motion (Lee 1977:46-47). Unlike his views in the other dialogues, Plato implies in the *Phaedrus* that the composite nature of the soul does not preclude its immortality, and that the baser parts of the soul accompany the higher part (reason) in the afterlife, for the myth of the charioteer depicts the soul as composite, yet discarnate.

The myth of the charioteer in the *Phaedrus* speaks of the soul as a chariot that is drawn by two winged horses (*Phaedrus* 246a), the charioteer representing reason, the noble horse representing the passionate or emotional attributes, and the base horse representing the base physical appetites. The gods' souls are also depicted as

charioteers with horses, although they suffer no strife, since they, according to Guthrie (1971:235), contain no possibility of evil. Guthrie (1971:235 also notes that souls already have all three elements (driver, obedient horse and unruly horse) prior to incarnation or rather before their fall from heaven, when they are still striving to follow the train of the gods and get a glimpse of the vision of reality in the plain of truth (Guthrie 1971:235).

Guthrie (1971:235-236) states that the *Phaedrus* has caused much speculation because of its apparent contradiction of the eschatology in the other dialogues, although the doctrine of the *Phaedrus* is also found in the doctrines of Empedocles, as well as in the system taught to initiates of Orphism. The doctrine is essentially that the soul is divine (the *daimon* found in both Empedocles and *Timaeus* 90a, and the *theos* which the dead man is to become according to the Orphic tablets of Thurii), but that the soul has been forced to be incarnated as punishment for some not very clearly defined original sin or impurity (Guthrie 1971:236).

It is not very clear how or why this impurity occurs, especially in something divine. Guthrie (1971:232) points out that as soon as the soul has sinned it has lost its purity, and thereafter it is doomed to the wheel of reincarnation for ten thousand years, incarnating as various forms, but never freeing itself from the "contamination of the sublunary world, exemplified in, *but not confined to* its direct association with a body". In the *Phaedrus* the soul's only hope of escape, once it has failed to keep up with the gods and is doomed to incarnation, is to live a philosophic life three times in succession (*Phaedrus* 248d-249a). Moreover, each circuit from one birth to the next lasts a thousand years, from which it follows that in the cycle of reincarnation much more time is spent out of the body than in it (*Phaedrus* 249b). Guthrie (1971:236) states that we can learn from the myth of Er in the *Republic* how this time is spent.

The conclusion which Guthrie (1971:236) draws is that for someone who holds these beliefs the essential contrast is not between an incarnate and a discarnate soul, for whether the soul is in the body or not is unimportant if it is "caught in the wheel, and destined for incarnation and reincarnation". The essential contrast is that difference between a soul that is in, or destined for, a bodily incarnation, and one that has escaped from it and returned to the eternal, for only by escaping the wheel of

incarnation can the soul become immortal, not in the sense of outlasting the body, but of attaining purity and divinity (Guthrie 1971:236-237).

Souls that are trapped in the cycle of birth have "the taint of the earthly still clinging to them", during incarnations and between, and therefore Guthrie (1971:237) believes that the myth of the charioteer in the *Phaedrus* does not present a contradiction of Plato's other doctrines, for it could be argued that the lower parts clinging to the soul are the result of incarnation. Guthrie (1971:237) argues that it can be affirmed that the composite nature of the soul in the *Phaedrus* is "bound up, if not with actual inclusion in a body, at any rate with its involvement in the doom of repeated incarnation". Reason therefore remains the only part of the individual that can attain divine purity and is truly immortal.

According to the *Timaeus* (40a-b), the gods themselves were created, and this could explain their perfect lower natures, since they had perfect bodies and were free from the confusion which degraded human existence upon its incarnation, and the gods also had purer souls to start with (*Timaeus* 41d). Whether Plato had already formulated this theory when he wrote the *Phaedrus*, however, is not known. But despite these problematic details, the immortal nature of the soul remains constant, and constantly dependent on reason. The control of the lower parts and their eventual subjugation is the work of reason, as is the contemplation of the good in order to escape the lower parts of the body entirely. Either option leads to a purification of the soul and an assurance of its immortality and divinity (*Timaeus* 44d).

3. The Soul and the Irrational

Dodds (1971:206) proposes that Plato reacted to the situation created by the collapse of the inherited beliefs that set in during the fifth century, arguing that Plato clearly perceived "the dangers inherent in the decay of an Inherited Conglomerate", amd that he formulated proposals for stabilising the position by means of a counter-reformation. In this analysis, Dodds (1971:206) focuses specifically on the importance Plato attached to irrational factors in human behaviour (and therefore in the soul), and on how he interpreted them, as well as on what concessions he was

prepared to make to "the irrationalism of popular belief for the sake of stabilising the Conglomerate" (Dodds 1971:206).

The historical milieu within which Plato wrote, especially the political developments (including those before Plato), such as the death of Pericles and the advent of Macedonian hegemony, as well as the philosophical developments of Plato's predecessors and contemporaries, is very important to the understanding of the external stimuli that shaped Plato's thought (Dodds 1971:207). Plato wrote in the fourth century, but Dodds (1971:207) argues that his personal convictions were shaped and moulded in the fifth century, as his earlier dialogues, such as the *Protagoras*, attest to. It is certainly safe to assume that Plato's philosophy was historically conditioned. This aids the analysis of how Plato viewed the irrational soul, and Dodds (1971:207-208) believes that the most important historical influence, the dilemma of the democracy that opposed the tyrants, but executed Socrates, and Plato's intimate connection with both parties (because he was Charmides's nephew and Socrates's disciple), led him to formulate his particular "metaphysical extension" of rationalism.

Socrates's concepts of the soul certainly influenced Plato, as has been discussed previously in this chapter, but Plato expanded these concepts considerably. Dodds (1971:208) argues that the Platonic expansion of the Socratic ideas (that the soul is divine and its health is man's primary concern) into a "new transcendental psychology" was influenced, to an even greater extent, by the Pythagoreans. This proposal is not at all unlikely if it is remembered that Plato had personal contact with the Pythagoreans of Western Greece in 390 BC, and that he "cross-fertilised" Greek rationalism with "magico-religious ideas whose remoter origins belong to the northern shamanistic culture" Dodds (1971:208). These magico-religious ideas are not easily recognisable in Plato's philosophy, however, since they have been interpreted and transformed from the plane of revelation to that of rational argument (Dodds 1971:208-209).

There are certainly many parallel concepts of the soul to be found in the Platonic, Orphic and Pythagorean doctrines, but Dodds (1971:209) argues that the crucial factor connecting Plato's concept of the soul to the beliefs found in these doctrines was the

identification of the "detachable occult self" (a repository of "guilt-feelings" which has the potential to be divine), with the rational *psyche* as Socrates saw it (whose potential for the divine is by virtue of its knowledge). Although this was a complete reinterpretation of the shamanistic concepts, Dodds (1971:209) argues that there are many features of these beliefs still recognisable in Plato's concept of the soul, such as reincarnation.

Some aspects of the Orphic and Pythagorean doctrines were reinterpreted in such a way as to perspicuously resemble their original source, however, such as the shamanistic trance, a "deliberate detachment of the occult self from the body", which became for Plato a "mental withdrawal and concentration which purifies the rational soul", a practice for which Plato in fact claims the authority of a traditional *logos* (Dodds 1971:209). The occult knowledge resulting from a shamanistic trance state therefore becomes a mentally visible metaphysical truth, the shamanistic recollection of past lives, a recollection of Forms, which became the basis of a new epistemology, and the mythical "long sleep" and "underworld journey" is echoed in the experiences of Er, and other such eschatological examples (Dodds 1971:209).

The distinction between the mythical and the philosophical is by no means clear in the first place, and it is not difficult to imagine how Plato could employ such mythical concepts in his own philosophy, since objectivity and purely mental activity and perception are concepts completely analogous to the altered states of consciousness which these shamanistic cults practise. Plato's philosophy is based entirely on the assumption that the objective and rational mental states reveal a higher truth not readily visible in the everyday existence of the corporeal world, and that this activity is the path to the purification of the self, the salvation of the soul and, eventually, to the attainment of the divine. These results and revelations remain valid for the belief that a shamanistic trance, as much as an objective speculation, is the path to enlightenment.

Many other aspects of Plato's philosophy are not as readily identifiable as being shamanistically influenced, and may not even be so, but the possibility of viewing these aspects as possibly connected to the shamanistic influences are nonetheless fruitful to the interpretation of Plato's philosophy. Dodds (1971:209), for instance,

argues that it is possible that the Guardians could be better understood if they are thought of as a new kind of "rationalised shaman". The Guardians, like their shamanistic predecessors, endure a disciplined process designed to "modify the whole psychic structure" in order to prepare themselves for their high office, submit to a form of dedication that is similar to asceticism and denies them the distracting pleasures of the rest of society, renew their contact with the sources of wisdom by periodic "retreats", and will be rewarded with special status in the afterlife (Dodds 1971:209-210).

It is also likely, according to Dodds (1971:210), that some class, similar to the Guardians, existed in the Pythagorean societies, and that Plato sought to "carry the experiment further" by giving this practice a scientific basis and employing it as an instrument in the fulfilment of his "counter-reformation". Even if there were no separate class analogous to the Guardians in Pythagorean societies, the general Pythagorean practices are already similar to those prescribed for the Guardians, practices which improved *suitable* initiates, provided the means for a ritualised purification of the soul, and which were, above all, not meant for the general population.

Dodds (1971:210) notes that Plato's visionary picture of the Guardians as a new kind of ruling class has often been criticised and cited as evidence that his estimate of human nature was "grossly unrealistic", but points out that shamanistic institutions are not devised for ordinary people and their concern is to exploit the possibilities of an "exceptional type of personality". The *Republic* (428e-429a) also follows this line of reasoning, for Plato states that his Guardian class will be a minority, picked for exceptional abilities not commonly found in the general population. Each section of the population has its own abilities and the various sections are compared to metals, but the metals that represent the higher classes of the Guardians and the philosopher-ruler are, tellingly, also the rarest metals.

The remainder of the inhabitants of Plato's ideal state form the majority, and Plato's interest in their welfare seems to have extended only to a sort of protection from external evils and a regulation of the expression of internal evils, with a view to their happiness rather than their excellence. Dodds (1971:210) argues that, in all the stages

of Plato's thought, Plato recognised that, for the common people, provided they are not exposed to the temptations of power, an "intelligent hedonism" sufficed as a practical guide to a satisfactory life (*cf. Phaedo* 82a-b; *Republic* 500d, *Philebus* 21d-e; *Laws* 653b, 663b-664a, 733a).

Although Plato's dialogues in the middle period show, according to Dodds (1971:210), a "preoccupation" with exceptional natures and their exceptional possibilities, he nevertheless maintains an interest in the "psychology of the ordinary man". Plato, in his later work, after he had abandoned the idea of a philosopher-king in favour of the rule of law, pays increased attention to the conduct of ordinary people, and his aim becomes an encouragement of goodness and honesty as a means of attaining happiness (Dodds 1971:211).

This is in stark contrast to Plato's more optimistic views that happiness and goodness are both results of knowledge or contemplation of the Forms, but in the *Laws* (653D), as Dodds (1971:211) points out, the virtue of the common man is evidently not based on knowledge, but on a process of "conditioning" or "habituation", which induces him to accept and act according to certain "salutary" beliefs. Plato seems to have abandoned the Socratic belief that the unexamined life is not worth living (*Apology* 38a), and Dodds (1971:211-212) is convinced that, although Plato would not admit to a divergence from any Socratic principle, Socrates's inherent respect for the human mind is diametrically opposite to the assumptions on which Plato's educational policy of the *Republic* and the techniques for indoctrination he recommended in the *Laws* are based.

Dodds (1971:212) argues that Plato seems to have thought that the general population could be kept in "tolerable moral health only by a carefully chosen diet of incantations" (*cf. Laws* 659e, 664b, 665c, 666c, 670e, 773d, 812c, 903b, 944b), which are to be "edifying myths and bracing ethical slogans". Dodds (1971:212) compares this to Burckhardt's dichotomy, "rationalism for the few, magic for the many", and notes that rationalism was not only influenced by ideas that once were magical, but that "incantations" were later to serve rational ends. It is possible that, underlying this differentiation between philosophers and ordinary people, was the concept that the conflict within the soul is different for those who can master it with reason, and who

therefore act willingly for the good, as opposed to those who have to forcefully subdue their baser natures.

It is likely that Plato believed that the conflicts of the irrational soul (or the conflict between the body and the soul) were very different for philosophers than for the mass population. Philosophers are able to contemplate the effects of and solutions to an inner conflict, and are also able to overcome this conflict and purify their souls by means of rational pondering and truthseeking. Yet the peasants cannot hope to attain salvation through metaphysical contemplation, but must merely try to live ascetically in the hope that the immortality of their souls is not affected by the body. They should live morally and religiously, believing in ethical gods and strengthening their resolve through religious incantations. If knowledge of the good compels action for the good, then Plato's proposals for standards and guidelines to be applied to the common people can be understood as a solution to the lack of good which is the result of a lack of philosophical contemplation.

The realisation that philosophical contemplation is most uncommon, and the accompanying problem of formulating an alternate method for attaining the good can be seen to have confronted Plato in the *Laws*, and was at least partially apparent in the *Republic*, but the *Timaeus* is a discussion of the higher principles of philosophical thought *par excellence*. Yet the doctrine in all three dialogues forms a unity, for they apply the same principles of philosophy to different situations. The dialogues, though aimed at similar audiences, clearly discuss two different groups of people and therefore contain different foci for discussion. They also propose two different methods for putting the postulated philosophy into practice.

Plato probably wrote the *Laws* with the intention of postulating a practical method for ruling the common people and for preserving them from corruption (foreign and bodily), but the ultimate aim Plato had was to demonstrate how order and harmony could be created. The same aim of the creation of order and harmony is present in the *Timaeus*, but the discussion in this dialogue is not about the practicalities of ruling a state, but of ruling the self. This would also explain the more abstract and tentative themes in the *Timaeus*, which Plato wrote, it seems, for the intellectual elite whom he

hoped existed, and therefore he could discuss more fully (if less certainly) the affective elements that he left unexplored in his other dialogues.

In other ways too, Plato's growing recognition of the importance of affective elements carried him beyond the limits of fifth century rationalism, and this appears very clearly, according to Dodds (1971:212), in the development of his theory of evil. Although Plato maintained that the Socratic dictum that "no man errs willingly" was true, Dodds (1971:212) argues that Plato was in fact discontented with the simplification of reducing moral error to a mistake in perspective. Plato adopted another simplified view of evil, however, namely the puritan dualism inherent in the magico-religious view of the *psyche*, which attributed all evil to the corrupting influence of the body or the corporeal, but Dodds (1971:212-213) argues that Plato came to different insights on this matter in his later writings.

In the *Phaedo* (67a) Plato adheres to the absolute dualism of the spiritual and the material, and views the corporeal as a trap which pollutes the soul as long as it is incarnate, becoming free of the "folly of the body" only if it can deny its ties with the physical, by asceticism or, failing that, by death. Dodds (1971:213) argues that Plato was later compelled to recognise a further possibility, an "irrational factor" in the mind itself, and therefore to view moral evil as a "psychological conflict". This recognition becomes apparent in the *Republic*, which describes the soul's struggle as an internal conflict between two parts of the soul (*Republic* 441b-c), unlike the earlier passage in the *Phaedo* (94d-e) that describes the soul's struggle with the passions of the body.

Dodds (1971:213) argues that, not only are the bodily passions no longer viewed as an extraneous source of infection which plagues the soul, but they are also recognised as a necessary part of the life of the mind, and even as a form of energy, like Freud's *libido*, which can be "canalised" either towards sensuous or intellectual activity. The theory of inner conflict, as illustrated in the *Republic* (439e) by the story of Leontion, is more clearly stated in the *Sophist* (227d-228e), where it is said to be a psychological maladjustment resulting from "some sort of injury", a disease of the soul and the cause of cowardice, intemperance, injustice, and moral evil in general, which are all distinct from ignorance or intellectual failure (Dodds 1971:214).

Yet Plato had not abandoned the transcendent rational self, according to Dodds (1971:214), nor had he dismissed the assumption that its unity was the prerequisite for the soul's immortality. Dodds (1971:214) argues that Plato, in the *Timaeus* (90a), tries to reformulate his earlier ideas of the destiny of man to make them compatible with his later psychology and cosmology, and so returns to the concept of a unitary soul that was previously found in the *Phaedo*, using the old religious term that Empedocles had used for the "occult self", namely *daimon*. The reference to the guardian spirit (*Timaeus* 90a) is preceded by another reference, this time to all three parts of the soul, for *Timaeus* 69c discusses how the gods who shape man receive the divine soul from the Demiurge and encase it in a body, but the gods add to it "another mortal part, containing terrible and necessary feelings", and Plato continues the discussion of the mortal parts of the soul up to par. 73a.

It is by no means clear how Plato proposed to unite the divine *daimon* of reason with the lowest part of the soul, which he describes as being secured in the lower midriff "like a wild beast" (*Timaeus* 70c), but Dodds (1971:221) argues that it could be *Eros* that unites the parts of the soul, for it is *Eros* that links the human with the divine in the *Symposium* (202e). *Eros* is rooted the procreative desire which man and animal alike share, but Dodds (1971:221) argues that *Eros* also supplies the dynamic impulse which drives the soul forward in its quest for a form of satisfaction transcending earthly experience, and it therefore "spans the whole compass of human personality, and makes the one empirical bridge between man as he is and man as he might be".

The connection with *Eros* may be an attempt at the unification of the two concepts of the soul discussed above, combining the theory of the magico-religious *psyche* which is corrupted by mortal flesh and the theory of a rational part of the *psyche* that is in conflict with an irrational part of the *psyche*. Whether the mortal and corrupting body is causally related, not just metaphysically through *Eros*, to the irrational *psyche*, is not overtly stated, for it is only stated that the irrational part of the soul is necessary. It seems likely, however, that the two are connected, as many of the desires of the irrational soul are directly related to the wish to satisfy the mortal body. This same connection would therefore also apply to a connection between the irrational and the rational parts of the soul, for the irrational soul sometimes desires things that aid reason and its control of the lower appetites.

Even without the mediating factor of the irrational soul, the fission of man into *daimon* and beast is similar to the fission in Plato's view of human nature, according to Dodds (1971:215); the gulf Plato perceived between the immortal and the mortal soul corresponds to the gulf between Plato's vision of man as he might be and his estimate of man as he is, the latter being apparent in the *Laws* as the culmination of what Plato had come to think of human life as it is actually lived. Plato indicates, furthermore, that he not only views the life man leads as largely uncontrolled, but uncontrollable, for he regards man as a "puppet", who is "hardly real and worthless, and whose purpose cannot be known" (*Laws* 803c, 804a-b).

Plato suggests a religious origin for this way of thinking, which, according to Dodds (1971:216), resembles the opinions of later religious thinkers such as Marcus Aurelius and T. S. Eliot, who said that human nature is able to endure only very little reality. Dodds (1971:216) also believes that this view is consistent with the rest of the *Laws*, for Plato thought that man was unfit to rule himself, as unfit as a flock of sheep (*Laws* 713c-d), that God, not man, must therefore be the measure of all things (*Laws 716c*), that man is God's property (*Laws* 902b, 906a, *Critias* 109b), and furthermore, that if he wishes to be happy, he must be "abject" before God (*Laws* 716a).

This may seem like uncharacteristic pessimism and in direct juxtaposition to the idealistic picture of the soul's divine nature and destiny as described in the middle dialogues, a picture that was never abjured, according to Dodds (1971:216). Nevertheless, there are various instances of a more cynical view of the mass population, which constantly reappear in Plato's works, as Dodds (1971:216-217) points out. In the *Republic* (486a), for instance, the philosopher doubts whether human life can be regarded "as a thing of any great consequence". In the *Meno* (100a) the general population of men are likened to the shadows in Homer's Hades. The conception of human beings as "chattels" of a god appears already in the *Phaedo* (62b), and is a belief which Plato seems to have retained until the end of his life, for it occurs in the *Laws* (906a).

Dodds (1971:217) mentions another instance of Plato's cynicism, in the *Phaedo* (81e-82b), where Plato predicts with "relish" the future of his fellow men, some of whom will be donkeys, others wolves, and the respectable bourgeoisie will be ants and bees

in their next incarnation. This is no doubt humorously intended, but it is humour in the vein of Jonathan Swift's, according to Dodds (1971:217), as it carries the implication that everybody but the philosopher is on the verge of becoming "subhuman", a view that is hard to reconcile with the theory that every human soul is essentially rational.

Plato seems to have retained this cynicism throughout his career as well, or at least to have periodically relapsed into it, for in the *Timaeus* (90d-92b) he explains the origins of animals through examples of how certain types of men would be reincarnated as animals appropriate to their imperfections, for instance "Birds were produced by a process of transformation, growing feathers instead of hair, from harmless, empty-headed men, who were interested in the heavens but were silly enough to think that visible evidence is all the foundation astronomy needs" (*Timaeus* 91c). Whether or not this instance was the product of professional jealousy, cannot be said, but the theme continues throughout the section in the Swiftian manner of the *Phaedo*.

In the light of these passages, Dodds (1971:217) argues that one is led to recognise two tendencies or strains in Plato's thinking about the status of man: firstly, there is the "faith and pride" in human reason which was a remnant of the thinking of the fifth century, and for which Plato found religious sanction by equating the detached reason with the detached occult self of shamanistic tradition, and secondly, there is the "bitter recognition of human worthlessness" which was the direct result of his experience of contemporary Athens and Syracuse.

Dodds (1971:217) adds that the relationship between these two points of view was not one of simple opposition, for the disillusionment which Plato experienced with humanity's everyday existence could also be expressed in the language of religion, as a denial of attaching any value to the activities and interests of this world in comparison with the things of the next world, but the extreme pessimism of the later period seems to have been a compensation for the extreme optimism in the early period. Dodds (1971:217-218) believes that Plato's underlying despair and pessimism became increasingly apparent, eventually translating itself into religious terms, until it found its logical expression in his final proposals for a completely

closed society, to be ruled not by the illuminated reason, but (under God) by custom and religious law.

Plato's basic proposals in the *Laws*, that the ideal society must be based on a foundation of logical and proven religious convictions (Bk. X), an unalterable code of law (Bk. IV, especially 712b-722c, 772b), a solid educational background of indoctrination in these legal and religious precepts (Bk. VII), and a social system which combines religious and civic life (738b-d), are viewed by Dodds (1971:221) as his final attempt at formulating proposals for reforming and stabilising the "Inherited Conglomerate". Dodds (1971:222) further argues that Plato's proposals could be interpreted as being designed merely to strengthen and generalise existing Athenian practice, but that, as a whole, they actually represent the first attempt to deal systematically with the problem of standardising religious belief.

The problem of standardising religious belief was new, according to Dodds (1971:222), for faith was taken for granted and neither proving the existence of the gods to induce belief, nor proposing the importance of early religious training as a means of conditioning the future adult, had occurred to anyone. Dodds (1971:222) further argues that Plato's proposals sought not only to stabilise, but also to reform the traditional structure. These proposals do not appear to fall properly within the field of science or philosophy, since they mainly deal with religion and myth (or myth-making), and popular religion for the masses. It must be kept in mind that Plato's state theory is inextricably linked to these religious reformations, however, and he seems not to have had in mind a religious revelation so much as a means of social transformation.

It could be argued that Plato's primary aim was not an attempt to convert the citizens to a new religion, but rather that this conversion to the new religion was a means to an end. The ultimate goal that Plato probably had in mind was to provide the population with a belief in deities they were familiar with, who could act as a form of authority for Plato's moral reforms, the gods therefore serving the function of all-seeing policemen, or as a kind of smoke-screen behind which the state's interference in the citizens' lives could be hidden. This argument could be supported by the difference between the gods described in the *Laws* (Bk. IV 717a-b, 738d), who are basically the

traditional gods of Greece, and the description of the Demiurge in the *Timaeus* – the "supreme god of Plato's personal faith", according to Dodds (1971:223).

Plato does not reveal the Demiurge himself to the citizens of the ideal state, although he would be a far more moral entity than the Greek gods (whose past immoralities would have to be erased from the common literature and memory for them to be able to warrant respect and inspire moral behaviour). The reason for this is clearly stated in the *Timaeus* (28c), however, where Plato states that to "discover" the Demiurge is a hard task, and even if he were to be discovered, it would be impossible to tell everyone about him. Dodds (1971:223) argues that Plato chose to advocate to the common people a belief in the kind of gods whom everyone could see, and thus, by implication, whose divinity could be recognised by the masses and about whom the philosophers could make logically valid statements.

An example of these recognisable deities would be Plato's depiction of the planets as gods, who are to be sacrificed and prayed to, and revered (*Laws* 821b), for their movements are not "wandering", as the name "planet" (literally "wanderer") implies, but orderly. These then are the planetary gods of the *Timaeus*, who are visible celestial bodies that move in orderly circles, some larger and some smaller, and who therefore embody the visual incarnation of the Form "eternity" by indicating time. These gods are also quite distinct from the Demiurge, who created them (*Timaeus* 41a).

Dodds (1971:224) regards Plato's religious reforms as novel, not only in his depiction of the celestial bodies as divinities (*Laws* 821b-d), but also in the instigation of their cult. The "new State Church" was to be the joint cult of Apollo and the sun-god Helios (*Laws* 946b-947a), a cult which Dodds (1971:224-225) regards as a union of the old and the new, Apollo representing the "traditionalism of the masses" and Helios the new "natural religion" of the philosophers, and it should therefore be seen as "Plato's last desperate attempt to build a bridge between the intellectuals and the people, and thereby save the unity of Greek belief and of Greek culture".

By contrast there is little focus on these "national" gods in the *Timaeus*, and more than ample focus on the Demiurge and his activities. Moreover, the Demiurge is the

ultimate truth and goodness, and the planetary gods (by their regular movements of soul) only reflect the order he created for the good. Most importantly, the planetary gods are created, and therefore dependent on a more ultimate source or cause, i.e. the Demiurge, who is outside of his creation and independent of it. This has implications for those who are interested in escaping the wheel of incarnation and want to save their souls, for the deities who are revered and contemplated must be directly linked to these questions about the soul and its destiny.

The deities of the *Laws* and the *Timaeus* are not incompatible, but it seems clear that if one takes account of the aim of the two dialogues and their proposed effect on the audience, it is only for the philosopher to contemplate the Demiurge, his creation (including the planetary gods), and his creature (the Forms), and not for the common man in the Magnesian state. The common man just needs some proof of the existence of *a* deity, whom he can emulate, and in so doing, conform to the order of the creation. Technically, of course, both accounts of the gods are true, but they differ in serving a specific need of, or goal for, the audience.

This could imply a different approach to salvation of souls, because, according to Plato's doctrine, there is a difference between the philosopher's soul and the souls of the masses, for the philosopher's soul is closer to being discarnate. It is therefore not impossible for the masses to contemplate the Demiurge, but this should be seen as something they might attain in a future life, after morality has been perfected by emulation of the order exemplified in the planetary deities, whom they are to worship until a more exhaustive view of the cosmos can be taken in.

Thus, the Demiurge serves as theoretical interest for the philosopher. Contemplation of the Demiurge also has the practical application of furthering knowledge and therefore morality, as well as the salvation of the individual soul once such knowledge and morality have been attained. This practical application, especially the furthering of morality, is the dominant concern in the *Laws*. In providing proof of the existence of the gods for the layman, Plato ensures that the theocracy can function politically. Yet the purpose of the furtherance of morality is not only to induce obedience to the state's Laws, but also to instil a sense of god (or the gods), and therefore ultimately to instil something higher and purer in the consciousness of the masses for their own

moral good. As they are visible, the planetary gods may also be discussed, and this might be a way of aspiring to a contemplation of the planetary gods in order one day to speculate about their origins, and so arrive at contemplation of the greater whole.

The difference between the Demiurge and the lesser gods can be compared to the difference, firstly, between Plato's view of the soul as rational, and the soul as a combination of the rational and the irrational, as well as the difference, secondly, between the philosopher and the common man. Plato's religion can therefore be viewed as a combination of two realities, one encompassing the other, for the common man would only be confused with metaphysical enquiries, and should rather emulate the lesser divinities by regulating his irrational soul and behaving morally, whereas the philosopher can improve his rational soul by contemplation of both the Demiurge and the lesser divinities, and so arrive at morality, and at salvation via enlightenment.

Zoroaster

The pre-Zoroastrian concept of the soul is much like the Homeric 'ghost', but the Zoroastrian concept of the soul, like the Platonic soul, also has sense and self-consciousness. It, too, is capable of thinking, moral decision and scientific cognition, and is likewise the seat of moral responsibility. The concept of the autonomous soul, akin to the Greek *psyche*, is very important to Zoroaster's doctrine, especially because he emphasised free will. The exercising of a choice for or against the good, and the tending of the well-being of the soul in so choosing, also has important repercussions in Zoroaster's doctrine of the after-life.

The soul in Zoroastrianism is also identified with the intellect, and a soul that strives constantly after wisdom and knowledge, and the necessary accompanying ethical behaviour, can belong to the eternal world. This is achieved by rendering the soul independent of evil, which, in turn, is identified with ignorance, and in so doing, purifying the soul so that it may acquire immortality and heaven. Immortality is not only the soul's freedom from the body (or the soul outlasting the body), but in both Plato's and Zoroaster's doctrines it implies divinity and presupposes complete purity.

116

1. Pre-Zoroastrian and Zoroastrian concepts of the soul

Zoroaster preached that leading a "good life" entailed more than sacrifice and worship, Boyce (1992:74) argues, and required the proselyte to be an *ashavan* (follower of Asha). This meant that, as a follower of Asha, the individual embraced and maintained the truth, as well as the order and harmony of the world, which had implications for both understanding and acting for the good. Boyce (1992:74) notes that the followers are expected not only to have knowledge of the "revealed truth", but to act on it by words and acts of good purpose (*Yasna* 53:2), which would continue into the hereafter, as the soul survived the body. The concept, Boyce (1992:74) points out, of two different fates awaiting souls in the afterlife, one of a happy existence on high, and the other of a joyless existence in the underworld, was not new to Zoroaster and was probably an old Indo-Iranian belief, but Zoroaster reinterpreted these fates as outcomes that are ethically based, as the reward of God's heaven (Khshathra) for the good souls, and punishment with the Evil Spirit in hell for those who chose evil.

The new system of an ethically based fate after death, Boyce (1992:74) argues, probably shared with the older beliefs the concept of storing up favour or merit with the gods, but Zoroastrianism, unlike the old system which was based on the amount of sacrifices, had to evolve a description of the method employed for establishing what fate the soul deserved after death. Boyce (1992:74) argues that the ancient Iranians were "evidently given to recourse to the law", and that this would have suggested to Zoroaster a system of impartial judgement awaiting the soul at death, with a weighing up of the good and the bad thoughts, words and deeds throughout life and the consequences to these being meted out accordingly. Boyce (1992:75) further points out that this opened up the possibility of salvation for any individual at any time, as even the most evil could attempt to rectify their debit with good deeds.

The concept of judgement in the afterlife led to the instatement of a judge in later Zoroastrian doctrine, namely Mithra (*Yasht* 10.94). Boyce (1992:75) believes that, although it cannot be proven, Zoroaster must have considered Mithra as the proper ahura to preside over the judgement of souls. It is likely, however, that since later Zoroastrianism revived many of the earlier Iranian beliefs that were not originally

found in the *Gathas*, the role of Mithra as a judge of the dead was suggested by his role as a judge in life. The process the soul had to go through after death is also reminiscent of the Iranian practice of ordeal by fire, presided over by *mainyus*, and common to many societies as an aid to the establishment of truth in a matter and therefore a common form of judgement.

Another old belief that was reinterpreted by Zoroaster was that of the journey and dangerous crossing that awaited the departed spirit. Once again, as Boyce (1992:75) notes, this belief in a downward path towards the underworld, ending in a difficult crossing, often of a river, before 'Hades' could be reached, was probably very old and possibly had Indo-European roots. The many analogous examples, such as the Greek belief in the soul's journey across the river Styx to enter Hades, would seem to support this theory. Boyce (1992:75) argues that Zoroastrianism extended this theme to include the passage of souls destined for heaven, and modified the river motif into a crossing of the "Chinvat Bridge". This bridge is also known as the "Bridge of Judgement", which discriminates between good and evil (Bode & Nanavutty 1952:85), although Boyce (1992:75) notes that the meaning is disputed. The Chinvat Bridge widens to a broad, safe crossing for good souls, and narrows to a razor's edge for the evil, who then fall into the abyss (Boyce 1992:75-76). Even the journey to the next world is mentioned by Zoroaster, who states that he will yoke strong and swift steeds of devotion to reach the Chinvat Bridge (*Yasna* 50.7).

Another old belief that was incorporated into the Zoroastrian faith was that the departed spirit, bound for heaven, should be met by a girl – moreover, according to Boyce (1992:76), a beautiful girl, who became its companion and led it to heaven, probably a myth born of the belief that in heaven all delights, including the sexual, would be available. Boyce (1992:76) notes that from this myth it is safe to deduce that women were not destined to enjoy such eternal rewards as heaven, but Zoroaster changed this old myth quite substantially. Firstly, he proclaimed that any good soul, male or female, could cross the Chinvat Bridge (*Yasna* 46.10), and in the transformed myth, as it appears in Zoroastrianism, the girl became a *daena*. Boyce (1992:76) notes that the word *daena* escapes translation, but states that the best English translation would be 'Inner Self'.

The *daena*, as the person's inner self, was shaped, as Boyce (1992:76) points out, by the individual's thoughts, words and deeds, which made the 'Self' either beautiful or ugly, and would therefore inspire either joy or revulsion when the *daena* finally meets the departed soul at the Chinvat Bridge. Boyce (1992:76) quotes three verses from the *Gathas* as illustration of this: "He who makes better or worse his thoughts, O Mazda, he by act and word makes better or worse his Inner Self; she follows his leanings, wishes and likings. At Thy will the end shall be different for each" (*Yasna* 48:4); "The Inner Self of the wicked man destroys for him the reality of the straight way. His soul shall surely vex him at the Chinvat Bridge" (*Yasna* 51:13); and "The Karapans and the Kavayas (sacrificial priests of the *Daevas*) combine their powers to destroy the spiritual life of man through their evil acts. But their own souls and their own consciences will torment them when they be dwellers in *Drujo Demana*, the House of the Lie" (*Yasna* 46:11).

The poetic justice in this postulate is striking, as there can be no more fitting fate than simply having to live with what one has made of oneself or one's own conscience, even in the afterlife. The power to shape the inner self lies with the individual, and is a matter of making the right and informed choices for the welfare of the soul and the conscience. The nature of the inner self is shaped by all thoughts, words and actions, and the reinterpretation of the *daena* myth serves to make the populace vigilant about their own morality for their own good, not only for the abstract good of the community and its laws and mores. Nor is the fate of the person some predestined thing, but something the individual has the power to choose for himself. The individual alone is responsible for his conduct, and thereby his fate after death.

Free from the determinism that characterised the Homeric and pre-Zoroastrian beliefs in the existence of shades, the fate of the soul in Zoroastrianism became inextricably linked with responsibility, choice, and therefore thought. This is also akin to the belief in metempsychosis, which teaches that the soul, being a responsible agent, will be reincarnated in whatever form is fitting for its next life, considering its actions in the previous life. In this regard, Plato (*Timaeus* 42a) states that if one lives a good life, the soul may return to its native star (the equivalent of heaven) and therefore be free of the wheel of incarnation, but warns that "anyone who failed to do so would be changed into a woman at his second birth.[and] if he still refrained from doing

wrong, he would be changed into some animal suitable to his particular wrongdoing" (*Timaeus* 42b).

Boyce (1992:76) notes that Zoroaster not only abandoned the belief in "a *houri*-like creature promising sexual delights", but also abandoned the belief that the physical body was returned to the departed soul in heaven after one year, to enable it to enjoy all the material pleasures again, and that Zoroaster believed the rewards in heaven, as well as the punishments of hell, to be purely spiritual. Yet later Zoroastrianism reincorporated the resurrection of the flesh, and the incumbent funerary practices. The diverse traditions of burial that existed prior to Zoroastrianism indicate a diversity in the beliefs about the afterlife, all of which could have influenced Zoroaster's concept. One site (at Sintashta, situated in north Khazakstan, in a bend of the Sintashta river in the province of Cheliabinsk), as Boyce (1992:35) points out, contains all three types of burial practice, namely burial in the ground, exposure and cremation, which is relevant to the burial practices of the Iranians because the steppe society at Sintashta, was very similar to the society depicted in the *Gathas*.

The rites of exposure as well as cremation are generally linked with a belief in heaven, whereas inhumation is associated with the older concept of a Hades or 'place of shades', a joyless existence in the afterlife. Exposure was also connected with the doctrine of a resurrection of the flesh. It is possible that the later Zoroastrian beliefs reincorporated all three these concepts, e.g. a belief in heaven, hell and a bodily resurrection, much like it reincorporated many of the pagan deities.

Another interesting development in the later Zoroastrian tradition is an account of a priest, Arda Viraf, who dies and goes through the process of becoming a discarnate soul, but returns to tell of what he saw. This is very similar to the Myth of Er in the *Republic*. In this Dantean journey, Arda Viraf observes the souls being met by their *daenas*, being judged according to their thoughts, words and deeds, and crossing the Chinvat Bridge. He is also shown heaven and hell, and the retribution or rewards that await the souls in the afterlife.

2. The Soul's choice between good and evil

Axial to the Zoroastrian doctrine of morality was the concept of the Twin Spirits, Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu, who in the beginning chose good and evil respectively (*Yasna* 30.1). Gnoli (2000:2) states that the paradigmatic nature of the choice these two spirits make is the prototype of the choice that man must make between the paths of truth and falsehood. There is an added dimension to this choice exercised by both man and spirit which becomes clear when one considers that 'mainyu' can be translated as 'spirit' as well as 'mentality', since the root of 'mainyu' is 'man', which means 'to think' (Schwartz 1985:641). This has led to the translation by Bode and Nanavutty (1952:49) of the Twin Mainyu as "the twin aspects of the human mind". The aspect of the mental is further accentuated by the fact that the verse which directly follows the mention of the Twins states that "the greatest boon [will be] given in truth to the wise" (*Yasna* 30.1). The accent on the choice of morality is not limited to thought, however, but is linked to the words and deeds of the individual as well.

The basis of the Zoroastrian ethical system is the triad of 'good thoughts, good words and good deeds', and sin in thought is equated with sin in actions, which presupposes, according to Geiger (1977:56), a high standard of moral culture. Because of the equation of thoughts and actions, Geiger (1977:56) argues that both the basis for actions and the basis for moral discernment are perceived in the mind. This accords well with the supremacy of Mind in the Zoroastrian doctrine, and its relation to the Good. The question of how man stands (through thought and action) in relation to the two opposite principles of good and evil, necessarily also moves from ethics into the field of eschatology, in that it relates to the end (and final judgement) of this opposition.

The most noticeable aspect of the ethical system in the *Gathas* is the operation of complete free will in every individual, and the absence of oppressive fatalistic concepts. Nor is man himself evil; he rather only internalises what is otherwise completely separate when he actively chooses it of his own accord. Conversely, Geiger (1977:57) points out that if man can choose to invite evil, he also has the ability and power to resist and oppose it. This choice, however, is made by the

individual's judgement, and the choice of evil is constantly referred to as the unwise, indiscriminate and confused choice (*Yasna* 30.3, 6). The *Kavis* and *Karapans* (the ruling princes and sacrificial priests of the *Daevas*) who follow the Lie are called wilfully deaf and blind (*Yasna* 32.14-15). The implication here is that not only is the choice between good and evil made of the individual's own accord, but that the choice is one of reason and basically mental, not based on blind faith or merely on piety, and the wrong choice is not made because of a basic or primordial flaw, but because of ignorance of the good.

The choice of evil is therefore linked to ignorance, wilful or otherwise, and the lack of understanding that makes people choose wrongly is a lack of hearkening to Vohu Manah. Yet there is hope for those who choose incorrectly, though their subsequent illumination seems to come at a dear price. The *Gathas* state that "when.retribution overtakes these sinful men, then O Lord of Life and Wisdom, Thy Might and Majesty will be revealed to them through the Good Mind who will teach these sinners to deliver the Lie into the hands of Truth" (*Yasna* 30.8). This doctrine is much like the Socratic belief that no man errs other than in ignorance, and there seems to be hope of enlightenment despite choosing evil. The responsibility rests solely on the individual, however, and he alone can choose right or wrong. Geiger (1977:57) believes that this reinforces his opinion that Zoroastrian ethics belongs to a high standard of moral culture and that it is certainly a "sound moral standpoint which places all responsibility upon man himself, and deprives him of the possibility of making any excuse for his laxity by saying that the matter did not lie in his power (or was a result of destiny)".

The absence of a concept of predestined evil extends further than the mortal morality discussed thus far, into the realm of the spirits. The *Gathas* state that the *daevas* did not "discriminate aright, for confusion came upon them as they stood in doubt so that they chose the Worst Mind" (*Yasna* 30.6). Geiger states that the *daevas* are therefore not evil by nature but by choice (1977:58). But the concept of a choice extends even to the Evil Spirit himself, as the preceding verse clearly states that "Of these two mentalities, the Evil One chose to perform the worst deeds" (*Yasna* 30.5). It is also emphasised, in *Yasna* 30.3, that the good choice was made by the wise, and that evil is chosen in folly.

122

The importance of free will is related to the importance of good thought as well, in that it implies concepts such as discrimination. As Geiger (1977:58) points out, the doctrine of free will "conforms with the opinion that religion is a matter of understanding or judgement, and that righteousness and truth on the one hand, and impiety and falsehood on the other hand, naturally stand in the closest connection". The Zoroastrian doctrine clearly gives not only free will to all living beings, but also the ability and power to use it, and aids recognition of the truth (Asha) with piety (Armaiti) and wisdom (Vohu Manah). The inclination to choose the good is assumed, and the absence of doing so is the absence of Good Mind. "The sinner is a fool, and the fool a sinner" (Geiger 1977:58).

The possibility exists, however, that the individual is as of yet incapable of understanding, or as Geiger (1977:58) would have it, a "fool", and that is why piety (for the intelligent as well as the unenlightened) remains the highest goal. Piety can be achieved by all, whether the individual employs his intellect in being pious or not. It is explicitly stated that God fashioned physical bodies as well as discerning souls and "directive intelligences" for humans, together with capacities to act, and true doctrines to guide, so that one could choose beliefs at will (*Yasna* 31.11), and therefore nobody is incapable of understanding. It is further stated that "each lifts up his voice to proclaim his faith, whether a liar or a truthful speaker, whether learned or unlearned, according to his own heart and mind." (*Yasna* 31.12).

For those individuals who are indecisive, however, Armaiti ("Piety") stands by to deliberate with the spirit of whoever is perplexed by doubt (*Yasna* 31.12). Armaiti also illumines the *Daena* (conscience or visionary perception) of men (*Yasna* 33.13), which perhaps indicates that piety itself can provide understanding. In fact, Zoroaster asks that God "bestow on [him], through loving Armaiti, the blessing of a perfect illumination – the life of the Good Mind" (*Yasna* 43.1), and Armaiti is said to instruct the prophets (*Yasna* 43.6). It seems that Piety (Armaiti) is as important to the informed choice of the free will (that will lead to the good) as Good Mind (Vohu Manah) is.

The connection between Good Mind (Vohu Manah) and Wisdom (Mazda) is indisputable, but Piety (Armaiti) also appears to be connected to these concepts.

Geiger (1977:59) states that Piety or Faith is the highest goodness (*vahishtem*) which Zoroaster can receive from God, and he implores the Deity to grant this highest good for himself as well as for his adherents (*Yasna* 28.8), but also notes that the highest goodness is also described as the property of Mazda (wisdom). Therefore, Wisdom (Mazda), as linked with Good Mind (Vohu Manah) as well as with Piety (Armaiti), motivates thought and therefore action that is good.

Zoroastrian faith is often summarised as "good thoughts, good words and good deeds" (Dhalla 1922:32), but it is furthermore a Zoroastrian belief that if the thoughts are good, so are the words and deeds. A pure mind (in the sense of being in possession of Wisdom, Good Mind *and* Piety) would therefore enable one to choose good above evil.

3. The afterlife and the end of time

"The fate of man after death is a strict consequence of his life on earth" (Reese 1980:643). According to the Zoroastrian doctrine man is met after death by his own conscience (*Yasna* 46.6; 49.9), and thus his future state depends solely on his own actions in life and whether his conscience will torment him in the hereafter. Whatever destiny awaits man rests on him, and happiness or misery is therefore the result of his own thoughts, words, and deeds that determine his heaven or hell (Panthaki 1999:6). Essentially, the souls can be faced with pure spiritual joys in Paradise, or with spiritual torment in Hell, where the wicked soul is parted from Mazda and the blessed spirits, to dwell with demons and be tormented by its own conscience (*Yasna* 46.11) (Geiger 1977:64). Man's actions in life will not only shape his conscience into a reward or torment, but there will also be a redress of all wrongs inflicted. Individuals are therefore responsible for their own heaven or hell, and are punished by what they inflict on themselves.

Zoroaster believed in the justice of God, according to Schroff (1999:1), and in order to address the injustices of society, Zoroaster maintained that men and women can attain salvation and heaven by accepting and living in accordance with the divine revelation of Ahura Mazda. The thoughts, words and deeds of the departed soul are judged at the Bridge of the Separator, where the good and bad are weighed against

124

each other, allowing the good souls to enter heaven, but if the bad outweighs the good, the soul descends to the underworld, a place of punishment and retribution (Schroff 1999:1).

When the Final Consummation occurs at the end of time, and evil is destroyed, the *Gathas* speak of a river of molten metal which will not harm the just but burn away all evil (*Yasna* 51.9). Schroff (1999:2) interprets this as signifying a resurrection of the bodies and a last judgement and a purgation of all evil, a view held by later Zoroastrianism as well. It is impossible to judge from the Gathic text whether Zoroaster saw the evil souls destroyed or purged, but it is perhaps an indication of purgatory rather than destruction when Zoroaster refers to this process as an "ordeal", which connotes the revelation or realisation of truth, rather than death. Whatever the case is concerning the evil souls, evil itself is unequivocally destroyed at the end, but this leads on to another aspect of Zoroaster's eschatological concept, namely the end of time, which seems inherently linked with the end of the struggle with evil.

As Boyce (1992:76) notes, the phrase "the end of time" is now familiar, but it was first conceived of by Zoroaster as meaning the end of historic time within the larger span of eternity, which brought with it an end of birth and death or destruction and renewal, e.g. a "cessation of all change". With the end of change will come the end of evil, and the advent of perfection in creation, which in Platonic terms could be described as when the creation passes from 'becoming' into 'being' and perfection. Boyce (1992:76) states that, at the end of change, when the earth has been made *frasha* ('glorious') by the defeat of evil, all heaven and its inhabitants will descend to earth, as Mazda's kingdom (Khshathra) will be established upon it and it will be made perfect again, with life on earth static and unchanging. Boyce (1992:76) argues that this new concept of an end to time and history was a necessary component of Zoroaster's concept of God's moral purpose for the creation. This is called the "Final Consummation" of the "divine purpose" in *Yasna* 43.5-6, but there is not much elaboration on the eschatology in the *Gathas*, except to state that the good shall receive good blessings, and the evil shall receive evil until the "Final Consummation" when, presumably, all will be atoned for.

It is only in later Zoroastrianism, according to Zaehner (1961:58), that there is a fully developed system of eschatology which speaks of the *Saoshyans* or 'Saviour' who will renew all existence at the end of time. This eschatology also preaches a resurrection of the bodies of the dead, which, reuniting with their souls, will wade through a purging stream of molten metal that will seem "like warm milk" to the just, but burn the wicked (Zaehner 1961:58). This ordeal by fiery metal therefore purges the evildoers of their evil, and creation becomes perfect (Zaehner 1961:58). The roots of this eschatology can be found in the *Gathas*, but Zaehner (1961:58) argues that they do not have a "systematically worked out" eschatology, and that there is nothing in them to suggest that the damned can atone for their sins.

There is of course no way to be certain whether the *Gathas* held that the wicked souls would perish or merely be purified by the final ordeal, but the rest of the doctrines held in the *Gathas* could possibly shed light on the issue. The idea of punishment in the *Gathas* seems directly linked to the torment of the individual's soul only, and furthermore the soul is plagued by its own conscience (*Yasna* 46.11). The torment or reward awaiting the soul after death is directly proportionate, therefore, to what it has inflicted on itself. This could be interpreted as a form of purgatory, but is no definite indication that the complete extermination of all evil souls is an exaggeration. It is asserted that evil itself will perish in the end (*Yasna* 53.7-8), but in the intermittent period the followers of Asha (Truth) will dwell in Light whereas the followers of the Druj (Lie) will endure a long period of darkness (*Yasna* 31.20). When the retribution of molten metal finally overtakes the sinful men at the end of time, Ahura Mazda's Might and Majesty (Khshathra) will be revealed to them and Good Mind (Vohu Manah) will teach them to deliver Evil into the hands of the Good (*Yasna* 30.7-8). The conclusion to these somewhat ambiguous statements are that Ahura Mazda knows best what is to befall the sinners at the final end (*Yasna* 32.7).

A more definite point of divergence is found between the *Gathas* and the later tradition in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, though this is not an absolute certainty either. Haug (1971:312) states that although no specific statement is made in the *Gathas* regarding a resurrection of the dead, there is a phrase used which was subsequently applied to signify a time of resurrection, and a restoration of all life that has been lost in the duration of creation. This is the expression of *frashem kerenaon*

ahûm (*Yasna* 30.9), which Haug translates as "they make the life everlasting", i.e. they perpetuate the life, and out of this phrase the substantive *frashô-kereti* ("perpetuation" of life), was formed, by which all the Later Avestan books designate the period of resurrection and palingenesis at the end of time (Haug 1971:312).

Zoroaster's eschatology, as Zaehner (1961:59) states, is not entirely homogenous with the eschatology in the *Later Avesta* or *Pahlavi* books, as the *Gathas* do not speak of the *Saoshyans* as an eschatological figure, and the *Frashkart* or "Final Rehabilitation" of existence is not described in any detail either. Zaehner (1961:59) notes that the *Gathas* refer to a judgement of individual souls at the Bridge of Judgement, but believes that the fire ordeal that awaits all at the end of time will finally separate the souls into their "eternal destinies of weal and woe". Zaehner (1961:59-60) points out that the later doctrine only refers to a single judgement and views the fire ordeal as a purging of evil, making all good. Yet the only reference in the *Gathas* to the final destiny of the souls at the end of time describes no such destruction of evil souls. Instead, the passage (*Yasna* 30.11) reads:

> "If, O ye Mortals, ye mark those commandments which Mazda hath ordained – of happiness and pain, the long punishment of the follower of the Druj, and the blessings for the followers of the Right – then hereafter shall it be well" (transl. Mills 1898).

Two other translations cite the same reference to the punishment of the wicked as lasting for a long time, but not for eternity:

> "If ye, O Mortals, realise and understand the laws of happiness and pain ordained by Mazda, and if you learn that liars and wicked persons shall face agelong punishment but pious and righteous ones shall enjoy ever-lasting prosperity, then you shall reach real contentment and salvation, by learning this principle" (transl. Azargoshasb 1998).

> "So understand, O mortal men, the decrees which Mazda has ordained, regarding happiness and misery. There will be a long period of suffering for the wicked, and rewards for the pious, but thereafter eternal joy shall reign everywhere" (transl. Bode & Nanavutty 1952).

It therefore seems that the hints in the *Gathas* at the purgation of evil at the end of time make the interpretation of hell as a non-eternal purgatory not as untenable as Zaehner believes, and that, at the very least, there is no indication that the evil will suffer in hell for all eternity.

An alternative view of this perplexing issue is that the end of time is an event that will only come to be when the world is finally free of all evil, for it says that mankind must choose good out of wisdom, "but due to man's blindness and ignorance he is easily led astray; thus the victory of Ahura Mazda has been delayed." (Reese 1980:643). This possibility is reinforced by Zoroaster's urgent emphasis on actively doing good and opposing evil, including good acts such as caring for creation. This would open the possibility that the fulfilment of the eschatological triumph of good depends on mankind improving itself and its surroundings until all things choose good out of wisdom, enabling a renewal of existence.

4. The nature and divisions of the soul

The structure of the entire human being is designated in the *Gathas* as being a tripartite division of body, spirit, and mind, with some divisions within these respective categories. The Gathic description, as translated by Haug (1971:152), is: "When Thou madest the world with its bodies, and (gavest them) motions and speeches, then Thou Mazda hast created at first through Thy mind the *gaethas* (enclosures), and the sacred visions (*daenao*), and intellects." (*Yasna* 31.11). Haug (1971:152) points out that the *daenas*, as the revelations communicated to the prophets through visions, involve perception in terms of seeing as well as thinking, because the root of the word is *di*, "to see", which is related to the Sanskrit root *dhyai*, "to think", and thinking was therefore considered a perception with the mental eye, and that only later did it pass into the general meaning of religious creed. The possible meanings of the word *Daena* will be discussed below.

Schwartz (1985:647) describes this division of the individual as consisting of a body and a number of "psycho-noetic faculties". The body, Schwartz (1985:647) notes, is referred to as both *tanu-* (the physical part of the individual in its totality) and as *kehrp-* (the outer appearance), and the large inventory of the various parts of the body correspond essentially to the various limbs described in other Indo-European languages. The psycho-noetic faculties, Schwartz (1985:647) states, are far less clear, though his translation of *ahu-* as literally 'essence', which further implies intellect and will, *baodah-* as 'perception' or 'consciousness', and *urvan-* as 'soul' or that which

survives after death (a faculty, he points out, that is also possessed by righteous animals), seems to correspond with Haug's translation (1971:152) discussed above.

The psychic-noetic faculties mentioned in the *Gathas* are rarely translated or interpreted as such, because of the rather puzzling nature of the content of the passage. The verse in question has Zoroaster asking Ahura Mazda:

> "This I ask Thee, tell me truly, Ahura – whether I shall indeed, O Right, earn the reward, even ten mares with a stallion and a camel, which was promised to me, O Mazda, as well as through these, the future gift of Welfare and Immortality" (*Yasna* 44.18, transl. Mills 1898).

In the *Gathas*, Haurvatat (Perfection/Welfare) and Ameretat (Immortality) are the twin rewards acquired by man at the end of a life lived spiritually on earth, and, as Bode and Nanavutty (1952:79) point out, the possession of ten mares, a stallion and a camel would therefore neither help Zoroaster to understand or attain Haurvatat and Ameretat, nor induce him to dedicate these Powers to the service of Ahura Mazda. This passage has long troubled scholars, but some scholars, such as Bode and Nanavutty (1952:78-79), believe that the key to the imagery employed is to be found in the *Katha Upanishad* and the *Bhagvadgita*. In the *Katha Upanishad*, III, 3-5, the soul is described as riding in a chariot, the body being the chariot, the intellect the charioteer, the mind the reigns, and the senses the horses, and in the *Bhagvadghita*, XIII, 5, the senses are divided into five of action and five of contemplation, and are said to be controlled by the "one", that is, the mind (Bode & Nanavutty 1952:78). This is rather peculiarly reminiscent of the Myth of the Charioteer in the *Phaedrus* (246a-250d), although the connection with the Gathic passage is not immediately clear.

Bode and Nanavutty (1952:78) render this passage intelligible by noting that the Avestan word for camel, *Ushtra*, is derived from the root *vas*, *ush*, 'to shine', 'to burn', and that Zoroaster is therefore adhering to a commonplace of Aryan imagery when he speaks metaphorically, in this Gathic verse, of the ten senses as the ten mares, controlled by the mind, represented as a stallion, which in turn is guided by the camel of illumination. The verse therefore can be translated as follows:

129

"Answer me aright that which I ask Thee, O Ahura. How may I deserve, through Asha, that blessed reward, the firm control of my ten senses by the mind illuminated with spiritual insight that Perfection and Immortality might be understood by me, O Mazda, so that I may lay them both as Thy feet?" (*Yasna* 44.18, transl. Bode & Nanavutty 1952).

4.1. The two Intellects

Another division is found in the *Gathas* that designates two intellects, often referred to as the first and last intellects, which Haug considers to be notions of the Zoroastrian philosophy. The first intellect is innate in the soul and originates from heaven, and the last is one that man himself acquires by experience (Haug 1971:161). They are mentioned several times in the *Gathas* (*Yasna* 44.19; 48.4; 50.6; 50.10). In *Yasna* 44.19 Zoroaster asks Ahura Mazda: "How is the first intellect of that man, who does not return (what he has received) to the offerer of this gift, of him who does not grant anything to the speaker of truth? For the last intellect of this man (his doing) is already known to me."

The *Gathas* also describe the intellect as hidden wisdom: "Zoroaster is the prophet who, through his wisdom ('mazda' in the appellative) and truth, utters in words the sacred thoughts (mantras). Through his tongue he makes known to the world, the laws given by my intellect, the mysteries hidden in my mind" (*Yasna* 50.6) (Haug 1971:168). There is also mention of the two intellects as good and evil, according to Haug, though this interpretation is tentative: "He who created, by means of his wisdom, the good and evil mind in thinking, words and deeds, rewards his obedient followers with prosperity. Art Thou (Mazda) not he, in whom the final cause of both intellects (good and evil) exist?" (*Yasna* 48.4) (Haug 1971:167-168).

The *Gathas* mention not only "two intellects", but also "two lives". The two intellects are commonly distinguished as the "first" and the "last", though Haug (1971:310) points out that their meaning is not certain from the passages where they are mentioned in the *Gathas* (*Yasna* 44.19; 48.4), but are described in more detailed terms in the Later Avestan writings, as "the original intellect or wisdom, spiritual/heavenly wisdom" and "the wisdom heard by the ear". The "two lives", on the other hand, are

distinguished as "bodily" or "prior life" and "mental" or "the second" (*Yasna* 28.3; 43.3; 45.1; 46.19), and their meaning is clearly our idea of "body" and "soul" (Haug 1971:310). The bodily life, or "second" life, is also quite clearly paralleled by the "last" intellect, or the intellect that is the result of bodily experience. Another way of describing the "two lives" would therefore be to say they are the "first" and "last" lives", which mean this life and the life hereafter (Haug 1971:310-311).

4.2. The *Daena*

Daena has been a problematic word to translate from the Gathic, and this problem is compounded by the fact that the meaning changed in later Zoroastrianism. The word is used in a variety of senses, one of which is the conscience of man which meets him at the Chinvat Bridge, as has been mentioned above. Bode & Nanavutty cite five different meanings of the word as employed in the *Gathas*: (1) visionary perception in man; (2) Divine Revelation; (3) Faith or religion, the Zoroastrian faith being called "*Daena Vanguhi*", the Good Religion (an interpretation partly dictated by later Zoroastrian interpretation); (4) Conscience in man, good or evil; (5) Character and conduct, and behaviour, good or bad (Bode & Nanavutty 1952:113).

The *Daena* as Religion was a later development in Zoroastrianism, and does not seem well attested to in the *Gathas*. The notion of the *Daena* as representing religion came from the concept that Ahura Mazda had a *Daena*, which would therefore necessarily be the Good Zoroastrian Faith. Duchesne-Guillemin also discusses the term at length, and concludes by quoting Pagliaro (*L'Idealismo Gathico*, in *Samjnavyakarnam*, Studia Indologica Internationalia, Poona-Paris 1954):

> "In the *Gathas* the manner in which the *daena* is assumed by the individual is not
> stated in explicit terms. But it was certainly meant in the sense of that freedom of
> choice between good and evil which is at the basis of the dualistic conception:
> whoever takes sides assumes a spiritual essence in conformity to one or the other
> principle. Only in this sense does Zoroaster's preaching, with its inherent
> proselytising effort, appear justified. (It is therefore something quite different from
> the choice of a 'Bios' made by the soul before being reborn into the world, as
> described in Plato's *Republic*, Book X.) This *daena* motif had a moderate success in
> ulterior theological speculation, since it was partly absorbed into the *fravashi*

'protective spirit, genius', which has a more religious, less speculative value and is not mentioned in the *Gathas*. On the other hand Ahura Mazda also has his *daena*, like man, of whose spirit he is an hypostasis; the *daena* of the only god, viz. his essence, is religion, an abstract image of the deity. The semantic evolution from 'essence, spiritual image (of the deity)' to 'religion' can be legitimately inferred from passages such as *Yasna* 44.11: 'Shall Armaiti extend to those to whom thy essence (religion) is proclaimed, O Wise One'" (Duchesne-Guillemin 1958:64-65).

Although the *Daena* is not etymologically related to much the Socratic concept of a *daimon*, it is much like a *daimon* in that it is the conscience of man, but carries implications of spirit, free will, and many other complex concepts pertaining to the proper conduct of which man is inherently aware.

4.3. Geush Urvan – The Soul of the Ox or the World-Soul

The section in the *Gathas*, *Yasna* 29 or the "Lament of the Ox", has been problematic and many interpretations do not go further than to refer to the importance of cattle for the ancient Iranians as the origin of the ox-image. The importance of *Geush Urvan*, commonly translated as "the Soul of the Ox", has always been explained with reference to the importance of cattle in general to the Iranians of that time. Though the importance of cattle is a significant fact in as far as it explains why the Ox is used in the metaphor about the soul crying out for deliverance from evil, it does not explain the passage at all if it is just taken literally to mean the soul of *an* ox. Some scholars, however, believe that the reference to the Soul of the Ox in fact designates a World-Soul. This conclusion is based on comparative material from the Vedic tradition, but the older tradition of Iran also has many references to the Ox itself, which is understandable if it is remembered how important cattle were.

Cattle are indeed a favourite metaphor for many societies, and the bull figures in much protology, not only Iranian. Creation myths often depict a primordial sacrifice of a man or animal from whose bodies the creation comes into existence. Dhalla (1938:65) mentions several examples, namely the Babylonian myth of Marduk and Tiamat, the Vedic texts which relate the sacrifice of Purusha at the hands of the gods, and the *Pahlavi* works which say Ahriman (Angra Mainyu) killed Gaya Maretan, the

Primeval Man, and Gavyokdat, the Primeval Bull, and men and animals and plants came into being from the various parts of their slaughtered bodies.

It is probably because of the economic importance of cattle as a source of wealth, food and labour, as Dhalla (1938:65) points out, that they were held in religious veneration in early agricultural societies, and the ancient Iranians were no exception. Dhalla (1938:65) notes that when Zoroaster preached his new philosophy, it was Mithra who was the post powerful deity, worshipped as 'lord of the wide pastures' and as the creator who fashioned the earthly creatures from the remains of the Primeval Bull he had killed. A more familiar reminder of this god's identity is the pose, common in mithraic sculpture, of Mithra on the back of a bull with his knife in its back. Zoroaster, Dhalla (1938:65) notes, excluded Mithra, although he included the bull in his creation mythology and transformed the bull sacrifice theme into an ethical lesson.

The importance of the bovine is also reflected in later Zoroastrian thought, according to Schwartz (1985:657), by the role of the Bull as the origin of all benign animal life, and by the related usage of the term "bovine" for the animal creation. Schwartz (1985:657) notes that the bull figures in Zoroastrian mythology not only in its protology, but also continues as a central theme in its later eschatology, as the body of the bull Hadayans, sacrificed by the final Saviour in an ultimate *Yasna*, will yield up the substance which will secure immortality. Schwartz (1985:657) also remarks that this is reminiscent of the hoama, in the later texts, that comes from the tree, which also bestows immortality, and argues that this might be a reference to the sacrifice of the primal bull from which all plant life was created, and who is possibly associated with the "Soul of the Bovine" (*Geush Urvan*) interpreted as the collective sum of the souls of sacrificed animals (Schwartz 1985:670).

In Zoroaster's *Gathas* there is a variety of references to cattle which make it clear, according to Schwartz (1985:657) that there was some struggle between settled herdsmen and cattle-rustling marauders. In *Yasna* 29 the cow or bull (the gender of *gav-* is often ambiguous) longs for a protector against violence and is urged to adopt Zoroaster as guardian whom Ahura Mazda has appointed, and in *Yasna* 31.10, the cow chooses for herself "the cattle-tending herdsman as a just lord, as one who

133

promotes Good Mind" (Schwartz 1985:657). Schwartz (1985:657) argues that cattle-herding provided "a model and symbol of ethical behaviour in general, with the role of the herdsman parallel to that of the biblical 'good shepherd', and the role of the gentle, defenceless cow like that of the biblical sheep (or lamb), a symbol of benignity and of suffering".

Dhalla (1938:46) also describes *Geush Urvan* as "the genius of all the sentient beings living on earth". It is interesting to note that the Dutch word 'beest' (the English equivalent would be beast or creature), means both cow and animals in general. It is possible that this may be the case with the Avestan 'gav-', which would mean that the many references to the cow include all the animal kingdom, and by proxy, the principle of Good Mind in earthly form or symbol. Even if this were not the case, the image of the ox seems much more complex than just the result of a prominent aspect of the ancient agrarian existence. One possibility is that the concept of the ox in Iranian society was similar to the concept in the Indian society, and that a comparison between the Gathic and Vedic texts would help illuminate some of the other aspects of the cattle metaphors.

Dhalla (1938:65) notes that the Avestan *gav* and Sanskrit *go* both mean bull or cow, and the dual Vedic divinities Dyaus ('the Heaven') and Prithivi ('the Earth') are often given the epithets 'bull' and 'cow' (*Rigveda* I.160.3). Because of the analogy with the Sanskrit tradition, Dhalla (1938:65) believes that it is possible that the above expressions are used with reference to the earth, or may even mean the spirit of the world (Dhalla 1922:25).

Haug (1971:147-148) likewise believes that the ox should be connected to the earth, and therefore *Geush Urvan* as the "soul of the animated creation" means the universal soul of earth, the cause, or representative, rather, of all life and growth. The literal meaning of the word, 'soul of the cow', implies a simile; for the earth is compared to a cow (from the Sanskrit *Gaush* which has two meanings, 'cow' and 'earth') (Haug 1971:148).

According to Bode & Nanavutty (1952:46), the passage in the *Gathas*, the Lament of the Ox (*Yasna* 29) is also comparable to a similar passage found in the Vedic Indian tradition, namely the complaint of Mother Earth in the *Bhagvata Purana*, X,1,17-18:

> "The Earth oppressed by schemes of princes proud,
> Leagued in their might with countless Demon hosts,
> Bowed down with this great burden, she approached
> Her great Creator, seeking help from Him.
> Wearing the shape of cow, two streams of tears
> Flowing down her face, lamenting loud
> And piteously, with heavy heart she stood,
> And poured out to her Lord her suffering soul."

The Lament of the Ox may even be a surreptitious commentary on the threat of wounding hostility towards creation, perhaps even a reference to the violence of Mithra towards the sacrificed bull, and a warning that this wrong will be stopped by Zoroaster, whose new religion will end this senselessness. It is, however, almost impossible to believe that texts as philosophically abstract as the *Gathas* could devote a large section to the lamenting of cattle without having some more universally applicable meaning or message.

CHAPTER 5 – DUALISM

Plato

Dualism is the "religious or philosophical doctrine which holds that reality consists, or is the outcome, of two ultimate principles which cannot be reduced to one more ultimate first cause" (Werblowsky 1971:242). In terms of the problem of the existence of evil, More (1928:233) argues that one can broadly identify two groups: one group categorically denies the existence of evil, and the other group, at least theoretically, admits its reality. Although Plato appears at first to have no *overt* category of evil, the hasty conclusion that this implies that he did not believe in the existence of evil must be avoided, as his position on the problem of good and evil is quite complex and not very clear. It is possible, however, that he had no belief in the existence of evil, but even if this were the case, he certainly was aware of the problem such a belief could pose philosophically.

This apparent lack of philosophical attention to evil could be a result of a variety of reasons. Cherniss (1971:253) argues that Plato did not collect and set down his doctrinal opinions systematically under the constructs and categories of later philosophy, but discussed aspects of problems he thought to be relevant to the context of a particular dialogue. Even so, themes dealing with the problem of good and evil are evident throughout Plato's dialogues. Cherniss (1971:253) warns that one should beware of reading into Plato's dialogues something not implied by it according to Plato's own standards, and even a collection of the instances where Plato mentions the problem still does not add up to a theory, but Cherniss argues that one must be equally wary of not recognising the insights one can derive from a comparison of the various dialogues. It is such a synoptic reading of the dialogues which suggested to Cherniss (1971:253) that, "behind all the apparently diverse statements concerning the sources of evil [Plato had] a theory more complicated than any of the current interpretations has recognised but perfectly coherent in all its parts and consistent with Plato's fundamental theory of reality".

1. Good and Evil in the Cosmos

Plato believed that the phenomenal world is a spacial reflection of the perfect Idea World (*Timaeus* 52a-c), but Cherniss (1977:254) notes that a copy cannot be identical to its model, and that the phenomenal therefore cannot perfectly imitate the Forms, involving it in what could be called "negative evil", since it is a derogation of the ultimate reality expressed in the Forms. The corporeal is therefore viewed as evil insofar as it is deviates from or falls short of the good that is inherent in the divine (*Theaetus* 176a; *Timaeus* 48a; *Philebus* 25e-26b, 16d-e).

Plato states that the Demiurge, who is good, desired that all things should be good and perfect as far as it was possible, and therefore created the best possible world (*Timaeus* 30a-b). Cherniss (1977:254) notes that Plato also states that for man, at least, there is more evil in this world than good (*Republic* 379c, *Laws* 906a-b). The Demiurge is not responsible for the evil in the corporeal world, however, as Plato repeatedly states (*Timaeus* 29e, 30a, 42d, 46e; *Republic* 379b-c, 617e; *Laws* 900d), but makes all things good. This indicates that things were not good to start with, or rather in a state of "inharmonious and disorderly motion" (*Timaeus* 30a).

Cherniss (1977:254) notes that the Demiurge creates neither the Ideas nor the space (receptacle), and both are described as uncaused and ultimate factors (*Timaeus* 52a, 52a-b, 51a-b). The role of the Demiurge is to bring reason to the chaos of necessity and make it conform as far as possible to the Forms, but in doing so, Cherniss (1977:255) argues, the Demiurge does not eliminate the character of the basic material or nullify the negative evil in which it necessarily participates. The work of necessity, as Plato describes it (*Timaeus* 47d-48c), does not conform perfectly to the purpose of the Demiurge, the fulfilment of which is the work of reason, despite the persuasion of necessity by reason to conform as far as is possible, because its nature does not allow total cooperation.

Despite the work of reason, the character of creation implies imperfection, for it is a created existence (as opposed to an eternal existence) and it is in a state of becoming (as opposed to unchanging being), and therefore the creation is near good, but not completely good, because it is a copy of the Forms (and is good so far as it resembles

them) and is ordered and organised by the Demiurge (as opposed to the state of chaos it was in before reason ordered it). The receptacle was characterised by heterogeneity and an imbalance in the forces within it (the elements of fire, water, earth and air), whose perpetual motion made the receptacle "sway unevenly" and caused the receptacle to move the elements in turn (*Timaeus* 52d). The elements themselves have different densities, weights and geometric shapes, allowing them to combine to make the varied shapes in which they appear and explaining why they are in perpetual motion and change (*Timaeus* 53a-61b).

The work of reason was to persuade necessity, which is an indeterminate cause and therefore in motion, to cooperate in forming the best possible creation, and the Demiurge did this by "using this type of cause as subordinate but himself contriving the good in things that come to be" (*Timaeus* 68d). Nothing corporeal can have its own motion, however, because motion must be caused by incorporeal self-motion as a primary cause (*Laws* 894b-896c), and Plato admits only one self-mover, namely the soul (*cf.* Lee 1977:46-47). The soul, as the primary cause of movement, can cause other things to trigger movement, but the movement of corporeal entities that are thus moved, is the result of secondary causes (*Timaeus* 46d-e).

Cherniss (1977:255-256) points out that erratic or random motion must therefore have its primary source in the soul just as much as orderly motion has, and argues that to assume that Plato meant to make it a characteristic of corporeality *per se* in the *Timaeus*, is to assume that he "temporarily forgot or abandoned a fundamental tenet which he not only emphatically maintained both before and afterwards, but which in fact is implied in the *Timaeus* itself". This is evidenced, according to Cherniss (1977:256), by the fact that Plato refers to the soul as the only origin of movement in the *Timaeus* 37b-c and refers to corporeal motion as secondary to primary causation in the *Timaeus* 46d-e, *Phaedrus* 245c and *Laws* 895b, 897a.

Cherniss (1977:256) notes that, if "soul" moves all, some interpreters have concluded that the cause of the random, disorderly motions of the phenomenal world must be an irrational element in the soul, which according to the *Timaeus*, pervades the universe and moves the heavenly bodies. Cornford (1956:176-77, 205-206, 209-210) discusses this at length, and I shall not go into it here. Suffice to say that another interpretation

is that this disorder is also ascribed by some scholars to an evil World-Soul, opposed to the good World-Soul of the *Timaeus* and which is posited, they believe, in the *Laws*.

It could very well be that Plato postulated an evil World-Soul, but it is likely that, if he did, it would only be as a metaphorical, or perhaps mythical, description of necessity or the "errant cause" in the *Timaeus* (which are figurative names for the same thing – irrationality, an element in both man and cosmos, which is incompletely mastered by the rational will). It is doubtful that Plato meant a personalised concept such as he implies the Demiurge is, however, as he would undoubtedly have overtly juxtaposed the two in such a case. Nevertheless, Plato does categorically state that soul is the cause of all good and evil in the phenomenal world (*Laws* 896d, *Charmides* 156e), possibly because all motion has its ultimate origin in the soul as primary cause, even of the chaotic motions described as secondary causes (*Timaeus* 46d-e; *Laws* 894e-895b, 896a-d).

Cherniss (1977:256) points out that not all evil is the result of secondary causes, but that evil can have its immediate source in psychical or primary motion, as there are souls in the universe which produce evil effects because they themselves are evil (*Timaeus* 48a, 57e-58c). A soul, Cherniss (1977:257) points out, is good or evil according to its knowledge or its ignorance, for the self-motion of the soul has to be directed by knowledge of the Ideas, or the lack of it, and it sets phenomena in motion in accordance with its knowledge or ignorance of the Ideas.

Furthermore, there are among these objects of knowledge also Ideas of certain phenomenal evils, according to Cherniss (1977:257), although not all the phenomenal evils have Idea equivalents, for much of what is termed evil is merely negative, "a phenomenal deficiency or deviation from the positive Idea imperfectly reflected or imitated", and many have a positive content too, and as such must refer to real entities among the Ideas. The Ideas that occur and which are reflected in the phenomenal as evils are in themselves not evil, according to Cherniss (1977:257), for their evil is context-dependent and relative. Disease is an example of an Idea that, when manifested in the phenomenal world, is classified as evil, although the Idea of disease is no more evil than the Idea of man (*Timaeus* 89b-c). Similarly, Ideas such as

pleasure, pain, and desire are not as dire as evil either, as Cherniss (1977:257) points out, but their phenomenal manifestation, though they can be good, is frequently evil relative to circumstances and degree of their manifestation (relative excess or absence).

Phenomenal evil therefore occurs only when motion is determined wrongly, as a result of ignorance of the true nature of the ideal and purpose of the motion of the soul. Positive evil, Cherniss (1977:257) argues, whether absolute or relative, is produced by the misguided motion of evil souls. Cherniss (1977:258) further argues that, since these souls move in ignorance of the truth, they do not necessarily intend the evil they do, but the motions they cause in phenomena are nevertheless induced deliberately and can therefore not be attributed to the random motions of necessity. Although the ignorance which causes the evil of the soul is an elaboration of the belief that no man errs if he knows the good and would therefore necessarily seek to realise it, the punishment for evil and ignorance alike is clearly stated in the *Timaeus* (91c-92b), and ignorance is no mitigating factor for evil.

The question of the source of evil is not to be confused with the question of moral responsibility, however, for no one can be accountable for negative evil, according to Cherniss (1977:259), whether the cause is considered to be the space itself or the imperfect reflection of the Forms in it, nor for incidental evil, even though the soul is its ultimate cause. Cherniss (1977:259) argues that the soul is only accountable for positive evil, of which it is not only the direct cause, but also the wilful agent. Plato has expressed many ideas about the fate of the imperfect soul, and believes that morality and responsibility are attainable by all, but nevertheless Plato is rather vague about evil as a concept, other than the brief mention he gives it as a concept related to the soul.

2. Good and Evil in the Soul

Plato's concepts of the evil in the soul are vague, however, and Plato's dualism is virtually tantamount to a refusal to deal with the origin of evil metaphysically, which More (1928:242) argues, is because Plato recognised the question as rationally insoluble, and as not making for edification. His mythology leaves evil in the cosmos

as a mysterious, unaccountable fact, for which no person (that is, no conscious will such as our own) is responsible, and in doing so, avoids the "abyss of monism" by firstly distinguishing between the immortal and the mortal elements of the soul, and secondly by the myth of transmigration, which regards the state of any individual soul as the product and result of its previous existence (More 1928:242).

More (1928:242) argues that although Plato is "continent" on the subject of metaphysical evil, he does deal with the psychological aspects more thoroughly, since his philosophy is predominantly ethical, and the details of his metaphysical concepts of evil must therefore be discovered with the aid of his more fully developed study of psychological causes. In the *Timaeus*, the evil in this world is presented as originating with the irrational aspects of the soul, which are "unregulated and endlessly expansive", and with a similar chaotic motion in nature itself (More 1928:242). This raises the obvious question, according to More (1928:242), of how this view accords with Plato's belief that evil must be equated with ignorance and that no man errs willingly.

Bevan (1962:212-213) points out that the idea that vice is its own punishment, that the retribution for someone being a bad man is that he *is* a bad man, is often attributed to Plato, but that this seems to be only partially correct, for although Plato certainly maintained that being bad held no rewards, he repeatedly insists that those who choose evil will suffer pain after death. The distinction between these two views pertains to the question, not of whether wrong-doers are punished, but of when this retribution and correction occurs. The former theory, that vice is its own punishment, seems to imply that the evil-doer will suffer only during life or rather in his present incarnation, whereas the latter theory, held by Plato on judgement and punishment as correction, refers to its occurrence after life.

Punishment after death (when the corporeal distractions and the confusing elements are therefore removed) would imply that the soul itself is being punished for something, not merely its association with the corrupting corporeal, which, after all, has ended by then. This may be because of Plato's theory that the soul, as immortal, is capable of an existence free of material nature, but not of spiritual nature, which is

still free to choose good or evil. The concept of choice quite possibly originated with the religious views that Pythagoras held on the subject.

The soul, which is immortal, is after all also the only self-mover and primary cause from which evil comes about. As such, it seems that the bad deeds done during life, or the physical manifestation of evil, will be punished during life, but there must therefore be punishment in the afterlife for the continuation of this evil in the immortal soul. How the soul became evil, however, seems linked with ignorance of the good, and evil is therefore to a degree involuntary. The evil man would not want to commit evil if only he knew what was good. The question that remains is, of course, whether man wants to know what is good, and if not, whether this directly or indirectly leads to his evil.

Plato took over from Socrates the well-known concept that virtue is identified with knowledge, as well as the belief that no man errs willingly, and More (1928:243) argues that for Plato this became the foundation of his ethical psychology. These two basic assumptions that Plato made are therefore the basis of his concept of evil, according to More (1928:243), and the statement Plato made in the *Sophist* (228c): "We know that no soul is voluntarily ignorant of anything", seems not only to combine the two assumptions, but also answer the question of whether man seeks to know the good.

It is not clear, however, what Plato means by involuntary ignorance. In the *Laws* (860d), Plato states that "the unjust man is doubtless wicked; but that the wicked man is in that state only against his will". He goes on, however, to qualify this assumption as a position which must be accepted in this instance, or "here and now" (860d), and further states that the two states in which the wrong could be committed, voluntarily or involuntarily, must be punished equally (861a-863b). Plato therefore considers two aspects of willingness: firstly, the actual physical harm being done or the criminal act itself, and secondly, the injustice which prompted the criminal action, a psychological state (Saunders 1970:367). Plato argues that the criminal act itself is voluntary, but the psychological motivation for it is not (Saunders 1970:367-368; *cf. Euthyphro* 8c).

Plato further analyses the motives for the acts of injustice by stating that there are three possible motives which are described as constituent elements in the soul: firstly, anger or fear, as a vice of the emotional faculty, or the *thymoeides*; secondly, the desire for pleasure, as a vice of concupiscence, or the *epithymetikon*; and thirdly, ignorance, as a vice of reason (*Laws* 863b-c; *cf.* More 1928:244). The motive of ignorance is further subdivided by Plato into "simple" ignorance (*agnoia*) of the facts of the case, and a "double", or deeper, ignorance (*amathia*) in the very soul of man, an ignorance which is the more dangerous because the ignorant man does not believe he is ignorant, but claims to have thorough knowledge (*Laws* 863b). More (1928:245) notes that this first falsehood (*proton pseudos*) is often described by Plato as not knowing what one knows or what one does not know.

More (1928:245) notes that the same triple division is carried through the elaborate metaphor of the purgation of evil in the *Sophist* (226c), that is, the art of separating or removing impure or disturbing elements from healthy ones much like one would heal a corrupt body. There are two different cures for the body, medicine which purges away disease, which is seen as a surfeit causing a discord among the humours of the body, and gymnastics, which removes a native deformity or disproportion of the body itself (More 1928:245). For the vice in the soul there is a corresponding remedy, and punishment must be employed as a medicine to drive out a temporary discord of the faculties, whereas instruction, either by admonition or by dialectic (*elenchos*) as employed by Socrates, serves to reform the inner deformity of the soul which is called ignorance (More 1928:245-246).

More (1928:246) points out that the whole tenor of Plato's philosophy leads to the conclusion that all evil in the soul, however varying its manifestations may be, is somehow the contrary of knowledge. It will therefore be in conformity with Plato's general method, according to More (1928:247), to take the analysis of evil as proceeding by way of "subsumption" rather than by way of "exclusion", for ignorance (*amathia*), which is the ultimate form of evil, is necessarily connected to other forms of evil, but will be different in order, or precedence. Ignorance is both a specific kind of vice and the source of all vice, just as vice itself is "one", though it has manifold appearances (More 1928:247).

The cure for this fundamental evil is the Socratic *elenchos*, which reveals the self-contradictions of the "presumptuously wise", and so brings them to a recognition of their state of ignorance, and an accompanying humility, which renders them receptive to correction (More 1928:247). This ignorance must be recognised and dispelled before any knowledge can be accessed the reason, "for, as physicians hold that the body can have no enjoyment from proffered nourishment before the internal hindrances are expelled, so the philosophic purgers of the soul believe that it can derive no benefit from proffered instruction before it is brought to a kind of shame by the *elenchos* of conviction, and thus, the opinions hostile to the instruction being driven out, it is made pure and thinks it knows only those things which it really knows" (*Sophist* 230c). The comparison of evils afflicting the soul to diseases afflicting the body occurs in the *Timaeus* also, and Plato discusses at length how the various passions can infect and affect the reason (86b-90d).

In other words, the purging of presumptuous ignorance must precede, and is the *sine qua non* of, instruction, and can be likened to a medicinal chastisement of the soul "sick with the passions of anger and fear, pleasure and desire" (More 1928:249). The purgation of the soul is the revelation of ignorance, but its evil actions are also punished. Plato viewed punishment as a corrective rather than a vindictive measure, and the penalties imposed on the soul which is, as it were, the victim of its own baser parts, are merely a special and drastic form of the Socratic *elenchos*, according to More 1928:249).

It is also possible that the punishment was intended as a just act on the part of the law enforcer, and a recompense for those wronged. The rectification of the physical damage is only a part of the process, for the more important aim of the exercise was to bring the Socratic *elenchos* to bear on the "faction and self-contradiction of moral disease and so arousing the soul to efforts of self-mastery and unison" (More 1928:249). Until that inner conviction takes place the soul, under the sway of voluntary falsehood, "is content to wallow like a swinish beast in the mire of ignorance, and has no shame at being detected" (*Republic* 535e).

Knowledge and virtue are identical, but the ignorance which is the fountainhead of evil is not a mere lack of calculation in which the brain alone is concerned, and Plato

144

certainly did not consider it so. More (1928:249) argues that evil is something which affects the whole soul and all the soul's faculties, not something negative as the mere absence of knowledge, but something positive that can be purged away, just as disease and discord in the body can be purged away. Plato nowhere states that evil is solely negative, for he repeatedly provides an ultimate cause for the most accidental of wrongs, and the evil that comes from a lack of knowledge is no less evil than the good that comes from having knowledge is good, nor is evil in any way excusable, and it must be punished and corrected.

More (1928:250) argues that the precise nature of this "parent of the vices" can be gathered by bringing together three or four scattered passages. In the *First Alcibiades* (117d) it is said: "You understand, then, that our sins of practice are owing to this ignorance, that we think we know when we do not know". In the *Laws* (731d) this presumption of knowledge is further described: "The greatest evil to men, generally, is one which is innate in their souls, and which man is always excusing in himself and has no way of escaping. I mean what is expressed in the saying that every man is and ought to be dear to himself.From this same fault arises the common habit of regarding our own ignorance (*amathia*) as wisdom, and of thinking we know all things when, so to speak, we really know nothing".

By this deceit the very desire of enlightenment is killed and philosophy is cut off at the root, "for herein is the calamity of ignorance (*amathia*), that he who is neither good nor wise is nevertheless content with himself; for feeling no want, he has no desire of that of which he has no conscious need" (*Symposium* 204a). And by the same conceit he is deprived of religious support in the hour of temptation; for the baser crimes are committed by those "who fear not the wrath of the gods or the storied vengeance of the nether world, but, as knowing what they by no means know, despise the ancient and universal belief of mankind" (*Laws* 880e).

This ignorance is clearly a self-ignorance nourished by self-love, and is, according to More (1928:251), the opposite not only of the skepticism, or humility of the intellect, which was characteristic of the method Socrates employed to gain spiritual insight, but also of the command "know thyself" (*Alcibiades* 129a; *Charmides* 164d-165b) which the god of Delphi described as the beginning of religion, and which influenced

both Socrates and Plato. In terms of Plato's philosophy, More (1928:251) defines ignorance (specifically self-ignorance) as an "inherent reluctance of the soul to face honestly the dualism of man's nature, and, under the spur of noble discontent, to acknowledge its own darker member and turn from that to what is akin in itself to the gods".

More (1928:251) believes that in the Platonic doctrine, flattery is the great enemy of the soul, especially flattery of the self, for it is self-love that breeds the illusion that it knows what it does not know, and causes it to disparage the *elenchos* that would purge away its self-complaisance. More (1928:251-252) notes that this delusion takes many forms. Plato discusses the many forms of delusions in the *Laws* (726a-728d), such as the belief that men are naturally virtuous and need only be released from constraint to fulfil their noble destiny; that men are naturally unselfish but have been corrupted by society, or by some other factor, which therefore releases them from the responsibility of their own evil; that education should develop native temperament; that self-respect precludes reverence for authority; and that progress can be made only if each man can do as he pleases.

The Athens in which Plato lived, More (1928:252-253) argues, was "full of these flattering voices", and especially the humanists, such as the Sophists, come to mind. Plato called this flattery "the utter dishonour of the soul" (*Laws* 727a), and when Plato, in the *Gorgias* (463a), represents Socrates as defending his own practice against the more popular teachers of the day, he makes the use of flattery the point of distinction. "As in the treatment of the body", he says, "there is a true science of gymnastics and physics, of which the so-called arts of adornment and fine cooking are servile imitations, so in matters of the soul there is a true art of law and judgement in opposition to which there is sophistry and rhetoric" (*Gorgias* 463a-d).

Plato mentions yet another vice of the soul: *rhathymia* (indolence or effeminate slackness of the soul itself), and it is this *rhathymia* that leads men "to rest lazily in a materialistic philosophy", according to More (1928:257), relying on the physical observation of the mechanical causes as the explanation of their actions and avoiding the search for the ethical motives which should be governing their behaviour. More (1928:257) argues that it is against the "innate indolence of the will" that Plato's

proposals for the ideal education is directed. In the *Republic* (413c) a strenuous programme is proposed for the future Guardians, so that they may be rendered impervious to flattery and not be seduced or misled by propaganda or the temptations of sensual pleasures, but remain true to the principle of doing the best which they learnt in their education.

The downward course of the soul and the state, in what More (1928:257) says may be called the tyrant's progress of the eighth and ninth books of the *Republic*, follows a successive yielding to the indulgence of temperament. As an opposition to the indulgence of the temperament, Plato proposes (*Timaeus* 87b-88b, 89b-90d; *Laws* 728a-d, 729a-734d, 791c, 841a, among others) a strengthening of that part of the soul which imposes a check on the desires through a rigorous discipline. This regulation of the part of the soul that could cause evil is not only dealt with in the *Laws*, and More (1928:258) argues that everywhere in Plato's dialogues the life of philosophy is represented as "a deathless battle within the fortress of the soul, a constant warfare, in which vigilance is the price of liberty", and "few are the victors, but the reward is fair and great the hope".

So far Plato carries the analysis of evil to the ignorance that is involved in self-love and *rhathymia*, but if one inquires into the further cause of the evil, More (1928:260) believes there is no answer given in the dialogues, nor does he think one will find satisfaction elsewhere. More (1928:260) also states that it is tempting to explain the defect of the will and the ignorance of self-love as belonging to the necessity of the phenomenal creation, and believes such an explanation to be sound to the extent that moral evil also goes back to a principle of spontaneous disorder. Yet blaming evil on nature cannot negate the responsibility of the individual in the matter, for Plato does believe that nature is a corrupting influence, but nowhere accepts that the rational part of the soul is subject to it, for the mortal cannot harm the immortal aspect in the individual, though it can confuse it (*Timaeus* 78a). In terms of ethics, as well, only the individuals, not their environments or other external factors, are accountable for their evil deeds.

Evil cannot be equated with necessity, however, for necessity is a secondary cause, whereas the soul as self-mover is the primary cause, and necessity is completely

extraneous to the conflict of good and evil as the result of a primary cause, the good and evil in the soul itself. If nature was the sole cause and origin of evil, all evil would fall away from the discarnate soul, yet Plato's theory of reincarnation presupposes that there are certain things the soul itself must be purged of to be able to escape the wheel of birth and return in its state of purity.

Meanwhile philosophy is the clear and present call to the soul to shake off its lethargy of ignorance, according to More (1928:261), so that it may learn of itself and of its destiny, and fortunate is the man who in this life finds a guide or teacher, whether it be his *daimon* or teacher such as Socrates, to "warn him of his peril before the twilight darkens into night". This is attested to in the *Alcibiades*: "There is one who cares for you. But it seems to me that, as in the Homeric story Athena took away the mist from the eyes of Diomedes, 'In order that he might know well both god and man', so this monitor of yours must first remove from your soul the mist which now envelopes it, and then, in good time, he shall bring you to the knowledge both of evil and of good" (*Alcibiades* 150D).

Zoroaster

The problem of evil is a philosophical and theological question that seems to pervade both these fields, and various systems have been devised to try and solve this conundrum. Dhalla summarises this difficulty as follows:

> "The origin of evil has been the deepest problem of life. It confronts every human being in one form or other. If there is one question which has eluded all investigations of the keenest intellects of all lands and all times; if there is one problem which has called forth volumes of writings from the profoundest of thinkers; if there is one riddle that has baffled all attempts of the sages at solving it; if there is one problem on which the last word yet remains to be said, despite the world's voluminous literature of some ten and twenty centuries – it is the problem of the existence of evil. The creation has not only a bright but also a dark side, and the latter is to be accounted for" (Dhalla 1938:81, *cf.* Fox 1967:129).

Dhalla (1930:3) believes that delusional optimism or pessimism about evil did not affect Zoroaster, but that he pragmatically saw its presence in God's good world as

stubborn fact. A more optimistic view, as Dhalla (1930:3) points out, may regard the world as all-good, denying its imperfections and seeing evil as complimentary to good, but argues that Zoroaster did not palliate evil, or invest bad things with good names and meanings in the hopes that this would negate the separate existence of evil; rather, he saw the world was not all-good and he sought to make it so. And so, Dhalla (1930:3) argues, a recognition that life, physical, mental, social and moral, is imperfect is followed by the ideal of life – to make life perfect.

To make life perfect, however, one must oppose its imperfections, and Dhalla (1930:4) states that not only cooperation with good but also conflict with evil are the cardinal principles of a moral life. Dhalla (1930:5-8) further argues that Zoroaster's doctrine was that man, in resisting evil and doing good, should help God transform the world of imperfection into a world of perfection, since his policy was one of active involvement in the issue, not of passive lamentation that imperfection exists.

Dhalla (1930:8) mentions some thinkers and their views of the subject of the imperfection of the world and its relation to God. Spinoza, for instance, said that God, being perfect, can not act with any end in view because that would involve something yet to be attained by him, and Leibnitz catered to the optimists with his belief that ours is the best possible world, although William James observed that it is not true to facts to suppose that the world, with its hundred wrongs, can be in harmony with God (Dhalla 1930:8). Other thinkers, Dhalla (1930:8-9) states, such as Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, have all but exhausted the topic of whether or not God could have created a better world. Dhalla (1930:9) notes that in response to these issues, Zoroaster's philosophy is that the world is in an unfinished state, to be moulded to perfection, which will be reached when the struggle between good and evil ends in the defeat of Angra Mainyu, with whom imperfection and sin will disappear.

This is similar to what Plato calls 'becoming' and 'being', and involves the important Zoroastrian doctrine of man's free will in his choice to assist perfection or aid destruction, for an active part surely makes for a more stable moral philosophy than a passive acceptance of inevitability which not only demotivates any good action, but nullifies free will ultimately. Dhalla (1930:9) mentions that James Mill, and his son

149

John Stuart Mill, both saw in Zoroastrian dualism what he terms "a close approach to the rational solution of the problem of evil.[which they] justly regarded as a happy compromise between the extreme optimistic view that all is well with the world and the inordinately pessimistic view that irremediable wrong is involved in the very nature of things".

The dualism in Zoroastrianism is most clear from his myth of the Twin Spirits or principles. The conflict between the two principles, Truth and the Lie, was manifest on a number of levels, however, and only had its origin in the myth of the Twins. Malandra (1983:22) argues that on one level, the conflict was between the *daevas* and *ahuras* of the Old Iranian religion over the ritual; on another it could be seen in socio-political terms between peaceful and ordered pastoralist life and the constant threat of nomadic invasion and plundering; and finally it was a conflict manifest in the human choice, made empirically. Malandra (1983:22) also notes that this conflict, which plagued Iran throughout history, was to become fully articulated between civilised Iran and the northern barbarians in Turan, and Frye (1984:40) argues that this antagonism served to "exemplify Zoroastrian ideals of good and evil". The political and social environment of Iran might have contributed to the development of a philosophy of dualism, although it is impossible to say whether this was more so the case than in other areas, but the dualism led to another interesting development in the Zoroastrian tradition in the form of a richly elaborate and advanced eschatology that was to influence many other religions.

Malandra (1983:22) argues that it is difficult to judge on the basis of the *Gathas* alone just how fully developed Zoroaster's eschatology was, but is convinced that it is apparent that he had formulated at least the 'germinal' concepts. It was only in later Zoroastrian writings, as Malandra (1983:22) points out, that a fully mature eschatological system was recorded, and it was probably the fully elaborated system that made such an impression on Judaic messianism. Malandra (1983:22) argues that the lack of a fully adumbrated eschatology was due to the fact that Zoroaster was a realist who focussed on the here and now, and who rather referred to more immediate rewards and punishments, but he did in fact speculate on a day of judgement and a future life, where all the reward and retribution not accomplished on earth were to be meted out.

Zoroaster, according to Gnuse (1997:221), proclaimed a doctrine of complete devotion to a supreme and good deity, Ahura Mazda, and therefore required followers to choose the good above the evil and maintain a high ethical standard in life. The choice between good and evil would last until the end of time, when the good will vanquish evil with the coming of the saviour figure, the *Saoshyant*, and the earth would be purged of evil (Gnuse 1997:221). The 'moral imperatives' of the Zoroastrian faith has led scholars to call it a religion of 'ethical dualism', but it is difficult to classify Zoroastrianism as primarily dualistic as it has many monotheistic elements, and even less which of these doctrines Zoroaster himself intended to convey (Gnuse 1997:221).

The later Zoroastrian religion portrays Ahura Mazda himself as opposite to Angra Mainyu, unlike the *Gathas*, which juxtapose Angra Mainyu with Spenta Mainyu, God's creative spirit. The new opposition left a void where the ultimate principle that transcends both should be, therefore forming a strict dualism of absolute opposites, but a reinterpretation of the new opposition and a reinstatement of a more ultimate being soon came about in the form of the Zurvanite Heresy. Zurvanism held the belief, according to Gnuse (1997:221) that Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu opposed each other completely, but were like twin brothers, both descended from Zurvan ('Infinite Time' or 'Divine Time'). Gnuse (1997:221) argues that Zurvanism, although seemingly similar to the situation in the *Gathas*, by postulating an amoral, not a moral, superior spirit, conformed more to later Zoroastrian dualism, which was predominant in the Zoroastrian state religion of the Sassanian Empire (226-652 CE). Gnuse (1997:221) further notes that this has led scholars to doubt whether a strict religious dualism should be attributed to Zoroaster at all (*cf.* Zaehner, *"Zoroastrianism"* in *"The Concise Encyclopaedia of Living Faiths"* ed. Zaehner, 1958; Duchesne-Guillemin, *"Symbols and Values in Zoroastrianism: Their Survival and Renewal"* in *Religious Perspectives*, 15, 1966; Noss & Noss, *"Religions"*; Tremmel, *"Religion"*; Smart, *"The World's Religions"*, all in Noss & Noss, *"Man's Religions"*, 1984; Yamauchi, *"Persia and the Bible"*, 1990).

I shall be discussing whether or not Zoroaster's doctrine can be called dualistic, as opposed to monotheistic or polytheistic, and whether Zoroastrian dualism should be seen as conflicting with Zoroastrian monotheism, as well as how this dualism operates

within the doctrine. Additionally, I shall be discussing the dualistic opposition of the Twin Spirits in the Gathic text, as well as the dualism within the soul and the dualism between the spiritual and the material.

1. Zoroastrianism: dualism, monotheism or polytheism?

There is general agreement that dualism is a feature peculiar to Iranian religion in ancient and medieval times, although some scholars have minimised the importance of dualistic elements in Zoroastrian doctrine and even denied their existence, in order to emphasise monotheistic or crypto-monotheistic aspects (e.g. Schroff, Moulton and Gray) (*cf.* Fox 1967:129-131). It is not certain, however, if these dualistic elements in the Zoroastrian doctrine would justify classifying it as religious dualism, as opposed to a monotheism, since many monotheistic elements also abound. From a strictly religious-historical perspective, however, Gnoli (2000:1) argues that dualism should not be seen as opposed to monotheism (as polytheism must be). On the contrary, Gnoli (2000:1) argues that it can be viewed as "monotheism itself in two opposite and contrary aspects", and although this is not a universal dualistic conception, it can be applied to Zoroastrianism, in which "monotheistic tendency and a strong dualism coexisted".

The problem of dualism in Zoroastrianism is complicated, according to Gnoli (2000:1), by the fact that Iranian dualism was not 'unitary' or 'static', but in a process of change and development as a concept. Gnoli (2000:1) further argues that the religious system in Iran must be recognised as heterogeneous, and that the "fundamentally ethical and philosophical dualism of Zoroaster", as it appears in the *Gathas*, must be differentiated from the later Zoroastrian doctrine and its dualism, in which the two entities of good and evil are coexistent and opposed by their intrinsic natures rather than by choice.

Such differentiation is rejected by scholars who maintain that dualism, as it is found in the later Zoroastrian literature, appears in the *Gathas*, and that the reference to the two Mainyus is "at most a statement regarding their essence" (Gnoli 2000:1); their choice, therefore, merely means "the declaration of their inborn natures" (Bianchi 1987:507). Nevertheless, Gnoli (2000:1) notes that the axial role of choice and free will in

Zoroastrianism has been "established by Herman Lommel and others, and Gershevitch has argued effectively for the ethical character of the Gathic opposition between the two spirits". Zoroastrian dualism was dependent on the idea that free will can be exercised, and the argument that the one who chooses evil follows his own nature (Bianchi 1987:507) does not affect that principle (Gnoli 2000:3).

1.1. Arguments for dualism

A possibility for the origin of Zoroaster's dualism, according to Reese (1980:643), is that it represents a purification of the Aryan-Iranian religions. Contrary to the opinion that Zoroaster purified the pagan religion, it could be argued that the question is to what extent the *Gathas* incorporate the polytheism of the society. The *Avesta* professes the existence of a complete list of good spirits such as the Amesha Spentas, Sraosha, Tishtrya, Haoma, Geush Urvan and others. Several of these good spirits have forms that are derived from pre-Zoroastrian times, possibly belonging to an Aryan nature-worship, and they are also encountered in the Indian Vedic hymns. This could indicate an incorporation of the polytheism then current, but Zoroaster's dualism is more often ascribed to a reaction against monotheism, and the polytheistic elements, and whether they are present in the *Gathas* or whether they are noticeably absent, do not significantly affect the interpretation of Zoroastrian dualism, even supposing they caused it.

Henning (1951:46) is one scholar who interpreted Zoroaster's dualism as a reaction against monotheism, proposing that the assumption that the world was created by a benevolent god raises the question of why the world is itself not good, and that Zoroaster's dualism was a logical answer which monotheism could not provide. Zoroaster postulated that the world was the product of both good intention and evil intervention, which Henning described as "more satisfying to the thinking mind than.[the one] given by the author of the Book of Job, who withdrew to the claim that it did not behove man to inquire into the ways of Omnipotence" (Henning 1951:46).

Henning (1951:45) also argues that the two main features which distinguish Zoroastrianism from other religions, namely a force of evil opposing the good and

153

man's capacity to judge between them, which are necessarily linked, should be described as an ethical dualism, as opposed to the dualism of spirit or mind and matter of later Zoroastrianism. The opposition of the spiritual and the material became, in fact, a commonly held belief in many dualistic systems of thought, but Zoroastrianism holds that the only important dualism is the one between good and evil.

Because of his belief that Zoroastrianism is an absolute dualism, Henning (1951:45-46) proposed that the battle between good and evil is evenly matched and will last from the beginning of time to the end of the world, which means the outcome is therefore dependent on the collective action of mankind. Henning is right in his proposition that the forces of good and evil are equal, but he does not take into account the higher good, Ahura Mazda, which is eternal, whereas evil only has sway as long as it affects creation. According to Zoroastrian eschatology, when people cease to choose evil, and those who have done so have been purged of it, evil itself will cease to be. Free will is a very central concept in Zoroastrianism, and could be viewed as a leap forward in the liberation of men's minds within religious systems which too often rely on unthinking faith or fear, but precisely because of this exercise of free will, which necessarily entails the possibility of choosing wrongly, mankind is doomed to make this mistake until it learns the good.

This emphasis on free will in Zoroastrianism led Henning to comment:

> "How different Zoroaster's Man is from the cringing primitive who runs to his witch-doctor to beg for protection against the dark threats of imaginary spirits; or from the trembling believer of the contemporaneous religions of the Near East, who approaches his god with fear and servility. He is a proud man, who faithfully serves the side he has, freely and deliberately, chosen, but who remains conscious of the value of his support and of his own value. Zoroaster's view of Man was not reached by nebulous feeling or by the dreams that may come to one in a drugged stupor; it can have been reached only by thinking, and I should say by very clear thinking. This is true also of his dualism. It seems to me that a dualism of this kind can have been built only on a pre-existing monotheism, on the belief that one God, a good God, was responsible for the world. For this reason I would claim that the religion in which Zoroaster grew up was purely monotheistic. Zoroaster's religion (as are most dualistic movements) is best understood as a protest against monotheism" (Henning 1951:46).

Zoroaster's protest against monotheism, which Henning sees as evidence that Zoroaster came from a monotheistic tradition, might just as well be seen as

Zoroaster's explanation of the evil in the world as a supplement to formulating monotheism as a theological concept within his *own* speculation. Zoroastrianism need not, therefore, be classified as wholly monotheistic or dualistic, for it clearly has features of both, a situation not unique to Zoroastrianism either, as it is also found, for instance, in Plato's combination of theological monotheism and philosophical dualism.

Spiegel followed a similar line of reasoning to Henning's: "It is only when one has come to admit one omnipotent, omniscient creator, who created the world with all there is in it, that the question arises why everything in the world does not go according to the will of the creator and ruler, why not only praiseworthy undertakings of the creature go wrong but also things happen of which he could not possibly approve. In a word: the question arises as to how evil came into the world. An attempt to answer this question: such is dualism in its different forms" (Duchesne-Guillemin 1958:1).

Scholarly debate has been lively regarding whether or not Zoroaster was a monotheist or a dualist, and some scholars (Collinson 1994:4-5) believe that the concept of Zoroaster as a monotheist is an error that is the result of Haug's work (1971), who translated the *Gathas* and established them as Zoroaster's own work, but who also interpreted them as embodying a monotheism and a rejection of ritual sacrifice. The cause for concern about Haug's interpretation was solely because it differed completely from nineteenth century Parsi practices in India, and therefore fails to take into account that the modern Parsi beliefs do not perfectly copy the original Zoroastrian beliefs as set out in the *Gathas*.

Collinson (1994:5) notes that when secondary Zoroastrian literature was later translated by E.H. West, in consultation with Parsi priests and with references to modern Zoroastrian practices, a "somewhat different conception of Zoroastrianism emerged, one more consistent with its known tradition of a belief in dualism". What Collinson (1994:5) fails to mention is that the modern Zoroastrian practices are very similar to the beliefs and doctrines found in the 'secondary Zoroastrian literature', but the beliefs that this literature propounds bears little resemblance to what is propounded in the *Gathas*. The secondary literature may have been a development

155

and elaboration of the *Gathas*, but it was also a reintroduction of many pagan concepts the *Gathas* expressly oppose, or pagan deities that were replaced by the abstract Amesha Spentas in the *Gathas*.

The tradition is far from homogenous, and although the rest of the Zoroastrian tradition from the Later Avestan texts through to modern Zoroastrian practices in India are useful, they serve mainly to show how concepts found in the *Gathas* have developed and changed over the 4 000 years of the Zoroastrian tradition. Besides these considerations, to describe Haug as regarding Zoroastrianism as a monotheism is to quote him selectively, since Haug (1971:303) considered Zoroaster's *religious convictions* to be monotheistic, but regarded him as an ethical dualist as well. The issue of the nature of the opposition of good and evil in Zoroastrianism, to which Haug found an ingenious explanation, is still a point of contention, however.

Collinson (1994:5) argues that "the central issue in the debate which has ensued arose from the tension between Zoroaster's assertion of the fundamental dualism of the cosmos and later interpretations of his theology as monotheistic". It could also be said that the problem lies in reconciling Zoroaster's concept of a dualism, not a cosmic dualism as Collinson believes, for nowhere in the *Gathas* is the opposition described as cosmic, and his belief in a single good God. Whatever the specific interpretations of the problem, it remains a difficulty arising from an attempt to classify Zoroastrianism as either a dualism or a monotheism. This issue gave rise to yet other problems, according to Collinson (1994:5), such as whether the two principles posited are entirely distinct from one another and what the status and source of each is.

The distinction between the two principles, although blurred in the later tradition, is clearly stated in the *Gathas*, where the Good Spirit addresses the Evil Spirit: "Neither our minds, nor doctrines, nor directive intelligences, nor choice of faith, neither words nor deeds, neither our consciences nor souls agree" (*Yasna* 45.2). Later Zoroastrianism identified the principles as two gods, and Collinson (1994:5) argues that either the concept of monotheism does not apply, or it must be reinstated, as with the Zurvanite heresy. If, on the other hand, it is admitted that the good is supreme,

156

Collinson (1994:5) notes that the presence and power of evil, as well as its relation to the good, must be clarified.

I argue that the debate mentioned above confused Zoroaster's doctrines with the doctrines of the later Zoroastrian tradition, and that the fundamental dualism of the cosmos, against which later interpretations of monotheism reacted, was part of the later tradition, and not of the doctrines in the *Gathas*. This underlines the problem of the emphasis on the later Zoroastrian tradition versus the exclusive treatment of Zoroaster's doctrines as found only in the *Gathas*. Some scholars, such as Boyce (1975; 1982; 1984; 1978; 1992), rely on the later tradition as well as the current anthropological evidence of the Zoroastrian faith, whereas other scholars, such as Haug, only rely on the *Gathas*. Unless the tradition is completely homogenous, such vastly different sources cannot result in similar interpretations, although neither of the interpretations is invalid if it does not profess to exceed the sources from which it was derived.

Although there is continuation in the Zoroastrian tradition and anthropological data are important to its study, there is also a process of evolution involved in the tradition, and quite an amount of change is likely to have taken place given the time-span of the faith. I have therefore confined this study to an investigation of the *Gathas*, using supplementary material from the later tradition only where necessary, since the later tradition often differs remarkably from the Gathic texts. These differences include the extreme cosmological dualism that was introduced in the later tradition, and which, I believe, is wrongly attributed to Zoroaster.

1.2. Arguments against dualism

Some scholars, such as Malandra (1983:19), have argued that the dualism of Zoroaster, in contradistinction to that of the *Later Avesta* and of orthodox Zoroastrianism of the Sassanid period, is not absolute, that is, the opposing forces of Truth and Falsehood are not primordial. Other scholars have argued, more radically, against Zoroaster's dualism by postulating that he advocated a monotheism. Geiger argues (1977:37) that Zoroaster had "arrived at the idea of an Almighty, All-wise, and All-just God, a Creator and Preserver of the world, and thereby provided his people

with a monotheism in the place of a polytheistic nature-worship". Yet Zoroaster's supposed monotheism must also be qualified, as it seems not to appear in any pure form.

Gnuse (1997:222) states that the main factor is the nature of the monotheistic elements in Zoroaster's doctrine, although to ascertain this is by no means an easy task and scholars in both biblical and Zoroastrian studies widely agree that Zoroaster cannot be called a 'true monotheist'. According to Gnuse (1997:222), Zoroastrianism is often described as a 'pseudo-monotheism', such as Atonism in Egypt is, because of the dualistic elements it contains. Zoroastrian monotheism must not be confused with monism either, as it conceives of the divine as "personal, transcendent and monotheistic", as opposed to the Hindu concept of the divine or the ultimate as "non-personal, pantheistic and monistic" (Gnuse 1997:220). The problem arises, however, as to how a monotheism can represent the forces of good and evil with a dualistic emphasis on their equal power in the cosmos, and this has led some scholars to classify it as mid-way between monotheism and dualism, because Zoroastrianism does not have the pure monotheism of the Jewish faith, but is closer to this monotheism than the monism and "occasional monotheistic speculations" of India (Gnuse 1997:220-222).

Duchesne-Guillemin (1958:2) states that the denial that dualism is to be found in Zoroaster's teaching has recently been made by Parsi theologians, who find the suggestion insulting, but their position is clearly apologetic and almost certainly a reaction against the attack by Christian missionaries in the early nineteenth century that relied heavily on old arguments against dualism, much like St. Augustine's arguments against the Manichaeans. The Parsi defence was to elevate the status of the good (and God), diminishing the status of evil, and so to assimilate their religion into Christianity (Duchesne-Guillemin 1958:2; cf. Henning 1951:47).

Duchesne-Guillemin (1958:26) also discusses the scholars who argue in favour of monotheism, referring to Moulton's "Early Zoroastrianism" (1972) as one such work which insisted on Zoroaster's monotheism, ascribing the sections of the *Avesta* which are characterised by radical dualism to the Median Magi (as Nyberg was to do). Moulton also made a special study of the particular relationship of Ahura Mazda to

the Amesha Spentas, and insisted, as Jackson had done, on the doctrine of Free Choice (Duchesne-Guillemin 1958:26).

Moulton (1972:126) drew a sharp distinction between the *Gathas* and the *Later Avesta*, arguing that Parsism differed in many important ways from the original teachings of Zoroaster. The characteristic of Magianism, Moulton (1972:126) claims, is "bilateral symmetry", but there is no evidence to support the assumption that this originated in Zoroaster's doctrines. Moulton (1972:126) further argues that, although Parsism shares Zoroaster's view that good will be the end of evil, there is no fixed name for evil in the *Gathas*, and the creative privilege of evil independent of Ahura Mazda, the co-eternity of the Good and Bad Spirits, and other important eschatological notions in the *Later Avesta* are not developed from the *Gathas*.

Henning (1951:47) also discusses the arguments propounded by scholars, both modern and Parsi, who are opposed to the conviction that Zoroastrianism is a dualism, which Henning held to be the case. The criticism of dualism is based on the imbalance between the powers of good and evil (Ahura Mazda being supreme, and the opposition existing only between Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu) and the belief that good will triumph in the end. Despite the fact that the *Gathas* clearly support this view, Henning (1951:48) argues that the "apparent attribution of greater weight to the powers of good lies in the nature of these movements as religions", therefore qualifying the theology of Zoroastrianism as dualistic. Henning (1951:48) also believes that the possibility of evil being victorious could not be publicly admitted, but argues that "in their hearts they knew that the possibility existed", proof of which he finds implicit in their own activity, for if good was to triumph anyway they would not need to exert themselves. Henning (1951:48) argues that this is the result of a conflict between an abstract doctrine and the needs of missionary policy. Although such a conflict seems quite plausible, it should perhaps be considered that evil was seen, both philosophically and theologically, as something that was both possible to destroy and that necessitated destruction. The onus would therefore be on creation to speed the advent of the return of the Good by purging evil from creation.

Geiger (1977:39) believes that a distinction should be drawn between the *Gathas* and the rest of the *Avesta*, and that the *Gathas* clearly indicate a far purer monotheism. In

the *Gathas*, Mithra and Tishtrya are not mentioned, the Fravashis are never directly alluded to, as is the case with Haoma, Verethraghna and Anahita, in fact, the names of all the good spirits (mostly personifications of attributes) in the *Later Avesta* are absent from the *Gathas* (Geiger 1977:40). Geiger (1977:41) further believes that "the character of the *Gathas* is so philosophical, abstract and transcendental that such good spirits (yazatas) or angels as are mentioned above would be quite unsuitable in their theology".

Geiger (1977:41) goes further and infers that Zoroaster and his followers undoubtedly knew of the existence of these spiritual entities, who must have been much revered by the Iranian people, that there was ample opportunity to include them in the *Gathas*, and that their absence is due not to accident, but design – that "their non–mention is evidently the result of an object aimed at". He argues (Geiger 1977:41) that Zoroaster intended to replace with higher and more philosophical ideas the good spirits, who resembled the pagan gods of the old Aryan tradition too much, and all the genii that are named in the *Gathas* along with Ahura Mazda are in point of fact abstract conceptions.

Now the question arises what the nature of the relationships are between the Amesha Spentas and Ahura Mazda, if the unpolytheistic character of the *Gathas* is not to be impaired by them. Geiger (1977:45) argues that the Amesha Spentas and Ahura Mazda seem almost equally important, and he substantiates this (Geiger 1977:45-46) by citing several instances of the number of times the Amesha Spentas are named in the *Gathas* in relation to Ahura Mazda, for example, the word '*asha*' occurs in the *Gathas* about 180 times, and the name '*Mazda*' about 200 times. There is an important difference, however, between Ahura Mazda and the Amesha Spentas. The Amesha Spentas (or their functions) are related to each other in many instances and they often operate together, and are therefore sometimes open to comparison. This comparison excludes only Ahura Mazda, to whom they are compared or equated only in or as a group. Geiger (1977:46) argues that Ahura Mazda has become the only proper name to designate an Almighty God, and that he alone has achieved true personification, whereas the Amesha Spentas are abstract concepts that form part of this personification.

In fact, the apparent personification of abstract concepts could be misleading and their correct interpretation should perhaps exclude any image of their existence as divine beings per se. Regarding the names of the Amesha Spentas, Geiger (1977:46) notes that in the majority of the passages the only right interpretation of the word is as its abstract idea, and in other instances where the fixing of the correct meaning is difficult, it is likely that a double meaning was intended. The Amesha Spentas, Geiger (1977:46-47) argues, therefore designate abstract concepts and as such represent certain powers and qualities of the "Godhead", which are included in Mazda and in his "Essence". This is reinforced by the fact that Mazda's poetic designation in relation to them is as father and progenitor as well as creator, and is of one nature with them all and the powers they represent emanate from him, not from themselves leading a spiritual existence outside of God (Geiger 1977:47-48).

As for the dualistic nature of the Zoroastrian religion, Geiger (1977:50-51) argues if one is to understand under dualism a religious system wherein the existence of a force working in opposition to the good is assumed, that in this sense the religion of the Old Testament must also be classified a dualistic system. Geiger (1977:51) also argues that a religion can only be classified as a dualism if both the good and evil principles oppose each other with equal right and equal might, exert equal influence on the world, and if man considers both as agents he is dependent upon and therefore would sacrifice to and propitiate both in order to ward off bad and receive good things. The *Gathas* do not advocate this, nor does the rest of the *Avesta*, and the dualism in the Zoroastrian doctrine is present only in its philosophy, not its theology.

The *Avesta*, however, describes an evil spirit who stands opposed to the good spirit in everything. Pains are taken, in fact, in many of the passages to match the opposition of evil to good with exactly opposite epithets and opposite actions. The question remains whether this signifies a dualism. Geiger (1977:51-54) argues that although the opposition of evil to good is so painstakingly traced, and that the good spirits, such as Vohu Manah, often have their exact counterparts in evil spirits, such as Akem Manah, it is important to note that there is no regular counterpart of the name Ahura Mazda.

Another possibility in explaining the presence of an opposing force of evil, according to Geiger (1977:51), is to view its presence as a solution to the question (that plagues 'every philosophic mind') – that of how evil came into the world if there is only a good deity capable of producing only good things. Geiger (1977:51) believes that Zoroaster endeavoured to solve the question in a philosophical way. This philosophical question therefore presumably has a philosophical answer. In the *Gathas*, the abstract concept of evil certainly was personified along with the abstract concepts of good, but it seems not to have had an impact on the monotheism of the theology, as God remains above the opposition hierarchy. This conforms to Haug's view (1971), which will be discussed shortly, and which also distinguishes between theological monotheism and philosophical dualism in Zoroaster's doctrines.

The opposition between the spirits of good and the spirits of evil is present from the earliest parts of the *Avesta*, and was most precisely and formally portrayed in the *Later Avesta*. In the *Gathas*, however, the system is not so thoroughly developed or pursued. The name Angra Mainyu occurs only once (*Yasna* 45.2), and then in opposition to Spenta Mainyu, not Ahura Mazda as one might expect from the *Later Avesta*. Likewise, *Ako Mainyu* occurs only in one passage (*Yasna* 32.5); *Akem Manah* (which, however, has in other passages the original abstract sense of "evil mind") is found twice (*Yasna* 47.5, 32.3); and *Achistem Manah* (the appellative) also twice (*Yasna* 30.6, 32.13).

With these data in mind, Geiger (1977:54) summarises the philosophy of Zoroaster by stating that Ahura Mazda is certainly the Highest Being or Godhead, who is by nature good and from whom only goodness emanates; and that evil is the negation of the good, and exists only in relation to the latter, just as darkness is only the negation of light. Geiger (1977:54) further argues that evil (Angra Mainyu) is never opposed to Ahura Mazda himself but rather to his creative spirit (Spenta Mainyu). Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu are referred to as twin (*Yasna* 30.3), and Geiger (1977:54) postulates that they do not exist alone for themselves, but each in relation to the other and are both absorbed in the higher unity, Ahura Mazda.

Haug (1971) made two important distinctions. Firstly, he argued that in the *Avesta* the *Gathas* were the only works that could be attributed to Zoroaster himself, and

displays a monotheism as opposed to the dualism found in later books in the *Avesta* such as the *Vendidad*. Secondly, he argued that, following only the *Gathas*, Zoroaster's theology was monotheistic, whereas his philosophy was dualistic. Duchesne-Guillemin (1958:20) argues that the distinction between a monotheistic theology and a dualistic speculative philosophy enabled Haug to argue that a separate, equal and opposing force of evil is entirely foreign to Zoroaster's theology.

Haug (1971:303) argues that the opinion that Zoroaster was preaching a dualism, that is to say, the idea of two original independent spirits, one good and the other bad, utterly distinct from each other, and one opposing or counteracting the creation of the other, is a confusion of his philosophy with his theology. Haug states that: "Having arrived at the grand idea of the unity and indivisibility of the Supreme Being, Zoroaster undertook to solve the great problem which has engaged the attention of so many wise men in antiquity, and even of modern times, viz. how are the imperfections discoverable in the world, the various kinds of evils, wickedness, and baseness, compatible with the goodness, holiness, and justice of God?" (1971:303). Zoroaster solved this difficult question philosophically by proposing that there were two primeval causes, according to Haug (1971:303), that produced the material and spiritual world, but that these were diametrically different yet united, as is evidenced in certain portions of the *Gathas* such as *Yasna* 30. I disagree with Haug that the two opposing causes were primeval, but concur with the postulate that the dualism in Zoroastrianism is to be found in the philosophical postulates, not the theological statements. This will be discussed more fully in the section on Qualified Dualism.

1.3. Conclusion

It would be reasonable to conclude, according to Gnoli (2000:1), that dualism was central to Zoroaster's message and that Gathic dualism cannot be dismissed simply because there is a supreme force, Ahura Mazda, above the opposed principles of good and evil, or because of the belief in the final triumph of good over evil. Gnoli (2000:1) points out that both these elements are common to other dualistic systems that also believe in the triumph of good. Therefore, there can be no doubt that various dualistic elements can be found in the *Gathas*, and dualism seems an undeniable part of the Zoroastrian doctrine.

It is not necessary, however, that monotheistic and dualistic concepts be seen as mutually exclusive, and any analysis of the *Gathas* would be incomplete if the dualism apparent in the doctrine was dealt with at the cost of ignoring the equally apparent monotheism. Zoroaster could be said to be a monotheist inasmuch as Plato in his conception of the Demiurge could be described as one, but Zoroaster can also be described as adhering to dualistic principles, just like Plato's philosophy can be described as dualistic. It therefore remains to be clarified which *part* dualism played in the Zoroastrian doctrine as found in the *Gathas*.

1.4. Qualified dualism

Gnoli (1987:581) argues that monotheism and dualism are related to each other in the *Gathas*, and are not in conflict with one another, as Henning (1951:46) argued, for Gnoli believes that the dualism in the *Gathas* is in opposition to polytheism, not monotheism, as dualism is a "necessary and logical consequence" of monotheism, and serves to explain the origin and existence of evil. As such, Gnoli (1987:581) argues that Zoroaster's dualism is essentially ethical, and revolves around the concept of a moral choice between good and evil, as illustrated by the prototypical choice made by each of the Twin Spirits, one choosing order and truth (*Asha*) and therefore good thoughts, words and deeds, and the other choosing the opposite (*Yasna* 30.2, 5; 49.3).

The emphasis in this myth of the two spirits is on free will and the ability to choose what is good, as the good or evil nature of the two spirits derives from their own moral choice, not from an "innate, ontologically given or predetermined" compulsion, as some scholars argue (Gnoli 1987:581). The accent in Zoroastrianism is constantly on free will and the ability to make an informed decision, and fatalistic concepts are entirely alien to the doctrine in the *Gathas*. As this is the case, it is highly unlikely that an exception was made in the case of two beings in the creation only, and even if this were the case, it is as unlikely that this deviation from the norm would not be noted or explained. This renders the possibility of a religious dualism absurd, as it clearly remains an ethical issue.

In addition to the ethical nature of the problem of good and evil, there are cosmological ramifications. The problem of evil and suffering in this world,

according to Gnoli (1987:582), is a central concern in Zoroastrian thought, and Gnoli argues that explaining evil in what is believed to be a good creation, and in which man has dignity and freedom, necessitated a belief in the myth of choice as the origin of the principles of good and evil. The doctrines Zoroaster held on the Twin Spirits, free will and the primordial choice, will be discussed later in this chapter.

The nature of the dualism in Zoroaster's doctrines has been described as ethical by Gnoli (1987:581), with whom I agree, but the further implications of this premise regarding the structure of Zoroaster's philosophy is most clearly stated by Haug (1971:300). Although Haug's belief in the theological monotheism of Zoroastrianism has met with opposition, it is important to see this belief in context. Referring to the doctrines held in the *Gathas*, Haug (1971:300) postulates that there are three different aspects to Zoroaster's speculation, and proposes that "the leading idea of Zoroaster's *theology* was *monotheism*, i.e. that there are not many gods, but only one; and the principle of his *speculative philosophy* was *dualism*, i.e. the supposition of two primeval causes of the real world and of the intellectual; while his moral philosophy was moving in the *triad* of thought, word, and deed".

Haug's postulate solves the problem of the perceived opposition between monotheism and dualism in Zoroaster, and places in proper categorical context, i.e. theological, philosophical and moral, the beliefs expressed in the *Gathas*. I fully concur with Haug's interpretation, and would speculate that it could successfully be applied to Plato's doctrines as well. Yet there are differences within the concept of dualism too, and these will be discussed below.

2. Different forms of dualism

2.1. Religious and philosophical dualism

Bianchi (1987:506) argues that dualism, as a category within the history and phenomenology of religion, could be described as a doctrine that proposes the existence of two "fundamental causal principles" that underlie the existence of the world. Bianchi (1987:506) adds that dualistic doctrines, worldviews or myths portray an ontological opposition and antipathic quality characterising the dual existence that

is inherent in the world, and as such are different from the philosophical doctrines of "transcendence and metaphysical irreducability" which oppose monistic or pantheistic doctrines of immanence. This extrinsicality, as opposed to the intrinsicality of monism and pantheism, could be seen as inherent to Zoroaster's dualism as much as the opposition of the 'fundamental causal principles' operating in creation are, however.

The philosophical aspects of Zoroaster's dualism are often overlooked because they are held to be incompatible with the existence of two opposed causal principles, and are therefore not recognised. Zoroaster's doctrine reveals itself as multi-layered, however, and all the religious precepts have a philosophical implication that is inseparable from them, his doctrine of dualism being no exception. This is attested to by the fact that the combination of monotheistic and dualistic notions in the *Gathas* is often overlooked in favour of arguing for the existence of one of these concepts while implying the absence of the other.

Bianchi (1987:506) argues that, in the historical phenomenology of religion, there is no need to regard dualism as an opposition to either monotheism, polytheism, or monism, as "dualistic manifestations of monotheism" can be found in both the *Gathas* and in Christian gnosticism. This is also the case if the dualism is philosophical and the monotheism is theological. This is the case in the Zoroastrian doctrine as it appears in the *Gathas*, as has been argued by Haug (1971:300), just as it is in Plato's doctrine in the *Timaeus*, in which a philosophical dualism is found side by side with a monotheistic theology as well.

Bianchi (1987:506-507) also states that examples of "dualistic manifestations in monotheism", as is found in Zoroastrianism and Christian gnosticism, can also be seen in some non-gnostic forms of Christian speculation, that were dualistic because they were influenced by Plato, as well as in similar notions that occur in Jewish thought, which postulates the existence of angelic agents who work alongside the Creator. One such instance, Bianchi (1987:507) argues, is Philo Juadaeus's concept of angels who create man or his "lower constituents", a concept which is clearly influenced by Plato's *Timaeus* (41a-c), where the created divinities in turn create the mortal parts of man.

166

Dualistic formulations within monotheism, even if recognised, are not readily accepted, however, and Bianchi (1987:507) notes that Christian theologians criticised such interpretations for fear that it would limit the absolute creativity of God. Bianchi (1987:507) points out that the above-mentioned formulations were intended to free God of the responsibility of creating something evil or imperfect, rendering the evil or imperfection as an attribute, in the case of Platonism, of human free will and the corrupting influence of the base corporeal nature. Although Zoroastrianism does not conceive of the corporeal as base or evil, it does regard evil as the consequence of exercising free will incorrectly. Evil is therefore not in any being's nature, but can be a corrupting influence if the individual chooses it above the good. The importance of the concept of free will in Zoroastrianism is discussed later in this chapter.

Bianchi (1987:507) argues that dualistic conceptions are not only found in monotheism, but in polytheism as well, as there are instances of an opposition between two causal principles in polytheistic cosmogonies, often an opposition between "older, semi-personal *archai*" and new gods who are "youthful and energetic". Examples of these oppositions can be found in Ouranus in Hesiod's cosmogony and Apsu in the *Enuma Elish*, both "violently opposed in their egocentrism and ontological passivity by new gods, among whom figures a wise and energetic demiurge who creates or sets in order the world, apportioning lots and fixing destinies" (Bianchi 1987:507).

Even monism, according to Bianchi (1987:507), can be expressed in dualistic terms, and can even be seen in the classical *advaita* doctrine of Sankara, and other systems that reduce the multiplicity of the material world to illusion, that is, to metaphysical non-existence, for in *advaita* the illusion (*maya*) which is insubstantial, nonetheless causes the phenomenal world and its suffering. Bianchi (1987:507) mentions examples of monism with dualistic overtones outside of India as well, such as the monistic doctrines of the Pre-Socratics. Parmenides proposed an opposition between truth and opinion (*doxa*), an opposition which was recognised by Plato as well; Empedocles postulated coeternal and opposed principles of Love and Discord; Heraclitus conceived of a war (*polemos*) between the "way downward and the way upward", all within the context of "the axiological pre-eminence attributed to the principle of Logos, which has as its material aspect fire" (Bianchi 1987:507).

There is also a dualistic opposition in the polytheism of the pre-Zoroastrian religion, between the *ahuras* and the *daevas*. This opposition is also found in the Brahmanic tradition, between the *asuras* and the *devas*, though the attributes of good and evil are not as overtly stated as in the Iranian tradition, yet the opposition clearly exists (*cf.* Haug 1971:267-271). If all these instances are to be taken into account, it is perhaps duality, rather than dualism, which seems to pervade speculation, and it could be argued that dualism should not be considered a religious notion at all, but rather a philosophical recognition of opposition, inherent in all thinking, including monism. Dualism itself has various different classifications of degree and type, however, namely radical or moderate, dialectical or eschatological, cosmic or anticosmic (Bianchi 1987:507).

Radical dualism, Bianchi (1987:507) argues, postulates two "coequal and coeternal principles", principles that exist from the beginning, whatever their final destiny may be. Bianchi (1987:507-508) further argues that radical dualism is found, among the Greeks, in the cycle of birth postulated by Orphism, in the opposition of forces conceived of by both Empedocles and Heraclitus, in Plato's doctrines of the two motions of the world, mentioned in the *Statesman*, and of the coeternity of the Ideas and the Receptacle (*chora*), and among the Iranians in Late Avestan and medieval Zoroastrianism, as well as in the Gathic doctrine of the Twin Spirits, the latter supposedly "existing independently from the very beginning of the world with their perfectly contrary natures".

As has been argued in chapter 8 (Creation), it is possible that the two Gathic principles were not primordial, but that their existence could have been dependent on creation. The reference to their existence in the beginning likewise has a connection with the destruction of one of the opposing forces in the end, and both these references to time quite possibly refer to the Zoroastrian concept of linear time that will end, and therefore has a beginning, though not a primordial beginning. If this is the case, the two opposing forces are not primordial, and radical dualism is therefore not found in the *Gathas*, but rather a moderate dualism.

Moderate dualism, or the existence of one primordial principle, with a second principle deriving from the first, often attributes an important part to the second

principle in bringing the world into existence, and example of which is the dualism of the "anthropogony" of Plato's *Timaeus* (Bianchi 1987:508). The *Gathas* display characteristics similar to what can be described as moderate dualism, since the Evil Spirit does play a part in the shaping of creation, albeit destructive, though it is not stated that the Evil Spirit derives from God in any way, unless God's gift of free will is to be considered a connection.

The dualism in the *Gathas* can also be described as an eschatological dualism, as opposed to a dialectical dualism, the latter postulating that the two principles function eternally and are often conceived of as not only ethically dualistic but also metaphysically (Bianchi 1987:508). Examples of dialectic dualism can be found in the speculations of Empedocles and Heraclitus, as well as in the doctrines of Orphism and Platonism, whereas Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism and Gnosticism are some examples of eschatological dualism (Bianchi 1987:508). Plato's ideas concerning the soul's escape from the wheel of incarnation could also be described as an instance of eschatological dualism. It could be argued that this is analogous to the perfecting of the creation, body and spirit, propounded by Zoroaster, who includes the corporeal because he, unlike Plato, did not view it as base or evil itself.

Finally, cosmic and anticosmic dualism, as the names imply, are different beliefs regarding the world, cosmic dualism maintaining that creation is good, and evil is an external force (a belief held by Zoroaster), as opposed to anticosmic dualism which considers the corporeal to be inherently evil and corrupting (a concept common to Plato and many other dualistic systems) (Bianchi 197:508-509).

2.2. Ethical and Cosmological dualism

If there is anything known about the Zoroastrian faith in the West, it is that it is a dualistic religion and "Zoroastrian dualism" has even become a cliché often used in the field of religious scholarship as well as in popular accounts of religion (Shapero 1995b:3). The current Zoroastrian community also regards Zoroastrianism as a dualism, although Shapero (1995b:4) notes that there are three major interpretations of the type of dualism found in the religion. The first interpretation of the Zoroastrian dualism is that it is ethical, an interpretation which is influenced by dualism as it is

portrayed in the *Gathas*; the second interpretation that the dualism is cosmic, and conforms to the beliefs held in later Zoroastrian traditions that claim they are an elaboration of the Gathic doctrines; and the third interpretation seeks to reconcile the previous two, presuming a homogeneity within the long tradition of the Zoroastrian religion or a compatibility between the ethical and cosmic interpretation of dualism (Shapero 1995b:5). The notions of ethical and cosmic dualism, as well as attempts at their synthesis, will be discussed below.

2.2.1. Ethical dualism

The "dualism" of Zoroastrianism may be known in the West, but Shapero (1995a:4) argues that it is mostly misunderstood. The doctrine of dualism as it appears in the *Gathas*, Shapero (1995a:4) argues, where Spenta Mainyu, the "Holy Creative Spirit", is opposed to Angra Mainyu, the Hostile Spirit, proposes a conflict that takes place in the human heart and mind only, not in the material universe. The only evil that is manifest in material reality is the direct result of evil will, not of inherent nature. Shapero (1995a:4) concludes that the constant struggle between good and evil is therefore a struggle within human beings themselves, and that this is clearly an ethical dualism. In later traditions the opposition of good and evil incorporated the material, dividing the Universe into two camps, ruled by the Good God or his opponent, the Evil Spirit, the conflict changing into an opposition of two coeternal beings, and therefore becoming a cosmic dualism (Shapero 1995a:5). Some modern Zoroastrians believe in cosmic dualism, others in ethical dualism, but the teachings concerning dualism in the *Gathas* remain ethical (Shapero 1995a:5).

Shapero (1995b:6) points out that the interpretation that the dualism in the *Gathas* is ethical, and that the two principles of Good and Evil are purely psychological, mental, and abstract, illustrations of an opposition active only in the human mind, is supported by linguistic studies (already mentioned) which reveal that the word Zoroaster chose to describe these principles, Avestan *mainyu*, is from the Indo-European root *man*, which is translated as "mind" or "mental". Jafarey, in translating the Avestan, renders *mainyu* literally as "mentality", but most of the other English translations of *mainyu* use the word "spirit" (Shapero 1995b:6). There is quite a difference between a "mentality" and a "spirit", the first being a concept or a condition in the mind, but the

second having the potential for a much more independent existence (Shapero 1995b:6). This second meaning of the word *mainyu*, spirit as opposed to mentality, perhaps suggested the interpretation in the later tradition of the two spirits as autonomous and active entities within the material sphere.

The Californian Zoroastrian Centre describes the opposition of the two spirits as being that of a progressive versus a retarding force or mentality (Panthaki 1999:5), and Shapero (1995b:6) believes that the description in the *Gathas* could be called "psychological language", e.g. the better and the bad in thoughts, words and deeds; worst vs. best mind, wrongful vs. progressive mind. Shapero (1995b:7) further notes that Zoroaster would have conceived of and expressed such psychology in mythical terms and with the aid of personification, hence his use of metaphor in calling the two "Twins". Shapero's use of the word "psychological" for Zoroaster's description of the Twins is in reaction to Jafarey's use of the word "imaginary" in his translation, which Shapero considers to be misleading, since it connotes something fanciful that has no reality (Shapero 1995b:7).

The Avestan word translated by Jafarey could mean either "seen in a dream/vision" or "self-active", its translation is obscure, but Jafarey's interpretation is also psychological rather than mythological, as it pertains to human consciousness and refers to the fact that, in reality, the importance of the choice is not whether the two spirits make it, but rather that man himself must choose between Good or Evil (Shapero 1995b:7). It is as illustration of the choice "each man and woman" must make between good and evil (*Yasna* 30.2) that the choices of the Twin Spirits are related. Shapero (1995b:8) further believes that the ethical choice in the *Gathas* is only experienced by sentient beings, human or divine, for good and evil are essentially linked with consciousness, and only conscious beings can make a choice.

The ethical dualism in the *Gathas* therefore proposes that the conflict of good and evil exists only in the world of consciousness, and specifically human consciousness. Shapero (1995b:8) notes that evil arises in this world only through the wrong choices and actions of human beings, and all the things that are viewed as wrong: war, pollution, crime, oppression, hate, deprivation, violence, are the result of human

171

thoughts and actions, and it is the human society that is the arena in which the battle of good and evil is fought.

Shapero (1995b:8) concludes that:

> "In this humanistic ethical view of dualism, our responsibility is huge. Every morally good action we do advances God's work on earth and brings us closer to the Wise Lord, but every evil action we do, no matter how small, retards that work and distances us from God. This is a sober and even stark way: everything is up to us. We cannot blame our bad actions on an independent Devil who made us do it, or on the inscrutable plan of an incomprehensible God. If we do wrong, it is our fault alone, having given in to our own hostile mentality."

2.2.2. Cosmic dualism

There is, as Shapero (1995b:6) has mentioned, another translation of *mainyu*, and that is Spirit, which is favoured by most Gathic translators "despite its somewhat Christian sound", and Shapero (1995b:9) believes that this meaning of the word led to the interpretation of dualism as cosmic. The *Gathas* describe the two mentalities, or Spirits, as if they acted independently, making their choices for Good or Evil, but the question is whether this is just a poetic metaphor for a human, psychological reality or whether it is meant to be taken more literally, that Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu are indeed independent beings with consciousness of their own (Shapero 1995b:9).

Ethical dualists consider Zoroaster's personifications as a literary device only, according to Shapero (1995b:9), whereas the later dualists interpret them as actual theological realities. The translations of the *Gathas* that emphasise the idea that Good and Evil are represented by personified, living beings are equally plausible linguistically (Shapero 1995b:9), although it could be argued that they do not represent an interpretation harmonious with the rest of Zoroaster's doctrine. The personification of the opposing forces only truly eclipsed the "strictly ethical-psychological view" of the *Gathas* in the later Zoroastrian tradition, which became what is thought of as "classic" Zoroastrian doctrine (Shapero 1995b:9).

Dhalla (1922:33) argues that the successors to Zoroaster's ethical dualism in the *Gathas* extended the concept and developed a system of cosmic dualism, and dualism therefore remains a "salient feature of religious thought in Iran". This cosmic dualism seems absent in the *Gathas*, however, and present only in the later Zoroastrian tradition, which casts considerable doubt on the thesis that Zoroaster preached a dualistic theology. Shapero (1995b:9) believes that this elaboration, in the *Later Avesta*, of the initial Gathic dualism is due to the reintroduction of myths.

Shapero (1995b:9) states that myth, as it is part of all religions, was also part of the ancient, polytheistic Indo-Iranian religion that Zoroaster rejected "in order to establish his radical new monotheistic way". Shapero (1995b:9) also argues that the mythical elements in the *Gathas*, although still present, are muted in favour of abstract moral philosophy and worship, but soon returned to the religion after Zoroaster's death, and dualism, amongst others, became mythologised, changing from abstract philosophy to sacred story. This was a reintroduction not only of myths of divine creation and conflict, but of the "God-forms" of the old Indo-Iranian gods and goddesses, who were re-adapted into the Zoroastrian faith by the later priests of the religion, the Magi (Shapero 1995b:9). This observation of reintroduction of the older, pre-Gathic tradition in the later Zoroastrian texts was also made by Zaehner (1956:14), who believes that there was a revival of paganism, especially in the *Yashts*.

Zoroaster's two principles, Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu, also changed as the religion evolved. Instead of being an emanation of God, Spenta Mainyu, the Good Spirit, became identified and united with Ahura Mazda Himself, so that they formed one Godhead, Ohrmazd in the later language of Middle Persian. Angra Mainyu, the Spirit of Evil, became the fixed epithet in the later texts as well, known as Ahriman. Shapero (1995b:10) notes that the battle of good and evil was no longer between one emanated mentality and another; it was between the God of Goodness Himself and an independent spirit of evil, a cosmic rather than an ethical dualism.

Although the opposition of God to the Evil Spirit in later Zoroastrianism has been classified as a dualism in the sense that there are two gods opposing each other, Shapero (1995b:10) argues that this is a misinterpretation of the dualism in the later Zoroastrian belief as well: the notion of two gods has never been part of Zoroastrian

belief, neither in the Gathic nor the Later Avestan and Pahlavi traditions; Angra Mainyu (or Ahriman) may appear to be powerful and even to have divine characteristics, but he has never been divine, for he is considered a subordinate entity in rebellion against the One God (Ahura Mazda or Ohrmazd) and His Truth, his reign is temporary, and he is not eternal.

The dualism of the later doctrine is in fact material rather than cosmic, as the physical world becomes the stage for the opposition of the forces of good and evil, the universe having been divided into areas where evil dominates and areas where the good does. There is, therefore, a Good Creation and an Evil Creation, and the earth is described as the "World of Mixture", where neither Good nor Evil has yet prevailed (Shapero 1995b:10).

This is in direct opposition to the teachings of the *Gathas*, where evil is said to have no existence other than the spiritual. The introduction of the physical as a possible realm of evil changed much of the previous Gathic belief, and the implications are manifold. Firstly, the nature of ethical dualism internalised the struggle of good and evil, and, because of this internal contemplation of the choice, letting the responsibility fall on the individual. As soon as the physical realm came into play it made way for the reintroduction of many pagan beliefs. Rituals, for instance, could be reintroduced as they would necessarily be believed to have an effect on the spiritual as well as the material worlds, and evil was no longer a mere concept which had to be morally opposed, but a force to be magically destroyed.

Pagan gods were also reintroduced, presumably as the battling of good and evil suggested a reincorporation of the old divinities as a form of army, who could continue their fighting with each other as of old, but under new banners, as it were. Shapero (1995b:11) notes that, unlike the 'plain' world of ethical dualism, where the only moral actors are human beings on the neutral stage of the physical world, the world of cosmic dualism is an extravagant drama played out in an elaborate theatre with many levels, populated with countless spiritual and physical beings, each aligned to one side or the other, and the plot takes aeons to unfold

Whether it be a slow and inner process of becoming good, or a cosmic battle of divine beings, the opposition of good and evil will end. Both ethical and cosmic dualism,

and their respective contexts of the *Gathas* and the later Zoroastrian doctrine, postulate a linear timeline, with a clearly defined end of time, when evil will be vanquished and creation will be perfected. Also, in both ethical and cosmic dualism, human actions are crucial for making this Renewal of All Things (*frashokereti*) happen, and the moral imperative and goal is the same in both views: righteous action and emulation of the goodness of God and His divine Order, Asha (Shapero 1995b:11).

2.2.3. Synthesis

There are many other ways in which the dualism of Zoroastrianism has entered Western thought, through religions and ideologies such as Manichaeism and Gnosticism, which extended the boundaries of cosmic dualism. In Manichaean and Gnostic thought, the entire physical world is the product of an evil entity, and is completely corrupt, except for the "particles of light" or soul-essence trapped in the prison of matter, and therefore the work of humanity is not to redeem the world, but to escape it by rejecting matter as much as possible (Shapero 1995b:12).

This form of dualism, which led to an otherworldly contempt for the physical world and the human body, influenced major Christian thinkers, especially Augustine, and can still be recognised in some areas of Christianity today (Shapero 1995b:12). It is important to remember, however, that this Manichaean dualism of soul against world, of mind against body, is not the true Zoroastrian dualism, for the Zoroastrians, whether they are cosmic or ethical dualists, believe in the continuity of the physical and spiritual, not their separation. What is done in the physical world affects the spiritual world, and vice versa. Zoroastrianism has never called the entire physical world evil; rather, it rejoices in the goodness of the world which was created by an all-good God (Shapero 1995b:12).

Other Western schools of thought have attempted to generalise dualism in non-religious ways. System-building philosophers such as Hegel proposed a world-view of alternating opposites, both in the material and social world, which would then be resolved into a "synthesis" of the two opposites (Shapero 1995b:13). This Western dualism is not really Zoroastrian either, although Zoroaster, in his *Gathas*, did

contemplate pairs of opposites in the natural world (light and darkness, sleep and waking, night and day, in Yasna 44). Zoroaster's purpose, however, was not to create a philosophy of Being, but to lead people to God and to right action and thinking (Shapero 1995b:12). Therefore, in the Zoroastrian doctrine there can be no reconciliation or "synthesis" between the two opposites of Good and Evil, for it is stated in the *Gathas* that neither the thoughts, teachings, intellects, choices, words, deeds, consciences nor the souls of the Twin Spirits agree (*Yasna* 45.2).

A synthesis of good and evil, or a reconciliation of the Twin Spirits, was already attempted in ancient times. This attempt at a synthesis tried to identify the Twin Spirits (Ohrmazd and Ahriman at this point in the tradition), as literally twins, the offspring of a single father, Zurvan. Zurvan was a personification of Time, and the twins were primordially connected through their progenitor, making them a unity rather than a duality (Shapero 1995b:13). Zurvanism flourished along with mainstream Zoroastrianism for centuries, but disappeared as a religious movement some time after the Arab conquest (Shapero 1995b:13). Zurvanism, however, can be viewed as a partial return to the original Zoroastrian concept of the good and evil opposites being or existing above and beyond this opposition, although it is more often considered a heretic movement away from 'true' Zoroastrian dualism, which postulated only the existence of two deities opposed to each other. Gathic dualism, therefore, remains a lesser-known form of Zoroastrian dualism.

3. The Twin Spirits

Fundamental to the understanding of the dualistic nature of the *Gathas* is *Yasna* 30.3-4, as it discusses the nature and choice of the two spirits, and their role in creation:

> "Now in the beginning, these two Mainyu, the twins, revealed themselves in thought, word and deed as the Better and the Bad; and, from these two, the wise chose aright, but not so the unwise. And thus, when these two Mainyu first came together, they generated life and the absence of life [non-life], and so shall human existence continue till the end of time: the worst life for the Followers of the Lie, but the supreme beatific vision [best Thinking] for the Followers of the Truth."

The later tradition, according to Zaehner (1961:51), is divided on the interpretation of the *Gathas* as propounding a monotheism or a dualism, a rigid dualism between

176

Ahuramazda, an incorporation of Ahura Mazda, erroneously identified, according to Zaehner, with Spenta Mainyu, and Ahriman being supported by the late Sassanian and later orthodoxy. Zaehner (1961:51) further believes that the Zurvanite heterodoxy drew the correct conclusion from the Gathic description of the two spirits as twins, interpreting it as signifying that they had a common father, substituting Zurvan Arkana for Ahura Mazda, since the latter was now identified as one of the twins. Zaehner (1961:51) also mentions that yet another sect believed that the Evil Spirit came into being because of a single evil thought of the Supreme Being.

Since both these heretic sects attributed the creation of the Evil Spirit to God, Zaehner (1961:51) argues that the notion of Zoroaster having held a similar belief cannot be summarily dismissed, although Zaehner points out that Zoroaster did not believe the Evil Spirit was evil in substance, forced to do evil by God or any "inner compulsion of his own nature", as the later Sassanian orthodoxy did, but was evil because he chose to be. The choice exercised by the Twin Spirits, as it must be exercised by all people, is the important factor in Zoroaster's doctrine, whether the Evil Spirit be regarded as God's literal offspring or not, for the choice implies a dualism of mentalities or spirits, not deities.

Eliade (1976:310) also believes that Zoroaster's theology is not "rigidly dualistic in the strict sense of the term", since Ahura Mazda is not confronted by an anti-god, but the opposition in the beginning is between the two Spirits. Eliade (1976:310) recognises that a unity between Ahura Mazda and Spenta Mainyu is implied (*Yasna* 43.3) also, and if they are separate, this nevertheless translates into Good and Evil (these two spirits) originating from Ahura Mazda himself. Conversely, Eliade (1976:310) argues, since Angra Mainyu freely chose evil, Ahura Mazda cannot be accountable for his actions or responsible for the introduction of evil, although Ahura Mazda, in his omniscient capacity, would have known from the beginning what choices were to be made and nevertheless did not prevent it. Eliade (1976:310) postulates that this may mean either that God transcends all contradictions or that the existence of evil "constitutes the preliminary condition for human freedom". A similar argument could conceivably be pursued regarding the Old Testament religion or the Judeo-Christian tradition, neither of which is classified are a dualism.

It is not only in the Hebrew religions that a parallel can be found, either, and Eliade (1976:310-311) states that the antecedents reach as far back as prehistory, in the different "mythico-ritual systems of bipartitions and polarities, alternations and dualities, antithetical dyads and *coincidentia oppositorum* – systems that accounted at once for the cosmic rhythms and the negative aspects of reality and, first and foremost, for the existence of evil". Yet Zoroastrianism contributes significantly to the illumination of this problem of evil, and Eliade (1976:311) also states that Zoroaster conferred an entirely new religious and moral meaning to this immemorial problem, and the *Gathas* are the basis for the characteristics and later elaborations of the Iranian religion.

One of the important contributions that Zoroaster made is to stress the faculty of free will, and therefore to relegate evil to a position that is chosen, not preordained, for Eliade (1976:311) points out that the primordial separation between good and evil is the consequence of the choice exercised by the twin spirits, one choosing Asha (Justice) and the other Drug (Deceit). The beings that follow evil are therefore doing so by choice. Some of these followers of evil are condemned by Zoroaster specifically, such as the *daevas*, or old Iranian gods. Zoroaster speaks against the worship of these *daevas* and forbids the sacrifices made to them, specifically bovine sacrifices, which Eliade (1976:311) interprets as being a result of the importance of bovines in the Mazdean religion and as possibly reflecting a conflict between sedentary and nomadic tribes. Eliade (1976:311) also mentions that it is not only a question of criticism on the social plane, but also of a rejection of the Aryan national religious tradition. It seems obvious that Zoroaster, having reformed the national pantheon considerably, should explain the position of the old gods within the new religion, as well as the reason for his disagreement and resulting reforms. These are only the physical and social factors contributing to an exposition of Zoroaster's dualism, and are rather less important than the spiritual and intellectual aspects.

Gnoli (2000:2), like Zaehner (1961:51), notes that Zoroaster's dualism was a "wholly transcendent" or "spiritual" dualism, not based on the opposition of *mainyava/menog* (the 'spiritual') versus *geithya/getig* (the 'material'). This spiritual-material duality is mainly found in the later Zoroastrian literature, such as the ninth century *Pahlavi* texts, although there are Gathic antecedents (Gnoli 2000:2). In later Zoroastrianism

178

the material is not considered inherently evil or base, however, but 'negative' in the sense that it is the place where the two spirits 'intermingle' and, as such, the place where creation is contaminated by the evil, despite the non-material existence of evil (Gnoli 2000:2). The dualism between good and evil takes place on the spiritual or mental plane, however, and is not to be equated with a dualism between spirit and matter, but is rather an opposition of spirit against spirit, reinforcing the purely mental issue of choice which is to be made by all (Gnoli 2000:2, *cf.* Shaked 1967).

The dualism of good and evil does affect both spirit and matter, however, as is indicated by their respective creations. Gnoli (2000:3) regards these two creations, or rather the creation and the counter-creation, as a crucial element of Zoroastrian dualism, and interprets the non-life that Angra Mainyu creates in answer to the life that Spenta Mainyu creates as having a negative character only. The physical creation remains God's (through his creative spirit Spenta Mainyu), and Gnoli (2000:3) interprets Angra Mainyu's role as that of attacker and corrupter, not creator, for he has no power outside the spiritual. Certain references in the later Zoroastrian literature that claim Ahriman can never exist, prompted Shaked (1967:232) to go so far as to argue that the Evil Spirit's presence in creation may not be "an ontological fact, but merely an anthropological and psychological phenomenon". There is certainly no indication that this is not also the case in the *Gathas*, as the Evil Spirit is hardly seen as anything but a rather vague concept, and solely as an antithesis to the Good.

Something the *Gathas* are surprisingly clear on, however, is the good forces that are mentioned in opposition to the evil. Not once is evil opposed directly to Ahura Mazda himself, only to his Amesha Spentas, and specifically to Spenta Mainyu. Later Zoroastrian dualism differed from the doctrine of dualism in the *Gathas* in that Spenta Mainyu became increasingly assimilated into Ahura Mazda, an assimilation which Gnoli (2000:3) argues was suggested by two references: the *Gathas*, which clearly states in *Yasna* 44.7 that God created everything through his Beneficent Spirit; and the *Later Avesta*, which defines Spenta Mainyu as a 'creator' not unlike Ahura Mazda himself (*Yasht* 10.143).

I disagree with Gnoli on his interpretation of these two passages as indicating concepts antecedent to the later interpretation of Zoroastrian dualism, as they both

seem to indicate a clear division between Ahura Mazda and Spenta Mainyu. The problem lies not so much in ascertaining whether Spenta Mainyu and Ahura Mazda are to be identified as one, but whether the Amesha Spentas in total are part of God. However, the identification of God and his creative spirit was only recorded as late as the ninth century *Pahlavi* texts, though mentioned by Greek sources in the fourth century BCE, but Gnoli (2000:3) notes that there is nothing in the *Avesta* to indicate that the opposition between Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu was transferred to Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu. Zoroaster's doctrine, as Gnoli (2000:3-4) argues, had therefore become an "uncompromising dualism, in which two aboriginal deities, Ohrmazd and Ahriman, God and the Devil, face each other and contend for ultimate victory" (Gnoli 2000:3-4).

The Gathic doctrine of Ahura Mazda and the opposition of Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu seem to have led to the development of two other doctrines, namely *Pahlavi* and Zurvanist dualism. *Pahlavi* dualism married the concepts of Ahura Mazda and Spenta Mainyu, forming the one cognate Ohrmazd and opposing it to the transformed Angra Mainyu who had become Ahriman. The Zurvanistic dualism retained the concept of twin spirits (here Ohrmazd and Ahriman instead of Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu), but inserted a deity in the role of the Gathic Ahura Mazda – Zurvan, the god of time and father of the twins, although closer examination will show Zurvanism to have a different philosophy than early Zoroastrianism.

Gnoli (2000:4) himself argues that Zoroastrian dualism was reformulated by the later degradation of God to the level of "devil's antagonist", but believes that this reformulation was part of a "unitary body of doctrine that remained essentially unchanged for centuries". Gnoli (2000:4) argues that the heterogeneous sources serve partially to reconstruct the historical development of such a 'unitary doctrine', and states that it progressed from the Gathic doctrine of Ahura Mazda as separate from the twin opposing forces, to the belief that Ahura Mazda himself was opposed to the evil spirit, which in turn was expanded to the belief that Zurvan (Time) was the father of the twins Ohrmazd and Ahriman.

The supremacy of Time has been variously regarded as a development parallel to Mazdaism in Iran, a Mazdean heresy, a theological 'trend' "peripheral to orthodoxy",

related to the religion of the Magi, and even as a speculation introduced in the ninth century Zoroastrian religious literature (Gnoli 2000:4). Gnoli (2000:4-5) argues that Zurvanism, "with its speculation on Time, its apparatus of numbers and the idea of the world-year", is the result of contact between Zoroastrianism and the Babylonian civilisation in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, specifically with Babylonian astronomy, astrology and astral religion, although an influence from the prevailing thought of the Achaemenid and Hellenistic period in the Near East, mostly notions of universal, regulating, and impersonal laws and forces, cannot be discounted. These influences on Zurvanism, Gnoli (2000:5) argues, caused a subversion of the original Zoroastrian moral values and belief in the dignity and freedom of man, subjugating God and man to the omnipotence of time. This fatalism, Gnoli (2000:5) notes, was to continue into and deeply influence medieval Persia.

The basic hierarchy underlying Zurvanism was not new, however, as the dual principles of good and evil that are subject to a higher power seem to have appeared in the *Gathas* as well. As has been noted by Geiger (1977:54), there do not seem to be any references in the *Gathas* to an evil force opposing Ahura Mazda himself, only to his Amesha Spentas, unless no distinction is drawn between Ahura Mazda and Spenta Mainyu as in the *Later Avesta*. An evil force opposing Spenta Mainyu is mentioned only twice (*Yasna* 30.4-7, 45.2). The role Spenta Mainyu has in the *Gathas* is not very clear, however, as he is sometimes identified with Ahura Mazda (*Yasna* 43.2), and sometimes distinguished from him (*Yasna* 45.6, 47.1).

Geiger (1977:54) contends that Spenta Mainyu must therefore be a divine being who sometimes rises to the level of the Highest Godhead, sometimes is distinct from him or has separate existence. However, the other Amesha Spentas, as they are depicted in the *Gathas*, can also be said to alternate between having a separate existence and being an emanation from or attribute of the Godhead. The important distinction is that Spenta Mainyu is an important attribute of Ahura Mazda as his creative spirit, just as the creation is an important manifestation of that force.

Evil is depicted as a destructive force in its capacity of negating creation, but a non-creative force itself, thereby fulfilling its role of mere negation of good in an opposition of being vs. nothingness. Geiger's view that Spenta Mainyu sometimes

rises to the level of Highest Godhead, if correct, should by rights apply to all the Amesha Spentas. It seems rather that evil negates good in both the moral and intellectual spheres as Lie and Evil Mind, but also in the physical realm as an opposition to creation, the most important aspect of a Creator.

Ahura Mazda therefore creates everything through his creative spirit, Spenta Mainyu, and Zoroaster expresses the negative counterpart to his creativity as Angra Mainyu, the evil spirit and twin of the good spirit Spenta Mainyu, who chooses evil in opposition to goodness (*Yasna* 30.3). The first thing which the twins produced is life and the absence of life (or being and not-being/nothingness) (*Yasna* 30.4). Geiger (1977:55) explains this opposition by the example that if Spenta Mainyu creates light, the counteraction of Angra Mainyu is darkness, or the absence of light.

Geiger (1977:55) postulates that to the Zoroastrian all evil is therefore not something properly realistic, existing in and for itself, but only the failure of goodness, and furthermore that it is self-evident that good and evil throughout are not parallel ideas of equal value, but the latter has a purely relative existence. This semi-reality of evil coincides with the belief in its temporal nature held in Zoroastrian eschatology.

This temporal nature of evil is also connected to the immaterial nature of evil, as opposed to good that has both material and immaterial forms. Later Zoroastrianism opposes *menog* to *getig* and maintains that Ahriman has only *menog* existence in the hearts of men. Being driven from every human heart would therefore drive evil from the world as well, though in the Gathic doctrine it is less clearly classified (*cf.* Shaked 1967:230-231).

If the Gathic doctrine of evil is to be understood, however, what must be resolved is in which relationship Angra Mainyu stands to Ahura Mazda or to Spenta Mainyu – its twin spirit; in which case, in what relationship do the twin spirits stand to Ahura Mazda? This relationship has proven problematic, and many interpretations have been biased by a desire for a certain outcome. Such misreadings have been perpetrated, among others, by Christian scholars, according to Boyce (1984:15-16), who began reconstructing Zoroaster's teachings before the *Avesta* was available to them, and without contact with the Zoroastrian community, and who sought to cast

Zoroaster in a role similar to the biblical prophets who proclaimed the coming of Christ.

After the *Avesta* became known to them, Boyce (1984:16) states that they interpreted the relevant Gathic passages as indicating Ahura Mazda as the father of the twin spirits, and therefore as the source of good and evil. They seem to have ignored the implication this interpretation had for their own belief that the biblical God did not create evil, though he created Satan. Boyce (1984:16) argues that this "European heresy" was inspired by the heretic Zurvanite cult, and was a rejection of all post-Gathic literature concerning dualism and the Heptad (the Amesha Spentas, including Ahura Mazda as one with Spenta Mainyu), and notes that it has dominated Parsi theology from the nineteenth century onward.

Therefore, the argument for monotheism was the product of an ulterior motive in a zealous Christian missionary community, whose interests were not to preserve the truth of an existing faith, but to use it as a stepping-stone for replacement by their own. The argument against monotheism for dualism in turn was an apologetic reaction to this proselytism, and is therefore equally biased and unreliable.

Boyce's criticism (1984:15-16) is valid, but fails to take into account that it is by no means a commonly held conviction, outside of the Parsi faith, that the *Gathas* and the Later Avestan literature form a homogenous philosophy, nor does it touch on the crux of the 'European heresy's' error, namely that placing Ahura Mazda as the literal progenitor of the twin spirits and then attempting to demonstrate that he was the author of evil as well, is by no means a valid interpretation. It is constantly asserted in the *Gathas* themselves that Ahura Mazda is wholly good, and all that he creates is good, and furthermore, that evil is followed by choice, first by Angra Mainyu and thereafter by all who make the same mistake. Unlike in Christianity, there is no inherent evil in anything, and both man and spirit are not born or created evil, but become so by choice. This makes Zoroastrianism less of a dualism than Christianity, if the Christian scholars' reasoning is to be taken to its logical conclusion.

Boyce (1984:16) argues that it is clearly a case of Christian biases and of Parsi reformists being taken in by these apologetic arguments. Nevertheless, Boyce is

similarly biased, as is apparent in her assumption that the *Gathas* and the *Later Avesta* can be seen as uniform in opinion on the issue, and in her general reliance on later and current Zoroastrian beliefs, which becomes almost apologetic itself. Some distance seems to be required from such religiously affected views. The scope of this work, however, relies solely on the *Gathas* as the only works attributable to Zoroaster. Within this framework, it seems that both arguments (for and against dualism) can be supported by the *Gathas*. It remains only to investigate in what relationship the twin spirits stand to Ahura Mazda.

Ahura Mazda seems to stand in a paternal relationship to one of the two spirits, namely Spenta Mainyu, since the Good Spirit is referred to as the son of Ahura Mazda. The two Spirits are also described as twins (*Yasna* 45.2), which some scholars (*cf.* Collinson 1994:6) take to be an indication that the spirit of evil is as much the offspring of Ahura Mazda as is the spirit of good, but this conclusion is problematic even for its advocates: it implies that God is the author of evil and responsible for its introduction into the cosmos – an impossibility, since God is wholly good. A solution to this difficulty, which also accords with the doctrine of the *Gathas*, according to Collinson (1994:6), is the possibility that Ahura Mazda created two spirits and gave them free will to choose their ways. This solution permits the interpretation that the spirit that chose evil, having done so of his own volition, was not created evil, but as something that had the freedom to choose evil, and this would accord well with the fact that Zoroaster nowhere attributes evil to God (Collinson 1994:6).

Collinson (1994:6) points out that those who adhere to a strictly monotheistic interpretation of Zoroaster's doctrine cite passages from the *Gathas* in which Ahura Mazda is described as, for example, "the creator of all things by the Holy Spirit [Spenta Mainyu]" (*Yasna* 44.7), whereas those who regard dualism as central to the doctrine, emphasise the opposition of Good and Evil, mostly as it appears in the later tradition, and as such is seen as an opposition between Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu, without denying the attribution of supremacy to Ahura Mazda.

Boyce (1978:608) believes that "in one sense, that of believing in only one eternal, uncreated Being, who is worthy of worship, Zoroaster was indeed a monotheist, with

a concept of god as exalted as that of any Hebrew or Arabian prophet. But he was also a dualist, in that he saw, coexisting with Ahura Mazda, another uncreated Being who was maleficent, not to be worshipped". This would mean that 'Traditional Zoroastrianism' teaches that Ahura Mazda is supreme and wholly good, but not omnipotent, and Angra Mainyu is an active force of evil that is pitted against the good and that must be opposed with courage and resolution (Collinson 1994:7).

This view is entirely foreign to the *Gathas*, however, because, firstly, there is no opposition between Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu, and no substitution of Ahura Mazda with the opposing force to Angra Mainyu, namely Spenta Mainyu. Secondly, evil is not even properly opposed to Spenta Mainyu, and the *Gathas* seem to display a tentative definition or manifestation of evil, even though the concept itself was quite important.

Dhalla (1938:89) points out that the Evil Spirit who opposes the Good Spirit is not given a proper name in the *Gathas*. Dhalla (1938:89) notes that as an opposition to Spenta Mainyu (Holy or Beneficent Spirit), the other spirit is given the epithet Angra (Enemy or Evil), and it is applied directly only once (*Yasna* 45.2), and once indirectly (*Yasna* 44.12), where it is asked "why is a bad (angra) man is not like unto Angra, 'The Evil One'. Dhalla (1938:89-90) lists the other examples where evil is mentioned as well, namely: in *Yasna* 43.15; 44.12; 48.10, where the term *angra* is used in the ordinary meaning 'evil' to indicate wicked men; in *Yasna* 30.3 the epithet *aka* ('bad') and Aka Mainyu ('Bad Spirit') (*Yasna* 32.5) also appear; and in *Yasna* 30.5 he is called *dregvant*, or the Wicked One; in *Yasna* 45.2 he is described as the opposite to the Good Spirit in minds, doctrines, faith, words, deeds, conscience and soul, and again in *Yasna* 30.3 as evil in thought, word and deed; in *Yasna* 30.4 he is described as having created an absence of life in response to the Spenta Mainyu who generated life. Not only is there a distinct absence of the hierarchy found in the arrangement of the Amesha Spentas, but evil is also seemingly only superficially described. In fact, it seems that the name for the opposing evil force depends entirely on the formal name of the entity it is opposing, and this would therefore imply that its epithets are related to its current actions only, not to a permanent state of existence.

185

It is, according to Collinson (1994:5), in contrast to the good force, which "epitomises everything that is life-affirming and creative, and all activities that foster truth, the benign ordering of life and a pastoral care of the earth and its creatures", that evil exists. Collinson (1994:5-6) believes that Angra Mainyu is the representative of "destruction, untruth and bloodshed, and the aggressive life-pattern of the pillaging nomad rather than the settled pastoralist". This concept of the opposition of two beings could have originated with the opposition of the two types of divine entity in Indo-Iranian pagan times, the opposition of the *ahuras* and the *daevas*, a correlation that is also pointed out by Collinson (1994:6), who further states that this Indo-Iranian polytheistic religion was rejected by Zoroaster, who changed the previously popular *daevas* into symbols and followers of evil and the Lie, and chose from among the *ahuras* one supreme deity, Ahura Mazda.

The *daevas* chose evil, however, for between the two spirits "even the Daevas did not discriminate aright, for confusion came upon them as they stood in doubt so that they chose the Worst Mind" (*Yasna* 30.6), and they are later described as the offspring of Evil Mind (Ako Manah) (*Yasna* 32.3) who now corrupt men, turning them away from Ahura Mazda (*Yasna* 32.4) and defrauding mankind of the good life and Immortality, as they were beguiled by the Evil Mainyu, with evil thought, word and deed (*Yasna* 32.5). Their misdeeds against the pastoralists are specifically mentioned, and they are accused of abusing the earth and cattle (*Yasna* 44.20). It is only in the later literature that the *daevas* become the counterparts to the hierarchy of the Amesha Spentas. Dhalla (1938:91) states that in later Zoroastrianism Angra Mainyu has a retinue of demons just as Ahura Mazda has his council with the Amesha Spentas. The hierarchical opposition was in fact so painstakingly balanced that, as noted by Dhalla (1938:91), for every angel and archangel there was a corresponding demon who forms an exact opposition. This exact opposition mirrors the absolute dualism of the *Later Avesta* between Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu as well, but is found in the *Gathas* only inasmuch as evil, when it is mentioned, is exactly the opposite of the good force discussed. The *Gathas* are devoid of a formal hierarchy of evil, however, and this formulaic opposition could not have been native to Zoroaster's philosophy, or he would have elaborated as much on the evil forces as he did on the good.

Dhalla (1938:91) also remarks that there is no such symmetry of diametric opposites between these rival forces in the Gathic literature, and that the only demons mentioned are in opposition to Vohu Manah, Asha, Armaiti and Sraosha, and these are called Aka Manah (Evil Mind), Druj (Lie), Taromaiti (Heresy) and Aeshma (Wrath) respectively. Dhalla (1938:91) further points out that, except for the Druj, they work infrequently and do not antagonise their opponents systematically, nor do the terms used to describe them always signify personified demons. This could even cast doubt on too much emphasis on the personification of the Twin Spirits, as everything thereafter chooses Angra Mainyu (or a related term for evil) as a principle of evil, as opposed to the principle of good, which is only represented by and goes beyond the personification of Spenta Mainyu, if this is valid.

Iyer (1983:16) believes that the two spirits, Spenta and Angra Mainyu are impersonal, universal forces – "centripetal and centrifugal", a concept derived from the same source from which the Ahimanyu of the *Rigveda* comes, not necessarily borrowed from the *Vedas*, but rooted, as many other concepts in Zoroastrianism are, in the system in which the Vedic and Avestan concepts originated. An example, according to Iyer (1983:16), is the similarity between the Avestan Angra and the Vedic Ahi, the serpent of evil and the Cycle of Matter, or the Avestan Twin Spirits (as impersonal and universal forces), which are akin to Purusha and Prakriti of Indian philosophy. Iyer (1983:16) argues that, just as "Light and darkness are the world's eternal ways" (*Gita* VIII), so the struggle between Spenta and Angra Mainyu "commence, sustain and renovate the cycle of necessity". Iyer (1983:28) concludes that Angra Mainyu is to be equated with matter, and, as such, is the begetter of all evil and the destroyer, since matter must destroy itself as part of its process of change and flux, whereas Ahura Mazda, as spirit, remains immutable in its abstract unity. Evil's association with matter is most likely a pagan concept that was revived in the later Zoroastrian tradition, and it is not found in the *Gathas*, except for evil's association with matter in its capacity for destruction and corruption of the good material creation. The opposition of good and evil in the realms of spirit and matter will be discussed more fully later in this chapter.

The question that must be answered concerning the conflicting principles of good and evil is what the nature of these principles is. Do they exist as real entities, actual

beings with minds and will, or are they abstract principles with no existence other than that of ideas, or tendencies, in the human or divine mind? Do Good and Evil only exist in the world of human actions, or are there good and evil in the natural world, the non-human world? (Shapero 1995b:14).

Zoroaster considered the Good as an attribute of God together with Wisdom and Justice, and saw evil as that which prevents or deprives him of God's help and obstructs the realisation of the ideal (Afnan 1960:120). Therefore, if religion is the revelation of that "help" or guideline of God's purpose for the cultural and spiritual evolution of man, the good is whatever conforms to and aids the acquisition of this perfection, and evil is any force that retains or retards that realisation (Afnan 1960:120). Afnan (1960:120) therefore believes that evil is not a being with any substantial existence, but a relative reality, opposing the good and God's divine plan of perfecting the creation as an obstructing force only. Any abstract principle, be it in human thought, a force in nature, a tendency in human instincts or habits, that obstructs or thwarts the ideal constitutes evil, and should be avoided or overcome (Afnan 1960:120).

The divine purpose that must be pursued is aided and thwarted respectively by good and evil forces, but their goodness and evilness reside not in themselves, according to Afnan (1960:120), but in the manner they operate on the purpose pursued, and are therefore not substantial but relative. Evil will continue, therefore, to operate until the goal of perfection and the realisation of the good in everything is attained (Afnan 1960:120). This interpretation serves to explain not only Zoroaster's lack of description of good and evil as personified divine beings in favour of a more abstract description of them as spirits/forces or mentalities, but also how Zoroaster could propose the eventual vanishing of evil completely. Afnan (1960:120) argues that it is in this light that Zoroaster's concept of evil should be understood, as he did not consider evil as possessing a substantial being, a god who wrestles with Ahura Mazda throughout the ages, until he is killed or defeated.

The good, on the other hand, possesses a positive existence, not an existence based on negation, as evil has, according to Afnan (1960:120), for it constitutes an attribute or revelation of the divine being. It is important to note, however, that the relative good

is not the 'Absolute Good', that which is an attribute or revelation of God's being, but relative good is what helps its realisation in the life of society and of man (Afnan 1960:120). This could be compared to Plato's belief that all that is good on earth is good insofar as it is part of the ideal Form or absolute Good, and all that is not good is so inasmuch as it fails to emulate the absolute Good. Evil in Zoroastrianism also seems to have existence only as a negation of the good, or as something that is present in whatever measures the good is not emulated. Afnan (1960:120) argues that evil is always relative to the process through which the Absolute Good is gradually acquired and realised, and furthermore constitutes a negation of only the relative good, not the Absolute, which does have a separate existence.

Throughout the *Gathas*, and in all later Zoroastrian teaching as well, Ahura Mazda, the Wise Lord, is an entirely good God. No evil of any kind can proceed from him, and Ahura Mazda, unlike God in the Semitic view, does not personally take vengeance or send punishments or temptations to His followers (Shapero 1995b:16). Evil must then have arisen apart from the One Good God. This process is suggested in the Gathic text where Zoroaster describes the primordial choice of the two mentalities, in which the wrongful mentality chose the worst actions, and the most progressive mentality chose righteousness (*Yasna* 30.3). Zoroaster does not speculate on the origin of the two mentalities, whether they were both created by God, or whether they already existed simultaneously when they 'first came together', whether this 'coming together' was in a mythical time before human beings, or in the first moral awakening of every human being (Shapero 1995b:16). Zoroaster is clear about the choices, however, and Evil arose when the wrongful mentality first chose worst actions - and it continues to arise whenever anyone chooses worst actions, as it is a rebellion and a defiance of the One Good God and the universal law of Righteousness, which Zoroaster calls Asha (Shapero 1995b:16).

The emphasis on choice in the opposition between the good and evil spirits, especially considering the epithet of Ako Mainyu or Evil Mind, could be interpreted as merely an illustration of the choice man has to make. Haug (1971:150) goes one step further in his interpretation of the illustration of opposition in the *Gathas*, and argues that Worst Mind (*Yasna* 30.6) is a philosophical term applied by Zoroaster to designate his principle of non-existence, non-reality, which is the cause of all evils. Iyer (1983:15)

also believes that the good and evil forces in Zoroastrian cosmology represent "definite philosophic concepts".

4. Free will and the dualism in the soul

The free choice which is the privilege of even the animal kingdom, was God's gift to his creatures at the very beginning of existence, for 'in the beginning, O Mazda, by thy mind didst thou create for us material forms (*gaetha*) and consciences and rational wills (*khratu*), for thou didst establish corporeal life – deeds and doctrines that men might thereby make their choices in freedom of will' (*Yasna* 31.11). Zaehner (1961:41) argues that the choice that must be made can be summed up as ultimately that between Truth and the Lie, as is stated in the *Gathas*, "For our choice, Truth has been presented for our own benefit, but to the (false) teacher the Lie is for his own undoing" (*Yasna* 49.3). Zaehner (1961:41) also points out that Zoroaster must have been fully aware of the fact that this choice also enabled one to make the wrong choice. The choice is not to be made blindly, however, and there are various passages in the *Gathas* explaining that it is the result of good thinking, recognition of the good as better, wisdom or piety that the right way is chosen, whereas it is because of fraud and confusion that evil draws people in. The choice must be made, however, as existence is divided entirely between the forces of good and evil.

It is after Zoroaster explains that all must make their choices, each individual for himself, after having heard with their ears and beheld with their minds (*Yasna* 30.2), that he first speaks (*Yasna* 30.3-6) of the choice that had to be made by the Twin Spirits at the beginning of time (Zaehner 1961:42). In this myth of the two opposing spirits, it is not just the physical world's dualism that is explained, but, true to the style of multi-layered meaning in the *Gathas*, has an implication on other levels as well, namely the spiritual and ethical. This is possibly due to Zoroasters belief in the connectedness of the physical and the spiritual.

Malandra (1983:19) believes that the dualism of Zoroaster, in contradistinction to that of the *Later Avesta* and of orthodox Zoroastrianism of the Sassanid period, is not absolute, and that the opposing forces of Truth and Falsehood are not primordial, but came into being as emanations or creations of Ahura Mazda, just like the other beings,

190

or 'Entities' (*hatam*) as they are called, who surround him and who appear to be emanations of aspects of his own personality. It is not certain whether Zoroaster was the first to compose the myth of the Twin Spirits or whether he reinterpreted the myth of an ancient tradition (Zaehner 1961:42), but it is probable that, as Malandra (1983:19) believes, Zoroaster was drawing upon the ancient Indo-European myth of the Twins in whom life and death originate.

Although an antecedent exists for the myth of the Twin Spirits, Malandra (1983:19) emphasises that Zoroaster extended his version to include Ahura Mazda as the creator of the two Spirits as twin brothers, whose natures differed in thought, word and deed, one good and one bad (*Yasna* 30.3), and who established life and death (*Yasna* 30.4). Although their natures differed completely (*Yasna* 45.2), Malandra (1983:19) believes that the fundamental difference is in their ability to exercise free will and choice. Although this interpretation is a valid one for Zoroastrianism insofar as it is similar to the scenario in the Old Testament religion, and the two religions have much in common, it is not as clear whether there is too much emphasis on personification in the *Gathas*, which in actual fact lends itself more to abstract concepts than personifications. It could well be that the Evil Spirit is only a counterpart to the creative process, and that the choice referred to is merely an illustrative myth. It is not impossible, however, that Malandra is correct in interpreting Ahura Mazda as the progenitor of both, but the important factor is their choice, made between good and evil, through which this myth communicates the analogous human choice between good and evil.

Zaehner (1961:42-43) argues that in the myth of the Twin Spirits Zoroaster was projecting onto the spiritual the situation of conflict he observed on earth, especially the opposition of destruction and conservation which surrounded him. The life-affirming and life-creating spirit, Spenta Mainyu (often translated as "Bounteous" or "Holy", and implying increase and abundance) is opposed to the spirit of destruction who negates life, and the two spirits are 'irreconcilable' in their 'total contradiction' (Zaehner 1961:42-43). But the myth, most importantly, illustrates the ethical problem of evil, and man's choice in the situation, not its physical manifestations.

The original exercise of free will, according to Malandra (1983:20), remains paradigmatic for man, although Malandra postulates that this precedes creation, whereas the Gathic evidence points to the introduction of both free will and evil *at* creation. Malandra's (1983:20) point, however, is that free will to choose between good and evil is the very essence of Zoroastrianism, and man is responsible for his fate. Completely devoid of fatalism, this philosophy has another interesting aspect to it: man is responsible for his own salvation or damnation as much as he is responsible for his own choice of good or evil. The importance of his choice, however, is never underestimated in Zoroastrianism, and it is not assumed that this choice is obvious, and individuals who fail to recognise the good are therefore 'naturally' evil. Much of the Zoroastrian literature is given to explaining that the process by which the good is chosen is a rational one, and that a pure mind is the tool with which to recognise the good. A pure mind in turn is a product of both intellect and piety (Vohu Manah and Armaiti). The possibility of confusion is also taken into account (*Yasna* 31.12), and it is recognised that the opposition to good is often deceitful and difficult to recognise. Despite the thoughtful mention of these mitigating circumstances in the recognition of good and evil, the opposition of good and evil remains quite simple, a rather black and white issue in the true spirit of dualism.

Dhalla (1938:85) views this opposition in the spirit world as a reflection of the opposition of two conflicting natures within man himself. Dhalla (1938:85) believes that man is divided into higher impulses and lower appetites, and that the conflict between the two spirits in *Yasna* 45.2 is the same complete polarity as the aspects of man which stand respectively for truth, virtue and righteousness or falsehood, vice and wickedness.

Dhalla (1938:86) further states that it is not only the evil within man himself which he must oppose, but the evil in society as well, for one is the microcosm of the other. Dhalla (1938:86) argues that just as man's higher impulses must band together to resist the lower appetites, so too must men band together in society to oppose evil, but that men often fail at this and fight each other instead, ignoring the commands of a moral world in order to continue the practice of the physical world in which might is right. Dhalla (1938:86) views this failure as caused by incomplete evolution from base creatures to divine products, and assumes that the baser element will be disabled

by degrees only. The comparison to evolution is a fitting one up to a point only, for Zoroastrianism preaches a far more active mode of reform of the present state of being, not a slow, natural process at all. It is up to man to improve himself, and although the result may be so slow as to suggest evolution at a leisurely pace, the accent remains on a very active self-improvement and resistance to evil, not a salvation granted or an instantaneous perfection for the initiate.

There are many religions and societies which adhere to the precepts that one must be good and oppose evil. Zoroastrianism, as Dhalla (1938:87) points out, is one such system, but with the remarkable difference that it takes such an active, not passive, role and *furthers* good while *fighting* evil, for Zoroaster proclaimed that man is to seek salvation not only for himself but for the whole world. Dhalla (1938:87) explains that to seek individual salvation and leave others to their fate is to fail in one's civic duty, and to refrain from being evil but not to resist evil worked by others, is merely a negative virtue.

Kotwal and Boyd (1982:xxii) point out that although Dastur Erachji (a modern Zoroastrian priest) clearly believes that spiritual powers of evil exist, and are caused by the Hostile Spirit named Angra Mainyu, human 'evil-doers' concern him most. The evil which mankind can commit is varied, and concerns the elements, such as extinguishing sacred fire and polluting water or earth, or moral laws, such as giving false evidence or harming another person, but the greatest enemies man encounters are "vices that cause pain and damage" (Kotwal & Boyd 1982:xxii). Christian Catechism has largely demythologised many references to the evil spirits, however, and the man who commits evil becomes an evil spirit himself (Kotwal & Boyd 1982:xxii-xxiii).

Iyer (1983:28) similarly believes that the evil to be most feared lies in man himself. Concerning the concept of an opposition between good and evil, he states that:

> "It was neither the metaphysical nor the historical aspect which perpetuated the teaching about Ohrmazd-Ahriman in old Iran; it was the personal – the strife of mind and heart in man, the struggle between his own members.[What appealed to the Iranians] was the truth that Mazda's Law of Purity was the weapon to destroy the impure being of their own passion-nature. Their veneration for the great elements, in

fact the whole of Nature, sprang from the idea that it was the religious duty of man not only to refrain from polluting but to raise and elevate all the kingdoms of the manifested universe. The aspect of the dual powers which persist with such tenacity in Zoroastrianism is a psychologic-human one, and while Ahriman has been personified and has become, like Satan, a living entity for the superstitious, for the cultured he is but a force within man, his own lower nature" (Iyer 1983:28-29).

Iyer (1983:31) further argues that there is no substitute method of gaining insight into the good and attaining happiness thereby, but that man must himself choose to practise good and resist evil, and man is aided in this internal struggle by good thoughts, words and deeds, which, being in accordance with the Good Law, secures his purification and immortality. It is clear that, although Iyer dismisses belief in the existence of spirits of good and evil that exist outside of man as superhuman beings in the spiritual realm, the passage in the *Gathas* can be interpreted on many levels, including the "psychologic-human" one. The *Gathas* abound with abstract concepts and multiple meanings, and it is therefore quite plausible to interpret *Yasna* 30.4 as referring to an opposition of good and evil (from the beginning) that denies any reconciliation of the concepts and provides an absolute divide in moral behaviour that is independent of class, wealth, status or might. Evil is not linked, however, with anything material in the *Gathas*, as the term "lower nature" might convey, and although a person consists of nine parts making up his entire being (Bode & Nanavutty 1952:112-113), none of the parts is inherently base or evil at all, and it is only as a spiritual threat that evil exists, not as something material.

5. The Dualism of Spirit and Matter

The Zoroastrian religion is primarily known as dualistic in the sense that the opposition between the powers of good and evil occupies a central position in its ethical thought. Another dualism that is characteristic of Zoroastrianism, as Malandra (1983:20) points out, is the opposition between matter and spirit. Malandra (1983:20) emphasises that this matter-spirit opposition should not be confused with the gnostic systems that view matter as the root of all evil and spirit as purely good, as this thinking is entirely foreign to Zoroastrianism. Quite the opposite applies, in fact, for Ahura Mazda created a good world, and the demons (*daevas*) and evil creatures

(*khrafstras*), as Malandra (1983:21) points out, are the work of Angra Mainyu. Malandra (1983:21) adds that, in Zoroastrianism, "evil is always a product of will, never of nature". A dualism is present, however, in the sense that there is a distinction between nature and the supernatural. This dualism is important, though often overlooked, as it transpires that evil has no natural incarnation, and is entirely deprived of physical existence except where physical beings choose to allow its will to operate through them. The terms used to indicate the material and the spiritual are complex, however, and in themselves carry a wealth of meaning completely apart from the implications for the dualism of good and evil.

Shaked (1995:59) states that the term for spirit (Avestan *mainyava-*, Pahlavi *menog*, 'that which is non-material, non-sensual, intelligible') is sometimes best translated as 'ideal', in the sense of a conceptual prototype of a concrete existence, and its opposite is *getig* (Avestan *gaethya-*, 'the material, earthly (world), that which can be apprehended through the senses'). The notions of spirit and matter occupy a prominent position, as Shaked (1995:59-60) points out, in the Zoroastrian religion and particularly in the later texts, but although the terms are opposites, they are neutral to the ethical dualism of Zoroastrianism. Schwartz (1985:641) elaborates on the usual translation of the terms simply as 'physical' and 'spiritual' by proposing that they are more appropriately described as the realm of the tangible and the intangible.

Schwartz (1985:641) also notes that the etymology of the term *mainyava* is *mainyu-* (often translated 'spirit', but connected with the root *man* – 'to think or perceive with the mind'), and in Old Indic *manyu* is a 'force, vehemence, impulse', which adds a dimension to the interpretation of the term *mainyu* as applied to the twin *mainyus* in the *Gathas* who are the creative and destructive forces. Although these definitions of the terms are commonly used, Schwartz (1985:641) argues that *mainyava* may, in fact, mean the "mentalistic or 'ideal' realm through whose workings tangible reality is made manifest", which leads him to conclude that Ahura Mazda first made the world in ideal (*mainyava/menog*) form and then in actual (*geithya/getig*) form. This accords with the later tradition, according to Shaked (1995:66), specifically the mythology of creation in the *Bundahishn* that seems to interpret in temporal terms the duality of existence, which is taken to characterise life in the world. The *menog* world is taken here to precede the *getig*, which does not exist on its own but is foreshadowed by a

menog prototype, from which it is derived and on which it continues to be in a sense dependent (Shaked 1995:66).

This is reminiscent of Plato's model from which the Demiurge made the copy of physical reality, but Plato's mistrust of physical reality and his conviction that the material is inherently imperfect was not shared by Zoroaster. The *Gathas* do not have any indication that the matter-spirit dichotomy was one of evil vs. good, yet there is a connection with ethical dualism. As Schwartz (1985:641) points out, evil exists in *mainyava* form only, whereas the divine has its *menog* and its *getig* states. This unusual dichotomy is perhaps an excellent example of the difference between good and evil, which followers of the interpretation of Zoroastrianism as a strict dualism would be hard-pressed to explain, and could be seen not as evidence that good is 'stronger' than evil, but that evil has limited scope within which to act, whereas good can operate in both the physical and spiritual spheres.

Importantly, this ideal form of creation is its spiritual (not physical) essence, reflected in and connected with the physical. Being ideal in the sense of being related to both "spirit" and "mental idea", the ideal is therefore cognisable by man. This is, once again, analogous to Plato's Idea World that can be known through metaphysical speculation about the ideal reflected in the corporeal. Plato also saw creation as good in its aspects that were in harmony with the perfect ideal, a concept not absent from the *Gathas* either, for another dichotomy in Zoroastrianism is the opposition of *asha*- and *drug*. As Schwartz (1985:641) notes, *asha* (*rta*) is a concept in the Indo-Iranian tradition which combines moral and cosmic harmony or order, often translated as 'the true' or 'truth', opposed by *druh* ('the false'). All these instances of dichotomy within the Zoroastrian doctrine serve to conjure an interpretation of resounding dualism, but are probably much more complex and interconnected ideas within a metaphysical philosophy than simply by-products of the fight between an evil deity and a good.

Gnoli (1987:585) believes that the most original aspects of the complex Zoroastrian doctrine are not the cosmological concepts but the doctrines concerning the history of the cosmos, the three stages of *Bundahishn, Gumezishn* and *Wizarishn*, and the concept of a dual state of existence, *mainyava/menog* and *geithya/getig*. Gnoli

196

(1987:585) further notes that the concept of the two states of being, "although it is also analogous in some of its aspects to a number of Greek ideas (a fact that has led to speculation concerning Greek influences, whether Platonic or Aristotelian, as the doctrine is recorded systematically only in relatively late texts), is nonetheless rooted in very early Zoroastrianism". The *Gathas* describe the two states of being as "spiritual" and "with bones", e.g. with a body, and the concept of these two realms is central to Zoroastrian thought (Gnoli 1987:585).

Zaehner (1961:62) notes that although Zoroaster differentiated between the spiritual and material worlds, they are not in any way antagonistic, and even tend to merge into one another. Zoroaster's emphasis remained on the spiritual and mental (or intellectual) world, which Zaehner (1961:62) finds 'astonishing' given the time and place in which Zoroaster lived, the environment having probably encouraged consideration of only the most practical aspects of survival. The material world in the *Gathas* only has reality in relation to the spiritual, according to Zaehner (1961:62), and itself originated from the spiritual world, as God (through his creative Spirit) thought the material world into existence. As such, however, the material and spiritual worlds are connected to the extent of interdependence, which creates the platform for the 'battle' between the followers of the Lie and the followers of Truth (Zaehner 1961:62).

Although there is a strongly marked dualism of the spiritual and the material throughout the *Avesta*, including the *Gathas*, Moulton (1972:147) observes that, unlike speculative Gnosticism, matter has no inherent evil. The Gathic distinction between "this life here of body and that of thought" (*Yasna* 43.3) is an antithesis that is continued through the whole of the Parsi scriptures, but in later Zoroastrianism the division of good and evil becomes much more intimately associated with the division of matter and spirit (Moulton 1972:147). The *Yashts*, which mention "spiritual and corporeal *yazata*", state that Angra Mainyu, by nature *mainyava* ('spiritual') only, has a representative in the corporeal world called Azhi Dahaka. Similarly, in the *Vendidad* the question "Who is absolutely a *daeva*? Who is before death a *daeva*? Who changes after death into a spiritual *daeva*?" is answered by stating it is the human being who has practised unnatural vice (Mouton 1972:147-148). This

baseness of the physical is like the Greek dualism, but is completely alien to the *Gathas*.

There is a firm distinction in the *Gathas* between body and spirit, but, contrary to Plato, Zoroaster does not "reject the body in the name of the soul.[and] suggests no renunciation, [but] preaches the maintenance of life" (Duchesne-Guillemin 1979:159-160). This has important implications for worship in the Zoroastrian faith, and also for ethical acts that, within the corporeal world, entail man not only refraining from evil acts against others, but also from evil acts against nature. In the positive and active sense, this means tending and conserving the good creation.

Boyce (1992:94-95) notes that, in addition to showing reverence for the Amesha Spentas by emulating the virtues they embody, a believer could also care for the physical creations which they represent, for it was believed that the Amesha Spentas infused the creation with their presence, an illustration of how completely interfused the *mainyava* and *gaethya* states were considered to be. In Boyce's opinion (1992:95), such "subtle doctrines thus became assimilable, through regular, repetitive and significant acts, by the simplest of his followers, and the sanction of carrying out his precepts and of serving the world of Asha, could be constant". It could also be seen as another example of the influence of the immediate economic environment on Zoroastrian thought, as 'care' for the environment would be an activity specific to the settled pastoralists, and could be a rather subtle encouragement to respect the earth which one tills, or, more explicitly, to practise proper farming techniques and conserve the environment. There are doubtless many layers of meaning to be interpreted in this aspect of Zoroastrian thought, but it remains foremost a particularly admirable precept, and an unusually practical one, which illustrates the importance of the physical application of metaphysical convictions, so often ignored in systems of metaphysical thought. Without this consideration of implementation, doubt may be cast on the purpose of metaphysical speculation and moral philosophy.

CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSION

I believe that this comparison has shown, firstly, that the various methods that are usually employed for the study of religion often ignore the speculative tradition within religion. The speculative tradition (or philosophy) within religion can be interpreted as a system of speculative thought apart from the religious tradition in which it originated, or which it underlies. A case in point is Indian philosophy, which has grown into a tradition of philosophy entirely separate from the religion in which it originated.

Secondly, that the categorisation of social phenomena such as religion or philosophy is artificial and that the domains of religion and philosophy, like all cultural domains, partially overlap. This interaction (and relation) between cultural domains such as religion and philosophy necessitates a less rigid division between the study of these fields, though a rigid classification for the sake of convenience is understandable, given the basic need for clarity of terminology. Research in both philosophy and religion should not be confined to rigid classifications that define each concept.

Thirdly, that previous interpretations have overemphasised a rigid division between many cultural domains, as well as many fields of study dealing with these cultural domains. Reactions against this overemphasis have compounded the problem, such as the premise in Idealism, which reacted against the overemphasis on reason and fact in Rationalism, and postulated subjectivity instead. These extreme reactions in one methodological approach after another, and their search for an exhaustive approach to the study of cultural domains such as religion, have created more problems than they have solved. I have attempted a comparison of two systems of thought based on a method I believe to be more holistic, although not exhaustive or comprehensive of all aspects of philosophy or religion. Although the approach I have chosen is mainly relevant to the specific problems encountered in this comparison, the method employed is not irrelevant to other analogous studies.

Fourthly, that the use of the relatively familiar Greek philosophical tradition (familiar, at least, to the West), to interpret a relatively unfamiliar 'Eastern' religious tradition

has facilitated a better understanding of the unfamiliar 'Eastern' tradition as well as a re-evaluation and re-illumination of the familiar Greek tradition. This has hopefully demonstrated that the larger context within which the various cultures of the ancient world functioned is not limited to a comparison of factually verifiable contact, but could also be extended to more abstract aspects of the societies studied, such as their world-views or philosophies.

Fifthly, that there is a clear correlation between the speculative thought of the fifth century philosophical tradition of Greece and the speculative thought within the religious traditions of the ancient Near East (including India), specifically the philosophy of Plato and the religion of Zoroaster, as found in the *Timaeus* and the *Gathas* respectively. The lack of an overt classification of speculative thought within the religions of the ancient world as 'philosophy' by the ancients themselves does not, therefore, preclude a study of what is apparently philosophy within a religious tradition. There are other undoubted instances of philosophy embedded in traditions, such as wisdom literature, myth, law, and others, and the separate classification for speculative thought as "philosophy" by the ancient Greeks (as well as modern Western people) need not preclude a study of philosophy in other traditions and cultures that did not apply such classification or separation.

Sixthly, that this correlation between the speculative thought of the fifth century philosophical tradition of Greece and the speculative thought within the religious traditions of the ancient Near East is apparent in various concepts that both Plato and Zoroaster speculated about. The philosophical and religious concepts, which I believe are illustrated as similar in both systems of thought, include speculation on the subjects of metaphysics, the creator and his creation, the soul and dualism. I shall briefly mention some instances of correlation in the concepts of Plato and Zoroaster below.

Plato and Zoroaster both postulated a metaphysical reality, the Forms in Plato's case, and the Amesha Spentas in Zoroaster's. Both the Forms and the Amesha Spentas are terms applied to abstract concepts, values and classifications, such as order, goodness, truth, animals, and so forth. The metaphysical concepts of both Plato and Zoroaster are further analogous in that they are concepts that have a more ultimate reality than

the corporeal world. The metaphysical concepts are linked to the corporeal world in two ways, for they are both reflected in the corporeal world and are also its ideal. As the Forms or Amesha Spentas are reflected in the corporeal world as well, proper care of the environment and a general enhancement of the divine order through reason (which is achieved in increasing measure the more creation resembles or reflects the Forms or Amesha Spentas) are prescribed by both Plato and Zoroaster.

As the ideal of the corporeal world, the Forms or Amesha Spentas are to be assimilated and emulated for the good. Creation is perfect as far as it conforms to the Forms or Amesha Spentas. The individual, like creation, must emulate the Forms or Amesha Spentas in order to further the perfection of his soul. The immortality or salvation of the soul is also dependent on this perfection by emulation. The philosophies of both Plato and Zoroaster stress the contemplation and emulation of abstract values for attaining the good, but both philosophies also discuss the lack of good in the soul. Plato's concept of a rational and an irrational part of the soul corresponds to Zoroaster's belief that the soul is capable of both good and evil. The evil in the soul is also linked to the absence of knowing the good, and therefore choosing the good.

Each soul is capable of good, however, as it has a conscience (a *daimon* or a *daena*, according to Plato and Zoroaster respectively). The souls that are evil are to be punished, according to both Plato and Zoroaster, and the form this punishment is to take is similar in both philosophies. In Plato's doctrine, the soul is doomed to the wheel of incarnation, and the form of its reincarnation is dependent on its previous life. If it led an evil life, it would therefore be reincarnated as something suited to the nature and extent of that evil. In Zoroaster's doctrine, the soul is also punished according to the extent of its evil, for it is met in the afterlife by its *daena*, or conscience, which will torment it if it has been corrupted by the soul's evil during its life. Both philosophies therefore postulate punishment for evil according to what the soul deserves, or has brought on itself.

The purgation of evil is also a concept important to both philosophers. Plato believed that the soul would be reincarnated until it managed to live a good life three times in succession, thereby proving its purity and freeing it from further punishment by

incarnation. Although it is not certain whether Zoroaster taught that evil souls would be purged of their evil and finally escape their hell, he certainly believed that creation itself would eventually be purged of all its evil and become the perfect entity the creator originally had in mind.

Plato, however, saw evil as inherent in the corporeal, whereas Zoroaster saw evil as a purely spiritual force. Plato did not postulate the perfection of creation, therefore, but both Plato and Zoroaster believed that the world was created by an agent who was good and had only good as his purpose in creating. The creation is the result of a process of thought and good action on the part of the creator. The creator is identified not only with the good, but also with "mind", and can be discovered through "mind" or "intelligence". It is through the operation of mind or intelligence that the creator creates the world. The imperfection of the world, and the evil in it, is therefore not to be considered as having originated with the creator. Instead, evil is that which is opposite to the creative force, in that it is identified by both Plato and Zoroaster as something inherently destructive and chaotic (since it is opposed to order).

There are differences in the type of dualism postulated by Plato as opposed to the dualism postulated by Zoroaster, but both believed that evil is destructive to the good creation, and inherent in the soul that does not know the good nor act according to the good. Although good thought is of paramount importance, the actions that are necessarily influenced by thought (or lack of it) are also very important, and both philosophies had a highly developed system of ethics. Moreover, evil is identified with ignorance (of the good) in both philosophies. The concept of the soul as immortal, thinking, autonomous, capable of moral decision and accountable for any action that it causes, was also propounded by both. The concepts of the afterlife of the soul are therefore dependent solely on ethical thought and action (which are, in turn, the result of knowledge of the good and choice exercised by free will to participate in the good), and not on social status or propitiation of the gods. Additionally, both had concepts of socio-political reform as a necessary extension of the ethical concepts pertaining to the soul of the individual, and a concept of the society as a microcosm of the macrocosmic cosmos.

The good (or evil) of the cosmos was not linked to the creator of this cosmos by either Plato or Zoroaster, however, and the accent on dualism remains ethical. Both Plato and Zoroaster believed in two opposing principles of good and evil, but since this concept did not extend to their concept of God, they seem to display a theological monotheism, namely a belief in one good and supreme god, alongside an ethical dualism. In Plato's case this dualism is an opposition between the spiritual and the material (an opposition of body and soul or matter and mind). In Zoroaster's case this is an opposition between two spirits or two mentalities (an opposition, physically, of creative and destructive action and, ethically, of truthful and deceitful action), but both Plato and Zoroaster also had a dualistic concept of the fluctuating and the static. Despite the importance of the opposition between good and evil in both philosophies, the supremacy of the good remains a central concept for both.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources:

Archer-Hind, R D 1973. *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle: The Timaeus of Plato.* New York: Arno Press.

Azargoshasb, M F 1998. *The Holy Songs of Zarathushtra: Translation of the Gathas.* [Online] Available: http://www.zarathushtra.com/gatha/az/gathtml.htm.

Bode, D F A & Nanavutty, P 1952. *Songs of Zarathushtra: The Gathas translated from the Avesta.* London: George Allen and Unwin.

Lee, D 1977. *Plato: Timaeus and Critias.* London: Penguin Books.

Mills, L H 1898. *The Yasna* in *The Sacred Books of the East.* [Online] Available: http://www.avesta.org/yasna/y28to34b.htm via http://www.avesta.org/

Taylor, A E 1928. *A Commentary on Plato's Timaeus.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Secondary sources:

Afnan, R M 1960. *The Great Prophets: Moses, Zoroaster, Jesus.* New York: Philosophical Library.

Afnan, R M 1965. *Zoroaster's Influence on Greek Thought.* New York: Philosophical Library.

Allen, D 1987. Phenomenology of Religion, in: Eliade, M (ed.) 1987. *Encyclopaedia of Religion,* vol. 6 p.276-285. New York: Macmillan.

Barr, J 1985. The Question of Religious Influence: The case of Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53/2:201-235.

Bevan, E 1962. *Symbolism and Belief.* London: Fontana Library.

Bianchi, U 1987. Dualism, in: Eliade, M (ed.) 1987. *Encyclopaedia of Religion,* vol. 4 p.506-512. New York: Macmillan.

Bianchi, U 1987. History of Religions, in: Eliade, M (ed.) 1987. *Encyclopaedia of Religion,* vol. 6 p.399-408. New York: Macmillan.

Boyce, M 1975. *A History of Zoroastrianism,* vol. 1. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Boyce, M. 1978. Spanning East and West: Zoroastrianism, in: Foy, W (ed.) 1978. *Man's Religious Quest.* London: Open University Press.

Boyce, M 1982. *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. 2. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Boyce, M 1984. *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism*. New Jersey: Barnes & Noble.

Boyce, M 1992. *Zoroastrianism: Its Antiquity and Constant Vigour*. New York: Mazda Publishers & Bibliotheca Persica.

Brumbaugh, R S 1964. *Plato for the Modern Age*. London: Collier-Macmillan.

Carus, P 1996. *The History of the Devil and the Idea of Evil*. New York: Gramercy Books.

Cherniss, H 1957. The Relation of the Timaeus to Plato's Later Dialogues, in: Allen, R E (ed.) 1965. *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics*, p.339-378. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Cherniss, H 1977. The Sources of Evil according to Plato, in: Taranl, L (ed.) 1977. *Harold Cherniss – Selected Papers*, p.253-260. Leiden: E J Brill.

Chroust, A H 1980. The Influence of Zoroastrian Teachings on Plato, Aristotle and Philosophy in General, in: *New Scholasticism*, vol 54, p.342-357. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame.

Collinson, D & Wilkinson, R 1994. *Thirty-Five Oriental Philosophers*. London: Routledge.

Cook, J 1998. Greek Philosophy and the Septuagint. *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 24/1, 177-191.

Cornford, F M 1956. *Plato's Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato*. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Cornford, F M 1957. *From Religion to Philosophy: A Study in the Origins of Western Speculation*. New York: Harper.

Dandamaev, M A 1994. *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran*, translated by P.C.Kohl & D.J.Dadson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press:

Dannenfeld, K H 1952. The Renaissance and the Pre-Classical Civilizations. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. XIII no. 4.

Deist, F E 1993. The Nature of Historical Understanding. *Old Testament Esssays*, vol. 6 p.384-398. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Deist, F E & Le Roux, J H 1987. *Revolution and Reinterpretation*. Tafelberg Publishers: Cape Town.

De Jong, A 1997. *Traditions of the Magi: Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature*. Leiden: E J Brill.

Dhalla, M N 1922. *Zoroastrian Civilization.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dhalla, M N 1930. *Our Perfecting World.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dhalla, M N 1938. *History of Zoroastrianism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dodds, E R 1971. Plato and the Irrational Soul, in: Vlastos, G (ed.) 1971. *The Philosophy of Socrates*, p.206-229. New York: Doubleday & Co, Inc.

Duchesne-Guillemin, J 1958. *The Western Response to Zoroaster.* Conneticut: Greenwood Publishers.

Duchesne-Guillemin, J 1979. *The Hymns of Zarathustra.* London: Hyperion Press.

Eliade, M 1976. *A History of Religious Ideas*, vol. 1. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fox, D A 1967. Darkness and Light: The Zoroastrian View. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 35, 129-137.

Frye, R N 1984. *The History of Ancient Iran.* München: C H Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung.

Geertz, C 1979. Religion as a Cultural System, in: Lessa, W A & Vogt, E (eds.) 1979. *Reader in Comparative Religion*, p.78-89. New York: Harper & Row.

Geiger, W & Windischmann, F 1977. *Zarathustra in the Gathas and in the Greek and Roman Classics*, translated by Sanjana, D D P. AMS Press: New York.

Gnoli, G 2000. Dualism, in: Yarshater, E (ed.) 2000. *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol.7 fascicle 6. Bibliotheca Persica Press, New York. [Online] Available: http://www.iranica.com/articles/v7f6/v7f622.html

Gnoli, G 1987. Zoroastrianism, in: Eliade, M (ed.) 1987. *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, vol. 15 p.579-591. New York: Macmillan.

Gnuse, R K 1997. *No Other Gods – Emergent Monotheism in Israel.* Sheffield: JSOT Press.

Guthrie, K S 1971. Plato's views on the Nature of the Soul, in: Vlastos, G (ed.) 1971, *The Philosophy of Socrates*, p.230-243. New York: Doubleday & Co, Inc.

Hackforth, R R 1936. Plato's Theism, in: Allen, R E (ed.) 1965. *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics*, p.439-447 . New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Harrelson, W 1987. Myth and Ritual School, in: Eliade, M (ed.) 1987. *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, vol. 10 p.282-285. New York: Macmillan.

Haug, M 1971. *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the*

Parsis. Amsterdam: Philo Press.

Havelock, E A 1963. *Preface to Plato*. London: Harvard University Press.

Henning, W B H 1951. *Zoroaster, Politician or Witch-Doctor?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Herzfeld, E 1947. *Zoroaster and his World*. Princeton University Press.

Iyer, R 1983. *The Gathas of Zarathustra from the Zend-Avesta*. London: Concord Grove Press.

Jackson, A V W 1965. *Zoroaster: The Prophet of Ancient Iran*. New York: AMS Press.

King, W L 1987. Religion, in: Eliade, M (ed.) 1987. *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, vol. 12 p.282-292. New York: Macmillan.

Konow, S 1937. Medha and Mazda, in: *Jha Commemoration Volume: Essays on Oriental subjects presented to Ganganatha Jha*, Poona Oriental Series vol. 39, p.217-222. Poona.

Kotwal, F M & Boyd, J W 1982. *A Guide to the Zoroastrian Religion*. California: Scholars Press.

Louw, E M 1997. Dualisme in Judaïsme (Qumran) en Zoroastrisme. Unpublished MA-thesis, University of Stellenbosch.

Malandra, W M 1983. *An Introduction to Ancient Iranian Religion*. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.

McCabe, M M 1994. *Plato's Individuals*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

More, P E 1928. *The Religion of Plato*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Morrow, G R 1950. Necessity and Persuasion in Plato's Timaeus, in: Allen, R E (ed.) 1965. *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics*, p.421-437. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Moulton, J H 1972. *Early Zoroastrianism*. Amsterdam: Philo Press.

Owen, G E L 1953. The Place of the Timaeus in Plato's Dialogues, in: Allen, R E (ed.) 1965. *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics*, p.313-338. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Pangborn, C R 1983. *Zoroastrianism*. New York: Advent Books.

Panthaki, E B M 1999. The Gathas, the Creation, the Amesha Spentas, Good and Evil and Reward and Retribution. [Online] Available: http://www.zamwi.org/behram.htm

Preucel, R W & Hodder, I (eds.) 1996. Contemporary Archaeology in Theory. Oxford: Blackwell.

Reese, W L 1980. Dualism, in: Reese, W.L. *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and Western Thought*, p.136. Harvest Press: Sussex.

Reese, W L 1980. Zoroaster & Zoroastrianism, in: Reese, W.L. *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and Western Thought*, p.643-644. Harvest Press: Sussex.

Renfrew, C & Bahn, P 1994. *Archaeology – Theories, Methods and Practice*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Saunders, T J (transl.) 1970. *The Laws*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Schroff, K B 1999. *Zoroastrianism under the Achaemenians*. [Online] Available: http://www.nicom.com/~zamwi/ via http://www.stanford.edu/group/zoroastrians/

Schwartz, M 1985. The Old Eastern Iranian World View According to the Avesta, in: Gershevitch, I (ed.) 1985. *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol 2, 640-663. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schwartz, M 1985. The Religion of Achaemenian Iran, in: Gershevitch, I (ed.) 1985. *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol 2, 664-697. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Selby, H 1981. *Cultural Anthropology*. Iowa: WCB.

Shaked, S 1967. Some notes on Ahreman, the Evil Spirit, and his Creation, in: Urbach, R J, Werblowsky, R J Z & Wirszubski, C H (eds.) 1967. *Studies in Mysticism and Religion*, p.227-234. Jerusalem: Magnes Press.

Shaked, S 1995. *From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam: Studies in Religious History and Intercultural Contacts*. Hampshire: Variorum.

Shapero, H M G 1995a. *Zoroastrianism*. [Online] Available: http://www.walker.reston.va.us:8080/hmgs/zoroastrianism.html via http://www.stanford.edu/group/zoroastrians/

Shapero, H M G 1995b. *Dualism*. [Online] Available: http://www.walker.reston.va.us:8080/hmgs/zoroastrianism.html via http://www.stanford.edu/group/zoroastrians/

Sharpe, E J 1987. Comparative Religion, in: Eliade, M (ed.). *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, vol. 3 p.578-580. New York: Macmillan.

Smith, N K 1978. *A Commentary to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. London: Macmillan.

Stewart, J A 1960. *The Myths of Plato*. London: Centaur Press.

Verryn, T D 1982. *Symbols and Scriptures.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Werblowsky, R J Z 1971. Dualism, in: Roth, C & Wigoder, G (eds.) 1971. *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 6, p.242-246. Jerusalem: Keter Publishing.

Zaehner, R C 1961. *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism.* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Zaehner, R C 1956. *Teachings of the Magi.* London: Sheldon Press.