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THE
THEOLOGY OF
THE EARLY
GREEK PHILOSOPHERS

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BY
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During the Middle Ages this commanding position was gradually usurped by Aristotle, and it is only since the Renaissance that Plato has again been his serious competitor. But throughout this period Greek philosophy—whether Platonic or Aristotelian—together with a gradually increasing amount of Greek science in Latin translation, was all that was left of Greek culture in the West at a time when the knowledge of the Greek language had vanished in the general cultural decline. If the continuity of the ancient Greek tradition was never entirely broken in Europe, it is due to the fact that Greek philosophy kept it alive. But this would not have been possible had not that same philosophy, as *theologia naturalis*, served as the basis for the *theologia supernaturalis* of Christianity.

Originally, however, the concept of natural theology did not arise in opposition to supernatural theology, an idea which was unknown to the ancient world. If we want to understand what natural theology meant to those who first conceived the idea, we must see it in its genetic context. The concept of natural theology was, as St. Augustine himself states, one which he had taken from the *Antiquitates rerum humanarum et divinarum* of M. Terentius Varro,³ the prolific Roman writer and learned encyclopaedist of the last days of the republic (116–27 B.C.). In the second part of this massive work, which was entitled *Antiquitates rerum divinarum*, Varro had built up a theory of the Roman gods with thoroughgoing consistency and striking antiquarian erudition. According to St. Augustine he distinguished three kinds of theology (*genera theologiae*): mythical, political, and natural.⁴ Mythical theology had for its domain the world of the gods as described by the poets; political theology included the official State religion and its institutions and cults; natural theology was a field for the philosophers—the theory of the nature of the divine as revealed in the nature of reality. Only natural theology could be called religion in the true sense, since a real religion meant for St. Augustine a religion which is true; the poets' mythical theology presented merely a world of beautiful make-believe. By Varro's time the State religion was already beginning to decline; he hoped to save it by maintaining that religion derives its own validity from the authority of the State as the earlier of the two institutions. Religion is to him primarily one of the basic forms in the

social life of the human community.⁵ This thesis is one which St. Augustine stoutly opposes. He looks upon Varro's State gods as not a whit better or truer than the infamous myths of the poets. He excuses Varro's reactionary and—as it seems to him—fundamentally false attitude towards the whole problem of State religion by pointing out that Varro was living in a time of scant political liberty, with the old order crumbling about him, so that his own conservatism compelled him to defend the Roman national religion as the very soul of the Roman republic.⁶ But if there be some truth in this observation, yet for the same reason the old Roman religion, even in its most recent and strongly Hellenized form, was unable to become the religion of the empire in which so many different nations were united. To St. Augustine it is inconceivable that any true religion should be restricted to a single nation. God is essentially universal and must be worshipped universally.⁷ This, indeed, is a basic Christian doctrine; but it is in the universalism of Greek philosophy that St. Augustine finds its chief support. Greek philosophy is genuine natural theology because it is based on rational insight into the nature of reality itself; the theologies of myth and State, on the contrary, have nothing to do with nature but are mere artificial conventions, entirely man-made. St. Augustine himself says that this opposition is the very basis of the concept of natural theology.⁸ Obviously he has in mind the old antithesis of *φύσει* and *θέσει*. Even Socrates' pupil Antisthenes, whose influence upon the Stoic philosophy was profound, had distinguished the one *φύσει θεός* from the many *θέσει θεοί*,⁹ among whom he included the gods of the poets no less than those of the official cult. So from the standpoint of natural theology the gods of the poets and those of the State were on precisely the same footing. This is a point which St. Augustine quite properly brings up against Varro.¹⁰ Obviously Varro's threefold division was intended to blur the sharpness of this antithesis in order that the State gods might be rescued from the general repudiation of the *θέσει θεοί* and thus be permitted to retain their birthright. The division was really a compromise. We do not know who first introduced it. At any rate it must have been some Hellenistic (probably Stoic) philosopher, for Varro still used for his three *genera theologiae* the Greek adjectives *mythicon*, *politicon*, and *physicon*.

St. Augustine was one of the first to replace the Greek word *physicos* by the Latin *naturalis*.¹¹

The word 'theology' is much older than the concept of natural theology and the Varronian trichotomy. But theology is also a specific creation of the Greek mind.¹² This fact is not always rightly understood and deserves special emphasis, for it concerns not only the word but even more the thing which it expresses. Theology is a mental attitude which is characteristically Greek, and has something to do with the great importance which the Greek thinkers attribute to the *logos*, for the word *theologia* means the approach to God or the gods (*theoi*) by means of the *logos*. To the Greeks God became a problem. Again, it will be better to trace the development of both the idea and the word in the history of the language, rather than to begin with a systematic discussion of the relations between theology and philosophy, for such general definitions are never valid for more than a limited period.

The words *θεολόγος*, *θεολογία*, *θεολογεῖν*, *θεολογικός*, were created in the philosophical language of Plato and Aristotle. Plato was the first who used the word 'theology' (*θεολογία*), and he evidently was the creator of the idea. He introduced it in his *Republic*, where he wanted to set up certain philosophical standards and criteria for poetry. In his ideal state the poets must avoid the errors of Homer, Hesiod, and the poetic tradition in general, and rise in their representation of the gods to the level of philosophic truth. The mythical deities of early Greek poetry were tinged with all kinds of human weakness; but such an idea of the gods was irreconcilable with Plato's and Socrates' rational conception of the divine. Thus, when Plato set forth *τύποι περὶ θεολογίας*, 'outlines of theology', in the *Republic*,¹³ the creation of that new word sprang from the conflict between the mythical tradition and the natural (rational) approach to the problem of God. Both in the *Republic* and the *Laws* Plato's philosophy appears, at its highest level, as theology in this sense. Thereafter every system of Greek philosophy (save only the Sceptic) culminated in theology, and we can distinguish a Platonic, Aristotelian, Epicurean, Stoic, Neopythagorean, and Neoplatonic theology.

The words derived from *θεολογία* are particularly frequent in the works of Aristotle and his school.¹⁴ In his writings they are

used to indicate a special complex of problems and a special intellectual attitude.¹⁵ But his usage apparently involves an inner contradiction. On the one hand, he understands by 'theology' that fundamental branch of philosophical science which he also calls 'first philosophy' or 'science of first principles'—the branch which later acquires the name of 'metaphysics' among his followers. In this sense theology is the ultimate and highest goal of all philosophical study of Being.¹⁶ In historical contexts, however, he uses the term to designate certain non-philosophers such as Hesiod and Pherecydes, whom he contrasts rather sharply with the oldest genuine philosophers or physicists.¹⁷ In this sense one might say of the older period that philosophy begins where theology ends. We can find good evidence of this conception in the first book of Aristotle's lost dialogue *On Philosophy*, which was highly renowned in antiquity. When, for instance, he discusses the historical antecedents of his own scientific philosophy and goes so far as to take the religious systems of the Orient into account, I suspect that the remarkable range of his purview can be most simply explained if we remember that the men who stood for this kind of wisdom (*σοφία*) impressed him as falling into the category of *θεολόγος* in the second sense I have described.¹⁸ Aristotle's pupil Eudemus of Rhodes, the first man to write a history of theology, uses the same system of classification. Accordingly he too gives special attention to the Oriental religious systems when he deals with the contributions of the Greek verse- and prose-writers on theogony—the origin of the gods. But Eudemus would never have included his master Aristotle, the creator of metaphysics or theology in the philosophical sense, among the theologians. 14

I should like to dispel this apparent contradiction by referring to a passage in the twelfth book of the *Metaphysics*, where Aristotle, after developing his own theory of the unmoved mover of the universe and the movers of the spheres, turns back to the ancient religious conception of the gods in heaven. He sees here an intimation of the truth; but religion, he feels, has amplified this true intimation mythologically by inventing the anthropomorphic gods.¹⁹ Thus the theologians represent human thought in its primitive mythological stage. In later years philosophy returns—on a rational plane—to the problem

are concerned even he seems to look on Hesiod and others like him as forerunners of philosophy. He calls them the *πρώτοι θεολογήσαντες*, just as in the same connexion he speaks of the older philosophers as *πρώτοι φιλοσοφήσαντες*. This implies that even in the fourth century the word *θεολογείν* could be used in a sense quite properly applicable to the *θεολογείν* of the philosophers.²⁸ But when Aristotle uses the word *πρώτοι*, it involves the further connotation of something undeveloped and primitive—something to be followed by a higher stage of development. In another passage he contrasts the philosophers with the older theologians of the Hesiodic type: the essential thing about the philosophers, he asserts, is that they proceed by strict methods of proof; the theologians, on the other hand, are *μυθικῶς σοφίζόμενοι*.²⁹ This is a very pregnant formulation; it brings out both a common factor and an element of difference: the theologians are like the philosophers in that they promulgate certain doctrines (*σοφίζονται*); unlike them, however, in that they do so 'in mythical form' (*μυθικῶς*).

In general the former characteristic does not apply to Homer; on the contrary, it indicates precisely the nature of the difference between Hesiod's *Theogony* and the Homeric epic. Only in those isolated passages which furnish the chief excuse for Aristotle's classifying Homer among the theologians does he too appear in this light.³⁰ When the *Iliad* refers to Oceanus as the origin and source of all the gods, this has a theogonical ring; but when in another verse he is described as the origin and source of all things, this seems like nothing more than a transparent way of expressing in mythical guise the comparatively matter-of-fact conception that everything arose from water.³¹ As a rule the heroic legends that form the content of the Homeric poems seldom give occasion for doctrinal application. But this exceptional passage may well belong to one of the later portions of the *Iliad*. If so, we may hazard the inference that the intellectual standpoint which we find here belongs to a later stage of development than that in which the heroic epic of the Homeric type reached its height.³² Of course, we must not make too sharp a distinction between heroic legend and the myths of the gods, for both were primarily attempts to describe what had already come to pass, and both were originally looked upon as true. On the other hand, the legends

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commonly, even in later times, to denote a man's household goods and property; in philosophical language its scope is now widened to include everything that human perception finds in the world.² In thus broadly defining its subject-matter, philosophy shows that it has reached a new level, even in matters of theology; for among these *ὄντα* the heavenly forces piously reported in the earlier myths will find no place, and can no longer be taken for granted at the outset, as can the actual presence of things like stars and air, earth and sea, rivers and mountains, plants, animals, and men. Thunder and lightning are given facts; but can this be said of Zeus, the god who sends them? At all events, he does not belong to the realm of things that meet the senses; and beyond that realm we cannot go. Even if we recognize that eyes and ears do not reach very far, and that imagination travels immeasurable distances beyond the bounds of direct perception, the *ὄντα* that imagination finds will always be of the same sort as the things that present themselves to the senses, or at least very similar.

So reserved an intellectual approach implies a profound alteration in man's state of mind as compared with the mythological stage. His attitude towards myth itself has changed. It is true that the older philosophical thinkers have left us no direct statements about their relationship to the traditional myths; but it is inconceivable that they could have failed to regard their own ideas as most patently antithetical to a way of life grounded on the assumption that any mythical tale in general acceptance must be true. In particular they must have felt that there should be no intrusion of *μῦθοι* in any genuine knowledge of the world. Now the word *μῦθοι* had originally been a harmless designation for any speech or narration; but by the time of the Milesians, when men were beginning to turn to a more immediate source of knowledge, it must undoubtedly have started to take on that negative sense which was to become almost universal by the time of Thucydides, and which is expressed with a particularly clear connotation in the adjective *μυθώδης*: here we have the mythical in the sense of the fabulous and unauthenticated, as contrasted with any verifiable truth or reality. Thucydides uses the word 'mythical' to discredit the traditional verse and prose accounts of the older periods of Greek history; and surely an Ionian philosopher of

perceived the devastating novelty of their approach and loudly proclaimed that it was irreconcilable with the traditional views. The dominant intellectual and moral tradition of the time had no more distinguished representative than Homer, by whom, as Plato remarks, all Hellas had been educated. Xenophanes thought the same: to him Homer was the man

From whom all men have learned since the beginning.¹⁷

These words reveal a clear awareness of Homer's overpowering authority throughout the realm of Greek culture. And it was precisely because of this awareness that Xenophanes felt compelled to attack Homer as the mainstay of the prevailing errors. At this moment the latent antagonism between the new philosophical thinking and the old world of myth, which had dominated the earlier achievements of the Greek spirit, broke into open conflict. The clash was inevitable. While the pioneer thinkers of the new philosophy had not marshalled their discoveries polemically, Xenophanes made the world of myth a focal point for his opposition. It was not unreasonable that he, the poet, should be the one to see in this situation implications which spelled disaster for all previous poetry. It seemed to him self-evident that the poet is the one real educator of the people, and his work the only genuinely responsible authority of *paideia*. And so it was with Xenophanes that the work of deliberately transfusing the new philosophical ideas into the intellectual blood-stream of Greece began.

It is characteristic of the effect of Ionian philosophy upon the most enlightened contemporary minds that the problem of God is central for Xenophanes. This is the best evidence of the extent to which the new doctrines of the origin of the world had encroached upon the domain of religion. Naturally, Anaximander must have sensed his own opposition to the traditional anthropomorphic deities when he boldly asserted the Boundless to be the Divine, and thus refused to let divine nature take the form of distinct individual gods; but it is Xenophanes who first declares war on the old gods with the impressive words:

. . . One god is the highest among gods and men ;
In neither his form nor his thought is he like unto mortals.¹⁸

By this negation the poet gives his newly discovered knowledge a fixed direction and propulsive force which it hitherto lacked.

These are words which catch men's fancy far more easily than those of Anaximander, despite the genius with which he first expressed this knowledge. For not only did Xenophanes choose to put his message in poetical form; he also consciously applied his philosophical insight to the whole world of the anthropomorphic gods of Homer and Hesiod—a world which had previously counted as plain historical fact, but which now was collapsing. In these two lines the bearing of the new knowledge upon the old divinities is made explicit for the first time, not only in its positive aspects, but also negatively and critically. The philosophical intuition of a single world-ground, of course, involves new riddles more difficult than those for which it provides an answer. Xenophanes himself points out in another context that even when one sees the truth, this knowledge can never give its possessor complete assurance of its validity; about the highest questions there must always be widespread doubt.¹⁹ This insight, which, though tinged with resignation, is still far removed from the thorough-going scepticism of later centuries,²⁰ inevitably appears whenever man first starts to reason about these problems. But one thing at least is certain for Xenophanes: the human mind is an inadequate form through which to comprehend that infinite, all-governing unity which the philosophers have recognized as the principle of all things. It never occurs to Xenophanes to suggest that God may be without form altogether. It is significant that in all the time that the Greeks gave their philosophical attention to these matters, the problem of the form (*μορφή*) of the Divine was one that never lost its importance. It always remained an essential part of the problem *de natura deorum*,²¹ and in the Stoic philosophy it acquired new impetus in the doctrine of God's immanence in the world, which was represented as a sphere.²² But Xenophanes does not express his views of the divine form in positive terms. He does not say that the world is God, so that God's form is merely the world's form; for Xenophanes is not to be dismissed with the word pantheist. He merely makes way for a philosophic conception by denying that God's form is human.²³

In other respects he retains the conventional Greek pluralism. For understandable reasons Christian writers have always tended to read their own monotheism into Xenophanes' proclamation of the One God; but while he extols this God as more

than human, he also describes him explicitly as 'the greatest among gods and men'.²⁴ This manner of speaking, with its polar juxtaposition of gods and men, follows the old epic formulas; nevertheless, it still makes it perfectly clear that besides the One God there must be others, just as there are men. On the other hand, it would be wrong to conclude that these must be the anthropomorphic gods of the epic, which would rank side by side with the one highest God and would enable Xenophanes to compromise with the popular religion. It is more plausible to think of the dictum of Thales that all things are full of gods, or of Anaximander's doctrine of the one divine primal ground and the innumerable gods (that is, the innumerable worlds) that have come into being,²⁵ even if we have no right to ascribe to Xenophanes any specific dogma of this sort. In any case the one all-embracing God is so far superior to all the other lesser divine forces that he alone could really seem important to Xenophanes.

But Xenophanes goes even farther in draining off the residue of anthropomorphism from his conception of the One God. He writes that God 'sees as a whole, thinks as a whole, hears as a whole'.²⁶ Thus God's consciousness is not dependent upon sense organs or anything comparable. On the other hand, Xenophanes' God is unquestionably represented as a conscious, personal being, a fact which distinguishes him from what Anaximander calls the Divine. The philosophical attempt to divest the gods of their forms, which Stenzel sees in Anaximander's conception, is quite foreign to Xenophanes. The fact that he speaks very definitely of the One God who is more than all others is hardly to be explained as a mere reversion to traditional poetic language. One would not be likely to say of Anaximander's 'Boundless' that it sees as a whole, thinks as a whole, hears as a whole. Moreover, Anaximander, unlike Xenophanes, does not attack the gods in order to supplant them with his own divine Being. But no one can doubt that Xenophanes actually prays to his God; we could be sure of this even if we did not have his banquet elegy to show us how seriously and directly he puts his religious ideas into practice.²⁷

These ideas, however, continue to unfold in sharp opposition to the prevailing faith, just as if they were intended to become a prevailing faith themselves. God, says Xenophanes:

. . . ever abides
 In the selfsame place without moving; nor is it fitting
 For him to move hither and thither, changing his place.²⁸

Here Xenophanes is again criticizing the Homeric representation. In Homer the gods' quickness of movement is construed as a veritable token of the divine power.²⁹ Xenophanes, however, demands that his God be immobile, for he sees in this a mark of the highest dignity, as is clear from the words: 'Nor is it fitting for him to move.' (We meet the same religious intuition again in the contemporary statues and paintings which represent the gods as sitting in full majesty upon thrones, though naturally the artists had to express this insight in anthropomorphic terms.) Furthermore, the idea of God's absolute calm and immobility leads inevitably to an altered conception of his manner of acting upon things:

But effortlessly he sets all things astrid
 By the power of his mind alone.³⁰

This conjunction of omnipotence and repose is of tremendous importance in paving the way for the idea of God that we meet in later years. We think at once of the Aristotelian unmoved mover, an idea which really originates here in Xenophanes. Aristotle's doctrine attempts, by adopting the Platonic formula *κινεῖ ὡς ἐρώμενον*,³¹ to give greater plausibility to this noble conception of divine action upon the world. In Aeschylus we find much earlier evidence of the power and vigour of the idea, particularly in the great prayer to Zeus in *The Suppliants*. The poet depicts the divine dominion in a way that reveals not only the critical significance of Xenophanes' pioneering for a purer conception of God, but also its positive religious significance for his own time. The notion that God can sway the world merely by the power of his mind is shifted from the cosmic to the ethical sphere.

Down from their high-towered hopes
 He flings poor, wretched mortals,
 Donning no armour of might.
 For gods act without effort:
 High from their hallowed seats
 They somehow make their own thinking
 Come all at once to pass.³²

Aeschylus' expressive but almost prosaic 'somehow' (*πως*) shows

and the problem of its legal order. This fact is clear from an elegy that has come down to us in its entirety, where he praises the cultivation of the intellect (*σοφλή*). Xenophanes considered himself uniquely equipped to propagate *σοφλή* in his new home in the west of the Greek world; and it is only because he saw in it the highest political virtue that he considered his own efforts justified.⁴⁶ Not until the fourth century, when the gods of the *polis* had died and the *polis* itself was losing its identity in the world-empire of Alexander, did the universalistic theology come into its own and emerge from the background of philosophy to cushion the impending collapse of all established authority.⁴⁷

We have already pointed out that while Xenophanes' utterances presuppose the new and profoundly disturbing experience of the Anaximandrian cosmology, they also contain something peculiarly his own. Anaximander's conception of the Divine was deduced by pure speculation about the idea of an absolute beginning, from which it acquired its attributes—its boundlessness and its property of never having become. But in Xenophanes we find a new motif, which is the actual source of his theology. It is nothing that rests on logical proof, nor is it really philosophical at all, but springs from an immediate sense of awe at the sublimity of the Divine. It is a feeling of reverence that leads Xenophanes to deny all the finite shortcomings and limitations laid upon the gods by traditional religion, and makes him a unique theological figure, despite his dependence on the views of the natural philosophers. Only as a theologian, indeed, can he really be understood. His religious motif—the demand for utter sublimity in the Godhead—is expressed with particular clarity in the assertion that it is not seemly for God to move hither and thither.⁴⁸ Unrest is not appropriate to the divine majesty. The word *ἐπιπρέπει*, which Xenophanes uses here, is not, as a matter of fact, repeated in any of the other fragments; but it reveals the criterion on which his entire criticism of anthropomorphism is based: all these human frailties are out of keeping with God's essential nature. The misdeeds of the Homeric and Hesiodic gods are incompatible with the moral elevation of the Divine; nor are clothing, speech, human form, and birth any more appropriate. In the concept of the appropriate, which here appears for the first time in the Greek tradition,

be light' as a far more satisfactory model.⁵⁸ Of course the conception of the Creation has little to do with Xenophanes; but clearly his philosophical theology has done more than anything else to smooth the way for accepting Judaeo-Christian monotheism.

Xenophanes' conception of the One God has always roused the interest of monistic philosophers (*ἐνιζήοντες*) because he was the first, as Aristotle tells us, to teach the unity of the highest principle.⁵⁹ His conception seems to have a close connexion with Parmenides' theory of the One Being and consequently with the philosophy of the Eleatics. Inasmuch as he wrote an epic of the founding of Elea, the ancient historians of philosophy, who were on the watch for school successions, saw in him the father of Eleaticism. The One God of Xenophanes was thought to be an earlier version of the One Being of Parmenides, as if the religious intuition of the All-one had preceded the logical conception of the *ὄν*.⁶⁰ This view long dominated our own histories until it was vigorously upset by Karl Reinhardt's pioneer work on Parmenides.⁶¹ Reinhardt triumphantly demonstrated Parmenides' complete originality, and succeeded in showing that it was he and not Xenophanes who created the Eleatic theory of unity. His argument broke the traditional link between Xenophanes and the Eleatics, and allowed the problem of Xenophanes' position in history and his chronological relations with Parmenides to come up for fresh discussion. But Reinhardt also tried to give this problem a new solution by supplementing the direct fragments with the anonymous later work *On Xenophanes, Melissus, and Gorgias* as source material. Modern historians of philosophy, such as Zeller, Burnet, and Diels, had questioned the authenticity of this work so far as it dealt with Xenophanes' teachings, and accordingly refused to make any use of it. The little treatise was generally regarded as a product of the school philosophy of the later ancient period, and no one was ready to believe that its material came directly from Xenophanes' poems. It seemed much more likely that its author had taken Xenophanes' well-known assertions about the One God and his attributes, combined them with certain constituents of Parmenides' logic of Being, and thus tried to bring them into a strictly systematic dialectical form. But Reinhardt saw it all quite differently. Nothing seemed to him

Aristotle is still our most valuable source of information about the pre-Socratics, the weight of his testimony has been decidedly impaired during the last fifty years as we have become more and more clearly aware of his inability to grasp the ideas of his predecessors except in the fixed categories of his own system. But here we are dealing with facts that are almost unmistakable. Let us examine them briefly.

Aristotle reports that Parmenides thought of the One in terms of its *λόγος* or essence, while the Eleatic Melissus thought of it in terms of its matter, so that for Parmenides the One was limited, for Melissus unlimited. But Xenophanes, Aristotle continues, knew nothing of such a problem and did not aim at either the logical or the material One, but merely looked up at the whole heaven and said that the One was God.⁶² Now if we are to believe the author of the tract *On Xenophanes*, we must regard this account as false, for he says that according to Xenophanes the world is neither limited nor unlimited. If that is true, then Aristotle simply cannot have read Xenophanes; otherwise he could not have maintained that Xenophanes fails to distinguish between the logical and the material One, and therefore says nothing about whether it is limited or unlimited.⁶³ But it is really much more probable that the author of the late tract had not read Xenophanes at all. Instead he took his data from Aristotle and misunderstood it. After reading this good witness's statement that Xenophanes neither called the One limited nor called it unlimited, he drew the absurd conclusion that, according to Xenophanes, the One was neither limited nor unlimited. Out of Aristotle's merely negative statement he thus fashioned an utterly preposterous positive dogma, which he then proceeded to put in Xenophanes' mouth.⁶⁴ This is quite enough to prove the untrustworthiness of the author. It is undoubtedly true that all the arguments for the One which he attributes to Xenophanes actually point to the Being of Parmenides and not to the One God; but this fact merely proves that he has inserted Xenophanes' God into the Parmenidean ontology.

On the other hand, we can well understand how the author of the tract *On Xenophanes*, writing at a later period, can have come to devise this Eleatic *rationale* for the philosopher's idea of God. Evidently he felt that Eleaticism was precisely the

problem from which all philosophical thinking in this early period arises—the problem of cosmogony—while philosophy reveals its close relationship with its theogonic sister by assigning direct theological significance to its own cosmogonical discoveries. Thus it is inevitable that the philosophical conception of God should also prove positively fruitful for the old mythical theology in its vitalizing counter-effects upon theogonic speculation. Indeed, religious speculation, far from having its principles overthrown, acquires from this stimulus certain new incentives of extreme importance; for though it becomes indirectly dependent upon philosophy, it is now able to guard itself from the strongest attacks of a philosophical naturalism by taking full advantage of its own position. This advantage lies in the fact that while the philosopher must work with rational concepts of his own devising, theology always operates with the images and symbols of a living world of religious ideas firmly rooted in the popular consciousness. Even philosophy must fall back on such symbolism when it faces the ultimate enigmas. Xenophanes has already remarked that the very wisest of men never knows whether he really has found the truth about God and the universe.² Alcmaeon, the physician and student of nature, expresses the same conviction in an important passage at the beginning of his work;³ and his later successor, the author of the treatise *On Ancient Medicine*, which has come down to us in the Hippocratic collection, agrees whole-heartedly.⁴ How could any defender of the mythical theology fail to perceive here a vindication of his faith and keep from turning it to account? The more loudly the philosopher insists upon the sublimity of his own conception of God, all the more must anyone who accepts the old idea of a plurality of divine beings see a basic weakness in the indefiniteness and incomprehensibility of this philosophical God, and all the more readily will he exercise his inherited Greek impulse to endow his gods with definite forms and names.⁵

From this introduction to our special treatment of the sixth-century theogonic literature, we can see how inevitably misleading are those older accounts of the history of Greek philosophy which, following Aristotle, put the so-called Orphic systems at the very beginning, along with Hesiod, as a primitive stage of the philosophical spirit.⁶ Diels evaded the problem by

placing the remains of these writings as an appendix at the end of his collection of the fragments of the pre-Socratics. The latest editor of this classical work has now shifted them back to the beginning, so that they are again at the starting-point of their wanderings.⁷ The truth is that the theogonic writers cannot be understood except in the light of their close reciprocal relationships with the philosophers of their own period who are connected with them by the common bond of theological speculation, no matter how much they may differ in intellectual type. We must make this fact especially clear. To neglect it would be to obscure the organic interconnexions of the development of religious thought, in which philosophy has played a role from the very beginning.

For the most part recent research in the history of religion sees in the sixth-century theogonies, as we have remarked, a branch of the great religious development we call Orphism. Generally speaking, the sixth century meant for Greece a renewal of the religious life which the wave of naturalism in the previous period had threatened to drown out. The devotions of the official cult of the *polis*-gods were always in danger of becoming merely external. They were largely under the control of an enlightened stratum of high-born patricians. This was a period when the individual was beginning to enjoy much greater freedom of movement; both in art and poetry old forms lost their rigidity, and naturalness became the supreme standard for the depiction of reality no less than for the conduct of life.⁸ But in the course of the social upheaval caused by the widespread class struggles which were then beginning throughout Greece and which were to reach their peak during the sixth century, the social and political rise of the lower classes was accompanied also by the penetration of their religious conceptions into the higher intellectual life, thus smoothing the way for decisive changes. This revolution was heralded by the mounting esteem in which the cult of Dionysus now came to be held. Even as late as the Homeric epics this cult had hardly been deemed worth considering; now, however, it began to spread from the plains to the cities, where it soon found a place in the public festivals and divine ceremonies. Originally the orgiastic character of the Dionysiac religion had been looked upon as something quite alien, an insult to all municipal

order, as is clear from the myths of Pentheus and Lycurgus. But in the sixth century—often for political reasons—it came into favour with the tyrants, who were the representatives of the social stratum newly coming into power. We can see this change, for example, in the displacement of the old civic hero Adrastus of Sicyon by the Dionysiac cult under the rule of the tyrant Cleisthenes, and in the mighty rise of the Dionysiac festivals in Corinth under Periander and in Athens under the Peisistratidae, to which ceremonies the dithyramb and Attic tragedy and comedy owe their origin.⁹

Hand in hand with the rise of the cult of Dionysus went a revival of the ancient local mysteries, which were favoured by much the same political forces. We know that Peisistratus built the new Telesterion at Eleusis; and the mysteries were flourishing everywhere else as well, a sure sign of the new inward religious fervour which the movement had inspired. In the Orphic orgies, which were restricted to no one place, we find a kind of religious rites (*τελεταί*) of which there is no evidence before this time, though they were supposed to have been founded by the mythical singer Orpheus. Rules for the purification of man from sins which he had committed were, as Plato ironically remarks, promulgated by itinerant beggar-prophets and other devotees both by word of mouth and by whole piles of tracts.¹⁰ They also called Orphic certain ascetic rules of abstinence. Along with demands for abstention from meat and a purely vegetarian diet went a commandment enjoining justice in the conduct of life.¹¹ Thus the Orphic piety took the form of a definite *βίος* or way of living; but it also involved the observation of certain rites of sacrifice, exorcism, and expiation, which demanded some degree of training and accordingly necessitated a class of men professionally equipped for their performance.¹²

Modern students of the history of religion have gone a long way both in working out the details of this Orphic piety and in showing its influence on philosophy. According to Macchiore, who, to be sure, is an extreme partisan of the theory of Orphic influence, the teachings of Heraclitus and Plato are largely Orphic in origin.¹³ Many have seen in Orphism a religion of an oriental type, working its way into the organic development of the Greek spirit from outside like a bit of foreign matter in

Christian Church by representing them in the naïve modern fashion as a race of liberal free-thinkers is to narrow the horizon of comparison far too much. Naturally the Greek religion was without either theological dogma or creed. Nevertheless it was the Greeks who brought the Christian faith into the form of dogma, and the very history of Christian dogma was enacted on the soil of Greek culture. The only way the Greeks could make the oriental religion conform with their own nature was to approach it through the problems and the methods of Greek philosophy.²⁷ But on no account is the dogmatic and theological element in Christianity, which was developed in the first four centuries of our era, an oriental product. The Church Father, Gregory of Nyssa, who, as a man of Asia Minor, stands virtually at the watershed dividing the Greek mind from the Oriental, was fully aware of this fact and formulated it with masterly clarity: nothing, he says, is so characteristic of the Greeks as the erroneous notion that 'all Christianity rests entirely on dogmas'.²⁸ Sects, dogma, and theology, indeed, are definitely products of the Greek mind, and their intellectual structure is such that nothing else could have given them their characteristic stamp. It is not, however, from the Greek religion that they arise, but from philosophy, which, at the time of its impact on Christianity, was split up among a number of sects, each distinguished by its own rigid dogmatical system. Even if we cannot characterize the intellectual attitude of the early Greek thinkers as dogma in the rigid sense of the Stoics or Epicureans of the Hellenistic age,²⁹ theirs is the root from which both concept and word have grown; and if there was anything at all comparable to a dogma among the Greeks of the sixth century B.C., it must be sought among the philosophers and not in the Orphic rites. A figure like Xenophanes shows well enough how philosophy, with the peculiar firmness of intellectual conviction that characterizes it, can give rise to a dogmatic pathos—an entirely new phenomenon, not quite untouched by that impatience with which we usually view the religious opinions of our fellow-men whenever they strike us as erroneous. But a truly religious dogma is something of which this period has as yet no inkling. The theogonic theories arising as a Hesiodic aftermath have no such significance in contemporary religious life. They merely represent a constantly

the general ideas of this theory into harmony with the text of Homer. Taking the Christian belief in immortality as his point of departure, he first proceeded to show that there is nothing at all comparable in Homer,² and then turned his attention to that side of the Homeric conception of the psyche which has to do with the world beyond. But in beginning here he made his first mistake. For however important Homer may have found the role of the psyche as the shade of the dead person in the lower world, this meaning of the word *ψυχή* nevertheless remains derivative and secondary, as we shall presently show. Rohde himself says correctly enough that as soon as a Homeric man dies, his existence as an individual ceases; there is no soul in him which could live on after death.³ The shades of the dead which have entered Hades enjoy no conscious existence there; and several times when Homer uses the expression 'the man himself' as contrasted with the shade, he is thinking of the corporeal remains as such, even if life is now gone from them. Thus in the very first lines of the *Iliad* we read that the souls (*ψυχαι*) of the heroes, i.e. their shades, were hurled into Hades, while 'they themselves' (*αυτοι*) became feasts for dogs and birds of prey.⁴

But before we turn to what is really the chief meaning of the word in Homer, the psyche of the living person, let us spend a while longer with that unsubstantial, shadowy image from the world below, which he also calls simply an idol because of its close outward resemblance to the dead person; and let us ask with Rohde where it came from and how it was related to the man during his life.⁵ There are a number of passages in Homer where we read that the psyche has severed itself from the dying person, flown away from his mouth or his body (more exactly, from his limbs), and hurried off to the underworld. It must have dwelt for a while in the living person, but what was its activity there? That which we call 'soul' or 'consciousness', which is also what the later Greeks understand by the word *ψυχή*, is never given this name in Homer, but is called *θυμός*, or referred to by words denoting the heart, the diaphragm, or some other bodily organ involved in the affective or volitional reactions. Now Homer often uses the word *ψυχή* in connexion with living persons, in the sense of life.⁶ But Rohde felt that this usage was not enough to explain how the same word could

uses to designate the various aspects of all that we summarily refer to as 'soul'; he does not even ask what the particular meaning of the Homeric conception of the psyche may be; but he approaches the problem of the psyche with special attention to that sense of the word in which it betokens the spirit of the dead, just as Rohde began with the fact that in Homer the psyche as a being from Hades is an image of the living man. But while Rohde tried to use this creature from Hades, this idol and double, as a basis for inferences about the nature of the psyche in general and even about its function as the psyche of the living man, Otto distinguishes sharply between these two significations. In the Homeric creature from Hades he sees merely a Greek manifestation of the primitive belief in the ghost of the dead, quite untouched by reflection, a product of the fear of the dead which is part of the common experience of all peoples. But since Otto insists upon this origin for the shadowy image from the world below, it becomes problematical why such an image should ever be called a *ψυχή*; for, as we have already remarked, when Homer uses the word *ψυχή* in connexion with a living person, he uses it to designate his life,¹² which is at quite the opposite pole from using it to refer to the dead. Here we must notice a further distinction: the psyche that hovers about as an idol in Hades has a strictly individual character by reason of its manifest resemblance to the form of the living person,¹³ but the psyche of the living person is simply the animal life that is in him; it is in no way personal. How are these two conflicting meanings of the single word *ψυχή* in Homer to be reconciled? The conception of psyche as life will not explain the employment of the same term to denote the ghost of the dead. Otto accordingly assumes that there has been some transference of meaning. He suggests that conceivably the apparition of the ghost has been connected with the impression which the moment of death makes upon the beholder:¹⁴ the thing that separates itself from the body and escapes is the life, the *psyche*, which must then have been identical with the ghost in Hades. Now if this identification had occurred as a conscious inference, it would be hard to imagine how those who made it could have failed to notice the distinction we have just mentioned. Moreover, it would have been ill in accord with Otto's own ideas of the primitive intellectual processes

would understand the connotation of breath. Bickel has rightly declared it improbable that Anaximenes revived this original sense of *ψυχή* simply by his own lucubrations. Presumably this is how he had understood Homer; at any rate it is how he understood his mother tongue. Xenophanes is said to have argued against the theory that the world breathes.²⁵ This conception too, like many others, was one that he had found in the Ionian philosophy of nature and repudiated as altogether too outlandish. It would fit Anaximenes nicely; and it is chronologically possible that it originated with him. Aristotle expressly states that the idea of the world's breathing was to be found among the older Pythagoreans, who connected it with their theory that the world contained empty space.²⁶ But in itself the idea may well be older and go back to Anaximenes. Moreover, the Orphic theogony, when it represents the soul as entering the new-born child on the wings of the wind, already presupposes the philosophical theory that air is the principle of life.²⁷ It would be interesting to know whether Anaximenes already thinks of the word *ψυχή* as including the idea of consciousness; at any rate this will soon be the case with Heraclitus, for whom, as for Aeschylus and Pindar, this connotation is well established. This need not necessarily be true for Anaximenes, inasmuch as his chief concern is with the physiological aspects of the psyche. But at least his expression 'the soul rules us' (*συγκρατεῖ ἡμᾶς*) tempts us to interpret this with an eye to the intellectual powers as well;²⁸ and since the endless air is just as divine for Anaximenes as the *apeiron* is for Anaximander, and at the same time governs the world, it is hard to follow this analogy with the soul of man if consciousness and reason are left out. In any case the step from Anaximenes' air-psyche to the psyche as conscious soul would be only a short one. The meaning must be at least potentially present, and for us that is the deciding factor. Whether this whole development occurred in Ionia we cannot tell, for unfortunately we do not know what was going on in the mother country. Certainly it did not begin with Homer, though we must begin with him in the absence of other sources. Even Homer's conception of the psyche shows some departure from the original form; and the real starting-point for this development lies far more in the living language and imagery of the folk. From this alone

and not from the two disparate Homeric ideas of life and ghost can we explain how the one word *ψυχή* could come to express them both. Only the word 'spirit' with its breath-connotation, like the analogous concepts in English and German, suggests both of the two widely different aspects here involved: on the one hand, life; on the other, the supernatural apparition of the ghost. This, then, is the original notion. There is no way of jumping from the psyche as life-in-the-abstract to the idol in Hades.

However, we have not yet really solved the problem of how the word *ψυχή* in Homer can mean both the impersonal concept 'life' and 'ghost of the dead' appearing in individual form. The double significance with which this word is conceived in Homer cannot have grown from a single conceptual root. Otto's hypothesis that the idea of the life that soars away from the body at death has been combined with the experience of 'seeing ghosts' does not, of course, suffice to explain how the word *ψυχή* can have been transferred to the idol in Hades; but the hypothesis that some such transference occurred strikes me as inescapable. It becomes much easier to understand if the original meaning of *ψυχή* was not merely 'life', as Otto assumes, and if this transference was not consummated in Homer, for whom the prevailing meaning of *ψυχή* was already 'life', but rather at an earlier stage, when the word still meant quite literally the 'breath-soul'. It was then fairly easy to think of the breath-soul that escaped at death as identical with what primitive belief held to be the one thing remaining from the dead person which could under certain circumstances become an object of human sense-perception—namely, the ghost. From this identification the concept of psyche acquired its contrast of meanings; and this contrast is not to be explained away, for the breath of life is essentially nothing individual, while the apparition from the realm of phantasms naturally resembles the dead person himself. It is worth our while to notice that it was obviously much easier for the word *ψυχή* to have its range of meaning widened to include this creature of the dead than to take in those conscious processes which it would pre-eminently denote later on. Consciousness and animal life are never originally conceived as a unity. Accordingly they are indicated by different words.²⁹ While this may seem curious

in the light of the later psychological meaning of *ψυχή*, it is quite understandable if we bear in mind the basic linguistic meanings of the Homeric words *θυμός* and *ψυχή*. In Homer the predominant meanings of *θυμός* are 'passion', 'will', 'soul', 'mind', while that of *ψυχή* is 'life'; these, however, are obviously all secondary meanings which only gradually developed. Etymologically it is clear that *θυμός* is connected with the Latin *fumus* or 'smoke' and the Greek *θύω* ('to sacrifice'), so that it really suggests a hot welling-up of blood; *ψυχή* likewise means originally something quite concrete and perceptible, the 'breath', and belongs to the same family as *ψύχω* ('to breathe') and *ψυχρός* ('cold'). The two words indicate quite different and separate psychophysical phenomena and make no pretence of being reducible to any common denominator. But by the time of Homer there was already an inner tendency to merge the phenomena of consciousness (*θυμός*) and of animal life (*ψυχή*) in a single soul-concept, though the language contained no one word embracing both meanings; this is evident in double expressions such as *ψυχή καὶ θυμός* ('soul and mind').³⁰ Since the poetic language of the epic was extremely old and the significance of the words had long since become fixed, the meaning of a word like *ψυχή* could not be extended towards the mental side so easily here as it probably could in the imperceptible transitions of popular speech, where this process was already completed by the sixth century.³¹ We find parallels to this development elsewhere, for instance in the realm of ethical thought. While in the language of the epic the word *ἀρετή* has the specific, narrowly restricted sense of 'strength' and 'manly bravery', which goes back to the earliest heroic lays and continues under Homeric influence to reappear now and then in the language of poets centuries later, we also see in post-Homeric times an extension of the meaning of this word, coming partly from the language of daily life, partly from the poetical language itself. By this time *ἀρετή* has come to stand for every kind of human excellence and perfection, even outside the realm of warfare; it can denote justice, prudence, wisdom, or piety. Obviously the chief factor that made this extension of meaning possible was the extent of its basic etymological significance, which could include any sort of excellence whatsoever. So the development of this idea must simply have

depended upon what each succeeding period felt man's highest excellence to be.³² But the shift in the meaning of *ψυχή* followed a different course. The idea of breath was not general enough to take on any new mental connotations at random. It could not be broadened to acquire the meaning of soul in anything like our present sense until that which had hitherto been called *θυμός* was understood to be dependent on the psyche, and sheer animal living accordingly recognized as fundamental for the higher life of consciousness. So we do not need to explain why the word *ψυχή* was bound to defeat the word *θυμός* in their rivalry to determine which would better suggest both the mere fact of living and the life of the soul in the fullest sense. In the end *ψυχή* entirely absorbed the meaning of *θυμός* as soul or mind. As a matter of fact, *θυμός* frequently shows a tendency in Homer to rise to this more general meaning and include animal life as well,³³ but in the living language *ψυχή* carries the day, and *θυμός* becomes more and more confined to the special meaning of 'courage'.³⁴

Now this complete coalescence of life-soul and consciousness in the conception of the psyche appears in the religious beliefs of the sixth-century Orphics and Pythagoreans as a presupposition of their doctrine of the so-called transmigration of souls. It is impossible not to see in this doctrine one of the most important causes of the diffusion of the un-Homeric meaning of the word *ψυχή* and its ultimate triumph. But it is certainly wrong to suppose that this comprehensive conception of psyche was confined exclusively to these late mystical groups, and to regard it as a foreign substance in the intellectual life of the Greeks. Of course if we should contrast Homer and the Orphics as representing two distinct types of belief about the soul, the gap between them might seem so unbridgeable that we might as well be dealing with the typical opposition of popular belief and mysticism or with the philosophical views of two opposing races,³⁵ Homer representing the Greeks, and the Orphic dualism the Orientals.³⁶ But we have already observed that the non-Homeric and pre-Homeric Greek conception of the psyche as the breath-soul possessed a native tendency to widen its meaning to include something like our present idea of the soul, and that out of all the Homeric words for indicating either the physical life or the life of the conscious soul, this was by far the

his soul, shall enter Kronos' lofty hall on the Islands of the Blest.

There the ocean breezes blow;
 And golden flowers are blazing,
 Some on the land in glistening trees,
 While others are fed by the sea.

And the blessed ones weave them in crowns for themselves.

We find another no less exuberant and visually concrete description of the sorrows and joys of the beyond in a fragment from a lost Pindaric threnody.⁴⁴ In still another fragmentary series of lines we read of souls who must do penance there until the ninth year, when Persephone sends them back to the upper sun: from these come illustrious princes, men of swift strength and utmost wisdom, henceforth to be honoured as heroes.⁴⁵

With this eschatology the mystics associated a call for purity of life in accordance with certain specified rules. In particular this *βίος* required abstention from any form of bloodshed, including even blood-sacrifice and the eating of animal flesh⁴⁶—a prescription that led to a precise ritualistic regulation of diet. Man sees himself as responsible for the future fate of his soul in the beyond, and no longer feels fully at home in this world, whether he expects to obtain his salvation by mere adherence to outward ritual or rather by some ethical sanctification in the course of his wanderings. His soul, which has come from a higher and diviner sphere, is a transient guest in the house of the body. Only in dreams and in the hour of death, when released by the body, is it ever completely itself.⁴⁷ We must notice that Aristotle uses almost the same words with regard to the nature of the soul in a famous fragment of one of his early and still Platonistic dialogues.⁴⁸ He, too, speaks of the dream-vision and the intimations of the future at death as the only moments when the soul exists entirely by itself and reveals its true nature. The Orphic soul-theory is a direct precursor of Plato's and Aristotle's view of the divine nature of soul or mind, though they have stripped away all the material features still clinging to this conception. The passage from Aristotle that agrees so closely with the Pindaric fragment stands in a lengthy exposition of how the idea of God originated. This fact alone is enough to prove the significance of the Orphic soul-theory for Greek theology. In the teachings of Plato and

tote, all human beings strive. Nothing could be more false to the inner motivation of the heroic thinkers who meet us at the outset of Greek philosophy than to look on them as a company of pious doctrinaires or scholastics ambitious to demonstrate with the tools of the intellect what their feeling accepts on faith. An established confession of faith never played any part in the veneration accorded to the deities of the Greek cults. Their significance and their nature fluctuated with the universal change; and as life and human experience advanced from one stage to another, there were always new ways of discovering the divine presence in reality. For that very reason, however, we must take pains not to go to the other extreme and think of pure thought as something hermetically sealed and isolated, essentially opposed to religion and shut off from it with as sharp a cleavage as that with which modern science sometimes cuts itself off from the Christian faith. The Greeks were as yet unaware of any such autonomous realms of the spirit. Among the sources of those human experiences which helped in transforming the traditional mythical concept of the Divine, the rational investigation of reality was one of the most important; and just as religious inquiry itself had whetted the appetite for knowledge, so the philosophical speculation with which the Greeks were constantly aiming to grasp the totality of existence performed a truly religious function and gave rise to a peculiar religion of the intellect, reflecting in its structure the shift in the relationship between reason and feeling which confronts us in that new intellectual type—the philosopher. We have, I think, shown that it is impossible to follow Reinhardt (and here Reinhardt himself seems to vacillate) when he counts Anaximander and Anaximenes among the men of pure science but sets Xenophanes apart from all other thinkers as a radical theologian. For while Xenophanes clearly differs from them in the way he expresses his religious feelings, their rational style of thinking gives them a new conception of the world which is deeply satisfying to their own religious sense. And the very fact that Xenophanes was not originally a student of physics is all the more indicative of the latent religious force in the world-view of the natural philosophers.

Our problem is similar when we come to Parmenides. We need not ask whether his study of pure Being has a religious

revival. Similarly Aeschylus, in the great speech where Prometheus boasts of being the *εὑπετής* of human *τέχναι*, borrows a number of intonations from this sphere of prophetic discourse, the influence of which can still occasionally be traced, though it is otherwise lost to us:

Seeing, they saw in vain;
Listening, they failed to hear.¹⁸

To Parmenides, of course, eyes and ears were precisely the organs by which men were led astray;¹⁹ so he could speak only in more general terms of 'wandering off the track' and 'roving about'.

Naturally we have no reason to suppose that Parmenides was trying to build up a case for any particular religious sect, or was even following some such prototype point by point in describing his remarkable experiences. If such a model may have helped him find suitable ways of expressing his own position, it was at any rate a highly original device for giving it intellectual form. It amounts to far more than mere metaphor. What Parmenides has done is to take over the religious form of expression and transpose it to the sphere of philosophy, so that in truth a whole new intellectual world takes shape. Indeed, the one thing that distinguishes the achievement of the major Greek philosophers from the so-called special sciences (which were already beginning to emerge at this time, sometimes alongside philosophy and sometimes directly out of philosophy itself) is this very ability not merely to assemble their facts or make out a case for their theories, but to build up a full-sized intellectual world. Throughout the history of Greek thought we shall notice again and again how the philosophical spirit constructs its own *kosmos* and *bios* out of concepts and forms taken over from the religious and political life of the community, and remoulded until they have become genuinely philosophical in character. These matters have often been regarded as irrelevant to the philosophical content; but from our standpoint, which is really no longer that of a simple history of dogma, their value is peculiarly enhanced. In the wider intellectual life of Greece the philosopher who devises new symbols is no less important than the man who arrives at new doctrines. They are (mostly) one and the same person. Often

it is only in the language of its symbols that the spirit underlying these doctrines acquires its peculiar tonal colour.

So if we are fully to understand the inner meaning of Parmenides' approach, we must remember that, unlike the Ionian philosophers, he does not retreat behind his subject-matter with truly Homeric self-effacement, but, like Hesiod, announces in his own name a special revelation. His poem is a testament to the religious depth of his message and to the compelling experience which had enabled him to penetrate to the nature of true Being. The road along which he was driven by the sun-maidens did not go 'through all the cities', as the wording of our best manuscript would seem to require.²⁰ This reading, which has properly always been criticized, would make Parmenides a second Odysseus, wandering through the lands and towns of men,²¹ with an endless craving for knowledge purely for the sake of increasing his information. Parmenides' 'roadway' (*δδός*) is nowhere to be found on this earth; it is rather the way of salvation, of which he had learned in the mystery religions. Obviously it was here that the concept of the 'way'—innocent enough in itself—first acquired that pregnant significance which it constantly has in Parmenides' writing: the one right way that brings salvation and leads to the goal of knowledge.²² The philosophical language of a later era was to coin the similar word *μέθοδος*, which also stands for the way to a goal; but how empty, how merely methodical this metaphor seems in comparison with the 'way' of Parmenides, which (if this attempt at restoring the text is correct) 'leads him who knows unscathed wherever he goes'?²³ Only the way of salvation brings a man through unscathed, and no road but the road of truth does this for 'the man who knows'.²⁴ For the first time in Greek philosophical language we meet the philosophical personality considered as a bearer of knowledge. There is no intention of boasting of this knowledge; the philosopher chooses rather to look upon it as a gift from some divine power and to depict himself with modest pride as a mere instrument of that power. This is the real meaning behind the conception of 'the man who knows': he is one who has come to share in a knowledge of a higher origin—an analogue of the 'knower' or 'mystes' of the religious initiation rites, who is thus distinguished from the uninitiated.

The verses with which the main portion of Parmenides' poem begins are contained in fragments 2 and 3 (4 and 5 in editions previous to the fifth) of Diels's collection:

Come then, I shall tell you (and please listen well to my words)
 Which ways of inquiry alone can be thought. The first
 Maintains that *it is* and *cannot not be*; and this
 Is the path of conviction, which follows the truth. But the
 next
 Asserts: *it is not* and *this not-being must be*.
 This latter path, I must tell you, cannot be explored.
 For that which is not, you neither can know (for this
 Is beyond our achieving) nor can you express it in words,
 For thinking and being are one and the same.

The truth already proclaimed in the proem, from which the veil is now lifted for the first time, is so overwhelming in its simplicity that it comes as a shock to the listener, whom the solemn pronouncements of the goddess have prepared for some more pyrotechnic display. But this very simplicity reminds us of the actual experiences of the 'mystai' whose minds first had to be freed entirely from all confusing earthly entanglements so that they might be ready for the holy things that the initiation rites would reveal. The founders of the mysteries knew well that the deepest secrets are found only in things that are seemingly obvious.²⁵

The two ways—the right way and the way of error—appear again in the religious symbolism of later Pythagoreanism. There they serve as an emblem for the choice between a morally good life and a bad one—the choice confronting every man as a moral agent.²⁶ We meet a similar conception in the sacred two-branched Y on the gravestones of a later era, which seems to symbolize the dead person's membership in the sect as a decision rightly made, and holds forth a promise of eternal peace in the hereafter.²⁷ Unfortunately we do not know how far the idea of the two ways goes back. That it was already familiar in early times is clear from Hesiod's *Works and Days*, with its doctrine of the narrow path of *areté* and the broad highway of misery.²⁸ It is tempting to suppose that the image of the way was also employed in those pious doctrines of the other world which we have encountered in Pindar, for the

religion in which they appeared was definitely based on the idea of the soul's incessant wanderings. Perhaps it is no accident that in the passage already cited in the previous chapter Pindar speaks of a 'way of Zeus' which the soul must travel after death if man has led his life aright and entered into blessedness.²⁹ At any rate, it would seem quite likely that this symbolism of the way and the conscious choice thereof was also applied to our life in this world; for religion has always assumed that man's conduct in this life can exert considerable influence upon his fate in the life to come.³⁰ So Parmenides' image of the two ways, like the other material of his poem, is presumably based on a carry-over of religious symbolism into the intellectual processes of philosophy.

Although he speaks definitely of two ways, that of Being and that of Not-being, the image is expanded in another passage. He seems to recognize a third way on which the ignorant wander perplexed: this way takes for granted that both Being and Not-being possess real existence.³¹ It is obvious that the two ways so clearly differentiated at the outset are not to be reconciled. But there are men who still wander in error—men of two heads, dumb and unseeing—who hope to perform a reconciliation by regarding the same thing first as existent and then as non-existent, and who suppose that in dealing with anything that exists they can first go the one way and then return and go the other. Thus the third way is no proper highway distinct from the two others (the explorable way and the way that cannot be explored), but is merely an inadmissible combination of the two, disregarding their mutual exclusiveness. This impossible unification, however, is the chief thing that Parmenides is fighting against; for men's delusions invariably lend it plausibility and lead them to pursue it, while no man would so lightly venture to start on the way of Not-being alone. This is the sole reason why Parmenides speaks of a third way at all. Here we need only remember that ever since Homer the Greek word for 'way' (*ὁδός*) has meant not only the beaten track or road but also any course that a man pursues in going towards a goal. Only in this latter sense can one speak of a third 'way' when a person takes first one way and then the other.

Why does Parmenides pose the sharp alternatives of Being

incessant coming-to-be and passing-away: the thing that is now present will soon exist no more. But Parmenides' basic idea is that the eternal One, which the philosophy of nature discerns in the process of coming-to-be and passing-away and seeks to identify with the ever-moving primal substance of all things, falls far short of the requirements which a strict conception of Being involves.

This also enables us to understand the remarkable term 'the Existent' or 'that which is' (*ὄν*), which is the real subject of Parmenides' disquisition from the very first line. Evidently this is an expression of his own coining. It is not, however, one that has been simply brought down from heaven with nothing to prepare the way for it, but is clearly connected with the language and thought of the Ionian natural philosophers. Undoubtedly they had already spoken of the world of things that arise out of the primal ground and then return to it as *τὰ ὄντα*—the things that are present or given. The innovation of the Ionians lay in the fact that they did not begin with uncontrolled traditions and fictions, as did the mythical thinking of earlier times, but took as their point of departure the things they found given in experience, which they tried to explain in terms of itself alone. Parmenides now takes seriously the claims of these *ὄντα* to be true Being, and finds that the things which men have hitherto called by this name do not really fulfil the requirements.³⁶ True Being can have nothing in common with Not-being. Neither can it be many. It must rather be one alone; for anything manifold is subject to change and motion, and this would be contrary to the persistence that is essential to the very nature of Being. Thus there are no *ὄντα* in the plural, but only a single *ὄν*.³⁷ Of course, this conclusion does not agree with the evidence of the senses; but that means merely that the senses must be deceptive and need to be subjected to the strict scrutiny of the understanding (*λόγος*).³⁸ If the understanding finds room for only a single Existent, that does not mean that this Existent is something purely mental, such as modern idealism might postulate. This cannot possibly be what Parmenides has in mind in his famous assertion that 'thinking and being are one and the same'.³⁹ In announcing this identity he is simply attacking the conceivability and knowableness of the Non-existent—a matter which he considers

of decisive importance. The verb *voeîn* does not mean at all the same to Parmenides as it will to Plato, who contrasts *voûs* sharply with sense-perception. Ever since Homer *voeîn* has always meant 'to become aware' of an object and identify it as the thing that it is.⁴⁰ Moreover, the object of *voeîn* that Parmenides is talking about—'the Existent', or 'that which is'—is something taken directly from human experience. Parmenides can have no doubts about the existence of this object, inasmuch as *voeîn* itself is never really *voeîn* except when it knows the actual. What the understanding or *lógos* contributes is the all-important consideration that the Existent cannot be as our senses reveal it to us—namely, something manifold and in motion.

Parmenides' understanding compels him to be consistent, and this consistency leads him inevitably to a critique of human knowledge. The very fact that he uses the image of the two ways in expounding his theory⁴¹ shows how much he is dominated by this motif. This is also confirmed by the way he distinguishes the two sections of his work as dealing with 'truth' and 'appearance' respectively,⁴² thus putting both the metaphysics of the first part and the physics of the second in an avowedly critical epistemological perspective.⁴³ Parmenides' thought, with its amazing self-assurance, has an underlying necessity that makes it peculiarly compelling—the logical necessity inherent in the very concept of Being.⁴⁴ But Parmenides is quite innocent of our formal logic and does not yet think of the concept as a mere vehicle; he is convinced that his own logical reasoning will actually enable him to get a firm grasp of the Existent itself. To be sure, the Being that he approaches along this path is quite different from the things of whose existence the physicists have been talking. But it is significant that when he claims this Being to be the one true Being, he is definitely contrasting it with that of the physicists. So even when he seeks to vanquish the philosophy of nature, he has the same soil under his feet—the world of objective reality. And even when he faces the inevitable question of how the appearance by which all men have been victimized can have arisen at all, and how it can have obtained such universal respect, he cannot help putting his answer in the form of a physical system.

like a sphere⁶² (an obviously Pythagoreanizing comparison), this is, so to speak, its one last vestige of world-form which he has not succeeded in removing; and even in this passage he makes it plain that he is dealing merely with a comparison. His Existent is not to be approached by later conceptions such as that of matter.⁶³

It seems, indeed, far more like the pure form of that idea in which all the earlier philosophical research was rooted: the idea of eternal existence as the basis of all knowledge. The Milesians had found this eternal existence in their primal principle and claimed it to be divine. Similarly, Parmenides contrasts his Existent with the world of 'mortals' delusions' and proclaims its gospel as a revelation from the goddess of light—a purely theological figure introduced to emphasize the importance of true Being. Now if we are not mistaken, we have here a new stage in the approach to the same problem which the older thinkers had answered by equating their first principle with the Divine. Like them, Parmenides connects the knowledge of existence with the sphere of religion; indeed, he does so with peculiar effectiveness. On the other hand, he definitely fails to identify Being with God, even though in later times his theory of absolute Being and its predicates has been construed again and again as a philosophical theology. Therefore it may well be more in keeping with the character of his thought if we speak of his Mystery of Being. This will at least do justice to the form he has given his doctrine. A theologian will, of course, deplore the absence of a God in this mystery; but no one with a live religious sense will refuse to count his pure ontology as a genuine mystery and revelation; nor will he fail to be deeply stirred when he sees how much it meant to Parmenides to experience the nature of Being. To put it otherwise, the religious element lies more in the way the man has been affected by his discovery, and in his firm and decided handling of the alternatives of truth and appearance, than in any classification of the object of his research as divine.

In the long run, however, a Greek would feel that the real basis of this religious attitude of 'the man who knows'⁶⁴ must lie in the value and significance of that which is known. In this connexion we cannot keep Parmenides' Existent too sharply distinguished from our own idea of reality, tempered as it has

author's personality never obtruded itself, except in the critical first person singular of the scholar who candidly voices his own opinions against those more generally held, as in the geographical work of their follower, Hecataeus of Miletus. None of these earlier men was proclaiming a gospel—not even when their theory of nature led them to describe their basic principle as 'the Divine'.¹ Their impulse for rational explanation left no room for anything so impassioned. Only the restless religious search that followed the initial period of dispassionate boldness and self-assurance in the use of reason could produce the philosophical revolutionary or the type of man who founds a religion, striding over the ruins of the traditional world towards a new interpretation of existence.

This way of approaching Heraclitus is very different from that which long seemed unavoidable in the light of the ancient accounts of his work, particularly those of Plato and Aristotle. The ancient writers, to be sure, were not trying to grasp his doctrine as a whole complete in itself, but were considering it from the standpoint of the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. They inevitably placed Heraclitus among the philosophers of nature, along with Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes, and found that he differed from them chiefly in choosing fire as his basic principle.² They also contrasted him with Parmenides—as the philosopher of Becoming versus the philosopher of Being.³ According to Plato and Aristotle, Heraclitus' thought had culminated in the theory of the eternal flux of all things—the πάντα ῥεῖ—only to have the range of this principle restricted to the sense-world when Plato found in his realm of Ideas that eternal Being which is the sole and incontestable object of true knowledge.⁴ Thus Heraclitus' theory came to be regarded as one of the foundation-stones of the absolute truth and an important stage in the history of philosophy that had to be traversed before the summit was reached in Plato's own achievement. In itself the Heraclitean theory of flux seemed a brilliantly one-sided *tour de force*, the chief significance of which lay in the fact that it summed up the metaphysical contribution of the older Ionian philosophy of nature in its most general form.

Here as elsewhere the more recent scholars have tried to free themselves gradually from the Platonic and Aristotelian

loosely together. The same device reappears in prose in Democritus' tract *On Tranquillity* (*Περὶ εὐθυμίας*) and in the exhortation to Demonicus that has come down to us under the name of Isocrates. Even the latter hardly succeeds in making a whole of the numerous specific admonitions it contains (some of which have been handed down from the earliest times); and it is equally difficult to imagine how this could have been done with the remarks of Democritus in the light of our fragments. They approximate to the Heraclitean form more closely than anything else, and in many cases can be shown to have made use of his work.

The tone of Heraclitus' maxims, however, is utterly different from the rules of life that we find in the older gnostic wisdom. His style cannot be reduced to any one common denominator, but includes a number of interconnected elements. We shall now examine these in the light of the fragments, keeping a close eye on the content.¹⁰

The beginning of the work, which fortunately is still preserved, tells of the 'word' that the philosopher proclaims—the *logos*. Men fail to understand it, even though it is eternal.¹¹ They understand it neither before they hear it nor when they have heard it first. But even if this *logos* is primarily the word of Heraclitus himself, it is not merely his word as a man among men, but one that expresses eternal truth and reality and is therefore itself eternal.¹²

'For while all things come to pass in accordance with this Word, men behave as if they had no experience thereof, putting to test such words and deeds as I set forth when I explain¹³ things each by its own nature and point out the real state of the case. But other men are just as unaware of the things they do when awake as of those that they do in their sleep' (B 1).

This is not the language of a teacher and scholar, but that of a prophet intent on rousing men from their slumber. We can see how much significance Heraclitus must have attached to this image of sleeping and waking if we observe how often he makes use of it. In another passage he speaks of a 'cosmos of the waking', which presupposes a world of the sleeping as its opposite.¹⁴ But the waking state he has in mind is intellectual, not merely physiological, as indeed he has already told us in his

opening sentence: what other men call 'waking', he insists, is so utterly devoid of any intellectual awareness of the way things actually happen that it is hardly to be distinguished from sleep. In this sharp contrast between the speaker who feels himself to be the sole bearer of the Word, and the whole body of other men,¹⁵ who fail to understand it even though everything in the world is ordered in accordance with it, we again detect the prophetic tone. To be sure, it is not the will of a god that Heraclitus is proclaiming, but rather a principle in accordance with which everything occurs. Heraclitus is the prophet of a truth of which he has intellectual cognizance, but this truth is not purely theoretical like Parmenides' revelation. Too little attention has been given the fact that while Parmenides always uses the words *νοεῖν* and *νόημα* when he wishes to designate the activity of the philosophical mind, Heraclitus favours the word *φρονεῖν*—the traditional Greek term for 'right thinking' or 'right intuition', with plain reference to man's practical conduct.¹⁶ The word is thus particularly appropriate in connexion with moral and religious cognition. In Aeschylus' prayer to Zeus in the *Agamemnon* the believer's insight into the tragic events under divine control is called *φρονεῖν*, and so is the conscious human attitude to which that insight gives rise.¹⁷ Similarly, the Delphic wisdom which calls for self-restraint in every human endeavour and instils a fear of any *ὑβρις* beyond man's province is called *φρονεῖν*. Heraclitus teaches men *φρονεῖν* in the light of his new knowledge of the universe; he also speaks of the 'words and deeds' that he intends to set forth,¹⁸ and says that men 'make trial' of these vainly because they lack insight into the true nature of things. It is evident, therefore, that his teachings are meant to influence men's practical conduct as well. This is clear also in other passages, where he describes wisdom as a speaking and acting according to the truth.¹⁹ We read elsewhere that men ought not to 'act and speak' as if they were asleep.²⁰ Heraclitus is the first thinker who not only wishes to know the truth but also holds that this knowledge will renew men's lives. In his image of the waker and the sleeper he makes quite plain what he expects his *logos* to contribute. He has no desire to be another Prometheus, teaching men new and more ingenious methods of reaching their ultimate goals; he hopes rather to make them

NOEIN
1 Hom. Ag.
 2
 2
Thucyd.
Agamemnon
H. Pind.
Lyra.
Agamemnon

11

capable of leading their lives fully awake and aware of the *logos* according to which all things occur.²¹

Before we inquire further into the content of the *logos*, which men do not understand though it lies at the basis of everything, let us try to grasp its nature from another of the characteristics which Heraclitus emphasizes: those who are awake have a cosmos in common,²² while every man who slumbers, one must add, has a cosmos of his own. This distinction may be taken quite literally; but it also has a symbolic meaning, as we have indicated; here we have not merely the symbol of 'those who are awake', but also a more precise determination of their character in that they share a common world (as their intercourse with one another proves), while the world of dreams in which the sleeper finds himself proves inaccessible to others. Another fragment that is relevant here deduces the practical conclusion: 'So we must follow that which is common; . . . for even though the *logos* is common, the many live as if each of them had his own private wisdom.'²³ As soon as the philosopher begins demanding seriously that men be fully awake in the conduct of their lives, he finds the way blocked by the absence of this community of insight, or more accurately, by the presence of that which the crowd mistakes for it. Another fragment, which asserts that 'insight [*φρονεῖν*] is common to all',²⁴ does not contradict what we have already found, but means merely that every true insight recognized as such is characterized by the fact that it immediately binds together all who share in it and lays the same obligation upon them all. This is what distinguishes philosophy from the mere private opinions of individual men, although it might seem very similar at first, since philosophy is by no means common property but always some person's special conviction. Parmenides uses the image of a revelation to explain why it is that the philosopher who has known true Being must find himself isolated as a man;²⁵ and Heraclitus likewise requires a special sanction to justify the lonely stand from which he confronts his fellows. We can now understand why he should have a genuinely religious sense of his own mission. Without his prophetic cognizance he would not have strength enough to withstand the pressure of the overwhelming majority of the unknowing—the 'many'.²⁶ But he is sustained by knowing that he is the bearer of the *logos*,

which is incomprehensible to men when they first hear it, but which will unite them in a common cosmos once they have come to understand it. Thus the self-emancipating thought of the philosopher, which seems at first to be simply one more example of the intellectual decadence of a society already thoroughly individualized, is for Heraclitus the bond by which these same individuals can be bound together in a new community.

It might therefore seem that the content of the *logos* is ethical and political in character; and in a certain sense this is true, as is proved by the repeated emphasis upon its being something common (*ξυνόν*),²⁷ quite apart from its connexion with the 'words and deeds' of men. We have no right to construe this unequivocally social conception in Heraclitus as a mere figurative device for expressing logical universality. Heraclitus is actually the first man to approach the problem of philosophical thought with an eye to its social function. The *logos* is not only the universal (*das Allgemeine*) but also the common (*das Gemeinsame*). But while this makes it akin to the law of the State by which all citizens are bound, it is still far more than the law of even the greatest and mightiest commonwealth, for the *logos* is that which is common to all things whatsoever (*ξυνὸν πάντων*).²⁸ Its organ is the mind or *νοῦς*. To speak 'with the mind' (*ἐν νῷ*) means for Heraclitus nothing else than 'with that which is common' (*ἐννῶ*).

'Those who speak with the mind', he tells us, 'cannot but strengthen themselves with that which is common to all, just as a city makes itself strong with its law [*νόμῳ*], and much more strongly than this. For all human laws are nourished by the one divine law; for this holds sway as far as it will, and suffices for all, and prevails in everything (B 114).

This is the first time that the idea of 'law' has appeared in philosophic thought; what is more, it is now regarded as the object of the highest and most universal knowledge; the term is not used in the simple political sense but has been extended to cover the very nature of reality itself.²⁹ This shift of meaning has already been foreshadowed by the designation of the world as an ordering-together or *kosmos*—a term which we have traced back to the older philosophy of nature,³⁰ and one which Heraclitus uses freely in an almost technical sense. Anaximander's

symbolic interpretation of the cosmic process as a trial or legal contest (*diké*) is also a forerunner, to which Heraclitus himself reverts when, for instance, he writes: 'The sun will not overstep his measures; for otherwise the Erinyes, Diké's deputies, will find him out' (B 94). Here Diké serves as an embodiment of the inviolable order of nature. At first glance it is rather startling that the Erinyes should be mentioned here; but there is a Homeric precedent for introducing them in such a context, for it is they who stay the voice of Xanthos, the horse of Achilles, when he foretells his master's death.³¹ What is new in Heraclitus is the way all this juridical symbolism is summed up in the conception of a single all-controlling cosmic law. He calls it the 'divine law' as distinguished from the human. In so doing, he carries the Anaximandrian identification of the basic principle with the Divine³² a step farther. He does not, however, find the Divine in eternity, imperishability, and omnipotence alone; on the contrary, he connects this idea with that selfsame principle of law which Anaximander thought he had found in the processes of nature. This principle has become generalized far beyond that highest concept of human legalism and morality—the idea of law; it is now interpreted as the law of all laws whatsoever. We may assume that Heraclitus' book, which began with the idea of *logos*, went on immediately to define the *logos* more precisely as that which is common to all and as knowledge of the divine law. Only in these terms can we understand his justification for introducing himself as a prophet. The *logos* according to which everything occurs, though it still remains hidden from mankind, is the divine law itself. And the philosopher now sounds his reveille, calling on men to awake and to do as this divine law commands. This theological aspect makes very clear how profoundly the law of Heraclitus differs from what we mean when we speak of a 'law of nature'.³³ A 'law of nature' is merely a general descriptive formula for referring to some specific complex of observed facts, while Heraclitus' divine law is something genuinely normative. It is the highest norm of the cosmic process, and the thing which gives that process its significance and worth.

The theological elements in Heraclitus' solemn proclamation of the *logos* raise the question whether and how far his teachings

are in line with his introductory approach. Let us first hear what the ancient tradition has to say. Diogenes Laertius reports that Heraclitus' work was held together by the unifying theme of the theory of nature, from which it acquired its title. He adds, however, that it included 'considerations' (λόγοι) on three subjects—on the All, on politics, and on theology.³⁴ Though the title is naturally of later origin and there is nothing to guarantee its authenticity, we can infer from it that the groundwork of the whole was a cosmology, as Diogenes seems to intimate. But evidently either he or the writer from whom he got his information was struck by the fact that the title did not represent the contents in full. Our fragments confirm this; on the other hand, they rule out any clean-cut distribution of the cosmological, ethico-political, and theological elements into three distinct sections. When Diogenes refers to these as three *logoi*, it is either a rough way of putting a correct observation, or he merely has in mind three types of statement that can be distinguished in the philosopher's work, even though they are closely intertwined. So we really have no right to regard Heraclitus' theology as a separate part of his teachings. It must rather be thought of as forming with the cosmology an indivisible whole, even if we lay the chief emphasis on the theological side. I have elsewhere compared the relationship of these three aspects with that of three concentric spheres or rings: they are all held together by one and the same principle.³⁵ If in our discussion of this principle we begin with the cosmological side, we are quite in accord with what our fragments themselves suggest and also with the testimony of Diogenes. But while Diogenes speaks of the naturalistic or physical aspect as the thing that holds Heraclitus' work together, it is still worth mentioning that the grammarian Diodotus, who has likewise given some thought to the relationship of the physical and political elements in Heraclitus, stands for the view that in general the work does not deal with nature but rather with state and society, and that the physical element had merely a paradigmatic function. Evidently this struck Diodotus not as the main topic of the work but merely as a pattern for what he calls the 'political' factor.³⁶

Central in Heraclitus' thought is his doctrine of the unity of opposites. Here the relations between the different sides of

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discovered the content of that divine law which, according to Heraclitus, is the foundation of all human laws and of the community that rests upon them.⁴² In another sentence he identifies this principle with God himself: 'God is day—night; winter—summer; war—peace; surfeit—hunger. He changes himself like fire, which, when mingled with various kinds of incense, is named from the fragrance of each' (B 67). He contrasts war with peace in an array of typical pairs of opposites from the cosmic, social, and somatic spheres; so it can hardly have the same comprehensive, symbolic meaning as in the sentence in which it is declared to be the father of all things. But this makes all the clearer what we are to understand by 'war' in the higher, symbolic sense: it is the constant interchange and struggle of opposites in the world, including even war and peace. In all these pairs there is a single something which underlies them, though it appears each time in a different guise and so receives different names among men. This one thing that keeps asserting itself in struggle and in change is what Heraclitus calls God. This God is to be found no less in night than in day, in winter than in summer, in war than in peace, in hunger than in surfeit—or, as we read in another passage, in poverty than in surfeit.⁴³ He is not to be thought of as merely the positive member of some pair of opposites with positive and negative values respectively, nor even as the common denominator of all positive members of all pairs of opposites. 'There is always one and the same herein: living and dead, the awake and the sleeping, young and old. For these by their changes are those, and those, changing back again, these' (B 88). This figure of reciprocal transformation is a device for showing how unity maintains itself in opposites which, since they follow each other in immediate temporal succession, seem distinct states to us. Heraclitus is tireless in finding new concrete images for expressing the unity of opposites. It is for this purpose that he coins the words *σύναιψις*—a 'contiguity' or 'nexus', and *ἁρμονία* or 'harmony'—a fitting-together. When he speaks of 'contiguity' he is thinking of the unity as simply mechanical; 'harmony' is more dynamic. In one fragment he writes: 'Wholes and non-wholes, drawing together and drawing apart, concord and discord—these are contiguities. From all one, and from one all' (B 10). And in another fragment: 'They do not

understand how that which draws apart agrees with itself: a fitting-together with counter-tension, as of the bow and the lyre' (B 51).

In these two passages the new and fruitful idea of tension is clearly expressed. The *tertium comparationis* between the bow and the lyre lies in the dynamics of two opposing forces stretched together so that they work in unison; in each case these forces naturally tend apart, but now that they are joined together a third force emerges with a significance of its own. The Greeks call this joining-together a 'harmony'. In Greek this term, especially in early times, has a much wider range of application than to the realm of music, with which we associate it. It signifies anything that is tectonically or technically joined together; even in music the original conception is similar. While the reference to the lyre reminds us of musical harmony, our passage is primarily concerned with something else, namely the tension. But I cannot think it likely that Heraclitus has altogether missed the musical analogy, even though this has been claimed in the light of his comparison of the lyre and the bow.⁴⁴ It is surely precarious to try to find a reason here for distrusting Aristotle when he credits Heraclitus with saying that that which tends apart (*ἀντιξοον*) comes together, and that the most beautiful harmony arises from things that are different. Naturally this cannot refer to anything but musical harmony.⁴⁵ Moreover, another Aristotelian passage tells us expressly that Heraclitus adduced the 'harmony of the high and the low' as an argument against Homer, who had wrongfully cursed the strife prevailing among gods and among men.⁴⁶ It must also have been Heraclitus who cited as a further example the harmony of the sexes, which Aristotle mentions in the same passage. The doubts raised against this are likewise unconvincing.⁴⁷ Heraclitus' idea of the unity of opposites is by no means to be limited to any single meaning. We cannot tie it down to contiguity or connectivity any more than to tension or harmony or fusion. Heraclitus often has recourse to examples; but his use of them is symbolic, not inductive. What he expresses with them is not so much a clearly definable logical abstraction as a profound intuition revealing itself in the most various colours.

At bottom Heraclitus' unity cannot strictly be perceived in

any of the visual forms he uses for illustration. It is not without cause that he says of it: 'Invisible harmony—better than visible' (B 54). Because it is invisible it is hidden from the eye of man, even though it is actually the supreme power in accordance with which everything in the world proceeds. 'Nature likes to hide' (B 123). Heraclitus remarks elsewhere that 'In their knowledge of visible things, men are as easily fooled as Homer, though he was wiser than all the Greeks. For he was taken in by the boys who were killing lice and who told him, "The ones we have seen and caught, we leave behind; but the ones we didn't see and didn't catch, we take along"' (B 56). Here we have a genuine riddle, symbolizing our own situation with respect to reality itself. To Heraclitus this is the greatest riddle of all. He thinks of the philosopher neither as the man who sets forth the nature of the physical world, nor as the discoverer of a new reality behind sense-appearance, but as the solver of riddles, the man who interprets the hidden meaning of all that happens in our lives and in the world as a whole:

Hier ergreifet ohne Säumnis
Heilig öffentlich Geheimnis.

Hence comes the fondness of the 'dark' Heraclitus for a style which, like nature itself, does not reveal its inmost meaning at once, but often resorts to riddles; it is like the Delphic oracle, whose lord, he remarks, 'neither speaks nor conceals, but indicates' (B 93). Heraclitus also is struck with the philosophical significance in the language of the Sibyl: 'With her raving lips she utters things unlaughing, unadorned, unperfumed' (B 92). Do we not seem to hear in these words a most pregnant characterization of the philosopher's own language? This leaning towards the oracular, mystical, and enigmatic is in line with his whole prophetic bearing. 'Men contradict the *logos*, though they are dealing with it constantly; and the things which they encounter every day are strange to them' (B 72). Therefore a mediator and interpreter must appear. 'Wise it is for those who have listened not to me but to the *logos* [as I have proclaimed it] to agree that all things are one' (B 50).

Heraclitus always keeps coming back to this one point. The unity of all things is his alpha and omega. We have already observed the seriousness he attaches to his message, the high

value he sets upon himself as the man who brings it to mankind, and the lengths to which he has gone to present it as true knowledge of the Divine and to surround it with an air of deep mystery. It now becomes all the more pressing to ask where the novelty of this doctrine lies and how it is related to the thought of his predecessors. The natural philosophers have already spoken of the primal ground of all things; Xenophanes has proclaimed the one world-God; Parmenides has taught the unity and uniqueness of the Existent and striven to show the multiplicity of the sense-world to be mere appearance. At first glance it seems rather hard to say in what particular modification of the theory of unity the originality of Heraclitus' achievement consists.

The Milesians' principle of unity stood at the beginning of a rectilinear process of cosmic development, as its material ἀρχή. Their ambition was to find out how and where all things had originated and what had been present at the first. Heraclitus sees the process of coming-to-be and passing-away as a constant intertransformation of opposites, one into the other. He experiences it as 'the way up and down', along which things wander unceasingly.⁴⁸ He even applies this principle to cosmology, and here we encounter his peculiar doctrine of fire as the imperishable basis of the universe. Of course, his fragments do not exhibit a completely developed physics, and it is more than doubtful whether Heraclitus ever felt that his primary achievement lay in improving on the doctrines of his Milesian predecessors. It almost seems that even his choice of fire is to be explained entirely by his dominant idea of the intertransformation of opposites and their constant changes; and it is questionable whether fire is really to be described as the first principle or ἀρχή at all. 'This cosmos, the same for all, was made by neither a god nor a man; but it always has been and is and will be fire ever-living, kindling itself in measures, and quenching itself in measures' (B 30). We need not stop to discuss the more precise interpretation of these words, which involves a number of difficulties; nor need we embark on the vexed question of whether Heraclitus taught the theory of a universal conflagration (ἐκπύρωσις) ascribed to him by the Stoics. To me it seems plain that even in ancient times there were no clean-cut Heraclitean statements about a period in the world's history when

everything would be destroyed by fire,⁴⁹ but that this theory was inferred from such sentences as: 'All things are exchanges for fire, and fire for all things, just as wares for gold and gold for wares' (B 90). This exchange, however, is always occurring in the world, as is clear from the following fragment: 'Fire's transformations: first sea; and half of sea is earth, half whirlwind' (B 31). Here the writer must be referring to the constant cycle of the elements. These fragments indicate that Heraclitus had given his theory of opposites a particularly conspicuous position even in his cosmology. While the older philosophers of nature, in line with their basic assumptions, tried to explain the emergence of the world from the one primal ground by resorting to purely physical hypotheses such as separating-out or rarefaction and condensation,⁵⁰ Heraclitus obviously is little concerned with the physical how, but is far more intent upon finding support for his fundamental notion that everything which occurs involves opposites, and that in these very opposites unity perpetually renews itself.⁵¹ Unity thus becomes the central fact; it is always fully present, even if the events themselves have all the impetuosity of a river that is no longer the same when one steps into it for the second time. 'In changing, it takes its rest' (B 84). The whole world itself is likewise subject to change, and fire is the opposite into which it transforms itself. Thus we can understand why Heraclitus is not satisfied with such formulae as 'All things have come from one', but declares: 'All is one', and 'From all one, and from one all'.⁵² The most important thing for him is that the order is always reversible.⁵³

Unlike Parmenides, Heraclitus makes no attempt to anchor unity to any rigid Being, but finds it in the incessant change itself. Thus with the same goal in view, he follows the opposite road. It has recently been suggested that this solution of the problem of unity is the more complex of the two and presupposes a knowledge of Parmenides—as if Heraclitus were frankly trying to save unity as an eternal principle without positing any immobile Being and without rejecting the apparent multiplicity of things.⁵⁴ To me this hypothesis seems improbable. To fixate unity in the Eleatic conception of the Existent was one possible course to pursue; but the way chosen by Heraclitus, which permitted unity to maintain itself even in the

mother
and
energy.
Heraclitus

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world of change, was more plausible from the standpoint of the natural science of the Ionians and much more in accord with the spirit of it. The thing that is new is the mystical approach to the concept of unity, which makes us realize how the naturalistic world-view has stirred man's religious powers to more and more vigorous response and roused them to extort from it, with the help of its own methods, a new interpretation of existence. This is what Heraclitus has achieved. He does not stand on quite the same ground as the older philosophers of nature, but his outlook has been profoundly revolutionized by the truths which they proclaimed—discoveries so great and overwhelming that they were still expounded with little regard for their inevitable influence upon man's inner life and his own place in the world. Heraclitus is the first thinker to expose himself unreservedly to this influence, which threatens to annihilate man as a human being and to make any rational individual life quite impossible. The conception of the cosmos as a revelation of the one divine law to which all things are subject, and for which man, like everything else that exists, must serve as executor, becomes for Heraclitus the point of departure for a new interpretation of the world and of human existence. He hopes to lead his fellows to take the law unto themselves with full consciousness and accept it heroically in every 'word and act.'

It might seem that our interpretation of Heraclitus brings him farther away from the philosophers proper and closer to Xenophanes, who is also strongly influenced by the philosophers of nature, but still stands somewhat apart from them—a teacher of the people in his own right, a man of enlightenment, working out the bearings of the new knowledge upon the old gods and the whole mythical scheme of the world. But this comparison, which has recently been suggested, is only superficially appropriate and—if anything—leads us off the track.⁵⁵ Heraclitus is not a man of the open market-place like the poet of the *silloi*: he is a solitary. The many and vehement interests of the Colophonian (who never reaches a sufficient pitch of intellectual concentration to create a fully original thought), the restless variety of his production, and the number of positions that he is willing to assume—all these are the very antithesis of the firm and solid vigour with which Heraclitus rouses

himself for a single magnificent venture. Heraclitus thinks for himself as do very few others. He is no mere herald of enlightenment, despite his sharp and often cynical attacks on the popular religion.⁵⁶ Behind these is a world-view that is complete in itself and utterly his own—one that not only overturns the ideas of the past, but makes life subject to a new divine law. In Xenophanes we find no trace of this power of pervading life from a single centre and giving it form. There is, of course, one passage where he claims that he and the intellectual culture for which he stands promote the order of the state; but there he is fighting to maintain his place in society and contrasting his own wide knowledge with the athletic prowess which the Greeks of his time rated higher than intellectual achievement.⁵⁷ All this is a far cry from the rigour of the Heraclitean *φρονεῖν*. Heraclitus himself has shown us what he thinks of Xenophanes: 'Great learning does not teach insight. Otherwise it would have taught Hesiod, Pythagoras, Xenophanes, and Hecataeus' (B 40).

'Of all those whose teachings I have heard, no one has gone far enough to learn that the Wise is something apart from all things' (B 108). It is regrettable that this sentence, in which Heraclitus explains how he has outstripped all his predecessors, is not entirely clear. Just what is 'the Wise' that it should be 'apart from all things'? 'Apart from all things' can refer only to the things of the world of experience. The Wise, therefore, is something that is identical with none of them and present in none of them. It transcends them all. Man in particular is not entitled to this predicate. 'Human nature [*ἡθός*] has no insights',⁵⁸ we read elsewhere, 'but the Divine has them' (B 78). And again: 'One thing, the Wise alone, is unwilling and yet willing to be called by the name of Zeus' (B 32). Nowhere does Heraclitus make his attitude towards the popular religion clearer than he does here. On the one hand, he finds a number of customs and ideas that strike him as unworthy and shameful and stir him to merciless ridicule; on the other, he sees the religious idea of the highest God, whose name—Zeus—he regards as sacred because of the pure and lofty ideas it awakens.⁵⁹ Of course, his own idea of God is not to be equated with this anthropomorphized form of Zeus; but he feels that this name points in the same direction as that towards which his own

discoveries have led him.⁶⁰ All Heraclitus' remarks about man's relation to God seek assiduously to keep God free from any human features. 'A man is called childish by God, just as a boy is called childish by a man' (B 79). Heraclitus also touches upon the problem of the form of God, just as Xenophanes has done, and as was only natural in a land where the gods were honoured in paintings and statues. 'Compared with God, the wisest of men seems like an ape in wisdom, beauty, and everything else' (B 83). Even the achievements of man's intellect are mere 'child's play' (B 70). 'For the things that the most trustworthy man knows and holds fast are merely matters of opinion. But of course Diké will catch the fashioners of lies and those who support their testimony' (B 28). 'There is only one wisdom: to know that insight which governs all through all' (B 41). The word 'govern' (or 'steer') calls to mind the sentence in which Anaximander identifies the *apeiron* with the Divine.⁶¹ Ever since Anaximander's time this has evidently been the conventional expression for that activity of the divine principle by which the world is guided. Heraclitus uses the same idea again in connexion with his doctrine of the universal fire, when he writes: 'The thunderbolt steers all things' (B 64). The thunderbolt, traditional weapon of Zeus, is here again the weapon of the supreme god: it is the angry flash of the primal fire as it forces its way out of the universe. The fact that Heraclitus' fire has the power of governing or steering⁶² makes it closely related to the highest wisdom, even if not quite the same as God. When Anaximander speaks of his first principle as governing all things, it is hard to think of it as having no intelligence. Both Xenophanes and Heraclitus go so far as to endow their first principle with supreme wisdom and a mind that moves the world; only in Heraclitus, however, do we find God's mental activity determined more specifically by the unity of opposites, which is the content of the divine law. But can any law prescribed by a single power rightly be called a law at all? The idea of law, which comes from the sphere of jurisprudence, means to a Greek the universal norm obeyed by all. In Heraclitus' time this would ordinarily be decided by majority vote, for his is a democratic age. He feels, however, that he must connect this universal norm, which he regards as an expression of the cosmos itself, with the idea of the oneness of

of the two poems were a definite step forward in that they recognized the necessity of giving more attention to Empedocles' personality in its concern with both these worlds; for evidently this is where one must look to discover how two approaches so contrary can have been combined. Naturally this fact is of more than mere biographical significance. On the other hand, the problem of whether these two intellectual attitudes, which seem so antagonistic, can somehow have been reconciled in the philosopher's own mind is not really solved by assigning them to two successive periods in his life; the idea of temporal development merely parries the problem and serves to dull its edge. Indeed, the whole intellectual unity of Empedocles' personality has hereby been jettisoned without sufficient effort to see whether there is anything to justify thus breaking up his inner life into disconnected episodes. Perhaps the fault may lie, in part at least, in our very conception of religious experience, which modern psychology of religion often regards as including something temperamental, incalculable, and sudden. But even if this really were the nature of Empedocles' Orphic *katharsis*, can one seriously suppose that the firmly rooted physical conceptions of the poem *On Nature*, which served for so many centuries as the foundation for all scientific study of the natural world, should so soon have lost significance for their creator as to make him toss them lightly aside and abandon himself to new fervours of a radically different type? The first step towards a real understanding must be to restore the original antinomy in the problem of the juxtaposition and contraposition of Empedocles the student of nature and Empedocles the religious mystic, as Ettore Bignone has tried to do in his book on Empedocles⁴ (which is equally fascinating from the point of view of psychology and from that of intellectual history), and to reveal the unity behind this opposition.

Even in ancient times the importance of the philosopher's human personality for the understanding of his teachings was recognized, at least indirectly. There is no other pre-Socratic about whom such abundant biographical material is still available. In the ancient period Empedocles was decidedly more prominent than he is in our present-day histories of philosophy. Nowadays we are inclined to treat him as a straddler and compromiser, and, indeed, he does not seem to have the full integration

and sheer intellectual momentum that we find in Parmenides or Heraclitus. Despite all this he remains one of the most arresting figures of the pre-Socratic Olympus, if only for his historical interest, for he has given us a better idea of the intellectual culture of the Greek west than anyone else has done. Its strongly distinctive quality shines forth in him with peculiar richness of colour.⁵ The complexity of Empedocles' inner world is obviously more than a purely individual affair: it reflects with particular impressiveness the many inner stratifications of culture in Sicily and Magna Graecia, and at the same time proves the intellectual and spiritual solidarity of these two neighbouring centres of Hellenic colonization in the West. The two disparate elements that we meet in Empedocles were here already traditional. The naturalistic enlightenment from Ionia, of which Xenophanes was the first pioneer, had already left its mark on a personage no less indigenous than the Syracusan Epicharmus,⁶ whose poetical comedies had reached their peak in the days of Empedocles' youth. On the other hand, the Orphic pietism had nowhere been more profoundly effective than here in the West—not even in Athens, where, under the protecting wing of the Pisistratidae, the active circle of Onomacritus had embraced it very seriously for a while. When we look to the Greek literature and culture of this and the preceding period for traces of Orphic influence, it is not only in the Pythagoreans of southern Italy that we find them, but also—and this is significant—in an ode of Pindar addressed to Theron, tyrant of the Sicilian city of Akragas,⁷ and in the work of Theron's fellow-townsmen Empedocles. Moreover, our most important Hellenistic evidences of similar religious developments also come from Magna Graecia.⁸ Hence, when we find in the person of Empedocles Orphic ideas running hand in hand with the more precise concepts of the natural philosophy of his day, we ought to be no more surprised than when we come upon a purely scientific rationalism combined with the religious spirit of Christianity in a man of our own times.

The fact that such various intellectual elements were already traditionally available and ready to become fused with one another in the same individual could not help giving rise to a new synthesizing type of philosophical personality. It is not surprising, therefore, that the mind of Empedocles is one of

extraordinary breadth and inner tension. It shares with the imagination of the poet the plastic flexibility of response. Aristotle has expressed some doubt whether Empedocles' verse has anything but the metre in common with the epic of Homer,⁹ but we have no right to apply this rigid yardstick of perfection to his poems if we wish to treat them fairly.¹⁰ Only a true poetical genius could embrace the astonishing contrasts that appear in the thought of Empedocles, and only a born poet could possess an imagination ardent enough and versatile enough to entertain truths of such different orders, preserving each of them in all its absoluteness despite their basic incompatibility. In the poem *On Nature* every detail seems to be fitted into the frame of a single structure with the logical consistency of the true philosopher. But as soon as the first lines of the *Katharmoi* strike our ear, we find ourselves in a realm where a completely different, mystico-theological style and type of thought prevail. Neither of these two forms of thought seems to weaken the other in any way or to encroach upon its domain, and each of the two realms embraces the whole of reality in its own manner. The one thing they have in common is the fact that they are both poetical reality and take the form of poetry, which means for the Greeks that they appear in the form of myth.

From the very beginning we have stressed the fact that there is no unbridgeable gulf between early Greek poetry and the rational sphere of philosophy.¹¹ The rationalization of reality began even in the mythical world of Homer and Hesiod, and there is still a germ of productive mythopoeic power in the Milesians' fundamentally rational explanation of nature. In Empedocles this power is by no means diminished by the increasingly complex apparatus of his rational thought, but seems to increase proportionally, as if striving to counteract the force of rationalism and redress the balance. It is also the source of that inner compulsion which leads him to put his thoughts in poetical form and take Hesiod and Parmenides as his models. Empedocles' philosophy of nature is presented as a genuine theogony; and the mythical imagination of the philosopher-poet draws new vitality from the rich, sensuous content of the physical forces out of which he constructs his cosmos. The Greek consciousness requires no rational proof

unmoved³⁶—namely, the four eternal roots of things—one basic metaphysical quality of the Parmenidean $\delta\upsilon$ is abandoned: the quality of completeness, unity, wholeness.³⁷ We shall see that in Empedocles these essential properties of the Divine are not regarded as attributes of the four elemental gods, but pertain only to a certain state in which the world sometimes finds itself. The four material principles are not sufficient in themselves to bring this state to pass: they must be supplemented with the activity of two additional formative powers, which accomplish the mixing and unmixing of the basic substances. Empedocles gives mythical names to these two powers as well, and declares them to be gods of equal rank with the four material principles, calling them *Philia* and *Neikos*—Love and Strife.³⁸ In accord with the general tendency to translate Greek philosophy into the categories of modern mechanical physics, it has been tempting to speak of 'Attraction' and 'Repulsion' instead; but Empedocles' names stand for something quite different—two powers that reign throughout the inorganic and organic worlds alike. Empedocles seeks to understand the inorganic processes in terms of organic life rather than vice versa. He also speaks of Love as Aphrodite,³⁹ whose nature he has thus expanded and generalized into a divine life-giving power by which all things are made one. Empedocles not only endows her with many of the characteristics of Hesiod's cosmogonic Eros,⁴⁰ but makes her the cause of all pairing, both in the realm where we are accustomed to distinguish male and female and far beyond this in the whole structure of nature, which he holds to be organized in the same way throughout.⁴¹ Under her influence things disjoined become united, and in this way she brings about an order based entirely on Love. But when this unity has been reached, it always becomes split into multiplicity by the destructive power of Hate.⁴² This process is not perceptible to the senses but only to the eye of the mind.⁴³ None of these gods is more primordial or more revered than the others: they are all equal, but each has its own ethos, and in the cycle of time each prevails in its turn,⁴⁴ in the bodies and lives of individual plants, animals, and men, no less than in the life of the cosmos itself.⁴⁵ For even the parts of the cosmos—Sun and Earth, Heaven and Sea—are bound together in Love.⁴⁶ Nature is like the painter who mixes his colours to bring forth

manifold forms—trees, men and women, wild beasts, birds and fishes, and the long-lived gods.⁴⁷

The cosmology of Empedocles shares with its predecessors, the cosmologies of Anaximander or Heraclitus, a feature characteristic of all Greek cosmological thought: the interpretation of natural processes by means of analogies taken from man's political and social life. In Anaximander it was the concept of a *diké* or *tisis* ruling the process of coming-to-be and passing-away which made the *physis* a true *cosmos* (i.e. a legal order). Heraclitus took over this conception; but he varied and expanded its application to nature by proclaiming a 'law' (*nomos*) of the universe corresponding but superior to all human law. In Empedocles we discover similar forms of interpretation of physical phenomena. When he places much emphasis on the fact that the primordial gods of his cosmogony are all equal (*ἴσα*) and of the same age (*ἡλικα γένναν*), though their honour (*τιμή* = *γέρας*, 'function') and character (*ἦθος*) differ individually, he is obviously attacking the tradition of the earlier Greek theogonies, most of all that of Hesiod. Hesiod had taught that when the oldest gods began to emerge from the yawning Chaos, Earth and Eros appeared first. Plato quotes this passage in his *Symposium* in the speech which Phaedrus makes on the nature of Eros, in order to prove that Eros was the oldest of all gods (*πρεσβύτατος*). In the religious and political language of the Greeks that meant that he was also the most honoured (*τιμιώτατος*). The words for 'old' and 'honoured' were used as synonymous throughout the history of Greek thought. The attempt to break up this divine hierarchy of age and honour is condemned as revolutionary in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, in which the Furies complain of being denied by the younger deities the honour due to gods of the older generation.

Thus when Empedocles proclaims that all his gods are 'equal and of the same age' he is not speaking of the equal quantity of his four elements existing in the universe, as has been assumed by some who try to understand the Greek philosophy of nature in terms of modern physics or chemistry. His words should not be referred to the four elements alone, as in Diels's translation of the fragment; they seem also to include Love and Strife.⁴⁸ The plea for the equality of the gods refers not only to the monistic cosmogonies of Thales, Anaximenes, or

Heraclitus, but also to Hesiod's *Theogony*, in which, as we pointed out before, Earth and Love represent the earliest stage of the cosmogonic process. These oldest gods are now deprived of their privileges and absolute power, and they are all (*ταῦτα πάντα*) declared equals. They are all the same age, i.e. have existed from the beginning. Fire, Water, and Air are as essential to the world as is Earth. Hate is as necessary as Love to maintain its dynamic structure, even though Empedocles loves Love and hates Hate. Love and Hate are not above the four elemental gods, as Aristotle might make us believe in distinguishing them as *causa movens* and *causa materialis*. In other words, the aristocratic order of the older theogonic thought which was all based on difference of rank, age, and genealogy, is superseded now by the democratic equality of all the elementary and moving forces which make up Empedocles' cosmos. They are, however, bound together by the law of a higher unity to which their individual functions and characters are subordinate. This view suits perfectly Empedocles' social ideal; for tradition represents him as a passionate champion of democracy in the political struggle of his home town Akragas. But the relationship of the social element in Greek thought to the cosmological was always a reciprocal one: as the universe was understood in terms of political ideas such as *diké*, *nomos*, *moira*, *kosmos*, equality, so the political structure was derived throughout from the eternal order of the cosmos. It is of deep interest to the historian of the Greek mind to trace the changing social ideals in the development of this mutual relation, and to appreciate the importance for the democratic age, in the second half of the fifth century, of a new cosmo-theogony which expressed the trend of the time to discover the origin of its favourite ideas in the divine nature of the world.

In the system of Empedocles the parts of the world and its elements grow together in love for long periods of time until they unite in complete harmony in that perfect crowning state which Empedocles calls the *Sphairos*. Following Diels's interpretation, we may render the verses dealing with this as follows:⁴⁹

. . . And there the swift limbs of the Sun
 Are no longer descried, nor even the rough strength of Earth,
 Nor the Sea; so firmly is circular Sphairos held fast
 In the solitude round about . . .

several ages through which the world has passed is here revived : in the light of the doctrine of perpetual recurrence, Hesiod's conviction that he lives in the decadent Iron Age now becomes in Empedocles the belief that his own human existence is wedged in between a Golden Age of the past, when Love prevailed, and a brighter future when that Age shall come again, only to be vanquished by the reign of Hate.

This is what we must bear in mind if we are to understand why the Orphic beliefs are significant for Empedocles. His view of nature is by no means purely physical. It contains an element of eschatology such as always accompanies the idea of a paradise lost or divine primal state. It has already been correctly observed that the theory of the four elements, as it is generally called, is presupposed in the *Katharmoi* as well.⁶⁷ This is true also of the two powers, Love and Hate, which alternately rule the world.⁶⁸ In the religious poem, of course, the impassioned tone of proclamation does not spring from the discovery of these forces as such, as it does in the hymns on nature.⁶⁹ But their activity is fundamental even for this Orphic drama of the soul's destiny.

O friends of mine, who dwell in the mighty town
 That slopes from the yellow Akragas up to the heights
 Of the citadel, you who are busied with excellent works,
 A haven to strangers, duly aware of their rights
 And unwitting of evil, hail!
 But I—I now walk among you, a god free from death,
 No longer a mortal, and honoured by all, as you see,
 With garlands and fillets and flowery crowns. When I come
 Into flourishing towns with these people, both women and men,
 I am revered as a god. And in myriad throngs
 They pursue me, inquiring the path to their gain; and while some
 Are hungry for oracles, others beg but to hear
 In their manifold illnesses, too long pierced with distress,
 A word that will bring them health . . .

In these words of his proem the philosopher presents himself⁷⁰ to his fellow-countrymen as a religious teacher and medical man surrounded by a crowd of faithful votaries seeking his aid; We have definite accounts of his achievements as physician;⁷¹ and the later histories of Sicily testify to his influence with the populace, telling how he overthrew the tyranny in Akragas as

thoroughly justify the elevated style in which the philosopher speaks of this highest principle.³⁸ Anaxagoras holds that the Mind is particularly well qualified for the role of ruling the world because of the very property that distinguishes it from other things—its purity and freedom from admixture. Earlier thinkers ascribed Mind to the divine principle quite independently of these physical considerations. This was done by Xenophanes, for instance, whose God 'makes all things tremble by the power of his thought alone'.³⁹ The fact that the express ascription of consciousness to the highest principle did not begin with the physiological thinkers⁴⁰ but with the theologian of Colophon, is enough to prove its original independence of any physical motives. Parmenides knew nothing of it, and Empedocles was obviously following directly in Xenophanes' footsteps when he described the god *Sphairos* as 'a holy and unutterable Mind, darting through the whole cosmos with its swift thoughts'.⁴¹ All this made a deep impression on Anaxagoras, but failed to satisfy him as a philosopher of nature. One would like to know whether he was influenced by Heraclitus and if so to what extent. Heraclitus had already set up the postulate that the Wise (*σοφός*) is separate from everything else; and he attached so much importance to this doctrine that he said explicitly: 'None of all those whose teachings I have heard goes so far as to recognize this.'⁴² It was therefore a critical point for him; unfortunately we do not understand exactly what this 'separateness' means, and we must be careful not to interpret it too hastily in terms of later ideas. Anaxagoras' new conception of 'being by itself' is, as he finally makes clear, to be thought of as contrasted with his conception of the mixture of all things with everything, and serves him as a vehicle for the idea of something sovereign, dominating, independent.⁴³ In this way Mind becomes for the first time a physical principle in the proper sense, on which the whole construction of the world is based, although earlier thinkers may perhaps have entertained a similar idea more or less consciously. Mind, he feels, would forfeit its power of dominion if it were mixed with everything.⁴⁴ Hence arises the further consideration that a genuine cosmogony requires a second cause that is not subjected to mixture—something to provide the initial impetus for the vortical motion to which the separating-out of things from the

original mixture gives rise. In the main this conception is a purely physical one. It has been compared with the divine causality which some modern astronomers felt they needed for setting the original mechanism of their cosmology in motion.⁴⁵ But Anaxagoras' theory includes a second motif besides that of physical kinetics: his *Nous* is that all-guiding knowledge which ever since the beginning has comprehended each and every individual process of mixture, separating-out and particularization in the world's development, in the past no less than in the present and future. *Nous* has anticipated the motions and revolutions of the stars and meteorological bodies like air and ether in their present form, and has ordered everything from the first according to a definite plan (*διεκδόμησε*).⁴⁶

The idea of this preconceived world-plan is quite worthy of the rational physics of the fifth century; it is peculiarly fitting in a period that ascribes decided significance to *τέχνη* in all realms of being and even finds it present in nature itself.⁴⁷ The mechanism of the creative vortical motion is the ingenious device by which Anaxagoras, like other of his contemporaries, tried to explain the formation of the world. The fact that he made the divine Mind guide the vortex in a specific direction gave his physics its new teleological aspect. This is what caught Plato's attention and gave Aristotle occasion for the celebrated remark that among the earlier thinkers Anaxagoras, with his theory of the world-creative Mind, seemed like a sober man among the drunk, even if he made no detailed use of this teleological type of observation in his physics, but employed *Nous* only in his cosmogony and in certain instances where he was at a loss for a mechanical explanation and had to fall back on it, if only as a *deus ex machina*.⁴⁸ Probably Anaxagoras would not have considered this a very serious objection. Certainly he must have felt that he had assured the rationality of his world-plan when he envisaged a mechanical process as automatic as possible, whether pre-established as a whole in all its phases within the divine Mind or merely anticipated by it.

The conception of the Mind as unmixed, which is so important in Anaxagoras' doctrine of the divine world-principle, also enables him to ascertain the place of mankind and even philosophy itself in the system of the world as a whole. All Mind is like unto itself, declares Anaxagoras, whether larger or smaller.⁴⁹

We must notice that he recognizes certain distinctions between minds, just as he has spoken earlier of differences between things that have soul or life and those that do not; but these differences by no means imply that it is absolutely impossible to find any qualitative resemblances between the infinite divine Mind and the finite human mind. Our mind is the Divine in us, which enables us to approach the divine Mind and its plan for the world with genuine understanding. It is true that this idea is not expressed explicitly in the fragments, but we must assume that Anaxagoras thought at least this highly of the Mind. How else could he have come to think of it as the very essence of the Divine?⁵⁰ There is a mystical element in this rationalism that reminds us slightly of Empedocles' conviction of the soul's divine origin; but Anaxagoras has no experience of the sins and pollutions of the soul-demon, or of its purification and return to the godhead along endless paths of woe. To Anaxagoras the Divine is pure reason—the activity of the Mind as taskmaster. Man has direct access to the Divine by the similar powers that he bears within himself. Anaxagoras' philosophy is physics through and through; it obviously contains no anthropology in the theological sense and completely lacks any centre of gravity of that sort. Nevertheless, the axis of this physics has God and man as its two poles—or, more exactly, the divine principle of nature and the human knowledge that comprehends it; and this structure is what gives Anaxagoras his place in the line of those same impressive thinkers who served as his models. But we must not forget that when we think of him as an oracle for the great Pericles and a precursor of the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy of the Mind, such an historical perspective brings him too close to our eyes and unduly magnifies his stature.

With these teleological conceptions one of the most consistent and historically influential motifs makes its way into the study of the Divine from the philosophical side. The concept of *telos*, to be sure, belongs primarily to Socraticism,⁵¹ but that which Socraticism seeks in everything—the good, the intelligible, and the perfect—is already virtually present in Anaxagoras' principle of *diakosmesis* and the idea of order which it involves. It simply is not employed here as a consistent principle of explanation for particular phenomena.⁵² And yet this stage was

[νόησις] is the thing that men call air, and that it steers all things and controls all things. For I feel that this is God, and that it extends everywhere and disposes all things and is contained in all things. And there is nothing that does not have a share in it.'⁵⁹

There are a large number of ways in which things may participate in the divine primal stuff, as in soul and in power of mind. 'And this itself is an eternal and undying body; other things, however, are such that some of them come to be while others pass away.'⁶⁰ In another fragment Diogenes describes the primal stuff as 'great, and mighty, and eternal, and undying, and of great knowledge'.⁶¹

This elaborate theology from his treatise *On Nature*, which was still being read at the time of Simplicius,⁶² must not mislead us into supposing that the whole work sounded like this. We possess a very long and splendid fragment purely medical in content—a discussion of the veins⁶³—which shows us how much detailed research and description were mingled with theological interpretation in Diogenes' writings. All these matters are closely connected. Diogenes' theology is a theory of universal animization. It is based on the assumption that different stages of animization have occurred in a certain order, and that the divine Mind, which is also the prime elemental body, consciously produces this order out of itself.⁶⁴ Obviously the reasons for Diogenes' deliberate reversion from the pluralism of the later philosophers of nature like Empedocles and Anaxagoras to the doctrine of a single original being were primarily theological. On the one hand, this assumption seemed more satisfying than Empedocles' theory of the six contending divinities, Love and Strife and the gods of the four elements, even when they take the form of the one unified *Sphairos*, which prevails for only a certain length of time.⁶⁵ On the other hand, Diogenes succeeded in avoiding the difficulty of how the Mind could exert any influence upon the world of intermingling stuffs if it were as distinct from them as Anaxagoras maintained. In Diogenes' primal principle matter and Mind are united, and we obviously must think of the Mind as working from within outward.⁶⁶ Anaxagoras himself had not distinguished Mind sharply from 'the other things': despite its freedom from any admixture, it remained for him 'the thing [χρῆμα] that is purest and thinnest'.⁶⁷ He was therefore not yet aware of a real

opposition between matter and Mind. Though he needed the Mind primarily as a cause of motion, he still conceived of it as something material, endowed with the power of thought. Hence it was easy for Diogenes to obliterate the distinction between Mind and matter once again, without abandoning Mind as a teleological principle of order.

Apparently Diogenes was the first to try to demonstrate the sway of a purposeful divine thought in nature by interpreting particular phenomena from this point of view—the method that was to play so important a role in the Stoic theology later on. Presumably it was by way of Xenophon that Diogenes' ideas reached the Stoa; for in more than one passage of the *Memorabilia* Xenophon attributes to Socrates certain theological speculations which evidently come from this source.⁶⁸ It may be true that Socrates and his companions had actually discussed some piece of writing like that of Diogenes. At any rate, Plato makes Socrates report in the *Phaedo* that he has examined the work of Anaxagoras with great eagerness to find out what he has to say about Mind as the cause of natural processes, and has found him disappointing.⁶⁹ We may assume that in all probability Socrates was interested in Diogenes, too, for the same reasons, and paid even more attention to him. Xenophon himself does not mention Diogenes by name. He makes Socrates converse with a young friend notorious for his indifference to the cult of the gods, and try to refute his deistic attitude—for while the young man believes in the gods' existence, he refuses to admit that they feel any concern for mankind.⁷⁰ Socrates accordingly maintains that the nature of man himself, both bodily and mental, reveals the providing care of a higher wisdom.⁷¹ The arguments that Socrates brings forward are undoubtedly not his own. We might easily have assumed that they were, in view of his partiality for teleological explanations of nature (so well attested by Plato), if we did not find the same and similar explanations in the zoological works of Aristotle. Aristotle certainly did not take them from Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, but must have resorted to someone among the philosophers of nature who would count as particularly authoritative in such observations.⁷² We also find many similar traces in Attic comedy and in the tragedies of Euripides.⁷³

All this contemporary evidence suggests that at the time of

also had to try to demonstrate the presence of this same purposefulness in the course of nature as a whole and in the evident disposition of heavenly bodies according to some plan.⁷⁸ In fact we find this view clearly expressed (cf. p. 165) in a fragment that has come down to us under Diogenes' name.⁷⁹ But even in Xenophon, who has occasion to speak of this problem in several passages of the *Memorabilia*, it seems to be closely connected with the proof of the purposefulness with which human nature is arranged.⁸⁰ The earlier thinkers had raised the problem of the form (*μορφή*) of the Divine, on the frank assumption that while the existence of the Divine was a fact and needed no demonstration, its nature and form could not help being entirely different from the representations of the folk-religion.⁸¹ The line of thought struck out by Diogenes, however, begins with the 'works' (*ἔργα*) of the Divine. To determine the form of the gods is hard, Socrates explains in the fourth book of the *Memorabilia*; but their works lead us to a knowledge of their power, by which the All is imperceptibly ruled and preserved.⁸² In this way the whole point of the theological discussion is fundamentally shifted: the problem of the form of the Divine lapses into the background as insoluble, and the existence of the Divine as such becomes the real matter to be proved. The Divine can be known only indirectly, for it remains hidden behind its works, just as the soul guides the man without ever becoming visible to our sight.⁸³ The relation between soul and body corresponds exactly to that between God and the world; this analogy follows inevitably from Diogenes' identification of his principle—the air—with soul and Mind and the animation of the All.⁸⁴ That Xenophon's analogy between the invisible deity and the soul itself actually comes from Diogenes is rendered even more probable by the recurrence of the conception in that portion of the first book of the *Memorabilia* to which we have already referred—the section where we find the characteristic comparisons of the human organism with various technical implements.⁸⁵

The comparison of God and soul in this passage is connected with a kind of argument which makes particularly clear how much the inner point of departure of Diogenes' theology has come to differ from that of the earlier thinkers. They had approached nature with the exuberant consciousness that 'all

things are full of gods'.⁸⁶ In the new period nature has lost its divine character; the eye of man no longer finds traces of the demonic at every step, and philosophy is faced with a difficult problem. Is not Man, with his reason, isolated and alone in the universe? Is there any Mind or soul in the world apart from him? Such a conception would lay far too heavy a burden upon his shoulders; it would also indicate appalling arrogance on the part of little Man himself, at least for a people who shared the Greek feelings about the cosmos.

'Do you believe', Xenophon's Socrates asks the young Aristodemus, 'that you have any wisdom within you? . . . And do you still suppose that there is no spark of wisdom anywhere else in the world? And do you believe all this, even though you know that you have in your body only one tiny bit of earth out of the mass that exist, and only a little of all the moisture that there is, and that your body is composed entirely of small portions of every other kind of thing that is present in large quantities [in nature]? And do you still think that mind alone is nowhere else to be found, and that you have somehow gathered it up as if you had come upon it by some happy accident? And are you convinced that all these immense and utterly countless things [the heavenly bodies] hold their courses with such admirable order by the power of mere unreason?'⁸⁷

When his interlocutor objects that he cannot see the causes of these things and therefore is sceptical about them, Socrates again brings in the analogy of the human soul, which is likewise invisible.⁸⁸ If this point of contact with the argument of the fourth book is itself good ground for tracing both these arguments and Xenophon's statements about the Mind in the universe to the same source, then Plato's *Philebus* is corroborative evidence; for there this same peculiar line of proof appears in much the same words with an appeal to the authority of certain older philosophers of nature who extolled the *Nous* as lord and ruler of the universe.⁸⁹ This reminds us of Anaxagoras' *Nous*, but it also includes Diogenes'. We have seen how Diogenes, in his great theological fragment, following the example of Anaxagoras, lauds his first principle in hymn-like language as a thinking Mind by which all things are ordered.⁹⁰ It is through him rather than through Anaxagoras that this argument reached Xenophon and Plato. This is quite clear from the

mythical views of the world, the characteristics of which are constantly changed and revised with each new shift of perspective. The religious sense of the Greeks is not of such a sort that their conception of Zeus, for instance, would be dogmatically hardened and debarred from reinterpretation. Accordingly, the conception of Zeus which we find in art and in poetry draws new life from philosophy,⁵ while that which philosophy calls 'the Divine' is, as Heraclitus puts it, 'both willing and unwilling to be called by the name of Zeus'.⁶ In fact, it is impossible not to find in the Divine of which these thinkers speak many features that remind us of Zeus, even though we cannot treat it as identical with the old god of the skies. Indeed, the development of the philosophical idea of God from the *apeiron* to the *Nous* is undeniably accompanied by an increasing resemblance to Zeus. At first the whole spiritual element of the old conception of the gods seemed to have evaporated in the bare idea of the All; but as this idea developed into that of the Divine, the spirit was reinstated, and we again come round to something more like the mythological conception of the gods on a higher stage of the spiral cycle.⁷ From this point of view, moreover, the fact that the philosophical theory of God is the work of individual thinking rather than a heritage of collective lore from the immemorial past, is no argument against the religious quality of this intellectual faith. Indeed, the religious problem is so closely tied up with the problem of cosmogony, which sets the cognitive faculties in motion and puts them to work on the problem of the divine nature, that this religious quality follows inevitably. As is plain from the hymn-like form of the statements these thinkers make about the Divine, knowledge and reverence for the gods are one and the same for them.⁸ To this extent it is quite right to designate the philosophy of the pre-Socratic period as a *modus deum cognoscendi et colendi*—that is, as religion, even if the gap between this and the popular beliefs about the gods is never again entirely closed.⁹

In its final phase the rise of philosophical religion leads to a consciousness of the problem of religion itself—the problem of accounting for the universal dispersion of the idea of God and of discovering its sources. Any type of thinking that derives all existence from nature and its characteristic law and order must come to the point of regarding even the belief in God as

psychologists to consider the phenomenon of religion from this point of view. These various aspects cannot be kept altogether separate; for they are merely different forms of a single attitude of approach—an attitude which no longer demands an objective philosophical knowledge of the divine essence such as the older philosophers of nature had proclaimed, but which regards the traditional religious conceptions of the Divine as among the constituents of human nature as such, and seeks to approach them rather from the standpoint of the subject by analysing man himself.

In the myth of the rise of the human race and human civilization that Plato ascribes to Protagoras in his dialogue of that name, the worship of God is presupposed as an essential element of human culture. Here we read that 'as man had a share of the Divine, he was first of all the only living creature to believe in gods, because of his kinship with the godhead; and so he set himself to building altars and images of the gods'.¹⁵ Of course, the mythical form in which Protagoras clothes his views of the origin of culture prevents us from weighing every word of this sentence with too much precision, particularly when it comes to his metaphysical deduction of the religious impulse from man's relatedness to God. But in depicting the rise of human culture, Protagoras must surely have seen the full import of the fact that man alone has any acquaintance with religion and divine worship. Plato's myth makes very clear the context into which Protagoras attempted to fit it. Protagoras here looks upon religion primarily as an anthropological fact to be understood in the light of its meaning and function in human civilization and social structure. We shall see later that behind this positive attitude there also lurks the problem of the objective certainty and truth of the belief in God, a different aspect altogether, which receives Protagoras' attention in his work *On the Gods*.¹⁶

In the speech of Socrates in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* which we have analysed in our last chapter,¹⁷ we already possess a similar or at least comparable discussion of religion as a product and expression of the characteristic nature of man as distinct from the animals. It has recently been shown that Xenophon was not content to draw some of his ideas from Diogenes' teleological theory of nature, but probably fused it with a Sophistic tractate which attempted to prove the gods' solicitude

for men in a more anthropomorphic sense, by adducing man's own religious endowments as a sign of it.¹⁸ The art of divination is here mentioned as a particularly impressive example.¹⁹ As is well known, this argument gave rise to a whole literature in Hellenistic philosophy; we need only recall Cicero's tract *De Divinatione*, which follows a pattern quite familiar in Hellenistic philosophical literature. In Xenophon we are still very near the beginnings of the argument based on divination; and therefore our more extreme critics have felt that both this passage and all the rest of this theological chapter should be bracketed as a later Stoic interpolation. But Aeschylus' Prometheus had already boasted of inventing the arts out of his love for men in their helpless subjection to natural forces; and among these arts he included mathematics, astronomy, grammar, and divination.²⁰ We have here a direct precedent for Xenophon's argument. The difference is merely that he or his model formulated everything in somewhat broader terms, replacing the one god Prometheus, the traditional helper of suffering humanity, by the gods in general.²¹ In Xenophon Socrates considers the question whether divination may not sometimes be deceptive, and replies that the collective experience of untold generations is a more reliable criterion than individual intelligence. Socrates points out that states and nations, the longest-lived and wisest of all human institutions, are also the strongest religious forces in the world, just as older men, who by reason of their years may be supposed to have superior insight, are more god-fearing than younger ones.²² The problem of the truth and certainty of religion is here thrust into the background in favour of a new kind of attitude that makes practical experience rather than critical intelligence the real yardstick. This situation reminds us of that which we meet in the third book of Cicero's *De natura deorum*, where Cotta, the Roman Pontifex Maximus, while not denying the competence of philosophical understanding in religious matters, sets up against it the *auctoritas* of the religious tradition and religious experience.²³ The concept of *auctoritas*, however, which is later to be of such decisive importance for the attitude of the Church in questions of faith, is entirely missing in Greek thought. In its place we find Xenophon referring to the wisdom vested in the religious institutions of States and peoples by virtue of their immemorial age.²⁴ This

defence of the popular religion is obviously a far cry from mere credulousness. Any man capable of this statement must already have undergone the experience of radical philosophical doubt; and even if he returns to positive religion, he still speaks of it from an intellectual distance that is readily perceptible. It is not so much the details of religion that he defends as the whole. This is a new attitude towards religion, and it is based upon something very like a philosophy. It might be best characterized as a kind of pragmatism; for it utilizes the conception of verification by fruitfulness rather than by objective truth, and traces religion back to the subjective spiritual constitution of mankind.²⁵ Xenophon says that the idea of the gods as powers which bring blessings or destruction is one which is 'implanted' or 'inborn' in men; and from the fact that man possesses this psychological structure he infers the reality of a provident divine creative force as its producer.²⁶ This conclusion is not so remarkable if one has already accepted the premise that the experience of untold generations demonstrates the wisdom and bounty with which the religious side of man's mind has been equipped.

In Xenophon that which is only briefly suggested in Protagoras' myth is now fully developed. The problem is to discover from what inborn natural disposition of mankind religion has taken its rise. Awareness of this question is a significant stride forward from the earlier naturalistic attempts to determine the nature of the Divine. As an historical product of human nature, religion itself now appears to be something necessary and subject to natural law. This discovery provides a new argument for the purposefulness of man's mental organization, in addition to the older proofs based on his physiological structure.²⁷ While the older theology of the natural philosophers replaced the traditional ideas of the gods with its own conception of the Divine, the new anthropological and psychological approach proceeds to rehabilitate the popular religion, which has hitherto seemed irreconcilable with philosophical truth. Instead of rational criticism and speculative revision of the idea of God, we now find a more understanding attitude which shows how a whole world of given intellectual forms reflects the wisdom underlying man's natural endowments, and is to that extent divine. When Xenophon's youthful interlocutor asks Socrates

must have seemed a particularly good point of departure for conjecturing about the religious ideas of primitive times, for it was supposed to go back to extreme antiquity. This it presumably does, though it presupposes a fairly advanced civilization in which agriculture and settled living are already well established.³³ All these instances of deification of natural forces and things useful and healthful in human lives must have impressed Prodicus by their very numbers and compelled him to give his observations a highly general form. To trace the idea of God back to those things in nature which serve men's purposes was all the easier for him because the teleological motif had more effective demonstrative force in the philosophical thought of his time than any other. There was nothing farther removed from the rationalism of the Sophists than genuine historical thinking. They never realized how little plausibility there was in naively seizing upon the abstract teleological type of argument current in the scientific efforts of their own times and reading it back into the primitive stages of human thought.

Nevertheless, we have already seen that in the religious philosophy of the Hellenistic age Prodicus' teachings were taken very seriously;³⁴ and, in fact, they do contain a kernel of truth, as we shall presently show. The theories of Democritus took their place beside those of Prodicus,³⁵ and deserve mention here because of their similar method of approach to the problem. Democritus may also seem to merit our consideration as a philosopher of nature like his predecessors; but the great exponent of atomism did not work out any original theology, such as we find in Anaxagoras or Diogenes, which would oblige us to give special attention to this phase of his philosophy of nature. His description of nature in terms of the interplay of countless atoms in empty space ruled by the power of chance left no room for teleology and the deification of any moving forces or single primal ground. Nevertheless, Democritus saw a serious epistemological problem in the very existence of religious ideas in the mind of man. He was convinced that the immediate source of these ideas was to be sought in the apparitions of the gods that men behold in their dreams. He did not explain these as hallucinations, but attributed them to real objects actually perceived. Democritus called these objects 'images' (*εἴδωλα*), and thought of them as fine membranes freeing themselves

from the surfaces of actual things and stimulating human sense-organs.³⁶ We need not here discuss the physiological aspects of this hypothesis. Democritus thought of these images as having either good or baneful effects, and believed in their significance as portents; but he explained all this as a purely natural process. And it was to this process, as Sextus reports, that he ascribed the rise of the belief in gods among the earliest peoples.³⁷ Thus he did not deny the gods altogether, but relegated them to a twilight realm of materialized psychical phenomena, where even though divested of their own peculiar power and significance, they could still bring about good fortune or bad. He described these images as great and far exceeding human stature and hard to destroy, though not absolutely indestructible.³⁸ Thus Democritus recognized eternity and imperishability as properties really belonging to the gods, or at least as claims approaching reality, though he robbed them of their proper significance. He even went so far as to retain prayer as the most fundamental way of expressing one's faith in the reality of the Divine. But prayer, too, had come to mean something rather different, for the philosopher could bring himself to admit only one kind as reasonable—the wish 'to encounter propitious images'.³⁹ He had no faith in the idea of life after death as taught in the mysteries, for he held that everything that nature brings forth is subject to decay or, more strictly speaking, to dissolution. 'Some men who know nothing of the dissolution of mortal nature, but are well aware of the badness of their own ways of life, wear themselves out all their lifetime with troubles and anxieties, while they invent lying myths about the time which comes after death.' These words have come down to us as a fragment from Democritus' ethical work *On Tranquillity*.⁴⁰ Here the philosopher departs from his theory of images, declaring that certain types of religious conceptions are merely the unreal offspring of a bad conscience—obvious fictions, unwittingly compensatory, a source of lifelong self-inflicted torment for the human mind. Retribution, in truth, does not come in the hereafter but in man's own inner life, which constitutes his actual Hell.⁴¹ This idea does not spring from the cynicism of a pure student of nature utterly cold to the ethical side of the problem. It comes rather from the interplay which results when psychological and physiological

thinking are mingled with a refined ethical cultivation such as the treatise *On Tranquillity* reveals on every page. Democritus will not have men's conduct based on false authorities, even if they are derived from the laws of the State; he has faith in the paramount efficacy of some such moral force as human self-respect,⁴² and this faith accounts for the peculiarly impassioned tone with which he criticizes the belief in the hereafter.

The juxtaposition of the fiction-theory and the theory of images in Democritus' work shows that he attacked the problem of religion from two different sides, and prepares us for a third theory which is in principle like that of Prodicus. Here we are again indebted to Sextus. According to Democritus, he remarks,⁴³ it is through the wonders (*παραδόξων*) of nature that men have arrived at the idea of God; when the first men watched the cosmic meteorological processes like thunder and lightning, stellar conjunctions, and eclipses of sun and moon, they were filled with fear and believed that these things were caused by the gods. Similarly, in the papyrus fragments of Philodemus' treatise *On Piety*, we find still other meteorological processes like summer, winter, spring, and autumn named in connexion with Democritus as things that have come 'from above'; and we learn that it is this knowledge that has led men to honour the causes by which these processes are produced.⁴⁴ If we array these new examples along with thunder, lightning, eclipses, and other dire phenomena, we can refer them all to a single psychological motive on the border-line between awe and fear. It now becomes evident that our author's derivation of religion from apparitions in dreams and his theory of the origin of belief in an after-life, heterogeneous though they may appear, both harmonize very nicely with the same general psychological attitude. We then see at once that his attempt to explain the first intimations of the beyond as arising in the bad consciences of wrongdoers fits very well with the fear-theory. In this instance, to be sure, we are dealing with a truly inward anxiety, not the kind of fear which outward sense-impressions, such as thunder and lightning, produce. But obviously the hypothesis of images must be connected with the fear-motive; for what Democritus emphasizes in the images that appear to us in dreams is nothing other than their magnitude and supernatural stature (*μεγάλα τε καὶ ὑπερφυῆ*)—in short, their terrifying

appearance.⁴⁵ This derivation of religion from the sense of fear or awe really touches one of its strongest roots. Perhaps we may also venture a similar approach to Prodicus' theory that man has apotheosized those bounteous powers of nature which he finds to his advantage; for if we divest this theory of the rationalistic teleological form in which it is clothed and substitute a more psychological explanation, it would mean that man has come to revere the Divine because of his feeling of gratitude for the things in this world that seem to him good. This approach is not only an admirable supplement to Democritus' fear-theory; it is also a necessary one.

Apparently Democritus, like his townsman Protagoras in Plato's myth,⁴⁶ did more than treat the origin of religion as an abstract psychological problem. He even gave it a place in his concrete sociological theory of how culture arose—the subject of his principal work, the *Mikros Diakosmos*. At least, this seems to be the best place to put the beautiful fragment which Clement of Alexandria has preserved for us: 'Some of the wise men lifted their hands towards that place which we Hellenes call the abode of Air, and said that Zeus holds converse with himself about all things, and that it is he who knows all things, and gives and takes away, and he is king of all.'⁴⁷ Obviously this refers to that memorable moment in the dark primeval age when the idea of deity first dawned upon men's minds. Democritus is quite in accord with the spirit of his own enlightened era when he thinks of religious ideas as originating not by the flickering-up of a vague feeling among the many, but rather by the act of a few heroic souls who step before the multitude with solemn gestures, raise their hands in prayer to heaven, and speak these words, which seem like a manifest confirmation of Democritus' fear-theory, and show that in this fear the germ of reverence is latent. These men are venerable, men of wisdom, what the Greek calls *λόγιοι*—the name Herodotus gives to the sages of the ancient Asiatic peoples. Here we are reminded of the form and concept of the philosopher as such, and tend thoughtlessly to read it back into the pre-Socratic period as Plato and Aristotle might have done, though the word 'philosopher' did not as yet have this significance, if it even existed at all. Indeed, Democritus here has in mind the type of philosopher or *λόγιος* on whom the intellectual development of Ionian culture has

displayed a profound susceptibility even in the late ancient period, the Sophists found themselves forced to consider another source of religious assurance, of which Democritus was already conscious when he explained the belief in the hereafter. This is the world of morals. As we have already remarked, the Sophists were the first to make a careful theoretical study of the nature of State and society in connexion with their claim of training men in political ἀρετή. That they studied the problem of the validity and origin of the accepted moral standards and the laws of the State is plainly illustrated by a fragment from a lost work *On Truth* by Antiphon the Athenian, which was recovered several decades ago. The author considers that the distinguishing of a twofold justice—the natural and the conventional—is a discovery of the first importance.⁴⁹ This distinction, which is known to be much older, and has already been applied by Parmenides and Empedocles to certain cosmical and ontological matters, becomes of the greatest practical significance when it is used by Sophists like Antiphon, Hippias, and the 'Callicles' of Plato's *Gorgias* to demonstrate that the prevailing laws and accepted social *mores* are a product of mere convention and arbitrary human decisions.⁵⁰ Antiphon defines justice as conformity with the laws of the State in which one lives.⁵¹ By such a definition he makes room for his conviction of the relativity of the laws of the State, which he opposes to the conception of natural justice. According to his theory, the laws are shackles with which the lawgiver binds the individual, and are quite inimical to nature.⁵² The man who acts naturally has only one standard for his actions—namely, that which he finds agreeable or disagreeable, productive of pleasure or of pain.⁵³ Antiphon concludes, therefore, that man will obey the law only under compulsion, and will repudiate it as soon as that compulsion disappears. Moreover, he speaks of the presence of witnesses as a decisive factor in human conduct.⁵⁴ The fact that the average man will not act in the same way before witnesses as he will when none are present strikes Antiphon as an argument for his thesis—the distinction between natural and conventional morality and justice.

The presence or absence of witnesses plays an important role in the Sophistic and Platonic discussions of ethical problems, as I have shown in that section of my book *Paideia* where I

discuss the problem of the moral authority of law and the disturbances it undergoes in the life of this period.⁵⁵ Plato's tale of the ring of Gyges in the *Republic* illustrates most strikingly the ethical importance of witnesses. He asks whether a man would act justly of his own free will if he possessed a magic ring which would make him invisible.⁵⁶ Democritus, as we have seen already, introduces the idea of self-respect into his ethical maxims because he, too, is no longer able to conceive of mere outward obedience to law as a sufficient basis for action.⁵⁷ When the validity of the State law was inwardly shaken by the criticisms of the Sophists and by their efforts to define it as the expression of the advantage of those temporarily at the head of the State,⁵⁸ the re-establishment of an inner norm independent of legislative changes became the greatest of all human problems. In earlier times this norm was furnished by religion, which gave the law its support. But can it continue to do so when the all-too-human origins of law are criticized, and not without some cause?⁵⁹ Can it endorse legislation based on selfish interests? Or rather must not religion, too, become involved in the collapse of legal authority?

This is the point of departure for the remarkable criticism of religion that we find in the remaining long fragment of Critias' lost satyr-drama, the *Sisyphus*.⁶⁰ Many a convinced oligarch who found himself compelled to live under a democracy was sceptical of the pride which that democracy took in the laws as such;⁶¹ and it is from the oligarchic circle that there emerge those devastating criticisms of the law—the very pillar of the democratic order—which we meet in Plato's *Callicles*.⁶² No one else has succeeded in better expressing what this upper social stratum thought of the arbitrary character of those laws which the overwhelming majority of the people revered as truly god-given.⁶³ Presumably Critias, with his enlightened radicalism, was still dissatisfied with arguments of the kind put forward by Callicles in Plato's *Gorgias*. He therefore inserted in his *Sisyphus* a long account of the origin of religion, presumably putting it into the mouth of the crafty hero of his piece. In primeval times, he tells us (and here we note at once the influence of such prototypes as Democritus and Protagoras), men's life was confused and chaotic until the art of statecraft was developed and legislators arose to chain life down to a definite

that the beneficial things in nature have been looked upon as gods by the earliest of men. The Greek expression which he uses—*νομισθηῖναι*—is connected with *νόμος*;⁶⁸ behind this lurks the thought that these conceptions of divine beings are really based on *νόμος* alone and not on *φύσις*—an idea which the verb *νομίζω* occasionally expresses elsewhere.⁶⁹ Even when a Sophist regards religion with as positive a practical attitude as that of Protagoras in Plato's myth, there is always a conscious and fundamental theoretical doubt of its absolute truth. Protagoras' treatise *On the Gods*, which was publicly burned in Athens, began with the words: 'When it comes to the gods, I am unable to discover whether they are or are not, or even what they are like in form. For there are many things that stand in the way of this knowledge—the obscurity of the problem and the brevity of man's life.'⁷⁰ The words 'or even what they are like in form' are missing in some of the authors by whom this famous sentence is quoted, and they have been questioned by many critics.⁷¹ It is clear, however, that the statement is a reference to the two chief problems that have occupied the pre-Socratic philosophers with regard to the gods—the problems of the existence and the form of the Divine. In the light of what we have seen already, it is self-evident that the latter reference is here indispensable.⁷² Only so can we clearly see what Protagoras is opposing. He is backing away from the whole previous philosophical treatment of the problem of the Divine, by denying that there is anything certain about it. Such an opening note might seem to leave nothing more to be said, as has often been remarked. If, in spite of this, Protagoras could still devote an entire treatise to the problem of the belief in God, he must have been satisfied with a somewhat lesser degree of certainty as his work progressed. In that case, however, he could hardly do more than apply the standard of human opinion; and that would be most fitting for the man who had declared that 'Man is the measure of all things'.⁷³ In this way we can also understand the meaning of the 'I am unable to discover' in the first sentence of his treatise *On the Gods*, and we can see for what he is here preparing the way. With these words he restricts the scope of his sentence about the impossibility of knowing the gods, and makes it an expression of an individual opinion.⁷⁴ This must have seemed the only standpoint which would enable him to

13. Plat. *Rep.* ii. 379 a: οἱ τύποι περὶ θεολογίας τίνες ἂν εἴεν; Plato himself explains the new word *θεολογία*: οἷος τυγχάνει ὁ θεὸς ἂν αἰεὶ δῆπου ἀποδοτέον. The coining of the word indicates the importance from Plato's point of view of the mental attitude which it tries to express. Theology is in a way the very aim and centre of his thought. In his last work, the *Laws*, we find a complete system of theology when in book x Plato sets forth the importance of the soul for a theological view of reality. In the *Timaeus* he approaches the problem of the Divine from the point of view of nature and cosmogony; the Divine there appears as the demiurge. On these two ways of approach as sources of Plato's theology, cf. the most recent monograph on the subject, *Plato's Theology*, by Friedrich Solmsen (Ithaca, 1942). But although the *Timaeus* and the *Laws* are the most explicit discussions of God and the gods in Plato's dialogues, there are other treatments of the problem in Plato's moral philosophy. I should like to deal with them more in detail in a sequel to this volume, discussing the theology of Plato and Aristotle. In the meantime I refer to my outline in *Paidéia*, ii, p. 285. There I have tried to show that the main and most original approach to the problem of God which we find in Plato's philosophy is what may be called the paideutic approach—God as the measurement of measurements.
14. See Bonitz's *Index Aristotelicus*, p. 324^b53 ff., s.v. θεολογεῖν, θεολογία, θεολογική, θεολόγος.
15. It is probable, if not certain, that the development of this group of words as we find it in Aristotle's works had started in the Platonic school, as did most of his terminology, since his interest in the theological problem derived from his Platonic phase.
16. Cf. Arist. *Metaph.* E 1, 1026^a19 and the parallel passage K 7, 1064^b3 in the doublet of books BΓE which we have in our text of the *Metaphysics* in K 1-8.
17. Arist. *Metaph.* B 4, 1000^a9: οἱ . . . περὶ Ἡσίοδου καὶ πάντες ὅσοι θεολόγοι μόνον ἐφρόντισαν τοῦ πιθανοῦ τοῦ πρὸς αὐτούς (they are contrasted with scientific thought); Δ 6, 1071^b27: οἱ θεολόγοι οἱ ἐκ νυκτὸς γεννώντες (Pherecydes), as opposed to οἱ φυσικοί; N 4, 1091^a34 speaks of οἱ θεολόγοι who did not place the most perfect stage at the beginning of the world and compares them with τῶν νῦν τινας (Speusippus); A 3, 983^b28: τοὺς παμπαλαίους καὶ πολὺ πρὸ τῆς νῦν γενέσεως καὶ πρώτους θεολογήσαντας (Homer and Hesiod, cf. 30). They are contrasted with Thales and Ionian natural philosophy. *Meteorol.* ii. 1, 353^a35: οἱ ἀρχαῖοι καὶ διατρίβοντες περὶ τὰς θεολογίας.
18. See my *Aristotle*, p. 128.
19. Arist. *Metaph.* Δ 8, 1074^b1: παραδέδοται δὲ παρὰ τῶν ἀρχαίων καὶ παμπαλαίων ἐν μύθῳ οὐκ ἀληθῆ καταλειμμένα τοῖς ὕστερον ὅτι θεοὶ τ' εἰσιν οὐδοὶ καὶ περιέχει τὸ θεῖον τὴν δὴν φύσιν. τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ μυθικῶς ἤδη προσήκται πρὸς τὴν πειθῶ τῶν πολλῶν καὶ πρὸς τὴν εἰς τοὺς νόμους καὶ τὸ συμφέρον χρῆσιν. ἀνθρωποειδεῖς τε γὰρ τούτους καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ζώων ὁμοίους τινὲς λέγουσιν. . . . The same words, οἱ ἀρχαῖοι καὶ παμπαλαῖοι, are used by Aristotle with regard to the mythical theologies of Homer, Hesiod, Pherecydes, and others, in the passages collected in n. 17.
20. Edward Caird, *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers* (2 vv., Glasgow, 1904).
21. Paul Elmer More, *The Religion of Plato* (Princeton, 1921).
22. Cf. n. 13.
23. Of the earlier literature on this subject, the posthumous book by Otto Gilbert, *Griechische Religionsphilosophie* (Leipzig, 1911), ought to be mentioned. The title is somewhat misleading, since it suggests a book concerned

ξύμπαντα as a stereotyped element of their solemn theological language and interprets it as meaning *τόδε τὸ καλούμενον ὄλον*. He thus agrees with Aristotle, who says that they took the *apeiron* for the *ὄλον* (= τὸ πάντα περιέχον). See n. 42.

44. (A) The word τὸ θεῖον. There is no doubt that the word τὸ θεῖον occurred in the philosophical language of pre-Socratic thinkers, even though our fragmentary tradition has preserved but little evidence. In the two quotations from Empedocles (B 133) and Heraclitus (B 86) the word τὸ θεῖον or τὰ θεῖα occurs, but Diels seems to think that it does not belong to the text quoted. However, something like it must have been said in the text, and Kranz in the Index refers to the passages, s.v. θεῖον. Since no direct testimonia are available, the imitation by contemporary authors must serve as a substitute for us. Critias, in the long Sisyphus fragment preserved by Sextus Empiricus ix. 54 (Critias B 25), visualizes his wise man (σοφὸς γνώμην ἀνὴρ, v. 12), who invents religion, as a sort of pre-Socratic philosopher. He says of him that he introduced the idea of the Divine (τὸ θεῖον εἰσηγήσατο, v. 16) and equipped it with the predicates of immortal life, the power of seeing and hearing with its mind, and of moving divine nature (φύσιν θεῖαν φορᾶν). All these features are obviously taken from the language of pre-Socratic theology. He says explicitly that these are the statements (λόγοι) which the wise man made about the Divine (v. 24). The rest of his description of the Divinity makes the origin of his picture from the cosmological philosophers and their λόγοι even more evident. It reminds us of Democritus' famous words about the wise men of old (λόγοι ἀνθρώποι) who raised their hands towards the upper air and said: 'Zeus speaks everything and knows everything and gives and takes away, and he is King of all' (Democr. B 30). Cf. Critias l.c. vv. 27 ff. The bold identification of τὸ θεῖον with ἡ φύσις, which is characteristic of pre-Socratic thought, is to be found also in the medical literature of the Hippocratic age. The author of the book *On the Divine Disease* rejects the old but superstitious idea of the divine character of epilepsy by pointing out that the cause of this disease is as natural as that of any other, and that everything in the nature of our diseases is divine and everything is human. They all start from the same influences: cold, sunshine, changing winds, and weather. These physical factors are the forces which are the cause of all things (Hippocrates, ed. Littré, vi. 394). In this sense it is true *μάλιστα τὸ θεῖον ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν αἰτιον εἶναι* (*De natura muliebri*, Littré, vii. 312). From passages like this it becomes clear that in using the concept of the Divine, pre-Socratic natural philosophy made a statement about the primary cause, since traditional religious thought traced everything that happened back to the gods (αἰτιάσθαι τὸ θεῖον).

(B) καὶ τοῦτ' εἶναι τὸ θεῖον. With these words Anaximander (A 15) proceeds to identify his *apeiron* with τὸ θεῖον. His *modus procedendi* is quite natural. He cannot begin with the concept of God or the Divine, but starts with experience and the rational conclusions based on it. Having arrived in this way at the conception of a first cause, the predicates of which are equal to those which earlier religious belief used to attribute to the gods, he takes the last step, which is the identification of the highest principle with the Divine. This method was followed by ancient philosophers of later centuries. It is only natural that our main evidence should come from later times, since our direct fragments of the works of the pre-Socratics are scarce. But Aristotle's report on Anaximander and the other philosophers who stated the existence of the *apeiron* as the first cause must be authentic in this respect also. The most obvious argument for this is the grammatical form of his sentence, the *oratio obliqua*: καὶ τοῦτ' εἶναι τὸ θεῖον, which gives the derivation of the divine

character of the *apeiron* from its very predicates (*περιέχειν ἅπαντα καὶ πάντα κυβερνᾶν*) as an explicit statement of those thinkers and, so to speak, as their supreme thought. It follows the *verbum dicendi* ὡς φασιν ὅσοι μὴ ποιῶσι παρὰ τὸ ἄπειρον ἄλλας αἰτίας ὅν νοῦν ἢ φίλταν. By this restriction Anaxagoras and Empedocles are eliminated, and only the pure *apeiron*-theorists like Anaximander and Diogenes and Melissus are left. Theirs is also the reason which is added after *καὶ τοῦτ' εἶναι τὸ θεῖον*: ἀθάνατον γὰρ καὶ ἀνώλεθρον, ὡς φησιν ὁ Ἀναξίμανδρος καὶ οἱ πλείστοι τῶν φυσιολόγων. It is very important in the development of the philosophical theology of the earliest Ionian thinkers that we have this statement, which gives us not only the word τὸ θεῖον but also the method by which they arrived at final certainty about what we might think a transcendental problem. What happens in Anaximander's argument (and that of his successors in this line) is that the predicate God, or rather the Divine, is transferred from the traditional deities to the first principle of Being (at which they arrived by rational investigation), on the ground that the predicates usually attributed to the gods of Homer and Hesiod are inherent in that principle to a higher degree or can be assigned to it with greater certainty.

This new approach to the question of the Divine was apparently imitated by later philosophers. Since we prefer direct evidence from the fragments to any doxographic testimonium, here are the words of Diogenes of Apollonia (Diog. B 5), quoted by Simplicius, who says that he still had the original work of this thinker and made excerpts from it for his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* (p. 25, 7, ed. Diels): καὶ μοι δοκεῖ τὸ τὴν νόησιν ἔχον εἶναι ὁ ἀπὸ καλοῦ-μενος ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ

ὑπὸ τούτου πάντας καὶ κυβερνᾶσθαι
καὶ πάντων κρατεῖν.

αὐτὸ γάρ μοι τοῦτο θεός δοκεῖ εἶναι
καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶν ἀφίχθαι
καὶ πάντα διατιθέναι
καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἐνεῖναι.

καὶ ἔστιν οὐδὲ ἐν ὃ τι μὴ μετέχει τούτου.

Diogenes first states as the first cause 'what men call the air' (implying that it is something higher than that of which we think in pronouncing the simple word 'air'); he identifies with the air the thinking principle (τὸ τὴν νόησιν ἔχον) which his teacher Anaxagoras had introduced and called νοῦς. Then Diogenes attributes to this highest cause a series of predicates which resemble those of Anaximander's statement about the *apeiron* both in their stylistic form and in their philosophical intention: they are hymnodic in form; the first two predications vary the concept of ruling, which is expressed in more than one way (*κυβερνᾶσθαι, κρατεῖν*, the omnipotence being expressed by the anaphora *πάντας-πάντων*); then this very principle (αὐτὸ τοῦτο) at which Diogenes has arrived by rational speculation is equated with God, ὁ θεός; the equation is characterized as a subjective act of judgement (*δοκεῖ εἶναι*), which is added to the rational analysis of nature as a final step. This identification is safeguarded by three (or four) other predications which are aimed at establishing the identity of the air with God by showing the way in which this highest cause rules the world (*ἐπὶ πᾶν ἀφίχθαι, πάντα διατιθέναι, ἐν παντὶ ἐνεῖναι*). The last line, after the threefold *πάντα*, repeats this thought by saying that there is *nothing* which does not participate in it (τούτου, effectively placed at the end, in chiasmic form, re-emphasizes the αὐτὸ τοῦτο of the beginning and the ὑπὸ τούτου of the preceding sentence). This example proves Anaximander's influence on the language and method of thought of his successors in the most perfect way; they illustrate each other. Diogenes has amplified Anaximander's

form, if the words of the latter, as reported by Aristotle, are not too poor a reflection of the original.

Now we turn to the later philosophers and trace the same phenomenon in the tradition of post-Socratic philosophy. By that time the language of the philosophers had lost much of the original power of expression which it had possessed during the pre-Socratic period, when even a second-rate mind like Diogenes' aspired to a high level of diction (cf. his statement on style, frg. B 1). The form of argumentation became more stereotyped in the philosophers of later times, but at this stage it still reflected the influence of their predecessors upon them in form and content. Aristotle, in his lost dialogue *Περὶ φιλοσοφίας* (frg. 23, Rose, Cic. *De nat. deor.* ii. 15), wanted to prove that the stars have a soul and reason, and he ended his argument with the words 'ex quo efficitur in deorum numero astra esse ducenda'. The same is proved by pointing to the voluntary movement of the stars, frg. 24. A number of similar identifications of θεός with mens = νοῦς, mundus = κόσμος, πρῶτον κινῶν, caeli ardor = αἰθήρ, caelum = οὐρανός, are quoted by Cicero and Philodemus from Aristotle's *Περὶ φιλοσοφίας*, book iii (frg. 26, Rose). Aristotle seems to have followed earlier philosophical theologians in all the passages concerning the existence of God which occur in his dialogues. An example which comes especially close to Anaximander's form of expression and argument is preserved by Simplicius in his commentary on Aristotle's *De caelo* (289, 2, Heiberg): λέγει δὲ περὶ τούτου ἐν τοῖς περὶ φιλοσοφίας: καθόλου γὰρ ἐν οἷς ἐστὶ τι βέλτιον, ἐν τούτοις ἐστὶ τι καὶ ἄριστον. ἐπεὶ οὖν ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς οὐαῖν ἄλλο ἄλλο βέλτιον, ἔστιν ἄρα τι καὶ ἄριστον, ὅπερ εἶη ἂν τὸ θεῖον (Arist. frg. 16, Rose). Here Aristotle first concluded from the hierarchy of perfection in nature that there must exist a 'most perfect being', and this he identifies with τὸ θεῖον. The teleological argument is his own, but the form in which he puts it is inherited from earlier philosophers, who approached God from their specific principle (Anaximander from the *apeiron*, Anaximenes and Diogenes from the air, &c.). Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. dogm.* iii. 20, has preserved Aristotle's explanation of the origin of religion from dream-vision and from the regular movements of celestial bodies. Both arguments begin with the observation of natural phenomena and end with the conclusion εἶναι τι θεῖον or εἶναι τινα θεόν (frg. 10, Rose).

The same form of the teleological argument was used by the Hellenistic philosophers. The Stoics (frg. ii. 1016, Arnim) are represented by Sextus, *Adv. phys.* i. 114, as trying to prove that the cosmos has an intelligent nature which is moved by itself in a certain orderly way: νοερὰν ἔχει φύσιν . . . ἥτις εὐθέως ἐστὶ θεός. The conclusion that the intelligent nature which moves itself in orderly fashion is God seems, from their point of view, to follow εὐθέως. This word also throws light on the pre-Socratics who argued in the same or a similar way. See the same identification made by some of the Stoics in Sextus, *Adv. phys.* i. 118, where the nature of the cosmos is called *κρατίστη*, because it is the cause of order (*διακόσμησις*) in the entire universe. From this it is concluded that it is intelligent (*λογικὴ τέ ἐστι καὶ νοερά*) and eternal (*ἄδιος*), and then the author whom Sextus is quoting adds: ἡ δὲ τοιαύτη φύσις ἡ αὐτὴ ἐστὶ θεῶ, 'a nature like this, however, is identical with God'. See also Sextus, op. cit. i. 100, where we find οὗτος δὲ ἐστὶ θεός at the end of a demonstration that the universe is the product of the supreme intelligence of a demiurge. Cleanthes (frg., i. 529, Arnim) argues, quite in the Aristotelian manner (Sextus, op. cit. i. 88 ff.), that there must be a most perfect living being which is higher than man's virtue and wisdom and is not susceptible to failure; then he adds: τούτο δὲ οὐ διοίσει θεοῦ (cf. Sextus, op. cit. i. 91). See Sextus, op. cit. i. 76: ἐστὶ τις ἄρα καθ' ἑαυτὴν αὐτοκίνητος δύναμις, ἥτις ἂν εἶη θεία καὶ ἄδιος, and at the