



# Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture

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VOLUME I

ARCHAIC GREECE  
THE MIND OF ATHENS

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## BOOK TWO

## The Mind of Athens

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By uniting these two methods of influencing the mind, it surpasses both philosophical thought and actual life. Life has immediate appeal, but the events of life lack universal significance: they have too many accidental accompaniments to create a truly deep and lasting impression on the soul. Philosophy and abstract thought do attain to universal significance: they deal with the essence of things; yet they affect none but the man who can use his own experience to inspire them with the vividness and intensity of personal life. Thus, poetry has the advantage over both the universal teachings of abstract reason and the accidental events of individual experience. It is more philosophical than life (if we may use Aristotle's famous epigram in a wider sense), but it is also, because of its concentrated spiritual actuality, more lifelike than philosophy.

These observations are far from being applicable to the poetry of all ages. They do not even apply to the whole of Greek poetry, although their significance is not confined to Greek poetry alone. But, based as they are upon Greek poetry, they bear upon it more closely than upon the literature of other nations. In fact, they only reproduce the views developed in the age of Plato and Aristotle, when the Greek aesthetic sense, at last realizing its powers and its sphere, came to study the great achievements of Hellenic poets. Despite many variations in detail, the Greeks even of a later epoch retained the same general view of art; and since that view arose at a time when they were still sensitive to poetry and to the specially Hellenic qualities of their poetry, we must, to be historically correct, inquire how far it applied to Homer.

Through the art of Homer, the ideas of the Homeric age have achieved a far greater permanence and universality, and thereby a wider and more lasting cultural influence, than those of any other epoch. The two great epics show, more clearly than any other type of poetry, the absolute uniqueness of Greek cultural ideals. Most of the literary forms created by Greek literature are unparalleled in any other language and civilization. Tragedy, comedy, philosophical treatise, dialogue, scientific manual, critical history, biography, forensic, political, and ceremonial oratory, travel-notes, memoirs, collections of letters, autobiographies, reminiscences, and essays—all these literary types were created and bequeathed to us by the Greeks. But other

with the old men, to guard the city wall. And when they came to the place for the ambuscade—it was by a river, at the watering-place of cattle—they took their posts, and attacked a herd which was driven down to the river. Then the enemy rushed up, and a battle broke out along the river banks. Spears flew back and forward: Eris and Kydoimos, the demons of War, moved among them as they fought, while Kér, the spirit of Death, in blood-stained garments, dragged the dead and wounded men by the feet through the mêlée.

And Hephaestus made a field, where ploughmen drove their teams up and down: at the field's edge where they turned a man came up and gave them a cup of wine. And he made a manor at reaping time. The reapers plied their sickles, while the trusses fell behind them and were bound into sheaves by the binders; the king who owned the manor stood watching in silent joy; and his squires prepared a meal under an oak tree beyond. Hephaestus made a vineyard too, with a gay vintage dance; a herd of horned cattle, with drivers and dogs; a pasture ground in a beautiful valley, with sheep, and shepherds, and sheepfolds; and a dancing place, where young men and maidens were dancing, holding one another by the hand, while a divine minstrel sang to his lyre—all these completed the vast picture of all the activities of human life. Round the rim of the shield flowed the Ocean, embracing the whole world.

That deep sense of the harmony between man and nature, which inspires the description of Achilles' shield, is dominant in Homer's conception of the world. One great rhythm penetrates the moving whole. No day is so full of human striving that the poet forgets to tell how the sun rises and sinks above the turmoil, how the toil and battle of the day is succeeded by repose, and how the night, which loosens men's limbs in sleep, embraces all mortals. Homer is neither a naturalist nor a moralist. He is neither swept away without foothold in the chaotic waves of life, nor standing, a serene observer, on the shore. Physical and spiritual forces are equally real for him. He has a keen and objective insight into human passions. He knows their elemental violence, which overpowers man himself and whirls him away in their grip. But though that force may often seem to overswell its banks, it is always controlled by strong barriers beyond. For Homer, and for the Greeks in general, the ultimate ethical

Not only in poetry, but in religion and politics, the ancient East believed the gods to be the chief actors. In the royal inscriptions of Persia, Babylonia and Assyria, and in the prophecies and histories of the Jews, the gods are described as really responsible for all the actions and sufferings of men. The gods have always an interest in human life. They take sides, in order to show their favour or assert their rights. Every man holds his god responsible for the good and evil which befall him, and for every inspiration and every success. In the *Iliad*, too, the gods are divided into two camps. That is, no doubt, an ancient conception; but certain features in its working-out are late—such as the poet's endeavour to assert, above the feuds created in heaven by the Trojan war, the loyalty of the gods to one another, the unity of their power, and the reality of their divine kingdom. The ultimate cause of any event is the will of Zeus. Homer holds even the tragedy of Achilles to be the fulfilment of that will.<sup>32</sup> And the gods are introduced to justify every development of personal motive in the plot. This does not conflict with its normal psychological motivation. The psychological and the metaphysical aspects of any event are not mutually exclusive: on the contrary, Homer holds them to be complementary.

This gives epic poetry a strange double aspect. The audience must see every action from two points of view—for it happens both on earth and in heaven. The stage on which the drama is played has two levels, and we follow the plot in human purpose and action and in the higher purpose of the ruling gods. Naturally, this shows us the full limitations and short-sightedness of human action, with its dependence on the inscrutable decrees of a superhuman force; the actors cannot see these daemonic compulsions as the poet can. If we think of the mediaeval Christian epics written in German and in the Romance languages, and remember how they introduce no gods into their plots, and therefore present every action from the subjective side alone, as a simple human activity, we shall realize their vast distance from the deep poetic sense of reality which inspires the work of Homer. The fact that he holds the gods to be implicated in every human action and suffering obliges the Greek poet to see the eternal meaning of all man's acts and destinies, to find them their place in a general scheme of the world, and to measure them by the loftiest religious and moral standards. Thus the Greek epic

has a far richer and more objective view of life than the epic of the Middle Ages. And here again only Dante can be compared with Homer for depth of vision.<sup>33</sup> The Homeric epics contain the germs of all Greek philosophy.<sup>34</sup> In them we can clearly see the anthropocentric tendency of Greek thought, that tendency which contrasts so strongly with the theomorphic philosophy of the Oriental who sees God as the sole actor and man as merely the instrument or object of that divine activity. Homer definitely places man and his fate in the foreground, although he sees them *sub specie aeternitatis*, in the perspective of the loftiest general ideals and problems.<sup>35</sup>

The *Odyssey* shows this characteristic of epic construction even more strongly than the *Iliad*. It is the work of an age which has systematized and rationalized its beliefs; at least the poem as we have it was completed in such an age and bears its clear imprint. When two nations are at war, and call on their gods, with prayer and sacrifice, for help, the gods are placed in a difficult situation—that is, if their worshippers believe in their omnipotence and impartiality. Thus we can trace in the *Iliad*, with its comparatively advanced moral and religious beliefs, a struggle to harmonize the ideal of one indivisible and intelligent divine power with the original conception of most of the gods as local and specialized divinities. The Greek deities were very human and very near to mankind. Their human traits led the Greek nobles (proudly conscious of their own divine descent) to imagine that the life and activity of the heavenly powers were not unlike their own life on earth. Throughout the *Iliad*, that belief—so often attacked by the abstract and idealistic philosophy of subsequent ages—is giving way to the deeply religious conception of the heavenly powers, and of the supreme deity in particular, which was the germ of the loftiest ideals of later Greek art and thought. But it is not until the *Odyssey* that we find a more logical and consistent view of the power of the gods.

The idea of the council in heaven at the beginning of Books I and v of the *Odyssey* is of course borrowed from the *Iliad*; but there is a striking contrast between the tumultuous disputes on Olympus in the *Iliad* and the majestic council of superhuman beings in the *Odyssey*. The gods of the *Iliad* are almost palpably human. Zeus asserts his supremacy by threats of physical violence;<sup>36</sup> and one god will use very human methods to deceive

another or to nullify his power.<sup>37</sup> But the Zeus who presides over the heavenly council in the *Odyssey* personifies a high philosophical conception of the world-consciousness. He opens his speech<sup>38</sup> on the fate of Odysseus by a general discussion of the problem of human suffering and the unbreakable connexion between destiny and human error. The entire poem is filled with the same purpose—to justify the ways of God to man.<sup>39</sup> The poet holds the supreme deity to be an omniscient power, far above all the thoughts and efforts of mortal men: a spiritual power, whose essence is thought; a power infinitely superior to the blind passions which make men sin and entangle them in the net of Até. This moral and religious ideal governs the whole story of the sufferings of Odysseus and the hybris of the suitors, that insolence which is expiated only by their death: the problem is clearly set out, and it develops under that same conception to its end.

The divine will which governs the whole story, and at last brings it to a just and happy conclusion, naturally appears—always consistent and always omnipotent—at the crises of the story. For the poet systematizes all its incidents to harmonize with his own religious beliefs. Every character is therefore consistent and appropriate. This rigid ethical plan probably belongs to the last stage in the development of the *Odyssey*.<sup>40</sup> Homeric critics have not yet worked out the process by which the plan was imposed on the earlier versions of the traditional saga of Odysseus. Besides the general religious and moral structure which governs the whole of this final version, the poem contains many delightful minor motifs—idyll, heroic tale, adventure-story, fairy-tale. But the power of the *Odyssey* does not depend on them; it owes the unity and directness of its central structure, which has been admired throughout all ages, to its broad and comprehensive development of a central moral and religious problem.

What we have said deals with only one aspect of a phenomenon of far-reaching effect. Just as Homer allots to the destinies of men and nations their due place within a well-defined ethical universe, so also he sets each of his characters within its own appropriate world. He never shows us man in the abstract, man as pure spirit. His men and women are complete and living persons. They are not lay-figures, who move into striking groups or fall

into dramatic attitudes and then remain motionless. They have a life of their own: they are so solidly real that we can almost see and touch them; their actions are harmonious, and their life is consistent with the life of the real world. Consider Penelope. She could have been driven to express a more intense and lyrical emotion, galvanized to gestures of more violent joy and grief; but in a long poem neither the character nor the audience could have supported such excesses. Homer's characters are always natural; they express their whole nature at every moment; they are imagined in the round, and wrought with an incomparable closeness and liveliness of texture. Penelope in her room is the housewife, Penelope among the insolent suitors is the deserted wife praying for her lost husband; Penelope is the mistress of her maids both true and faithless, and the mother of a cherished only son: she has no one to help her except the honest old swineherd and Odysseus' father, bent with age, far from the city, working in his little garden; her own father is too far away to help her. It is all simple and logical; her character touches life on all sides, and thereby develops with a quiet inevitability into a true sculptural whole. The secret of Homer's sculptural power is his gift of placing every character within its own surroundings as clearly and accurately as the mathematician co-ordinates a point within a geometric system.<sup>41</sup>

Ultimately, it is the Greek spirit, with its native passion for clarity of form, which enables Homer to create a complete and independent cosmos, where changes and chances are always balanced by an element of order and stability. As we study him to-day, we cannot but marvel when we see all the characteristic Hellenic powers, the tendencies which develop throughout Greek history, already manifest in Homer's work. This is of course less obvious when we read the poems by themselves; but when we contemplate Homer and the later Greeks in one broad survey, we cannot help seeing the underlying identity of spirit. The deepest grounds of this identity lie in the unsolved secrets of heredity, blood and race. As we study them, we feel both that they are closely akin and that they are fundamentally alien to us; and it is the recognition of this necessary difference between members of the same species which is the real benefit of our intercourse with the Hellenic world. That factor of race and nationality, which we can feel by intuition, not by logic, continues

## HESIOD: THE PEASANT'S LIFE

HESIOD OF BOEOTIA, whom the Greeks called their second greatest poet after Homer, depicts a world very different from that of the Homeric nobility. His *Works and Days* (which is later than his other poem—the *Theogony* or *Descent of the Gods*—and more genuinely native to the soil), a vivid record of the life of the peasantry in mainland Greece about the end of the eighth century, is an indispensable complement to Homer's few glimpses of the life of the common people in early Ionia. But it is also a work of special importance in a study of the development of Greek culture. Homer's poetry brings out one fundamental fact: that all culture starts with the creation of an aristocratic ideal, shaped by deliberate cultivation of the qualities appropriate to a nobleman and a hero. Hesiod shows us the second basis of civilization—work. The later Greeks recognized this when they gave his didactic poem the title of *Works and Days*. Heroism is shown, and virtues of lasting value are developed, not only in the knight's duel with his enemy, but in the quiet incessant battle of the worker against the elements and the hard earth. It is not for nothing that Greece was the cradle of a civilization which places work high among the virtues. We must not be deceived by the carefree life of the Homeric gentlemen into forgetting that the land of Greece always demanded hard and constant labour from its people. Herodotus confirms this, by comparing it with richer lands and nations. 'Poverty,' says one of his characters, 'is native to Greece; but manly virtue is an acquisition—for it was produced by wisdom and a severe law. By using it Greece defends herself against poverty and tyranny.'<sup>1</sup> Greece is a hilly country, with many narrow valleys and remote districts shut off by mountains. It has hardly any of the broad, easily cultivated plains of northern Europe; and its inhabitants are forced to wring their bare existence out of the soil, to struggle with it for the last ounce it will yield. They always believed that cattle-rearing and agriculture were the most real and impor-

affects the prestige and prosperity of the ordinary man: for he can win place and respect only by being part of the crowd.<sup>6</sup>

The external occasion chosen by Hesiod for writing the *Works and Days* is his lawsuit with his lazy, greedy, litigious brother Perses. Perses has wasted part of his inheritance; and, after winning a lawsuit about Hesiod's share by bribing the judges, he now comes forward with fresh demands.<sup>7</sup> The lawsuit was, in fact, a contest between might and right; but Hesiod does not speak of it as if it were a special instance. He voices the general feeling of most of his fellow-peasants. And even so, he is remarkably outspoken in his attacks on the greed of the 'gift-eating' nobles and their harsh misuse of their power.<sup>8</sup> This is obviously a different life from that governed by the patriarchal noblemen of Homer's poetry. Such aristocratic tyranny and popular discontent did exist before Hesiod: but he believes that the Homeric heroes lived in an entirely different epoch—a better time than the 'age of iron' which he paints so darkly in the *Works and Days*.<sup>9</sup> Nothing shows the utter pessimism of the working folk so clearly as Hesiod's account of the five ages of man, beginning with the golden reign of Kronos, and gradually degenerating to the hard present, where justice, morality, and happiness are at their nadir. Aidos and Nemesis have veiled their faces, and quitted the earth to rejoin the other gods on Olympus, leaving nothing to mankind but suffering and endless strife.<sup>10</sup>

Such a grim life could not create any such pure ideal of human culture as was produced by the happier world in which the Homeric nobles ruled. It is therefore important to discover what share the common people took in developing the aristocratic ideals into a cultural pattern which covered the whole nation. The answer to this question lies in the fact that the country was not yet conquered by the city. The old feudal civilization was largely rooted in the soil. Country life was not yet synonymous with intellectual underdevelopment; it was not yet measured by an urban standard. 'Peasant' had not come to mean 'uncultured'.<sup>11</sup> At that time even the cities (especially those of mainland Greece) were principally country-towns, and so in large part they remained. There was in the countryside a steady growth of native morality, and thought, and faith, a crop as constant as the

grass and grain which every field produced, and as truly native to the soil.<sup>12</sup> The steam-roller of the city had not yet crushed flat everything that was uncommon or individual among the beliefs and practices of the country-folk.

In the country, it is naturally the landed gentry who are the leaders of the higher spiritual life. As the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* show, the Homeric epics were first sung by wandering minstrels at the manors of the nobility. But Hesiod himself, who worked as a farmer and grew up within the milieu of peasant life, knew Homer's poetry from his youth, before he became a professional rhapsode. The public for whom he writes is first and foremost the peasantry; and yet he assumes that they will know the stylized Homeric language which he employs. The spiritual process which began when the peasantry learnt the Homeric epics is best shown by the structure of Hesiod's own poems, for they reflect Hesiod's own progress towards culture. Every subject which he treats automatically enters the already fixed Homeric pattern. Words, phrases, fragments of lines, even whole lines are borrowed from Homer. It is from Homer that Hesiod takes his idealizing epic epithets. This borrowing created a remarkable contrast between the style and the content of the new poetry. Still, it was necessary for the prosaic earthbound farmer-folk to adapt the strange diction and ideals of a higher social class, before they could impart to their own half-comprehended thoughts and aspirations that deliberate clarity and moral conviction which alone could allow them to find convincing expression. When the peasantry of Hesiod's day came to know the poetry of Homer, they acquired an immense new stock of methods of expression. But that was not all. They also found that Homer (despite his heroic and emotional tone, so different from their own sober life) expressed the greatest problems of human life with a sharpness and clarity which showed them how to rise from the narrow struggles of daily existence into a higher and purer spiritual atmosphere.<sup>13</sup>

Hesiod's poems also show us fairly clearly what other spiritual possessions besides Homer were handed down among the Boeotian peasants. The rich lode of saga-material in the *Theogony* contains much that is familiar to us from Homer, but also many ancient traditions which appear nowhere else. It is of course not always possible to distinguish between the myths which had

already been made into poetry and those which were only transmitted by word of mouth. In the *Theogony* Hesiod shows most clearly his power as a creative thinker. The *Works and Days* are much nearer to the real life of the peasant. But even in the *Works and Days* he will suddenly interrupt his train of thought to tell a long myth, in the certainty of pleasing his audience.<sup>14</sup> The common people as well as the nobles had an enormous interest in myths: the myth stirred them to long, long thoughts and tales; it summed up their whole philosophy of life. But Hesiod's instinctive choice of myths reflects the peculiar outlook of the peasant. He obviously prefers those which express the peasant's realistic and pessimistic view of life, or describe the causes of the social difficulties which oppress him. Such are the tale of Prometheus, in which he finds the solution to the problem of the trouble and toil of human life; the description of the five ages of the world, which explains the vast difference between the peasant's existence and the brilliant life of the Homeric world, and reflects man's perpetual nostalgia for a better world; and the myth of Pandora, which expresses the sour prosaic belief (unknown to the world of Homeric chivalry) that woman is the root of all evil.<sup>15</sup> We can hardly be wrong in assuming that Hesiod was not the first to spread these stories among the country-folk, although he was doubtless the first to set them firmly in the broad social and philosophical framework of a great poem. The manner in which he tells the tales of Prometheus and Pandora, for instance, presupposes that they were already known to his audience.<sup>16</sup> The popular interest in these myths of religious and social purport predominates in Hesiod over the love of the heroic sagas which Homer preferred. A myth is the expression of a fundamental attitude to life. For that reason, every social class has myths of its own.

Besides their myths, the common folk have an ancient store of practical wisdom, laid up by the experience of immemorial generations of nameless workers. It consists partly of agricultural and vocational lore, partly of moral and social rules, all compressed into such brief maxims as stick easily in the memory. Hesiod's *Works and Days* contains much of this rich tradition; and, although the deep philosophical meditations in the first section of the poem have more interest for students of his character and history and of the development of his ideas, some of its

specting himself. He can only pray to Zeus to defend the right. So the *Works and Days* begins with a hymn and a prayer. The poet invokes Zeus, who brings the mighty low and exalts the humble, to make straight the verdict of the judges.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile Hesiod himself takes the active part on earth—he will tell the truth to his erring brother Perses, and lead him away from the ruinous path of injustice and strife. He says that Eris, Strife, is indeed a deity, to whom men must pay homage even against their own will. But besides the bad Eris there is a good one, who stirs men not to strife but to rivalry.<sup>25</sup> Zeus gave her a dwelling among the roots of the world.<sup>26</sup> The man who has nothing and sits idle is inspired by her to labour when he sees and envies the prosperity of his hard-working and successful neighbour. Then Hesiod warns Perses of the bad Eris. Only a rich man can spend his time on vain strife, a man who has filled his granaries and need not worry about his livelihood: only he can plan to take away the goods of others, and waste his time in the law-courts. Hesiod exhorts his brother not to take this path a second time, but to abandon the lawsuit and be reconciled with him: for they divided their inheritance long ago, but Perses has taken more than his fair share, by bribing the judges. ‘Fools! they do not know how much the half is larger than the whole, and what blessings there are in the cheapest herbs man can eat, mallow and asphodel’.<sup>27</sup> In this way the poet constantly widens his exhortations to his brother from the concrete instance to the general truth. Even from this prologue we can see how Hesiod connects the first part of his poem—his warning against strife and unrighteousness and his confident assertion that heaven will protect the just cause—with the second part, in which he describes the farmer’s and sailor’s work and adds moral maxims to tell men what to do and avoid. The connecting link is the leit-motiv of the whole work—the connexion between righteousness and work.<sup>28</sup> The only earthly power who can outface the oppressions of jealousy and strife is the good Eris, with her peaceful rivalry in work. Work is a hard necessity for mankind, but it is inevitable. And even the man whose work gives him only a scanty livelihood is more blessed by it than by an unrighteous greed for the goods of others.

Hesiod founded this philosophy of life on the eternal laws of the universe, laws which he himself enunciates in the religious

In him we see the belief that the gods are guardians of justice, and that their rule would not be truly divine if they did not make justice victorious over injustice in the end. That postulate governs the whole plot of the *Odyssey*. Even in the *Iliad*, a famous simile in the *Patrocleia* contains the belief that Zeus sends storms from heaven when men distort justice upon the earth.<sup>45</sup> But a vast distance separates these occasional traces of an ethical conception of the gods, and even the faith which governs the *Odyssey*, from the religious passion of Hesiod, the herald of justice, the simple man of the people whose infrangible trust in Zeus' guardianship of justice makes him stand out against the men of his own time, and still, after thousands of years, strikes us to the heart with its pathos and its power. He borrows from Homer the content of his ideal of justice, and even some characteristic phrases to describe it. But the reformer's zeal with which he experiences its compelling force, and its predominant position in his conception of the rule of heaven and the meaning of man's life, these mark him out as the prophet of a new age, in which men are to build a better society, founded upon justice. When Hesiod identifies the will of Zeus with the concept of justice, when he creates a new divinity, the goddess Diké, and sets her close beside Zeus the highest of all gods,<sup>46</sup> he is inspired by the burning religious and moral enthusiasm with which the rising class of peasants and townsfolk hailed the new ideal of Justice the saviour.

But the Boeotian countryside had certainly never harboured such new departures in thought as the Ionian coast. Hesiod cannot therefore have been the first to formulate this ideal and to voice the emotion with which it inspired his own society. No: but, feeling it more deeply than others, he became its arch-prophet. He himself in the *Works and Days*<sup>47</sup> tells how his father, destitute, had migrated to Boeotia from the Aeolian town of Kyme in Asia Minor. We can reasonably assume that the grim and joyless character of the family's new home, so bitterly described by Hesiod, had been felt by his father before him. They had never felt at home in the wretched village of Ascra. Hesiod calls it 'bad in winter, cruel in summer, never good at any time'. It is obvious that from his youth upwards he had learnt from his parents to view Boeotian life and society with a critical eye. He was the first to bring into it the idea of

justice. Even in the *Theogony*<sup>48</sup> he expressly introduces Diké. In that passage he sets the three Horai—the goddesses of morality, Diké, Eunomia, and Eiréné—beside the three Moirai and the three Charites: a position which he must have chosen for them purposely. Just as, in giving the genealogy of the winds Notos, Boreas and Zephyr,<sup>49</sup> he expatiates on the ruin which they bring upon sailors and landsmen alike, so he eulogizes the goddesses Justice, Order and Peace as deities who take care of 'the works of men'. In the *Works and Days* Hesiod's conception of justice penetrates every aspect of the peasant's life and thought. By connecting justice with work, he succeeds in writing a poem which orders and illuminates the peasant's work and ideals by the light of one dominating educational conception. We must now briefly trace that conception through the structure of the remainder of the poem.

Directly after the warning which closes the first part of the *Works and Days*—follow justice, and abandon unrighteousness for ever—Hesiod once more addresses his brother. These famous lines,<sup>50</sup> which have been quoted again and again apart from their context for thousands of years, are alone sufficient to make the poet immortal. 'Let me tell you this from my true knowledge, Perses, you silly child,' he begins, assuming a tone of fatherly superiority, though he speaks warmly and winningly. 'It is easy to reach misery even in crowds—the way is smooth, and lies not far away. But the immortal gods have placed sweat before success. Long and steep is the path to it, and rough at first. Yet when you have reached the top, then it is easy despite its hardness.' The full meaning of the words *κακότης* and *ἀρετή* is not given in 'misery' and 'success'; but these translations show that the Greek words do not signify the moral qualities of vice and virtue, as the later Greeks and Romans believed.<sup>51</sup> The passage recalls the opening words of the first part of the poem, about the good and the bad Eris.<sup>52</sup> In the first part Hesiod made his hearers feel the curse of strife; now he must show them the value of work. He praises it as the only way to areté, difficult though it is. The idea of areté embraces both personal ability and its products—welfare, success, repute.<sup>53</sup> It is neither the areté of the warrior noble, nor the areté of the landowning class, built on wealth, but the areté of the working man, expressed in the possession of a modest competence. Areté is the catchword of the

second part of the poem, the real *Erga*. The aim of work is areté as the common man understands it. He wishes to make something of his areté, and he engages, not in the ambitious rivalry for chivalrous prowess and praise which is commended by the code of the aristocrat, but in the quiet strong rivalry of work. In the sweat of his brow shall he eat bread—but that is not a curse, it is a blessing. Only the sweat of his brow can win him areté. From this it is obvious that Hesiod deliberately sets up against the aristocratic training of Homer's heroes a working-class ideal of education, based on the areté of the ordinary man. Righteousness and Work are the foundations on which it is built.

But can areté be learnt? That question arises at the beginning of every ethical and educational system. Hesiod answers it as soon as the word is mentioned. 'Best of all,' he says, 'is the man who considers everything himself and sees what is going to be right in the end. Good, too, is he who obeys another man who says what is good. But the man who neither understands for himself nor takes another's advice to heart, he is a useless fellow.'<sup>54</sup> It is significant that these words are spoken after Hesiod has named the end and aim of work, areté, and immediately before he proceeds to give his separate precepts. Perses, and any other who may hear the poet's words, must be willing to be guided by him if he cannot see in his own heart what will harm and help him. These words hold the real justification and the meaning of the whole of Hesiod's teaching. They were used by a philosopher of a later age as the first postulate of his ethical and educational system. Aristotle quotes them in full in the *Nicomachean Ethics*<sup>55</sup> in his prefatory discussion of the correct basis (*ἀρχή*) of ethical instruction. That fact is of great assistance in comprehending their function in the general scheme of the *Works and Days*. There, too, the question of *understanding* is important. Perses himself does not possess the correct insight; but the poet must assume that he is teachable and will understand when Hesiod attempts to impart his own convictions and to influence his conduct. The first part of the poem prepares the soil for the seed which will be sown by the second—it clears it of the prejudices and misconceptions which would choke the growing recognition of truth. Man cannot reach his goal by violence, strife, and injustice. All his striving must be adapted

is because the Homeric epic is not simply the poetry of one class, but has grown from the root of an aristocratic ideal to overshadow all humanity, that it can help the men of an entirely different class to create their own culture, discover their own purpose in life, and work out its inherent law. That is a great achievement. But this is something even greater—the peasant, by thus realizing his own powers, leaves his isolation and takes his place among the other elements in Greek society. Just as the culture of the nobility affects every class of society when its spiritual energy is intensified by Homer, so the ideals of the peasant, interpreted by Hesiod, reach far beyond the narrow frontiers of peasant life. Granted that much of the *Works and Days* is real and useful only for farmers and peasants, still the poem gives universal meaning to the fundamental ideals of peasant life. That is not to say that the pattern of Greek life was to be defined by agrarian civilization. Actually, Greek ideals did not receive their final and characteristic form until the rise of the city-state, and were relatively little influenced by the native culture of the peasant. But it is therefore all the more important that throughout Greek history Hesiod should have remained the prophet of that ideal of work and justice which was formed among the peasantry and kept its force and meaning within a widely different social framework.

Hesiod is a poet because he is a teacher. His poetic power comes neither from his command of epic style nor from the nature of his material. If we think of his didactic poetry merely as subjects which seem 'prosaic' to later generations, treated in more or less skilfully handled Homeric language, we shall begin to doubt whether it is poetry at all. (Ancient scholars felt the same doubt about later didactic poetry.<sup>60</sup>) Hesiod himself, however, certainly felt that his poetic mission was to be a teacher and a prophet among the Greeks. Hesiod's contemporaries viewed Homer primarily as a teacher. They could imagine no higher spiritual influence than that possessed by the poet, the Homeric rhapsode. A poet could not teach unless he used the noble language of Homer, whose educational effect every Greek felt and acknowledged. When Hesiod succeeded Homer, he defined once and for all the creative power of poetry (and not

its culture. That is why German scholars long studied the Greeks and their civilization from a predominantly aesthetic point of view. But that is a grave distortion of emphasis. The centre of gravity of Greek life lies in the polis. It is the polis which includes and defines every form of social and intellectual activity. In early Greek history, every branch of intellectual life grows straight from the same root, the life of the community. Or, to change the metaphor, all intellectual activities are brooks and rivers which flow into one central sea—the life of the city—which in turn feeds them all at their sources by invisible subterranean channels. Thus, to describe the Greek polis is to describe the whole of Greek life. That is an ideal which is unattainable in practice—at least by the usual method of narrating historical facts in detailed chronological sequence. But every branch of study would benefit from recognizing that essential unity in Greek life. The polis is the social framework of the whole history of Greek culture; and within that framework we shall set out the various achievements of 'literature' down to the end of the great age of Athens.<sup>3</sup>

We cannot of course investigate the manifold forms of Greek city-state life, or examine the numerous constitutions collected and studied by political historians during the nineteenth century. We are compelled to limit our survey by the nature of the evidence, which contains many important details of the constitutions of individual states, but seldom gives a vivid picture of their social life.<sup>4</sup> No less compelling is the fact that the spirit of the Greek polis was expressed finally and decisively first in poetry and then in prose literature, and thereby impressed its ideals on the spiritual life of Greece. Thus both the literary and the historical evidence leads us to concentrate on the main, the representative types of the Greek city-state. Plato himself, in the *Laws*, where he attempts to discover and record the cardinal ideals of early Greek political thought, bases his investigation on the poets. From them he finds that there are two fundamental types of state, which between them contain all the political culture of Greece. These are the constitutional state (which was in origin Ionian) and the Spartan military state. Accordingly, we shall examine these two types with particular care.<sup>5</sup>

These states represent spiritual ideals which are diametrical opposites. The opposition is obviously a fundamental fact in

Greek political history. More than that: it is a fundamental fact in the history of the Greek spirit. Unless we realize that the Greek political ideal was not uniform, we cannot fully comprehend the essence of Greek culture, with its violent internal conflicts which are at last reconciled in a triumphant harmony. In studying the Ionian aristocracy and the Boeotian peasantry, as depicted by Homer and Hesiod, we had no need to discuss racial characteristics; for we had no means of comparing these societies with other contemporary tribes. The language of epic, composed as it is of a mixture of several dialects, shows that the Homeric poems are the artistic achievement of a number of different races, working together to perfect the language, the metre, and the saga-material. But we should be no more successful in working back from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to discover the spiritual differences between the races which created them, than scholars have been in educating complete Aeolic poems from the epics as they stand. However, the political and spiritual differences between the Dorian and the Ionian types are quite clearly marked in the polis. The two types finally unite in the Athens of the fifth and fourth centuries. For in that period the political life of Athens was moulded on the Ionian pattern, while the Spartan ideal was reborn in the realm of the intellect, through the aristocratic influence of Attic philosophy, and eventually, in Plato's cultural ideal, coalesced in a higher unity with the fundamental tenets of the Ionian and Attic constitutional state, stripped of its democratic form.<sup>6</sup>

#### HISTORICAL TRADITION AND THE PHILOSOPHICAL IDEALISATION OF SPARTA

Both in the history of philosophy and in that of art, Sparta holds a subordinate position. The Ionian race, for example, led Greece in the search for philosophical and ethical truth; but no Spartan name occurs in the long roll of Greek moralists and philosophers.<sup>7</sup> However, Sparta has an unchallengeable place in the history of education. Her most characteristic achievement was her state; and the Spartan state is the first which can be called, in the largest sense, an educational force.

Unfortunately, the evidence on which our knowledge of that remarkable organism is based is in part rather obscure. But, by

example of the far-seeing wisdom of Lycurgus, who, like Socrates and Plato, believed the power of education and the creation of the social sense to be more vital than any written code of laws. That is to some extent correct; for the effect of oral tradition and of education diminishes with the growing claim of law to regulate every detail of life by mechanical compulsion. But the conception of Lycurgus as the schoolmaster of Sparta is based on an idealization of Spartan life by later philosophers, who interpreted it by contemporary cultural theories.<sup>20</sup>

They were misled, by comparing Sparta with the sad degeneration of later Attic democracy, into believing that the Spartan system was deliberately created by a legislative genius. The archaic communal life of the Spartan men, living like soldiers in barracks and eating at common mess-tables, the predominance of their public life over their private life, the public education of the youth of both sexes, and the sharp cleavage between the industrial and agrarian *canaille* and the free Spartiate master-class, who did not work but devoted themselves to the hunt, the practice of war, and their official duties—the whole system seemed to be the deliberate realization of the philosopher's educational ideal, such an ideal as Plato proposed in the *Republic*. In fact, Plato's ideal, like other theories of paideia, was largely based on the Spartan model, although the spirit of it was quite new.<sup>21</sup> The great social problem of all later Greek educators was to determine how individualism might be repressed and the character of every citizen might be developed on one communal model. The Spartan state, with its rigid authoritarianism, appeared to be the solution of this problem in actual practice; and as such it occupied Plato's mind throughout his life. Plutarch too, who was a staunch follower of Plato's educational ideals, constantly recurred to this belief. 'Education,' he writes in his life of Lycurgus,<sup>22</sup> 'extended to grown men and women. Nobody was free to live as he wished, but as if in a camp everyone had his way of life and his public duties fixed, and he held that he did not belong to himself but to his country.' And in another passage<sup>23</sup> he says, 'In general Lycurgus made the citizens accustomed to have neither the will nor the ability to lead a private life; but, like the bees, always to be organic parts of their community, to cling together around the leader, and, in an ecstasy of

enthusiasm and selfless ambition, to belong wholly to their country.'

It was actually very difficult for a citizen of post-Periclean Athens, with its creed of complete individualism, to understand Sparta. We can neglect the philosophical interpretations of her system which were given by Attic philosophers, but we must accept the facts as they record them. Plato and Xenophon believed that the constitution of Sparta was the work of a single educational genius, with the authority of a dictator and the foresight of a philosopher. Actually, it was the survival of an earlier, simpler stage in social life, the stage which is characterized by strong racial and communal solidarity and scant individual initiative. Sparta's system was the creation of centuries. Only here and there can we determine what part a given individual took in shaping it. For example, the names of the kings Theopompus and Polydorus are attached to certain constitutional changes.<sup>24</sup> There is practically no doubt that Lycurgus himself really existed; but we cannot now decide whether he too was originally known as the author of similar changes, or why he was later believed to be the founder of the whole system. All we can say is that the tradition of 'Lycurgus' constitution' has no early authority.<sup>25</sup>

That tradition was created by an age which thought the Spartan system was deliberately created to serve an educational purpose, and which believed *a priori* that the highest end and meaning of the state was paideia—namely, a process by which the life of each citizen should be shaped to conform with some absolute norm. We hear again and again that the Delphic oracle approved of 'Lycurgus' constitution'—thereby providing an absolute, to offset the relative outlook of democracy, with its belief that every man was a law to himself. This is another example of the tendency of observers of Sparta to describe her constitution as the ideal educational system. The fourth-century Greeks believed that the problem of education was ultimately the problem of finding an absolute standard for human behaviour. But in Sparta the latter problem was solved. The Spartan constitution was founded on religious truth, for it had been sanctioned or praised by the Delphic god himself. Thus it is clear that the whole tradition of Lycurgus' constitution was built up to harmonize with a later political and educational theory,

hitherto unknown poem by Tyrtaeus. In this poem he speaks in the first person plural, and calls the Spartans to give obedience to their leaders.<sup>33</sup> It is entirely a vision of the future, a description of a decisive battle which is imminent, done in the Homeric manner. It mentions the old Spartan tribes—the Hylleis, the Dymanes, and the Pamphyloï—which were obviously units of the army at that time, although the division was later superseded by a new organization. And it speaks of a battle for a wall and a ditch—which looks as if a siege were in progress. Apart from this, Tyrtaeus gives us no historical data, and even the ancients found no more concrete facts in his poems than we.<sup>34</sup>

## TYRTAEUS' CALL TO ARETÉ

The will which made Sparta a great nation still lives in the elegies of Tyrtaeus. It had the power to create a great ideal—a power which long survived historical Sparta, and is not yet exhausted; and these poems are the strongest manifestation of that power. The Spartan community, as known to history in a later age, was in many ways an impermanent and eccentric thing. But the ideal which inspired its citizens, and towards which, with iron consistency, every effort of every Spartan was directed, is imperishable because it is an expression of a fundamental human instinct. Although the society which incorporated it appears to us to have been partial and limited in its outlook, the ideal itself remains true and valuable. Plato himself considered the Spartan conception of the citizen's functions and education to be narrow-minded, but he saw that the Spartan idea immortalized in Tyrtaeus' poems was one of the immutable bases of political life.<sup>35</sup> And he was not alone in that: he merely expressed the general Greek view of Sparta. The Greeks of his time did not give unqualified approval to Sparta and her policy, but they all recognized the value of her ideal.<sup>36</sup> In every city there was a philo-Laonian party, which idealized the constitution of Lycurgus. The majority did not share this unconditional admiration. Still, the position which Plato allotted to Tyrtaeus in his cultural system remained valid for the Greeks of all subsequent ages, and was an indefeasible element of their culture. It was Plato who arranged and systematized the spiritual inheritance of his nation: in his synthesis, the various ideals which inspired Greece

are objectified and set in their correct relationships. Since then, no great change has been made in his system; and the Spartan ideal has for two thousand years kept the position in the history of civilization which Plato assigned to it.<sup>37</sup>

The elegies of Tyrtaeus are inspired by a mighty educational ideal. The demands which they make on the self-sacrifice and patriotism of the Spartans were no doubt justified by the circumstances in which they were written—Sparta was almost sinking under the burden of the Messenian War. But they would not have been admired by later ages as the supreme expression of the Spartan will to forget oneself in one's country, if they had not been a permanent and timeless utterance of that ideal. The standards they impose on every citizen's thoughts and actions were not produced by a momentary outburst of warlike patriotism; they were the foundation of the whole Spartan cosmos. Nothing in Greek poetry shows more clearly how the creative activity of the poet begins in the life of the society to which he belongs. Tyrtaeus is not an individual poetic genius, in the modern sense of the word. He is the voice of the people. He utters the faith of every right-thinking citizen. For that reason he often speaks in the first person plural: 'let us fight!' he cries, and 'let us die!' Even when he says 'I', he is not giving free expression to his own personality, nor is he speaking as a superior authority (as the ancients thought; they even called him a general<sup>38</sup>); he is the universal I, he is what Demosthenes<sup>39</sup> calls 'the general voice of the country'.

He speaks with the voice of his country; and hence his judgment of what is 'honourable' and what 'disgraceful' has a far greater weight and authority than if it were the subjective opinion of an ordinary orator. The close relationship between state and individual might, even in Sparta, be comparatively unrealized by the average citizen in time of peace. But at a time of danger, the ideal suddenly manifested itself with overpowering force. The dreadful crisis of the long and doubtful war which was then beginning was to forge the iron framework of Sparta's state. For that dark hour, she needed not only resolute leadership, both political and military, but a universally valid expression of the new virtues which were being fired in the white heat of war. The Greek poets had for centuries been the heralds of *areté*, and such a herald now appeared in Tyrtaeus. As we have

observed, the legend said he was sent by Apollo<sup>40</sup>—a striking expression of the strange truth that when a spiritual leader is needed he always comes. Tyrtaeus came to express in eternal poetry the new civic virtues which were needed in the national crisis.

He was not an innovator in matters of style. He wrote in a more or less traditional form. There is no doubt that the elegiac couplet was invented before his day, although its origins are obscure, as they were even to ancient literary critics.<sup>41</sup> It has some connexion with the heroic metre used in epic, and, like it, could at that time be employed as a vehicle for any subject. Therefore, there is no one unvarying structure in all elegiac poems. (The ancient grammarians,<sup>42</sup> misled by false etymology and by the later development of the genre, attempted to derive all elegy from the song of lamentation, but that was a mistake.) Apart from the elegiac metre itself—which in the earliest times had no special name to distinguish it from the heroic metre—there is only one constant element in elegiac poetry. It is always *addressed to someone*: either to one individual or to a collection of people. The elegy expresses a latent bond between the speaker and his audience, and that bond is the distinguishing mark of all elegiac poetry. Tyrtaeus, for example, speaks either to the citizens of Sparta or to the young men of Sparta. Even the poem which begins in a more meditative tone (fragment 9) narrows at its conclusion into an exhortation: it is addressed to the members of a body which, as usual, is assumed but not described explicitly.<sup>43</sup> This admonitory address is a clear expression of the educational character of the elegy. It shares that character with the epic, but (like Hesiod's didactic poetry) makes its address more direct than epic, more deliberate, more definite in its object. The epic with its mythical examples is set in an imaginary world; the elegy, with its address to real concrete people, takes us into the actual situation which inspired the poet.

But although Tyrtaeus' elegies deal with the actual life of his audience, their form is fixed by the style of the Homeric epic. The poet, in fact, clothes a contemporary subject in the archaic language of Homer. But Homer's style was far more appropriate to Tyrtaeus than to Hesiod, though Hesiod too had been

exalt a dying man, by making him feel that he is sacrificing himself for a higher good<sup>48</sup> than his own life.

Tyrtaeus' transvaluation of the idea of areté is clearest in the third of his extant poems.<sup>49</sup> This poem was until recently rejected on purely stylistic grounds; but I have elsewhere given exhaustive proof of its authenticity.<sup>50</sup> It certainly cannot be placed as late as the period of the sophists, in the fifth century.<sup>51</sup> Solon and Pindar both knew it, and as early as the sixth century Xenophanes obviously imitated and altered one of its leading ideas in a poem which is still preserved.<sup>52</sup> It is fairly clear what led Plato to choose that elegy out of all the then extant poetry attributed to Tyrtaeus as best representative of the Spartan spirit: it was the precision and force with which the poet works out the true nature of Spartan areté.<sup>53</sup>

It opens a window on the history of the development of the idea of areté since Homer, and on the crisis which confronted the old aristocratic ideals during the rise of the city-state. Tyrtaeus exalts *true* areté above the other goods which his contemporaries believed could give a man true worth and esteem. 'I would not,' he says, 'mention or take account of a man for the prowess of his feet or for his wrestling, even if he had the stature and strength of the Cyclopes and outran the Thracian Boreas.'<sup>54</sup> These are exaggerated instances of the athletic areté which had been admired, above all else by the aristocracy ever since Homer's day; during the previous century, because of the rise of the Olympic Games, it had come to be regarded even by the common people as the highest pinnacle of human achievement.<sup>55</sup> Tyrtaeus now adds other virtues admired by the old nobility. 'And were he more beautiful in face and body than Tithonus, and richer than Midas and Cinyras, and more kingly than Tantalus' son Pelops, and sweeter of tongue than Adrastus, I would not honour him for these things, even if he had every glory except warlike valour. For no one is a good man in war, unless he can bear to see bloody slaughter and can press hard on the enemy, standing face to face. That is areté!' cries Tyrtaeus in a transport of emotion, 'that is the best and fairest prize which a young man can win among men. That is a good which is common to all—to the city and the whole people—when a man takes his stand and holds his ground relentlessly among the fore-

most fighters and casts away all thought of shameful flight.'<sup>56</sup> We must not call this 'late rhetoric'. Solon speaks in the same way. The origins of rhetorical style go far back into history.<sup>57</sup> Tyrtaeus' excited repetitions are prompted by the deep emotion with which he asks his central question—what is true *areté*? The usual answers to that question are one by one rejected, in the powerful negations of the first ten or twelve lines; all the lofty ideals of the old Greek aristocracy are removed to a lower plane, although not wholly denied or superseded; and then, when the poet has raised his audience to a high pitch of excitement, he proclaims the severe new ideal of citizenship. There is only one standard of true *areté*—the common good of the polis. Whatever helps the community is good, whatever injures it is bad.<sup>58</sup>

From this, he passes naturally to eulogies of the reward which a man wins by sacrificing himself for his country, whether he falls in battle or returns home triumphant. 'But he who falls among the foremost fighters and loses his dear life in winning glory for his city and his fellow-citizens and his father—his breast and his bossed shield and his breastplate pierced with many wounds in front—he is lamented by young and old together, and the whole city mourns for him in sad grief; and his tomb and his children are honoured among men, and his children's children likewise and his whole race after him; never is his name and fair fame destroyed, but though he lies beneath the earth he becomes immortal.'<sup>59</sup> The glory of a Homeric hero, however widely it is disseminated by the wandering bard, is nothing to the glory of a simple Spartan warrior, as Tyrtaeus describes it, laid up for ever deep in the hearts of his people. The close community of the city-state, which seemed at the beginning of the poem to be only an obligation, now appears as a privilege and an honour: it is the source of all ideal values. The first part states the heroic ideal of *areté* in terms of the city-state. The second restates, in the same terms, the heroic ideal of glory. *Areté* and glory are inseparable in the epic.<sup>60</sup> Glory is now to be given, and *areté* to be exercised, by and in the city-state. The polis lives when the individual dies; and so it is a safe guardian of the 'name' and, with it, of the future life of a hero.

The early Greeks did not believe in the immortality of the soul. A man was dead when his body died. What Homer calls the *psyché* is a reflection or wraith of the physical body, a

shadow living in Hades, a nothing.<sup>61</sup> But if a man crossed the frontiers of ordinary human existence and reached a higher life by sacrificing himself for his country, then the polis could give him immortality by perpetuating his ideal personality, his 'name'. This political idea of heroism became dominant with the rise of the city-state, and remained so throughout Greek history. Man as a political being reaches perfection by the perpetuation of his memory in the community for which he lived or died. It was only when the value of the state, and indeed of all earthly life, began to be questioned, and the value of the individual soul to be exalted—a process which culminated in Christianity—that philosophers came to preach the duty of despising fame.<sup>62</sup> Even in the political thought of Demosthenes and Cicero there is no trace of this change; while Tyrtaeus' elegies represent the first stage in the development of city-state morality.<sup>63</sup> It is the polis which guards and immortalizes the dead hero, and it is the polis which exalts the victorious warrior who returns alive. 'He is honoured by all, young and old together; his life brings him much happiness, and no one will offer him insult or injury. As he grows old, he is respected among the citizens, and wherever he goes all make way for him, both the youth and the elders.'<sup>64</sup> This is not merely rhetoric. The early Greek city-state was small, but it had something truly heroic and truly human in its nature. Greece, and in fact all the ancient world, held the hero to be the highest type of humanity.

In this poem the polis is presented as an inspiration in the life of all its citizens. But there is another<sup>65</sup> of Tyrtaeus' elegies which shows its power to compel, to threaten, and to terrify. The poet contrasts a glorious death on the battlefield with the miserable wandering life which is the doom of the man who has avoided his civic obligation to fight in the army, and has been forced to leave his home. He wanders about the world with his father and mother, wife and little children. In his poverty and need, he is a stranger to everyone he meets, and is regarded as an enemy by all. He dishonours his race and disgraces his noble face and form; and he is followed by outlawry and baseness. It is an incomparably vivid illustration of the relentless logic with which the state claims the life and property of its members. With the same realism as Tyrtaeus describes the honour paid to the country's heroes, he depicts the pitiless fate of the exile. It

justice by another word—*themis*.<sup>14</sup> Zeus gave to the Homeric kings ‘the sceptre and themis’.<sup>15</sup> Themis is the epitome of the judicial supremacy of the early kings and nobles. Etymologically, the word means ‘institution’. The feudal judge gives his decisions in accordance with the institutions set up by Zeus, and derives their rules from his knowledge of customary law and from his own intuition. The etymology of *diké* is not clear. The word belongs to Greek legal terminology, and is no less old than *themis*.<sup>16</sup> The parties to a dispute were said to ‘give and take *diké*’, so that the word contained the ideas of determining and of paying the penalty. The guilty man ‘gives *diké*’, which originally meant ‘makes compensation’ for his act; the injured party, whose rights are re-established by the judgment, ‘takes *diké*’, and the judge ‘allots *diké*’. Hence, the fundamental meaning of *diké* is much the same as ‘due share’.<sup>17</sup> Besides that, it also signifies the lawsuit, the judgment, and the penalty; but these meanings are derivative, not primary. The higher significance which the word acquires in the post-Homeric city-state is developed not from these more or less technical meanings, but from the normative element which must be assumed to be behind the ancient and familiar formulæ. *Diké* means the due share which each man can rightly claim; and then, the principle which guarantees that claim, the principle on which one can rely when one is injured by *hybris*—which originally signifies illegal action.<sup>18</sup> The meaning of *themis* is confined rather to the *authority* of justice, to its established position and validity, while *diké* means the legal enforceability of justice. It is obvious how, during the struggles of a class which had always been compelled to receive justice as *themis*—that is, as an inevitable authority imposed on it from above—the word *diké* became the battle-cry. Throughout these centuries we hear the call for *diké*, growing constantly more widespread, more passionate, and more imperative.<sup>19</sup>

The word *diké* contained another meaning, which was to make it still more useful in these struggles—the meaning of equality. This sense must have been innate in the word: we can best understand it by thinking of the old popular ideal of justice—compensation with an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. Obviously, that sense of equality must have been derived from the use of *diké* in legal proceedings; the derivation is confirmed by the history of law in other nations. Throughout all Greek thought, the

word retained this original significance. Even the political philosophers of later centuries depend on it, and seek only to redefine the concept of equality, which had been so mechanized by the rise of democracy as to become repugnant to Plato and Aristotle, with their aristocratic belief in the natural inequality of mankind.

Early Greece strove, above everything else, for equal justice.<sup>20</sup> Every trifling dispute above *meum* and *tuum* called for a standard by which the claims of the parties could be measured. This is the same problem in the sphere of law as that which had, in the same age, been solved in the economic sphere by the introduction of fixed standards of weight and measure for the exchange of goods. What was needed was a correct norm to measure legal rights, and that norm was found in the concept of equality which was implicit in the idea of *diké*.

Of course, that norm could be applied in far more ways than the Greeks thought; but perhaps that made it even more suitable for use as a political platform. It could, for instance, be taken to mean that an unprivileged class (that is, the commons) should be equal to the privileged class in the eyes of the judge, or before the law where law existed. Again, it could mean that each citizen ought to have an active part in the administration of justice; or that the votes of all citizens in affairs of state should be constitutionally equal; or, finally, that an ordinary citizen should have equal right to hold the principal public offices which were actually occupied by the aristocrats. This is, in fact, the beginning of a long process during which the concept of equality grew wider and more mechanical until it came to signify extreme democracy. Yet democracy is not a necessary consequence of the demand for equal justice or for a written law. Both equal justice and codified law have existed in monarchic and oligarchic states; while it is characteristic of extreme democracy that the state is ruled not by the law but by the mob. But hundreds of years were to pass until the democratic type of constitution developed and grew common in the Greek world.

Before that could happen, a long historical process was to be completed. Its first stage is still a kind of aristocracy—but a changed aristocracy. For now the ideal of *diké* is used as a standard in public life by which both high-born and low-born men are measured as ‘equals’. The nobles were compelled to

admit the new civic ideal created by the demand for justice, and based on *diké* as a norm. In the struggles of the approaching social conflict, and in the violence of revolution, they themselves were often compelled to appeal to *diké* for help. Even the Greek language bears traces of the formation of the new ideal. For centuries it had contained words to signify concrete offences—murder, theft, adultery; but it had had no general word for the quality through which one might avoid committing these offences and escape transgression. For that quality the new age coined the word ‘righteousness’ or ‘justice’, *dikaiosyné*—just as in its enthusiasm for the athletic virtues it had coined abstract words (which have no parallel in English) to correspond to the concretes ‘wrestling’, ‘boxing’, and so forth.<sup>21</sup> This new word was created as the sense of justice was more and more sharply intensified, and as the ideal of justice was embodied in a special type of human character and a peculiar *areté*. Originally, an *areté* was any kind of excellence. When the *areté* of a man was considered equivalent to courage, *areté* came to mean an ethical quality to which all other human excellences were subordinate and subservient. The new *dikaiosyné* was a more objective quality; but it became *areté par excellence* as soon as the Greeks believed that they had found, in written law, a reliable criterion for right and wrong. After *nomos*—that is, current legal usage—was codified, the general idea of righteousness acquired a palpable content. It consisted in obedience to the laws of the state, just as Christian ‘virtue’ consisted in obedience to the commands of God.

So then the will to justice, which grew up in the communal life of the city-state, was a new educational force comparable to the ideal of warlike courage in the old aristocratic culture. In the elegies of Tyrtaeus, that old ideal had been taken over by the Spartan state and raised to an all-embracing ideal of citizenship.<sup>22</sup> In the new state, based on law and justice, which was struggling through hard conflicts into life, the warrior-ideal of Sparta could not be accepted as the sole and universal embodiment of citizenship. Yet, as is shown by the summons of the Ephesian poet Callinus to his unwarlike fellow-citizens to resist the invading barbarians, even in the Ionian cities warlike courage was still needed at moments of crisis. Courage had in fact only changed its place within the general scheme of *areté*. From now on the law commands the citizen to show courage in face of the

enemy, to the point of dying in defence of his country; and the law punishes failure to obey that command by heavy penalties: but it is only one of many commands. In order to be *just*, in the concrete sense which justice now has in Greek political thought (that is, in order to obey the law and to mould one's conduct by its pattern<sup>23</sup>), the citizen must do his duty in war as he must do his duty in other matters. The old free ideal of the heroic *areté* of the Homeric champion now becomes a duty to the state, a duty to which all citizens alike are bound, as they are bound to observe the limits of *meum* and *tuum* in matters of property. One of the most famous poetic utterances of the sixth century is the line, often quoted by later philosophers, which says that all virtues are summed up in righteousness. The line is a close and exhaustive definition of the essence of the new constitutional city-state.<sup>24</sup>

The new conception that righteousness is the *areté* of the perfect citizen, embracing and transcending all others, naturally supplanted previous ideals. But the earlier *aretai* were not superseded by it: they were raised to a new power. That is what Plato means in the *Laws*, when he says<sup>25</sup> that in the ideal state Tyrtaeus' poem praising courage as the highest virtue must be rewritten so as to put righteousness in the place of courage. He does not exclude the Spartan warrior's virtue: he relegates it to its proper place, as subordinate to righteousness. Courage in a civil war, he says, must be estimated differently from courage exerted against a foreign enemy.<sup>26</sup> To show that all *areté* is embraced by the ideal of the righteous man, Plato gives a very enlightening example. Usually he speaks of four cardinal virtues: courage, godliness, righteousness, and prudence. (It is here irrelevant that in the *Republic* and often elsewhere he mentions philosophical wisdom instead of godliness.) As early as Aeschylus, we find this canon of the four so-called Platonic virtues mentioned as the sum of a citizen's virtue. Plato took it over *en bloc* from the ethical system of the early Greek city-state.<sup>27</sup> But he recognized that, although the canon mentioned four virtues, righteousness really embraced all *areté*.<sup>28</sup> The same thing happened in the case of Aristotle. He defines many more species of *aretai* than Plato; but when he comes to righteousness, he says that the name signifies two conceptions: there is righteousness

torious. Victory in such a contest had once glorified only the family of the winner; but now, as the whole citizen-community felt itself to be one family, victory served *ad maiorem patriae gloriam*.<sup>30</sup> And the city encouraged its sons to share not only in athletic contests but in the musical and artistic heritage of the past. It created *isonomia* not only in legal matters but in the higher things of life, which had been created by aristocratic civilization and now became the common property of the citizen-family.<sup>31</sup>

The enormous influence of the polis upon individual life was based on the fact that it was an ideal. The state was a spiritual entity, which assimilated all the loftiest aspects of human life and gave them out as its own gifts. Nowadays, we naturally think first of the state's claim to educate all its citizens during their youth. But public education was not advocated in Greece until it became a thesis of fourth century philosophy: Sparta alone, at this early period, paid direct attention to the education of the young.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, even outside Sparta, the early city-state educated the members of its community, by utilizing the athletic and musical competitions which were held during the festivals of the gods. These competitions were the noblest reflection of the physical and spiritual culture of the age. Plato rightly calls gymnastics and music 'the old-established culture'.<sup>33</sup> That culture, which had originally been aristocratic, was fostered by the state through great and costly competitions; and these competitions did more than encourage musical taste and gymnastic skill. They really created the sense of community in the city. Once that sense has been established, it is easy to understand the Greek citizen's pride in membership of his state. To describe a Greek fully, not only his own name and his father's are needed, but also the name of his city. Membership in a city-state had for the Greeks the same ideal value that nationality has for men of to-day.

The polis is the sum of all its citizens and of all the aspects of their lives. It gives each citizen much, but it can demand all in return. Relentless and powerful, it imposes its way of life on each individual, and marks him for its own. From it are derived all the norms which govern the life of its citizens. Conduct that

injures it is bad, conduct that helps it is good. This is the paradoxical result of the passionate effort to obtain the rights and equal status of each individual. All these efforts have forged the new chains of Law, to hold together the centrifugal energies of mankind, and to co-ordinate them far more successfully than in the old social order. Law is the objective expression of the state, and now Law has become king, as the Greeks later said<sup>34</sup>—an invisible ruler who does not only prevent the strong from transgressing and bring the wrongdoer to justice, but issues positive commands in all the spheres of life which had once been governed by individual will and preference. Even the most intimate acts of the private life and the moral conduct of its citizens are by law prescribed and limited and defined. Thus, through the struggle to obtain law, the development of the state brings into being new and more sharply differentiated principles of public and private life.

And that is the significance of the new city-state in the shaping of Greek character. Plato says, and rightly, that every type of constitution produces its own type of man; both he and Aristotle claim that all education should, in the perfect state, bear the imprint of the spirit of the state.<sup>35</sup> Again and again the great Athenian political philosophers of the fourth century formulate this ideal in the words 'education in the spirit of the laws'.<sup>36</sup> The words show that to establish a legal standard by written law was for the Greeks an *educational act*.<sup>37</sup> Law is the most important stage in the development of Greek culture from the social ideal of aristocracy to the fundamental conception of man as an individual, as expressed by the philosophers. And the ethical and educational systems constructed by philosophers constantly recall, in both form and content, the legislation of earlier periods. Such systems do not come into being in the empty air of pure thought: they are rooted in the historical life of the nation—as the ancient philosophers themselves said—and do but translate it into the region of abstract and general ideas. Law was the most universal and permanent form of Greek moral and legal experience. The culmination of Plato's work as a philosophical educator comes in his last and greatest book, when he himself turns lawgiver; and Aristotle closes the *Ethics* by calling for a legislator to realize the ideal he has formulated.<sup>38</sup> Law is the mother of philos-

ophy, for another reason—because in Greece lawmaking was always the work of great individuals. They were rightly considered to be the educators of their people; it is typical of Greek ideas that the lawgiver is often named beside the poet, and the formulas which define the law are often mentioned beside the wise utterances of the poet: the two activities were essentially akin to each other.<sup>39</sup>

The rule of law was later criticized, in the epoch of degenerate democracy, when many rash and despotic laws were hurried into existence;<sup>40</sup> but such criticism is meanwhile irrelevant. All the thinkers of this early period unite in praising law. It is the soul of the city. Heraclitus says<sup>41</sup> 'the people must fight for their law as for their walls': evoking, behind the visible city defended by its walls, the invisible polis with its sure rampart of law. But there is an even earlier reflection of the ideal of law, in the work of the natural philosopher Anaximander of Miletus, about the middle of the sixth century. Transferring the concept of *diké* from the social life of the city-state to the realm of nature, he explains the causal connexion between coming-to-be and passing-away as equivalent to a lawsuit, in which things are compelled by the decision of Time to compensate each other for their unrighteousness.<sup>42</sup> This is the origin of the philosophical idea of the *cosmos*: for the word originally signifies the *right order* in a state or other community. The philosopher, by projecting the idea of a political *cosmos* upon the whole of nature, claims that *isonomia* and not *pleonexia* must be the leading principle not only of human life but of the nature of things; and his claim is a striking witness to the fact that in his age the new political ideal of justice and law had become the centre of all thought, the basis of existence, the real source of men's faith in the purpose and meaning of the world. Anaximander's projection of law upon nature is an important philosophical conception of the world, and will be studied in detail elsewhere.<sup>43</sup> Here we can only show in general how clearly it illuminates the function of the state and the new ideal of man as a citizen. At the same time we can see the close connexion between the origins of Ionian philosophy and the birth of the constitutional city-state. Both are rooted in the universal idea which, starting from this point, inspires Greek civilization more and more deeply—the idea that

the world and life in all their appearances can be interpreted by one fundamental standard.<sup>44</sup>

In conclusion, we must trace the process by which the Ionian city-states came into being, with special reference to the development of the old aristocratic civilization into the idea of universal culture. It should be specially noted that these general remarks are not fully applicable to the early city-state: they are a preliminary diagnosis of the process whose bases we have analysed above. But it will be valuable to define the range and tendency of the process, and to keep it as a whole before our minds.

The polis gives each individual his due place in its political cosmos, and thereby gives him, besides his private life, a sort of second life, his *βίος πολιτικός*. Now, every citizen belongs to two orders of existence; and there is a sharp distinction in his life between what is *his own* (*ἴδιον*) and what is *communal* (*κοινόν*). Man is not only 'idiotic,' he is also 'politic.'<sup>45</sup> As well as his ability in his own profession or trade, he has his share of the universal ability of the citizen, *πολιτικὴ ἀρετή*, by which he is fitted to co-operate and sympathize with the rest of the citizens in the life of the polis. It is obvious why the new ideal of the individual as citizen cannot be based (like Hesiod's ideal of popular education) on the conception of man's daily work.<sup>46</sup> Hesiod's idea of *areté* was inspired by the facts of real life and by the vocational morality of the working-class, his audience. From the standpoint of the present time, we should be inclined to say that the new movement ought to have taken over the Hesiodic ideal *en bloc*: by doing so, we might think, it would have substituted a new concept of the people's education for the aristocratic ideal of the education of the entire personality; the new concept would have valued each individual by the work he did in the world, and would have taught that the good of the community was achieved when each individual did his work as well as possible. That was the system proposed by the aristocrat Plato when he described, in the *Republic*, a state based on legal order, governed by a few intellectually superior men. It would have been in harmony with the life and work of the people. It would have emphasized the fact that hard work is no shame, but is the sole basis of each man's citizenship. That fact was indeed recognized; but the

actual development of the citizen ideal followed quite different lines.

The new factor in the development of the city-state, which at last made every man a political being, was the compulsion laid on each male citizen to take an active part in the public life of his community, and to recognize and accept his civic duties—which were quite different from his duties as a private person and a working man. Previously, it was only the nobleman who had possessed this ‘universal’ political ability. For centuries power had been in the hands of the aristocrats, and they had a vastly superior system of political education and experience, which was still indispensable. The new city-state could not, without injuring itself, ignore the *areté* of the aristocracy; but it was bound to repress its selfish and unjust misuse. That was at least the ideal of the polis, as expressed by Pericles in Thucydides.<sup>47</sup> Thus, in free Ionia as in authoritarian Sparta, the culture of the city-state was based on the old aristocratic culture—on the ideal of *areté* which embraced the whole personality and all its powers. The working-class morality of Hesiod was not abandoned; but the citizen of the polis aimed above all at the ideal which Phoenix had taught Achilles: to be a speaker of words and a doer of deeds.<sup>48</sup> Certainly the leading men in each state were bound to move towards that ideal, and the ordinary citizens too came to sympathize with it.

This fact had great results. Socrates, as we know, introduced his criticism of democracy by discussing the relationship of technical or professional knowledge to political ability. For Socrates, the mason’s son, the simple working man, thought it was a startling paradox that the cobbler, the tailor, and the carpenter should need special knowledge to practise their own honest trades, while the politician needed only a general and rather indefinite education to engage in politics, although his ‘craft’ dealt with much more important things.<sup>49</sup> Obviously the problem could not have been posed in these terms, except in an age which held that political *areté* was naturally a branch of *knowledge*.<sup>50</sup> From that point of view, the essence of democracy was the lack of any special knowledge.<sup>51</sup> But as a matter of fact the early city-states had never considered the question of political ability to be a predominantly *intellectual* problem. We have seen what they considered civic virtue to mean. When the constitutional city-

state came into being, the virtue of its citizens really consisted in their voluntary submission to the new authority of the law, without distinction of rank or birth.<sup>52</sup> In that conception of political virtue, *ethos* was still far more important than *logos*. Obedience to the laws and discipline were far more important qualifications for an ordinary citizen than knowledge of the administration and aims of the state. To co-operate was, for him, to join others in submission to the law, and not to help to govern.

The early city-state was, in the eyes of its citizens, the guarantee of all the ideals which made life worth living. *πολιτεύεσθαι* means ‘to take part in communal life’; but besides that it simply means ‘to live’—for the two meanings were one and the same.<sup>53</sup> At no time was the state more closely identified with all human values. Aristotle calls man ‘a political being’, so as to differentiate him from animals by his power of living in a state:<sup>54</sup> he is in fact identifying *humanitas*, ‘being human’, with the life in a state. His definition can be understood only by studying the structure of the early polis: for its citizens held their communal existence to be the sum of all the higher things of life—in fact to be something divine. In the *Laws* Plato constructs just such an old Hellenic cosmos based on law, a city in which the polis is the spirit, and in which all spiritual activity is referred to the polis as its final end. There he defines the essence of all true culture, or *paideia* (in contrast to the specialized knowledge of tradesmen such as the shopkeeper and the travelling merchant), as ‘the education in *areté* from youth onwards, which makes men passionately desire to become perfect citizens, knowing both how to rule and how to be ruled on a basis of justice’.<sup>55</sup>

Plato’s words are a true description of the original meaning of ‘universal’ culture as conceived in the early city-state. In his conception of culture he does include the Socratic ideal of a craft of politics; but he does not think of it as a special branch of knowledge comparable to the craftsman’s professional cunning. He believes that true culture is ‘universal’ culture, because political understanding is the understanding of universal questions. As we have shown, the contrast between the factual knowledge of the craftsman and the ideal culture of the citizen, with its reference to his entire personality and life, goes back to the aristocratic ideal of early Greece. But its deeper meaning first appears in the city-state, because there that ideal was imposed upon

## IONIAN AND AEOLIAN POETRY: THE INDIVIDUAL SHAPES HIS OWN PERSONALITY

THE revolution which rebuilt the state on the common basis of law created a new human type—the citizen—and compelled the new community to work out a universal standard for civic life. The ideals of the old Greek aristocracy had been expressed in the Homeric epics; Hesiod had wrought into poetry the practical wisdom and experience of the peasant's life and morality; and Tyrtaeus's elegies had eternalized the severe code of the Spartan state. But the new ideal of the polis seems, at first glance, to have no comparable expression in contemporary poetry. The city-state, as we have seen, eagerly assimilated the earlier stages of Greek culture, and in so doing utilized the great poetry of antiquity as a means of expressing its own ideals, just as it used the musical and athletic traditions of the era of aristocracy. But it failed to embody and express its own nature in any poetry which could bear comparison with the now classical poetry of past ages. The only attempt at such creation was the poems which told, in conventional epic style, of the founding of this or that city; and they were few in number in the early days of the city-state, and they appear never to have risen so far as to become true national epic on the plane of the last and greatest work of the type, Vergil's *Aeneid*.<sup>1</sup>

The first really revolutionary expression of the ethos of the new state was not poetry, but prose. For the city-state created prose, and prose was originally the medium in which law was recorded. The city-state was a new development in communal living, created by the struggle to subject all members of the community to a rigid legal code of life and conduct: it therefore persistently strove to express that code in clear and universally valid sentences. The violence of this effort occupied men's minds to the exclusion of any wish to express in poetry the character of the new community.<sup>2</sup> The constitutional polis was created by logical thought, and therefore had no basic kinship with poetry. Homer,

for the nobleman thought that public opinion meant fame for great deeds and their joyful acknowledgment by his generous peers. But that standard becomes absurd when it means the gossip of the jealous commoner who measures every great man by his own little yardmeasure. As such, public opinion is only a necessary safeguard against the new freedom of thought and action which has been produced by the new city-state spirit.

It is not for nothing that Archilochus was famous as the first and greatest representative of *ψόγος* in poetry, the formidable Satirist, the Scold.<sup>21</sup> Hasty conclusions about his personal character have been drawn from the bitter censorious nature of much of his iambic poetry—on the principle that in iambics, if in any genius of Greek poetry, one is justified in looking for purely psychological motives and in explaining each poem as the immediate reflex of its author's unpleasant personality.<sup>22</sup> But to reason like this is to forget that the rise of the lampoon in the early city-state is a symptom of the increased importance of the demos, the common people. Iambic ‘*flyting*’ was originally a general custom at the festivals of Dionysus, and this character it retained: it was rather the free expression of public opinion than the utterance of one man’s personal enmity. Witness to this is the truest survival of the iambus in a later age, which is in the old Attic comedy, where the poet speaks as the voice of public criticism. (That is not contradicted by the equally certain fact that, like Archilochus, he sometimes opposes, instead of voicing, the opinion of the community. Both opposition and support of public opinion are part of his duties.) If it were true that the iambus was only the voice of a free individual demanding a hearing for his own views, it would be hard to explain why the same root could produce the philosophical reflections of Semonides and the political exhortations of Solon. Closer investigation shows that Archilochus’ iambics have a parainetic, or hortatory, aspect which is quite as important as their critical and lampooning aspect, and which in fact is essentially akin to it.

He does not use the mythical examples and patterns which appear in the epic exhortations. Instead, he uses another kind of moral example, which shows very clearly the type of audience he is addressing. This is the fable. ‘I will tell you a fable . . .’ begins the story of the ape and the fox;<sup>23</sup> and the tale of the fox

tably they are brought face to face with the problem of destiny.

The Greeks, as they learnt to understand the problem of human freedom, penetrated deeper into the mystery of Tyché. Yet in the effort to attain freedom men are compelled to forego many of the gifts of Tyché. Consequently it was Archilochus who first formulated the idea that a man could be free only in a life chosen by himself. It is a famous poem<sup>42</sup> in which the speaker declares that he will not strive for the wealth of Gyges, nor overstep the frontier between gods and men by ambition, nor aim at a despot's power: 'for that is far from my eyes.' Another poem, his strange address to his own heart,<sup>43</sup> shows the experience on which this proud renunciation is based. It is the first great monologue in Greek literature: a hortatory address, not to another person, as is usual in elegiac and iambic poetry, but to the poet himself; so that Archilochus is both the speaker who counsels and the listener who reflects and resolves.<sup>44</sup> There is an example of this in the *Odyssey*, and Archilochus borrows its ideas and its situation. But see what he makes of Odysseus' famous words: 'Be strong, my heart, you have borne fouler things before!'<sup>45</sup> He calls to his will to rise up from the whirlpool of desperate sufferings in which it is sunk, to stand firm and boldly resist the enemy. 'Neither exult openly in victory, nor lie at home lamenting in defeat; but take pleasure in what is pleasant, yield not overmuch to troubles, and understand the rhythm which holds mankind in its bonds.'

The ideal on which this proud independence is built is not the purely practical counsel of moderation as the safest course in daily existence. It is the universal conception that there is a 'rhythm'<sup>46</sup> in all human life. That is the foundation on which Archilochus bases his exhortation to self-control and his warning to avoid excessive joy or grief—he means, to avoid feeling excessive emotion for *externals*, for the happiness or unhappiness which comes from destiny. This sense of 'rhythm' is probably an early trace of the conception which first appears in Ionian natural philosophy and historical thinking—the idea that there is an objective law of averages in the natural course of existence. Herodotus expressly speaks of the 'cycle of human affairs',<sup>47</sup> thinking chiefly of the rise and fall of human fortunes.

We must not be misled by his words into thinking that Archilochus' rhythm is a *flux*—although the modern idea of rhythm is

something which flows, and some derive the word itself from δέω, 'to flow.'<sup>48</sup> The history of the word warns us against that interpretation. Its application to the movement of music and the dance (from which we derive our word) was secondary, and somewhat concealed the primary meaning. We must first inquire what the Greeks took to be the essence of dancing and music; and that is clearly shown by the primary meaning, which appears in Archilochus' lines. If rhythm 'holds'<sup>49</sup> mankind—I translated it 'holds in bonds'—it cannot be a flux. We must rather think of Prometheus in Aeschylus' tragedy, who is chained immovably in iron fetters; he says, 'I am bound here in this "rhythm"'; and of Xerxes, of whom Aeschylus says that he chained the current of the Hellespont, and 'changed to another form ("rhythm")' the watery way across it: that is, he transformed the waterway into a bridge, and bound the current in strong bonds.<sup>50</sup> Rhythm then is that which imposes bonds on movement and confines the flux of things: just as it is in Archilochus. Democritus too speaks in the true old sense of the rhythm of the atoms, by which he means not their movement but their pattern—or as Aristotle perfectly translates it, their *schema*.<sup>51</sup> That is the interpretation which the ancient commentators correctly give for Aeschylus' words.<sup>52</sup> Obviously when the Greeks speak of the rhythm of a building or a statue, it is not a metaphor transferred from musical language; and the original conception which lies beneath the Greek discovery of rhythm in music and dancing is not *flow* but *pause*, the steady limitation of movement.<sup>53</sup>

In Archilochus we see the miracle of a new, personal form of culture, founded on the conscious realization of a natural and final basic pattern in human life. To this pattern human thoughts and desires can be made to conform, without the compulsion of traditional morality. Man's thought now becomes master of his life; and, just as it attempts to codify universal laws for the life of the city-state community, so it strives to invade the soul and to control within fixed frontiers the chaos of warring passions. During the succeeding centuries this struggle is reflected in Greek poetry, for philosophy does not enter it until much later. Archilochus' work is an important stage on the road which poetry travels down from Homer to the fourth century. His poetry, and that of his age, was born of the need of the free individual to see and solve the problem of human life outside

the mythical content of epic poetry, which had hitherto been the only sphere in which it could be posed or answered. As the poets assimilated the ideas and problems which had been set forth in the epic, and literally made them their own, they naturally created for them new poetic forms, the elegy and the iambus, and gave them a direct bearing on their own personal lives.

Of the poetry written in Ionia in the century and a half after Archilochus, enough survives to prove that it moves along the path he had explored; but none of it has the scope and power of his own work. His successors were chiefly influenced by his elegies and his reflective iambics. The existing iambic poems of Semonides are frankly didactic. The first,<sup>54</sup> with its direct address, clearly shows the educational trend of the iambus: 'My son,' he says, 'Zeus holds in his hand the end of all things, and arranges it as he wishes; but men have no sense. Creatures of a day, we live like animals, without knowing how God will bring everything to its conclusion. Hope and self-persuasion feed us all, and we aim at the impossible. . . . Old age, disease, death in battle or in the waves of the sea outstrip men before they have reached their goal; and others end their lives by suicide.' Like Hesiod,<sup>55</sup> Semonides complains that man is subject to every possible misfortune. Countless evil spirits, unexpected miseries and pains surround him. 'If you would believe me, we should not love our own unhappiness'—and there again we hear Hesiod's voice<sup>56</sup>—'and should not torture ourselves by setting our hearts on grievous unhappiness.'

The end of the poem is lost, but an elegy<sup>57</sup> on the same subject supplies the advice which Semonides must have offered to mankind. The ground of their blind pursuit of unhappiness is that they hope for immortality. 'One thing, finer than all others, was said by the man of Chios: "the generation of men is as the generation of leaves."<sup>58</sup> But few who heard that word put it away in their hearts; for everyone keeps the hope which grows in the hearts of the young. As long as a man has the lovely flower of youth, his mind is light and he makes many impossible plans. For he expects never to grow old nor to die, and while he is well he cares nothing for illness. Fools, to think like this, and not to know that mortal men have only a short space to be young and

to live. But do you learn this and, thinking of the end of life, give your soul some pleasure.'

Here youth appears as the source of all overbold illusions and intentions, because it lacks the Homeric wisdom to think that life is short. The moral drawn by the poet is, however, a strange new one—to enjoy the pleasures of life while one may. That is not in Homer.<sup>59</sup> It is the conclusion of an eclectic generation, for which the lofty code of the heroic age has lost much of its deep seriousness, and which chooses from that code the part which suits its own outlook, namely the lament for the shortness of human life. When that sad truth is transposed from the world of the epic to the more natural world of the elegiac poet, it must inevitably create, not a tragic heroism, but a burning hedonism.<sup>60</sup>

As the city-state tightened the chains of law on its citizens, they strove more and more eagerly to complement its political rigidity by liberty in their own private life. The libertarian ideal is that expressed by Pericles in the funeral speech,<sup>61</sup> when he describes the free Athenian ideal as the counterpart to Spartan severity: 'We do not grudge our neighbour his private pleasures, nor do we make him repent them by our bitter looks.' It was necessary for the rigid legal code of the city-state to allow the instincts of its citizens to have some play; and if the cry for liberty changed to a cry for pleasure, that is a very human impulse. It is not true individualism, for it does not come into conflict with supra-individual forces.<sup>62</sup> Yet, within the boundaries which they set, there is a palpable broadening of the individual's demand for happiness; in the balance of life and duty, the individual now casts his weight more strongly on the side of life. The Athenian civilization of the Periclean age recognized the principle of this distinction between the state's demands and the individual's wishes; but a fight was needed to gain that recognition, and the fight was won in Ionia. There arose the first poetry of hedonism, passionately vindicating the individual's right to sensual happiness and beauty, and asserting the worthlessness of a life lacking these things.

Like Semonides of Amorgos, Mimnermus of Colophon writes to proclaim the joy of life. This message, which in Archilochus is merely the bye-product of strong natural instincts and expressed the mood of a moment, is in his two successors theulti-

mate secret of life. It becomes a crusade, an ideal of life to which they wish to convert all mankind. Without golden Aphrodite, what is life and what is pleasure? Rather would I be dead, cries Mimnermus,<sup>63</sup> than care no more for love. Yet it would be very wrong to call him a decadent voluptuary. (We have not enough of Semonides' work to enable us to reconstruct his character.) Mimnermus sometimes speaks in the clear voice of a statesman and a warrior, and the tense Homeric phrases of his poems vibrate with chivalrous ardour.<sup>64</sup> But when a poet begins to write freely of his private pleasures, it is a new step in poetry, and one which deeply influences human culture.

For now men are groaning more and more heavily under their bondage to destiny and to 'the gifts of Zeus' which must be accepted as they come,<sup>65</sup> and at the same time lamenting ever more keenly the shortness of life and the transitoriness of sensual pleasure; both these complaints, which are heard throughout post-Homeric poetry, bear witness to the growing tendency to see everything as it affects the individual's right to live. The more one yields to the demands of nature, and the deeper one plunges in natural delights, the more profound is the melancholy resignation that follows. Death, age, disease, misfortune, and all the other dangers which ambush man's life<sup>66</sup> grow to giants threatening him at every breath he draws, and even if he tries to escape in the delights of the moment, he will still find them poisoned by the sorrow of the world.

The hedonist school of poetry marks one of the most important phases in the history of the Greek spirit. To prove its importance we need only remember that Greek logic always posed the problem of the individual will in ethics and politics as a conflict between pleasure (*tò ήδύ*) and nobility (*tò καλόν*). In the philosophy of the sophists the conflict becomes more clearly marked;<sup>67</sup> and the culmination of Plato's philosophy is the defeat of pleasure in its claim to be the highest good.<sup>68</sup> In the fifth century the opposition became sharp and definite; all the efforts of Attic philosophers from Socrates to Plato were directed to reconciling the opponents; and they met in a final harmony in Aristotle's ideal of human personality.<sup>69</sup> But before that could happen, the natural instinct to enjoy life and to aim at pleasure had to be affirmed as a principle, directly conflicting with the creed of *tò καλόν* which was preached directly and indirectly in

aspects in the heart of man. But in Sappho's poetry woman is seldom incarnated as mother or lover—only when a friend enters or leaves her band of maidens. Woman as such is not the subject of Sappho's inspiration. Her friends are girls who have just left their mothers' sides; protected by the unmarried woman who serves the Muses like a priestess, they are dedicated to serve beauty by their dances, games and songs.

The Greek poet was a teacher; and the two functions were never more closely identified than in Sappho's *thiasos* of girls consecrated to music. No doubt the beauty that they worshipped extended beyond the scope of Sappho's own poems, to embrace all the beauty inherited from the past. To the masculine heroism of tradition, Sappho's songs, quivering with the rapture of complete and harmonious friendship, added the ardour and nobility of the feminine soul. They depict an ideal third life between childhood and marriage—an age in which women were educated to attain the highest possible nobility of spirit. The very existence of Sappho's circle assumes the educational conception of poetry which was accepted by the Greeks of her time; but the novelty and greatness of it is that through it women were admitted to a man's world, and conquered that part of it to which they had a rightful claim. For it was a real conquest: it meant that women now took their part in serving the Muses and that this service blended with the process of forming their character. Yet this essential fusion which shapes the human soul is impossible without the power of Eros to release the forces of the spirit. The parallel between the Platonic and the Sapphic Eros is obvious. The feminine Eros, still charming us by his melodious and tender songs, was yet strong enough to create a true community among the souls of his worshippers. Thus he was more than mere emotion: he must have joined the souls which he inspired in some higher unity. He was present in the sensuous grace of dance and play; he was embodied in the glorious figure who was the friend and the ideal of her comrades. The great moments of Sappho's lyric poetry come when she strives to win the unripe heart of a girl, when she bids farewell to a beloved friend who is leaving her companions to return home or to follow the husband who has won her in marriage (and marriage at that time had nothing to do with love), and finally when she thinks sadly

## SOLON: CREATOR OF ATHENIAN POLITICAL CULTURE

THE voice of Athens was heard for the first time in the choir of Hellas about the year 600. At first she seemed only to imitate and elaborate the melodies of others (and above all of her Ionian kinsmen), but soon she wove them into a nobler harmony as a background for her own clearer and more commanding tones. Her genius did not reach its full power until it created the tragedies of Aeschylus a century later; and we are fortunate to know even a little of its achievements before that. Nothing survives from the sixth century except considerable fragments of Solon's poetry. Still, it is not mere chance which has preserved them. For centuries, as long as there was an Athenian state with a free spiritual life of its own, Solon was revered as a keystone of its culture. Boys at the beginning of their schooling learned his poems by heart; and they were constantly cited as the classical expression of the soul of Athenian citizenship by advocates in the lawcourts and orators in the public assembly.<sup>1</sup> Their influence lived on until the power and glory of the Athenian empire passed away. Thereafter, in the inevitable nostalgia for past greatness, the historians and philologists of the new age collected and preserved their remains. They even prized Solon's poetical self-revelations as valuable records of historical fact: it is not long since they were so regarded even by modern scholars.<sup>2</sup>

Think for a moment what a loss we should have suffered if no fragment of his poems had survived. We should hardly be able to comprehend the noblest and strangest quality in the great Attic tragedies, and in fact in the whole spiritual life of Athens —the inspiration given to all her art and thought by the idea of the state. So fully did her citizens realize that the intellectual and artistic life of each individual had both its origin and its purpose in the community, that the Athenian state dominated the lives of its members to a degree unparalleled outside Sparta. But Sparta,

deep despair is movingly described in Solon's great iambic poem.<sup>12</sup>

The culture of the Athenian nobility was Ionian through and through. Both its art and its poetry were moulded by the superior taste and convention of the kindred race. It was natural that Ionian influences should also affect its manner of life and its ideals: Solon was making a concession to the feelings of the common people when he legislated to forbid the Asiatic pomp and the women's lamentations which had until then been part of the funeral ceremony of every nobleman.<sup>13</sup> It was not until the terrible crisis of the Persian invasions a century later that Athenian fashions in clothes, hairdressing, and social usage abandoned the luxurious Ionian convention,<sup>14</sup> the ἀρχαῖα χλιδῆ. (The archaic statues lately recovered from the ruins of the Persian destruction of the Acropolis give us a lively idea of the rich Asiatic elegance of that style; and the haughty Attic ladies of Solon's own time are now represented by the standing goddess in the Berlin Museum.) No doubt the invading Ionian spirit brought much with it that seemed to be harmful; yet it was the inspiration of Ionia which first impelled Athens to her own spiritual achievement. Above all, without that inspiration, neither the political movement which drew its strength from the poor could have arisen, nor its great leader Solon, in whom the Attic and the Ionian spirit meet and mingle. For that important phase in the history of culture, Solon's poetry provides the really classical evidence, far outranking the scanty facts preserved by later historians and the remains of contemporary Athenian art. The forms of his poetry—elegy and iambus—are of Ionian origin. His close relationship to the Ionian poets of his time is shown by his poem addressed to Mimnermus of Colophon.<sup>15</sup> His poetic language is Ionian mixed with Attic forms, for at that time the Attic dialect could not yet be used for lofty poetry. And the thoughts expressed in his poems are partly Ionian too. But with his borrowings he has mingled much of his own, and created a great new mass of ideas which he is enabled, by borrowing the Ionian style, to work out freely and to express with some degree of ease.

His political poems<sup>16</sup>—the work of half a century, begun before his legislation and carried down to the conquest of Sa-

wearing themselves out in the blind and furious conflict of interests. He sees his city rushing towards the abyss, and tries to stem its ruin. 'Driven by avarice,' he cries,<sup>22</sup> 'the leaders of the people enrich themselves unrighteously: they spare neither the goods of the state nor the temple treasures, and they do not preserve the venerable foundations of Diké—who in her silence knows all the past and all the present, but does not fail to come in time to punish.' Yet when we examine Solon's idea of punishment we can see how his ideals differ from the religious realism of Hesiod's faith in justice. He does not imagine divine punishment to mean pestilence and famine, as Hesiod does.<sup>23</sup> He thinks of it as immanent in the state, for every transgression of justice is a disturbance of the social organism.<sup>24</sup> A state thus punished is afflicted by party feuds and civil war: its citizens gather in bands which think only of violence and injustice; great numbers of the destitute are driven from their homes, enslaved for debt, and sold into a foreign land. And even if a man tries to avoid this national curse by creeping into the most secret recesses of his home, the curse 'leaps over the high walls' and finds him there.<sup>25</sup>

There is no more vivid and potent description of the necessary implication of each individual in the life of his community than in this great warning, which was clearly written before Solon was summoned to be the 'peacemaker' of Athens.<sup>26</sup> The social evil is like an epidemic, which strikes everyone in the doomed city; and, says Solon, it comes inevitably to every city which stirs up civil strife and class-war.<sup>27</sup> This is not a prophetic vision, it is a statesman's diagnosis of the facts. It is the first objective statement of the universal truth that the violation of justice means the disruption of the life of the community;<sup>28</sup> and Solon is eager to drive home his discovery. 'My spirit commands me to teach the Athenians this'—that is the phrase which concludes his description of injustice and its social consequences;<sup>29</sup> and then, in a reminiscence of Hesiod's contrasting pictures of the just and the unjust cities, Solon ends his message with an inspiring description of the glories of Eunomia.<sup>30</sup> Eunomia, in his eyes, is a goddess like Diké—Hesiod's *Theogony*<sup>31</sup> calls them sisters—and her power too is immanent. She does not manifest it in external blessings, in fertility and material abundance, as in Hesiod; but in peace and harmony of the whole social cosmos.

selves allowed these men to grow great by giving them power, and therefore you have fallen into shameful servitude'.<sup>37</sup> These words are obviously reminiscent of the beginning of the warning elegy which is quoted above.<sup>38</sup> There Solon says: 'Our city will not perish by the decree of Zeus and the counsel of the blessed gods immortal, for Pallas Athene, its proud protector, has stretched out her hand above it; but the citizens themselves in their folly wish to ruin it by avarice'.<sup>39</sup> And in the later poem that prophecy comes true. By pointing to his early warning of the approaching disaster Solon demonstrates his own innocence, and raises the question of the real responsibility. Since he does it in practically the same words in both passages, he is clearly dealing with one of the fundamental tenets of his political creed: in modern language, it is the problem of responsibility; in Greek, it is the question of man's share in his own destiny.

This problem is first raised in *Homer*, at the beginning of the *Odyssey*. Zeus the father of gods and men speaks to the assembled gods of the unjust complaints of mankind, who blame heaven for every misfortune in human life. And he asserts, in almost the same words used by Solon, that men themselves, and not the gods, increase their troubles by their own folly.<sup>40</sup> Solon's poems are conscious reminiscences of the Homeric theodicy.<sup>41</sup> The earliest religion of Greece taught that all human misery, whether it came from external causes or from the will and impulse of the sufferer himself, was caused by an inevitable *até*, the agent of a higher power. The philosophical idea which the author of the *Odyssey* puts in the mouth of Zeus, as governor of heaven and earth, represents a later stage of ethical thought; for it distinguishes divine *até*, the unforeseen and inevitable doom sent by heaven, from human responsibility, which brings men greater misery than the portion allotted to them by heaven. The essential feature of the latter is foreknowledge—evil action deliberately willed.<sup>42</sup> That is the point where Solon's belief in the importance of justice for a healthy social life joins the Homeric theodicy and gives it a new depth of thought.

Recognition of the universal truth that every community is bound by immanent laws implies that every man is a responsible moral agent with a duty to be done. Thus in Solon's world there is far less scope for the arbitrary interference of the gods than in the world of the *Iliad*; for it is governed by law, and attributes

to the will of men many events which in the Homeric world were the gifts or inflictions of heaven. Accordingly, the gods merely carry into execution the effects of the moral order, which is identical with their will. The Ionian poets of Solon's time, who were quite as deeply conscious of the problem of suffering, offered no solution except melancholy resignation, and could only lament man's fate and its inevitability.<sup>43</sup> But Solon, who called his fellow men to act in full consciousness of their responsibility, himself set the example by his political and moral courage, which stands as a clear proof of the inexhaustible energy and moral earnestness of the Athenian character.

Though a busy politician, Solon was a deep thinker too. His great elegiac prayer to the Muses, which has been preserved entire, recurs to the problem of responsibility, and shows its paramount importance in his thought.<sup>44</sup> Here it appears at the centre of his general reflections on man's effort and his destiny: which proves, even more clearly than the political poems, how fundamentally religious was Solon's attitude. The elegy is inspired by the old aristocratic moral code—known to us chiefly from Theognis and Pindar, as well as from the *Odyssey*—with its traditional emphasis on material wealth and social prestige. But it revises that code to harmonize with Solon's deep faith in law and divine justice.<sup>45</sup> In the first section Solon limits the natural impulse to possess, by teaching that wealth must be righteously gained. Only the riches given by the gods, he says, will last: riches won by injustice and violence only foster *até*, which comes swiftly.

Here, as throughout his poetry, the thought recurs that injustice can maintain itself only for a brief time, and *diké* always comes sooner or later. But here, the idea advanced in his political poetry, that 'divine punishment' is immanent in the social order, is replaced by the religious image of 'the retribution of Zeus', which falls as rapidly as a tempest in spring. 'Suddenly it scatters the clouds, stirs the depths of the sea, rushes down on the fields and ruins the fair work of men's hands; and then it rises up again to heaven, the sun's rays shine out on the rich earth, and no cloud is to be seen. Such is the retribution of Zeus, which lets none escape. One man makes amends soon, another late; and if the guilty man escapes punishment, his innocent children and his descendants suffer in his stead.'<sup>46</sup> This is the very

core of the religious doctrine which, a century later, created Attic tragedy.

Now the poet turns to the other *até*, the doom which can be turned aside by no man's thoughts and efforts. It is clear that, although Solon's contemporaries had largely rationalized and moralized their conception of human action and destiny, there was still a residue of disbelief in the universal justice of heaven. 'We mortals, good and bad alike, think that we shall get<sup>47</sup> whatever we hope for, until misfortune comes, and then we complain. The sick man hopes to become well, the poor man to become rich. Everyone strives for gold and profit, each in a different way, as merchant-sailor, farmer, or craftsman, bard or seer. But the seer himself cannot avert misfortune even if he sees it impending.' Although these ideas are set out with archaic simplicity, the central thought of the second part of the poem stands out clearly: *Moira*, Fate, makes all human effort fundamentally insecure,<sup>48</sup> however earnest and logical it may seem to be; and *this Moira* cannot be averted by foreknowledge, although (as shown in the first part of the poem) misery caused by the agent can be averted. She strikes good and bad men without distinction. The relation of our success to the acts which we will is entirely irrational. Even the man who tries his best to succeed, frequently comes to ruin, and the man who begins badly is often allowed by God to prosper and escape the consequence of his folly. There is a risk in all human action.<sup>49</sup>

Although Solon recognizes the irrationality of the sequence of will and action, he still considers that the agent is responsible for the effect of a bad act; and so the second part of the elegy does not seem to him to contradict the first. While he believes that even the best-willed action may not succeed, he does not preach resignation and inaction. That was the conclusion reached by the Ionian Semonides of Amorgos, who complains that mortals waste much trouble and effort in striving for unattainable and illusionary ends, and that they wear themselves out in care and sorrow instead of resigning themselves and abandoning their blind pursuit of their own ruin.<sup>50</sup> At the end of this elegy, Solon takes a clear stand against such apathy. Instead of viewing the world from the sentimental human side, he takes the objective view, God's view, and asks himself and his audience whether facts which humanity thinks irrational may not have an intelli-

gible justification from a higher point of view. The essence of wealth—which is after all the object of all human effort—is that it has neither measure nor end in itself. Even the richest of us prove that, says Solon, for they strive to double their riches.<sup>51</sup> Who could satisfy men with all their wishes? There is only one solution, and that is beyond men's grasp. The gods give men profit, but take it away again. For when Zeus sends as a compensation the evil spirit of infatuation,<sup>52</sup> now this man has it and soon another one.

It has been necessary to analyse the thought of this poem, because it contains Solon's theory of social ethics. The poems in which, *post factum*, he justifies his legislation<sup>53</sup> show how closely his political acts were linked with his religious ideals. For instance, when divine Moira becomes the necessary balance which abolishes the inevitable economic differences between man and man, his moral theory is clearly a justification of his policy.<sup>54</sup> All his acts and words indicate that the leading aim of his reforms was to find a just medium between excess and deficiency, between excessive power and helplessness, between privilege and serfdom.<sup>55</sup> Therefore he could wholeheartedly support neither party in the state: yet both parties, rich and poor, really owed to him the strength they had won or retained. He constantly illustrates, by impressive images, his dangerous position not so much above as between the two opponents. He recognizes that his strength lies chiefly in the impalpable moral authority of his severely disinterested character. He compares the selfish ambition of the busy party-leaders with skimming cream off the milk or with pulling in a well-filled net<sup>56</sup>—images which would be vividly real to the Athenian farmers and fishermen—but he describes his own attitude in stylized Homeric language, which shows how keenly he felt his own position as a heroic champion of his cause. Now he holds his shield over both parties alike, so that neither can defeat the other, and now he advances fearlessly into no-man's-land among the flying spears, or, like the wolf, bites his way through the raging pack around him.<sup>57</sup> The most effective of the poems are those in which he speaks in his own person, because his personality is always magnificently individual, and brightest in the great iambic poem<sup>58</sup> where he gives his account 'before the tribunal of time'. The artless profusion of its lively images, the impulsive generosity of Solon's feeling of kin-

ship with all humanity, and the strength of his sympathy make the poem the most personal of all his political utterances.<sup>59</sup>

No great statesman has ever risen higher above the mere lust for power than Solon. When he had completed his work as legislator, he left his country and went away on a long journey. He himself never tires of declaring that he did not use his position to make himself a rich man or a tyrant, as most men would have in his place; and he is willing to be called a fool for missing the chance.<sup>60</sup> Herodotus bears out his account of his independence, in the romantic story of his interview with Croesus.<sup>61</sup> He shows us Solon the sage, talking with the Asiatic despot among his astounding wealth without abandoning the conviction that none of the great ones of the earth was so happy as the simple Attic peasant on his farm—who, after winning his daily bread for himself and his children in the sweat of his brow, and fulfilling a lifetime of duty as father and citizen, gains the crown of honour by dying for his country at the threshold of old age. The spirit of the tale is a unique and charming blend of the conservatism of the Athenian, clinging to the soil, and the adventurous spirit of the Ionian, travelling 'for the sake of seeing sights'.<sup>62</sup> It is delightful to trace this invasion of the Athenian character by Ionian culture, through the extant fragments of Solon's non-political poems. They are the work of a mind so rich that its possessor was reckoned by his admiring contemporaries as one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece.

The most notable are the famous verses in which Solon answers the complaints of the poet Mimnermus about the pangs of old age, and his yearning to die when he passes sixty, without knowing illness and grief. 'If you will obey me, then strike that out, and do not grudge it to me if I have thought of something better: rewrite your poem, Ionian nightingale, and sing this: "I wish the Moira which is death would overtake me at eighty".'<sup>63</sup> Mimnermus' thought sprang from the free Ionian spirit which uses its own standards to value life, and is willing to reject it when it loses its worth. Solon does not accept that valuation. His healthy Athenian energy and his rich enjoyment of life are fit opponents for the supersensitive melancholy which shrinks from the sixtieth year of life because that year will deliver it over to the pains and troubles of existence. Solon cannot believe that old

age is a slow and painful extinction. His old age is a green tree, whose irrepressible energy produces new blossoms from year to year.<sup>64</sup> And so he refuses even to die in silence and unlamented: he wants his friends to sigh and weep for him when he dies.<sup>65</sup> Here again he opposes a famous Ionic poet, Semonides of Amorgos: for Semonides taught that life was so short, and so full of pain and grief, that we should not mourn the dead for more than a day.<sup>66</sup> Solon does not believe that human life is kinder than Semonides has said. Once he cries, 'No one is happy. All the mortals on whom the sun gazes are wretched'.<sup>67</sup> And like Archilochus and all the other Ionians he laments the insecurity of life: 'The mind of the immortal gods is quite hidden from men'.<sup>68</sup> Yet all this is outweighed by his joy in the gifts of life—the growth of children, the strong pleasures of sport and hunting, the delights of wine and song, friendship, and the sensuous happiness of love.<sup>69</sup> The power of enjoyment, in Solon's eyes, is wealth not inferior to gold and silver, lands and horses. When a man goes down to Hades, it does not matter how much he has owned, but how much of its goods life has given him. His poem of the hebdomads (which is preserved entire<sup>70</sup>) divides man's life into seven-year periods, and gives each age its own special function. It is filled with a truly Greek feeling for the rhythm of life; for one age cannot change places with another—each has its own meaning, and each is in accord with another, so that the whole rises and falls with the rhythm of universal nature.<sup>71</sup>

Solon's attitude to the problems of ordinary life, as to political questions, is determined by this same new sense of the submission of all things to inherent laws. He expresses himself with the curt simplicity of a Greek proverb. Natural things are always simple, when one recognizes them. 'But the hardest thing of all is to recognize the invisible Mean of judgment, which alone contains the limits of all things.' These words of Solon<sup>72</sup> seem designed to give us the correct standard by which to measure his greatness. The idea of the mean and the limits—an idea of fundamental importance in Greek ethics—indicates the problem which was of central interest to Solon and his contemporaries: how to gain a new rule of life by the force of inner understanding. The nature of this new rule cannot be defined: it can be comprehended only through sympathetic study of Solon's words,

his character, and his life. For the mass of men it is enough to obey the laws which are laid down for them. But the man who makes these laws needs a higher standard, which is not written. The rare quality by which he can find it Solon calls *gnomosyné*, 'judgment', because it always suggests the *gnomé*—which is both true insight and the will to put it into action.<sup>73</sup>

That is the clue to understanding the unity of Solon's spiritual world. The unity was not given to him: he had to create it. We find that the conception of justice and the rule of law, which was the focal point of Solon's political and religious thought, already prevailed in Ionia: but there, as we have seen, it seems to have found no voice in poetry. The other aspect of Ionian thought, expressed all the more enthusiastically by the Ionian poets, is a shrewd practical wisdom and a hedonistic individualism. For that side too Solon has a deep sympathy. What is new in his thought is that he brings the two poles of Ionian philosophy together into a unity which is clear and perfect in his poetry. His poems reflect the rare completeness and harmony of his life and character. He put aside individualism, but he recognized the claims of the individual's personality: more, he was the first to give those claims an ethical basis. Because he brought together the state and the spirit, the community and the individual, he was the first Athenian. By creating that unity he struck out the type to which all the men of his race were to conform.

and annihilation which (as the poets show) saddened and perplexed all that generation.<sup>57</sup>

This great discovery opened the way to countless new philosophical explorations. The idea of a cosmos is even now one of the most essential categories of man's understanding of the universe, although it has gradually lost its metaphysical in its scientific meaning. But it conveniently symbolizes the whole influence of early natural philosophy upon the culture of the Greeks. Solon's ethico-legal conception of responsibility and retribution was derived from the epic theodicy;<sup>58</sup> similarly Anaximander's doctrine of the systematic justice of the universe reminds us that the most important idea in the new philosophy, that of Cause (*cártia*), was originally the same as the idea of Retribution, and was transferred from legal to physical terminology. Closely connected with this is the parallel transference of the related words cosmos, *diké*, and *tisis* from the sphere of law to that of nature.<sup>59</sup> Anaximander's fragment shows us much of the process by which the problem of causality developed out of the problem of the ways of God to man. His idea of *diké* is the first stage in the projection of the life of the city-state upon the life of the universe.<sup>60</sup> But we do not find that the Milesian philosophers expressly brought the superhuman cosmos into relation to human life.<sup>61</sup> It would not have occurred to them to do so, because their investigations were concerned not with humanity but with the eternal scheme of things. Still, they used human life as an example to help them in interpreting *physis*; therefore, their picture of the universe could later be used to establish a harmony between eternal Being on the one side and human life and human values on the other.

PYTHAGORAS of Samos, although he worked in south Italy, was an Ionian philosopher too. His intellectual character is as difficult to assess as his actual personality. The traditional accounts of his life and genius kept changing with the development of Greek civilization, so that he is described as an inventor, or a politician, or a teacher, or the head of a monkish order, or the founder of a religion, or a miracle-worker.<sup>62</sup> Heraclitus despised him as a polymath like Hesiod, Xenophanes, and Hecataeus; yet he thought of him as learned in one particular sphere, like the others mentioned.<sup>63</sup> Compared with the unity and completeness of Anaximander's lofty intellect, Pythagoras' mind, with its

sisted, he is no doubt making the mistake of translating into material terms their theoretical identification of numberness and existence.<sup>71</sup> He must be nearer their real meaning in his explanation that the Pythagoreans believed that things *resembled* numbers in many ways, and in fact more closely than fire, water, or earth—the principles from which previous philosophers had derived all nature.<sup>72</sup> The most important illustration of Pythagorean doctrine is found at a subsequent stage of the development of philosophy—in Plato's strange attempt towards the end of his life to reduce his Ideas to numbers. Aristotle criticizes him for believing that quantities could express qualitative differences. The criticism may appear merely trivial to us; but it has been justly observed that the Greek conception of number originally contained a qualitative element, and that the process by which numbers were reduced to pure quantities was slow and gradual.<sup>73</sup>

Perhaps the Pythagorean views would be further illuminated by an investigation of the origin of the Greek words for the various numbers, and the remarkable differences in their etymologies—if we could expose the visual element which is certainly contained in each of them. We can understand at least how the Pythagoreans came to prize the power of numbers so highly, when we compare the lofty utterances of their contemporaries on the same subject. Prometheus, in Aeschylus, calls the discovery of number the masterpiece of his civilizing wisdom.<sup>74</sup> In fact, the age which discovered that number is the ruling principle of several important aspects of existence had made a great forward step in the search for the meaning of the universe: it had come appreciably nearer to showing that all nature is ruled by an inner law which we must study to understand her. The discovery—like all great advances in systematic knowledge—was given exaggerated importance at the time, and, like many stimulating and permanently valuable discoveries, was misused in practice. In speculations which now seem frivolous, the Pythagoreans attempted to reduce everything in the universe to manifestations of an arithmetical principle. They would not believe that anything could exist which could not be explained as being in some way a number.<sup>75</sup>

Mathematical science was an essentially new element in Greek culture. At first, its various branches were developed independ-

ently. It was soon recognized that each of these branches was a valuable educational discipline, but it was some time later that they began to interact, and the science to exist as a whole. The late, semi-mythical traditions about Pythagoras emphasize above all else his influence as a teacher. Plato certainly served as the model for that conception of him; it was embroidered by the Neopythagoreans and Neoplatonists; and modern accounts of his 'educational wisdom' are almost entirely based on uncritical acceptance of edifying biographies written in late antiquity.<sup>76</sup> Yet even in that conception of his character there is a residuum of historical truth. Plato speaking of Homer and his claim to be called the educator of Greece (a title which many contemporaries were ready to confer upon him) asked whether he could really be called a 'leader of paideia' in the sense in which, for instance, Pythagoras was entitled to this rank. Plato seems to think of Pythagoras primarily as the founder of the 'Pythagorean life' in this connexion. But the question is not only whether Pythagoras himself was a teacher: the really great teacher in that age was the spirit of the new science, which is, in the traditions we possess, represented by him. The educational influence of mathematics was due chiefly to its normative aspect. If we recall the importance of music in early Greek culture, and the close relationship of music to Pythagorean mathematics, we shall recognize that as soon as the Pythagoreans had discovered the numerical laws governing musical sound they were bound to create a philosophical theory of the educational influence of music. The connexion between music and mathematics which Pythagoras established was thenceforward a constant possession of the Greek spirit.

The connexion produced concepts which were to have far-reaching effects on the creative thinking of the Greeks. Under its influence new laws, governing all aspects of existence, were formulated and recognized. All the marvellous principles of Greek thought—principles which have come to symbolize its most essential and indefeasible quality—were created in the sixth century. They were not always in existence—they were established and developed by a regular historical process. And one of the most decisive advances in that process was the new investigation of the structure of music. The knowledge of the true nature of harmony and rhythm produced by that investigation would

alone give Greece a permanent position in the history of civilization; for it affects almost every sphere of life. The work of the Pythagoreans created a new world ruled by inflexible laws, comparable to the rigid causality of Solon's doctrine of justice in society. While Anaximander had believed the universe to be a cosmos of things governed by the absolute power of justice, the Pythagoreans conceived that the principle of the cosmos was harmony.<sup>77</sup> He had established the causal *necessity* (calling it the 'justice' of existence) of the sequence of temporal phenomena; and they in turn emphasized the *harmony*, the structural aspect of the cosmos under its laws.

This harmony was expressed in the relation of parts to the whole. But behind that harmony lay the mathematical conception of proportion, which, the Greeks believed, could be visually presented by geometrical figures. The harmony of the world is a complex idea: it means both musical harmony, in the sense of a beautiful concord between different sounds, and harmonious mathematical structure on rigid geometrical rules. The subsequent influence of the conception of harmony on all aspects of Greek life was immeasurably great. It affected not only sculpture and architecture, but poetry and rhetoric, religion and morality; all Greece came to realize that whatever a man made or did was governed by a severe rule, which like the rule of justice could not be transgressed with impunity—the rule of fitness or propriety ( $\pi\eta\acute{\epsilon}\tau\omega$ ,  $\alpha\acute{q}\mu\acute{o}\tau\tau\omega$ ). Unless we trace the boundless working of this law in all spheres of Greek thought throughout classical and post-classical times, we cannot realize the powerful educative influence of the discovery of harmony. The conceptions of rhythm, of relation, and of the mean are closely akin to it, or derive from it a more definite content. It is true not only of the idea of the cosmos, but also of harmony and rhythm, that it was necessary for Greece to discover their existence in 'the nature of being' before she could employ them in the spiritual world, to find order and method in human life.

We do not know the inherent connexion between Pythagoras' mathematical and musical theories and his doctrine of transmigration. The philosophical speculations of his age were essentially metaphysical, so that the myth of metempsychosis (which is not founded on logic) must be an importation from outside

were other new religious movements in the sixth century, notably the powerful and growing cults of Dionysus, and the worship of the Delphic Apollo: these too responded to the craving for a more personal religion. Historians of religion find it impossible to explain why two violently contrasting deities like Apollo and Dionysus should have been worshipped together in the Delphic cult. Yet the Greeks obviously felt that these gods had something in common—which, in the age when we find them jointly revered, was their power to affect the souls of their worshippers.<sup>81</sup> They were the most personal of all gods. It might almost be said that Apollo's spirit of order, clarity and moderation could not have sunk so deeply into men's hearts if the wild excitement of Dionysus, sweeping away all civic *eukosmia*, had not first broken the ground. That revolution and resettlement gave the Delphic religion such authority that it came to command all the constructive energies of Greece. The 'seven wise men', the greatest kings, and the most powerful tyrants of the sixth century all extolled the oracle of the Delphic Apollo as the highest type of wise counsel. In the fifth century both Pindar and Herodotus were deeply influenced by the Delphic spirit, and testify to its power to exalt and inspire. Its influence was not—even at its heyday in the sixth century—perpetuated in the creation of any lasting records: there was no Delphic bible. But at Delphi the educational power of Greek religion reached its maximum, and spread from there far beyond the frontiers of Hellas.<sup>82</sup> The wise sayings of sages were dedicated to Apollo and inscribed in his temple, since their worldly wisdom was only a reflection of his divine wisdom. And at his door his worshippers saw the command *Know thyself*—the doctrine of *sophrosyné*, by which men learn to remember the limits of human power and ambition, expressed in the legislative form that was characteristic of the age.

It is a mistake to believe that Greek *sophrosyné* was produced by the naturally harmonious character of the Greek people. If it had been, why should they have been so earnestly enjoined to pursue it, at the time when they had suddenly realized the dark gulfs over which move our life and the soul of man? The moderation that Apollo preached was not the humdrum doctrine of peace and contentment. It was a strong repression of the new individualistic impulse to wantonness; for in the Apolline code the worst of outrages against heaven was 'not to think human

thoughts'<sup>83</sup>—to aspire too high, beyond the limits fixed for man. Hybris, which had originally been a concrete legalistic idea, the opposite of diké,<sup>84</sup> now grew into a religious conception too: it now meant the pleonexia or aggrandisement of man against God. This new connotation, which became the classical expression of the religious sentiment of the age of the tyrants, is the one which has come down to us. For a long time, along with the conception of the envy of the gods, it sharply defined the essential doctrines of much of Greek religion. The fortune of mortal men is as changeable as the day: so men must not aspire too high.

But the Greeks, driven by the human need for happiness, escaped from this tragic realization into the inner world of their own souls—either in the self-forgetfulness of Dionysiac intoxication (which was therefore complementary to the severe restraint of Apollo's creed) or in the Orphic teaching that the 'soul' is the best part of man and has a higher and purer destiny than his body. The passionless search for truth had now revealed to men the ceaseless process of birth and death which is Nature, and had shown that it was governed by a mighty universal law that cared nothing for the little life of mankind, but far transcended their brief happiness with its iron 'justice'. So, to strengthen them against this awful truth, men turned to the belief in their divine destiny. The soul, whose existence in us could be proved by no scientific demonstration, was now held to be a stranger in an inhospitable world, yearning for its eternal home. Ordinary men dreamt of life beyond the grave as an eternity of sensuous delight; while a few nobler spirits strove to keep their balance within the whirling chaos by hoping for release when their journey through the world was completed. But both classes were united by their faith in their own higher destiny. They were confident that when at last the pure soul reached the other world, it would speak as its password at the gate the truth by which it had lived on this earth: 'I too am of divine descent'. These are the words<sup>85</sup> inscribed on the Orphic gold plates which were deposited in graves in southern Italy to serve as passports to the life beyond the grave.

The Orphic conception of the soul marks an important advance in the development of man's consciousness of selfhood. Without it Plato and Aristotle could never have developed the theory that the human spirit is divine,<sup>86</sup> and that man's sensual

nature can be dissociated from his real self, which it is his true function to bring to perfection. The doctrines of Empedocles, inspired as they are by the Orphic conception of man's divine nature, are enough to show how closely the new religion was associated with the problems of philosophy. The connexion of the two is first manifest in Pythagoras' teaching; and he was extolled by Empedocles in his Orphic poem *The Purifications*.<sup>87</sup> In fact the Orphic doctrine of the soul and the natural philosophy of Ionia are mingled in the philosophy of Empedocles—a synthesis which shows very instructively how these two different ways of viewing the world could supplement and complete each other. The union of the two is symbolized in his image of the soul tossed up and down in the whirl of the elements: air, water, earth, and fire cast it out in turn and thrust it from one to another, 'and such a one am I,' he says,<sup>88</sup> 'a wanderer banished by God'. In the cosmos revealed by the physicists, the soul can find no home; but it redeems itself by its religious consciousness of selfhood. Only when the soul can make a place for itself in the philosophers' cosmos (as in Heraclitus<sup>89</sup>), can man, in his quest for religious satisfaction, be content with the theories of metaphysics.

XENOPHANES of Colophon, the second of the great Ionian thinkers who taught and worked in southern Italy, was not a systematic philosopher like his predecessors. Milesian natural philosophy was the work of pure scientific research. But Anaximander, by making his doctrines accessible in book form, was definitely addressing the public; and Pythagoras was the founder of a society devoted to putting his own doctrines into practice. Both were therefore to some extent engaged in teaching—which is an essentially different activity from philosophical research. Still, philosophy affected current beliefs so deeply by its criticisms that it was impossible to keep it entirely separate from other intellectual activities. Natural philosophy had been greatly stimulated by contemporary political and social movements; and in its turn it had a potent influence on state and society. Xenophanes was a poet: his work was an invasion of poetry by the spirit of philosophy. That is a sure sign that philosophy was becoming a cultural force, for poetry was then, as always, the true expression of national culture. In the impulse which moved

philosophy to put on poetic form we can see the whole of its power over man—its claim to complete supremacy over the whole soul, with its domination of reason and emotion alike. The new Ionian medium of prose was coming into favour very slowly, and had much less influence than poetry: for while prose, written in one local dialect, commanded a narrow audience, poetry used the language of Homer and was truly Panhellenic in speech. And the influence which Xenophanes meant his poems to have was also Panhellenic. Even Empedocles, who was a physicist, and Parmenides, who was an abstract logician and metaphysician, used the Hesiodic type of didactic poem as their medium. They were possibly encouraged by the example of Xenophanes; for, although he was neither a true philosopher nor (despite frequent ascriptions) the author of a didactic poem on nature,<sup>90</sup> he was a pioneer in the poetic presentation of philosophical reasoning. In his elegies and his *silloi* (a new kind of satire) he attacked and thereby popularized the enlightened doctrines of the Ionian physicists<sup>91</sup> and took up the cudgels against the prevailing ideals of culture.

These ideals were, above all else, the teachings of Homer and Hesiod. Xenophanes himself says so: 'all have learnt from Homer since the beginning'.<sup>92</sup> Therefore Homer was the focus of Xenophanes' attack, in his struggle to create a new culture.<sup>93</sup> Philosophy had replaced Homer's conception of the universe by a natural and logical explanation of events; and it was that new explanation of the universe which fired Xenophanes' poetic imagination.<sup>94</sup> For him it meant the abandonment of the old, polytheistic, anthropomorphic world of gods, which was (in Herodotus' famous phrase) created for the Greeks by Homer and Hesiod.<sup>95</sup> They had, he cried, attributed all shameful actions to the gods, theft and adultery and deceit.<sup>96</sup> His own conception of God, which he presents with fervent trust in the validity of his new doctrine, is that God is the same as the whole universe. There is only one God in that sense.<sup>97</sup> God is like mortals neither in shape nor in mind. He is all Sight, all Thought, all Hearing.<sup>98</sup> He sways the universe without effort, by pure thought.<sup>99</sup> He does not hurry busily here and there like the gods of epic poetry, but rests unmoved.<sup>100</sup> Men think that the gods are born, and have clothes, voices, bodies like themselves:<sup>101</sup> if oxen, horses, and lions had hands and could paint like men, they would paint

gods in their own images: the oxen would draw gods like oxen and the horses like horses.<sup>102</sup> Negroes believed in flatnosed black-faced gods, and the Thracians in gods with blue eyes and red hair.<sup>103</sup> All the things which happen in the external world—things which men think are the work of the gods, and which terrify them—are brought about by natural causes. The rainbow is only a coloured cloud<sup>104</sup>; the sea is the source of all waters, winds and clouds.<sup>105</sup> 'We are all born from earth and water.'<sup>106</sup> 'Earth and water are everything which comes into being and grows.'<sup>107</sup> 'Everything comes from earth and returns to it at last'.<sup>108</sup> Civilization was not a gift of the gods to men, as mythical tradition says, but men themselves discovered everything in time, and improved it.<sup>109</sup>

Not one of all these ideas was new. They were at bottom the doctrines of Anaximander and Anaximenes, who really created this naturalistic explanation of the universe. But the work of Xenophanes was to preach them with passionate conviction. He was inspired not only by their terrific power to destroy outworn beliefs, but by their creative religious and moral force. Thus, his biting jests at the inadequacy of the Homeric conception of the gods and the universe were part of his effort to drive home the new and more worthy faith of which he was the apostle. It was the power of this new truth to revolutionize the life and faith of mankind which made it the fitting basis for a new culture. So the physicists' cosmos became, by a curious retrogression in thought, the pattern of eunomia in human society,<sup>110</sup> the metaphysical foundation of city-state morality.

Xenophanes wrote other poems besides his philosophical satires. A restless spirit, he looked back in one poem<sup>111</sup> (written at the age of ninety-two) on sixty-seven years of wandering, which probably began with his emigration from Colophon to southern Italy; but in his epic *The Founding of Colophon* he glorified his old home.<sup>112</sup> He also wrote a poem on the foundation of the colony of Elea, in which he himself may have taken part.<sup>113</sup> In any case these poems contained more personal feeling than was usual in the treatment of objective themes. His philosophical poems were wholly inspired by his personal faith in the exciting new doctrines which he brought from Asia to his new home in Magna Graecia and Sicily. Some modern scholars describe him as a rhapsode who recited the Homeric epics in pub-

witty conversation with the tyrant Hiero of Syracuse,<sup>119</sup> he sat at the tables of the rich and the great. But he never found the natural appreciation and social prestige which had been his in Ionia : he was always alone.

In his poem can be seen, more clearly than anywhere else in the whole history of Greek civilization, the inevitable clash between the two spiritual foes—the old aristocratic culture, and the new philosophical ideal of humanity which now sought to eject it from its place and power in the social order. Sport or spirit?—that is the essence of the conflict. It seemed as if the invaders must fall back defeated from the strong walls of tradition; yet their battle cry had in it a victorious ring, and in fact their triumph was not far off. The absolute dominance of the athletic ideal was broken. Xenophanes could not, as Pindar could, hold that each Olympic victory, in wrestling or boxing, running or chariot-racing, was the revelation of the victor's divine *areté*.<sup>120</sup> The city loads the victor in the games with honours and gifts, he cries, 'and yet he does not deserve them as I do; for this wisdom of ours is better than the strength of men and horses! It is a mistaken custom: and there is no justice in preferring strength to wisdom. For even if a city has among its citizens a good boxer or a victor at wrestling or the pentathlon, it is not any more in right order (*εὐνούην*) for all that; and a victory at Olympia gives little joy to the city, for it does not fill its store-rooms.'<sup>121</sup>

That is a surprising way to defend the value of philosophical knowledge. Still, it shows once again with the greatest clarity that the city and its welfare are the basic standard of all values. Therefore, Xenophanes was bound, if he wished to replace the traditional ideal of manhood by the philosophical man, to show that the innovation would benefit the city. It is reminiscent of the poem in which Tyrtaeus proclaimed the unconditional superiority of the Spartan civic ideal, warlike prowess, above all other human excellences, and especially above the athletic excellence of the Olympic victor. 'This', he said, 'is a good shared by all the city'—and his words were the first attack of the city-state morality on the old chivalrous ideal.<sup>122</sup> Later, when the constitutional state came into being, justice was exalted as the highest virtue—still in the name of the polis.<sup>123</sup> And now Xenophanes appeals to the welfare of the polis to prove the value of his new

life. Thus, the universe as conceived by Anaximander is a visible symbol of the cosmic processes of coming-to-be and passing-away, the warring opposites ruled by eternal *diké*; and in that conception there is little trace of abstract logical reasoning.<sup>128</sup> But the sentences of Parmenides are a severely logical structure sustained and controlled by the sense of necessary sequence of thought. It is not for nothing that the extant fragments of his work form the first more or less comprehensive and connected set of philosophical dogmas which exists in Greek. We cannot realize or communicate his meaning by studying his calm vision of the universe, but rather by contemplating the mental processes which produced it.<sup>129</sup> The energy with which he imposes his doctrines on his audience arises not from the enthusiasm of the doctrinaire, but from the logician's triumphant belief in the necessary sequence of his thoughts. He too holds that the highest aim of human thought is the realization of an absolute necessity, *ananké*: he also calls it *diké* or *moira*, obviously under Anaximander's influence.<sup>130</sup> But he tells us that *diké* holds all existence fast in her toils, and will not loosen them, so that that which is can neither come into being nor pass away. And by that he does not mean simply to contrast his *diké* with the *diké* of Anaximander, which is manifested in the coming-to-be and passing-away of all things. He means that his own *diké*, which keeps all coming-to-be and passing-away far removed from Being, and holds Being immovably in its bonds, is the necessity implicit in the conception of Being, the necessity which he metaphorically calls the 'just claim' of Being.<sup>131</sup> As he repeats again and again, with increasing force, Being is, and Notbeing is not.<sup>132</sup> That which is cannot not be: that which is not cannot be—thus Parmenides expresses the law of thought which was established by his realization that a logical contradiction cannot be resolved.

The compulsion of pure thought is the great discovery on which the philosophy of Parmenides is centred. It defines the polemic tone of his teaching. What may seem to us in his chief propositions to be the discovery of a logical law was regarded by him as an objective discovery, which put him into opposition to all the ideas of the Ionian physicists. If it is true that Being never ceases to exist and Notbeing never exists, then (Parmenides realized) coming-to-be and passing-away are impossible.<sup>133</sup> Yet appearances, which seem to tell us that coming-to-be and

passing-away do occur, imposed on the natural philosophers so that they held that Being arose out of Notbeing and passed away into Notbeing again. They held, in fact, the belief which all men share. We trust our eyes and ears instead of our reason, which is the only guide to reliable certainty. Reason is our spiritual ears and eyes, and the man who does not use it is like the blind and the deaf<sup>134</sup>—he is lost in a maze of contradictions. He must at last come to believe that Being and Notbeing are the same and yet different.<sup>135</sup> If we assert that Being arises from Notbeing, we say that the origin of the world is unknowable; for what is not, cannot be known: real knowledge must correspond to an object.<sup>136</sup> So if we seek the truth, we must free ourselves from the sensory world of coming-to-be and passing-away,<sup>137</sup> which leads us to accept such unthinkable conclusions, and turn to true Being, which we can comprehend by reason. 'For thinking is the same as Being'.<sup>138</sup>

The great difficulty of pure reason always is to acquire some concrete knowledge of its object. In the extant fragments of his work Parmenides shows himself exercised to deduce, from his rigorous new conception of Being, a number of definitions which are inherent in its nature: he calls them signposts on the road of research along which pure reason takes us.<sup>139</sup> Being is without birth and therefore deathless; it is one; it is complete; it is immovable, eternal, ubiquitous, a unity, interconnected, indivisible, homogeneous, boundless, impenetrable. Obviously all the positive and negative qualities which Parmenides attributes to Being were coined on the model of the old natural philosophy, and worked out by careful analysis of the contradictions implicit in that philosophy.<sup>140</sup> Here we need not demonstrate this in detail. Unfortunately our understanding of Parmenides' doctrines is diminished by the gaps in our knowledge of earlier philosophies. But it is certain that he made constant references to Anaximander; and he may well have attacked Pythagorean theories too, although we can produce no evidence for the conjecture.<sup>141</sup> In this book we cannot undertake a systematic exposition of his attempt to attack, from his new point of view, and to destroy all the principles of natural philosophy, nor of the paradoxes which are the logical result of his own principles. (These paradoxes were investigated chiefly by his pupils, among whom

Zeno and Melissus deserve special mention as more or less independent thinkers.)

Parmenides held that the discovery of pure reason and of the stringent rules of logical thought meant the discovery of a new 'road' to truth—in fact, of the only practicable one.<sup>142</sup> In Greek philosophy the metaphor of the right road (*όδος*) of research constantly reappears; although it was only a metaphor, it has an almost technical sound about it, especially in the contrast of the right road and the wrong, where it approaches the sense of 'method'.<sup>143</sup> This concept, fundamental in the development of scholarship, was created by Parmenides; for he was the first thinker who deliberately endeavoured to solve the problem of philosophical method, and clearly distinguished the two chief channels in which, thenceforth, philosophical research was to run—thought and perception, the way of the senses and the way of reason. Whatever is not known by the way of reason is only 'men's opinion'.<sup>144</sup> Our salvation depends on our abandoning the world of opinion for the world of truth. Parmenides considered this conversion to be violent and difficult, and yet a great act of liberation. He presents his reasoning with a majestic sublimity and a deep religious emotion which makes it inspiring as well as convincing. For it is entralling to watch him, in his search for knowledge, freeing himself and men for the first time from the appearances which impose on sense, and discovering reason to be the organ through which alone the totality and unity of Being can be apprehended. Although his discovery was troubled and distorted by many problems, it brought into action one of the fundamental forces of the Greek genius for educating humanity and comprehending the universe. Every line he wrote pulsates with his ardent faith in the newly discovered powers of pure reason.

This faith of his explains the structure of his work, divided as it is into two sharply contrasting sections, *Truth* and *Opinion*;<sup>145</sup> and it also solves the old question—how can Parmenides have been both a poet and a dry logician? It is oversimplification to reply that in his day any subject could be treated in Homeric and Hesiodic verse. No: Parmenides was a natural poet, because he was carried away by his conviction that he must preach his discovery, the discovery which he believed to be in part at least a revelation of the truth. This conviction is not the same as

Xenophanes' boldly personal evangelism. Parmenides' poem is charged with a proud humility. Although his presentation of the facts is uncompromisingly austere, still he feels that he is only the instrument and servant of a power far higher and more worthy than himself. In his immortal prelude<sup>146</sup> he avows this philosophical inspiration. If we study it, we find that the image of the 'man who knows'<sup>147</sup> travelling towards truth is an essentially religious symbol. The text is corrupt at the most vital point, but I believe that the original words can be reconstructed. The 'man who knows' is an initiate who is called to watch the mysteries of truth: a symbol of the new knowledge of Being.<sup>148</sup> The road by which he travels 'uninjured' (so I should restore the words) to his goal is the road of salvation.<sup>149</sup> That philosophical research could be described in the terminology of the mysteries (which were at that time growing in importance) is a very significant fact: it shows that philosophy was consciously taking the place of religion. It has been said that for Parmenides both God and emotion are meaningless compared with the rigorous laws of thought;<sup>150</sup> but the obverse of this fact is that Parmenides considers thought and the truth which it apprehends to be something very like religion. It was the consciousness of his high mission which led him, in the prelude to his poem, to draw the first real picture of a philosopher—the 'man who knows', led by the daughters of light, far from the paths of men, along the hard road to the house of truth.

Philosophy had come very close to life in Xenophanes' educational and evangelistic writings; in Parmenides, it seemed to have receded, even further than at first, from human life and human affairs, because in his conception of Being all concrete individual existences—and therefore man too—disappeared; but in HERACLITUS of Ephesus the return to humanity is complete. Historians of philosophy long considered Heraclitus to be a physicist and described his doctrine that fire was the origin of all things as parallel to Thales' principle of water and Anaximenes' principle of air.<sup>151</sup> Yet the deep significance that fills the paradoxical aphorisms of 'the Dark' (as he was called) ought to have kept scholars from confusing his painfully repressed personality with that of a scientist devoted only to the search for facts. Nowhere throughout his work is there any trace either of

a purely didactic attitude or of a purely physical theory of the universe. The utterances which could be taken to mean either that he was a physicist or that he was a teacher must not be detached from their context, for they cannot stand alone. No doubt he was greatly influenced by natural philosophy. The physicists' conception of reality, the cosmos, the incessant rise and fall of coming-to-be and passing-away, the inexhaustible first principle from which everything arises and to which everything returns, the circle of changing appearances through which Being passes—these fundamentally physical ideas were the basis of his philosophy.

Yet those who had preceded him in the search for an objective conception of the universe—the Milesians, and, even more rigorously, their opponent Parmenides—had dehumanised the problem, and had eventually lost sight of human life in the vast pattern of nature. Heraclitus, on the other hand, held that the human soul with all its emotions and sufferings was the centre of all the energies of the cosmos. He could not forget himself in contemplation of the high distant procession of natural events, in which the seer at last becomes the totality of things seen. Cosmic phenomena happened through him, he held, and for him. He believed that all his acts and words were only the effect in him of nature's power, although most men did not realize that they were merely the instruments wielded by a higher order.<sup>152</sup> That was the great novelty in Heraclitus' doctrines. His predecessors had completed the conception of the cosmos:<sup>153</sup> they had brought the Greeks to realize the eternal conflict between Being and Becoming. But now they were driven to ask the awful question: 'In this universal struggle, what place is there for man?' With restless energy and childlike eagerness, his contemporaries—Hecataeus and others—devoted themselves to the Milesian passion for many-sided research (*historia*), collecting and assimilating quantities of historical traditions and geographical and ethnological data. But Heraclitus demolished this naïve rationalism by the blunt phrase 'Learning does not teach men to have sense';<sup>154</sup> and he expressed the revolutionary tendency of his own philosophy in one pregnant saying, 'I sought for myself'.<sup>155</sup> Humanization of philosophy could not be more trenchantly expressed.

No philosopher before Socrates awakes such keen personal

sympathy as Heraclitus. He stands at the very pinnacle of the freedom of Ionian thought, and his 'I sought for myself' expresses the highest consciousness of selfhood. A nobleman by birth, he speaks with a proud decision which appears at first sight to be aristocratic arrogance converted to dogma by his own genius. But he did not seek for himself by psychological research into his own nature. Before him, philosophers had engaged in logical reasoning, or in intellectually ordered observation of phenomena; but now he revealed that a new world of knowledge could be attained if the soul were to turn to contemplate herself. There is an underlying connexion between his claim of self-study and another of his sayings: 'Travel over every road, you cannot discover the frontiers of the soul—it has so deep a *logos*'.<sup>156</sup> This is the first appearance in Greek of the idea that the logos and the soul can be *deep*: and Heraclitus' entire philosophy flowed from this new spring of knowledge.

Logos for Heraclitus was not the conceptual thinking (*νοεῖν*, *νόημα*) of Parmenides,<sup>157</sup> whose pure analytical logic would not admit the metaphorical idea that the soul is boundless. It was a form of knowledge, the origin of both 'action and speech'.<sup>158</sup> If we want an example of this special type of knowledge, we shall not find it in thought, which teaches that what is can never not be, but in the insight which struck out such a brilliant truth as 'Ethos is man's daemon'.<sup>159</sup> It is highly important and significant that in the very first sentence<sup>160</sup> of his book (a sentence which is fortunately preserved) Heraclitus lays down that knowledge has a productive relation to life. There he speaks of the words and actions that men attempt without grasping the logos which alone teaches them to 'do while awake' those actions which those without it do 'while asleep'. That is, logos can give a new life of conscious knowledge. It affects every sphere of human action. Heraclitus was the first philosopher to introduce the idea of *φρόνησις* and to put it on a level with *σοφία*: that is, he connected knowledge of Being with insight into human values and conduct, and made the former include the latter.<sup>161</sup> The prophetic tone of his speech derived its logical power and urgency from his claim as a philosopher to open men's eyes to their own actions, to reveal to them the foundations of life, to awake them from sleep.<sup>162</sup> Many of his sayings confirm the view that he felt himself to be an interpreter of life. Nature and life are a *griphos*, a

riddle, a Delphic oracle, a Sibylline utterance—we must learn to read their *meaning*.<sup>163</sup> He feels that he is the solver of the riddle, the philosophic Oedipus who robs the Sphinx of her enigma: for 'Nature loves to hide herself'.<sup>164</sup>

This is a new way to philosophize: a novel conception of the philosopher's calling. It can be expressed only in words and metaphors drawn from intuition. Even the logos cannot be defined except in metaphor. The universality of the logos, of its evocative influence, of the self-consciousness that it awakes in the man whom it inspires, is most clearly expressed in Heraclitus' favourite contrast of sleep and waking.<sup>165</sup> He also mentions an essential quality of the logos, which distinguished it from the ordinary intellectual condition of the majority of mankind: it is 'common' or 'universal' (*Ξυνόν*).<sup>166</sup> That is, it is the one cosmos which exists for the 'waking' alone, while the 'sleepers' each have their own private world, a world of dreams.<sup>167</sup> We must not imagine that this social universality of Heraclitus' logos is merely a metaphorical expression of the universal validity of logic. Community is the highest good known to the moral code of the city-state: it takes up and transforms the private existence of each individual. Thus, what at first seemed to be an exaggerated individualism in Heraclitus, his imperative and dictatorial attitude, is now revealed as the very opposite of individualism; for it is a deliberate destruction of the weak and erring individual caprice, in which the whole of life was almost lost. Men must follow the logos. The logos is a still higher and more universal 'community' than the law of the city; and upon it men can support their lives and their thoughts, and 'strengthen' themselves with it, 'as a city strengthens itself with law'.<sup>168</sup> 'Men live as if each of them had a private insight of his own'.<sup>169</sup>

From this it is obvious that Heraclitus is not thinking of the deficiencies of some kind of theoretical knowledge, but of the whole of human existence, of men's conduct in practice and of its failure to correspond to the universal spirit of the logos. There is a law in the universe, as in the city. This uniquely Greek idea appears here for the first time in history. And it embodies the educational genius of the Greek statesman and lawgiver at its very highest. Only the logos can comprehend the law that Heraclitus calls divine, the law by which 'all human laws are nourished'.<sup>170</sup> The logos is the mind—the organ that perceives

the meaning of the cosmos. The thought which was implicit in Anaximander's conception of the universe now becomes explicit in Heraclitus' consciousness of selfhood—the idea of the logos which knows itself and its own place and effect in the scheme of the universe. By it lives and thinks the divine 'fire' which as life and thought is infused through the entire cosmos.<sup>171</sup> Through its divine origin it is able to penetrate the divine heart of nature from which it was born. Thus, within the new cosmos which his predecessors had discovered, Heraclitus gave man his place as a completely cosmic being. To live as a cosmic being, man must voluntarily learn, and obey the cosmic laws. Xenophanes had extolled 'wisdom' as the highest human virtue, because it was the source of law and order in the city;<sup>172</sup> so Heraclitus justifies its claim to supremacy by saying that it teaches men to follow in speech and action the truth of nature and its divine law.<sup>173</sup>

Heraclitus expressed the power and purpose of the cosmic wisdom, unrealizable by the average intellect, in his original doctrine of the warring forces within the unity of nature. That doctrine was in some degree borrowed from the concrete physical conceptions of the Milesian physicists; but ultimately it owed its living force, not to the suggestions of the philosophers, but to Heraclitus' own direct insight into the process of human existence, by which he saw both intellectual and physical activity as a strange complex unity, a bipolar life. 'Life', however, meant for him not only human but also cosmic existence. Only if understood as life, does the existence of the cosmos lose its apparent contradictions. Anaximander had held that coming-to-be and passing-away were the balanced forces of an eternal justice, or rather of a lawsuit of things before the tribunal of time, in which they must pay one another compensation for their unrighteousness and *pleonexia*.<sup>174</sup> Heraclitus simply said that conflict was 'the father of everything'.<sup>175</sup> Only in conflict could *diké* establish herself. Here he uses Anaximander's insight to give a visual interpretation to the new Pythagorean conception of harmony. 'That which opposes, fits; different elements make the finest harmony'.<sup>176</sup> That is a law which obviously rules the whole cosmos. Throughout nature there are abundance and lack—the causes of war. She is full of sharp opposites: day and night, summer and winter, heat and cold, war and peace, life and death succeed each other in eternal interchange.<sup>177</sup> All the conflicting opposites of

cosmic life constantly replace one another and are again replaced.<sup>178</sup> To continue the metaphor of the lawsuit, they keep compensating each other. The whole process of the world is a legal process—it is an interchange (*ἀνταμοιβή*), for the life of one thing is the death of another in this eternal see-saw of existence.<sup>179</sup> 'It rests by changing'.<sup>180</sup> 'Living and dead, waking and sleeping, young and old are at bottom one and the same. This changes, and is that; and that changes again, and is this'.<sup>181</sup> 'If you have not heard me, but my logos, it is wise for you to admit that all things are one'.<sup>182</sup> As symbols for the clash and harmony of opposites in the cosmos Heraclitus uses the bow and the lyre. Both do their work by 'counterstriving conjunction'.<sup>183</sup> The general conception which was needed in philosophical terminology here is that of tension: but it is supplied by the visual image.<sup>184</sup> Heraclitean unity is full of tension. This brilliant insight into the meaning of life was to give an enormous stimulus to the thought of subsequent ages: it has not, in fact, been estimated at its true value until our own time.

If we are to grasp what is new and essential in Heraclitus' influence on Greek culture, we must here refrain from further philosophical analysis of his doctrine of unity in opposites, and in particular from any discussion of the difficult problem of its relation to the teaching of Parmenides.<sup>185</sup> Compared with the philosophers who preceded him, Heraclitus was the first philosophical anthropologist. His philosophy of humanity might be figured as the innermost of three concentric circles: the outermost his theology, the next his cosmology, and within them both his anthropology. In reality the three circles are inseparable; at least his anthropology cannot be dissociated from his cosmological and theological teaching. For Heraclitus, man is part of the cosmos, and as such he is subject to the laws of the cosmos in the same way as all its other parts. But since, by virtue of his own intellect, he harbours within himself the eternal law of the life of the universe, he can share the highest wisdom, from whose counsel springs the divine law. The freedom of the Greek lies in the fact that he subordinates himself, as one part, to the whole which is the city-state, and to its law. That is a different kind of freedom from the liberty of modern individualism, which always feels that it belongs to a suprasensual and universal world, higher than the here-and-now world of the state. But the

philosophical liberty to which Heraclitus aspires never conflicts with the Greek's allegiance to his polis: for in it Heraclitus teaches that man is one part of a universal 'community' of all things, and that he is subject to the law of that community.<sup>186</sup> Our religious instinct naturally seeks a personal ruler for that community, and Heraclitus too felt that need. 'One thing, which alone is wise, will and will not be called by the name of Zeus'.<sup>187</sup> But Greek political opinion at that time held that the rule of one was tyranny: Heraclitus could reconcile this view with the religious impulse, because he held that law was not the opinion of the majority but the emanation of the highest knowledge. 'Law is also obedience to the will of one alone'.<sup>188</sup>

Heraclitus' insight into the meaning of the world was the birth of a new and nobler religion, an intellectual realization of the way of the highest wisdom. Living and acting by that realization were called φρονεῖν,<sup>189</sup> and Heraclitus, in prophetic words, showed how to reach it by following the way of the philosophical logos. The earliest physicists had not expressly posed the religious problem, for their conception of the universe was a de-humanized world of being. The Orphic cult, to fill the gap, taught that, though natural philosophy seemed to destroy mankind too in the midst of the confusion of universal coming-to-be and passing-away, man's soul was really akin to the divine, and so eternal.<sup>190</sup> Yet natural philosophy, in its concept of a cosmos under the rule of *diké*, offered a focus on which religious ideals might centre; and Heraclitus with his doctrine that man has a place in the cosmos at last unified the two contrasting ways of thought. And his conception of the soul raised the Orphic religion to a higher level, for he taught that through its kinship with the 'everliving fire' of the cosmos the philosophical soul is capable of knowing divine wisdom and harbouring it in itself.<sup>191</sup> Thus the conflict between the cosmology and the religion of the sixth century was resolved into unity in Heraclitus, who stood at the threshold of the new century. We have already observed that the cosmos of the Milesians was rather a universal moral code than a law of nature in the modern sense. Heraclitus raised its moral character to a cosmic religion, in his 'divine nomos', and thus based the moral code of the philosophical man upon the moral law of the entire universe.

THE CODIFICATION OF THE ARISTOCRATIC EDUCATIONAL  
TRADITION

Structurally, Theognis' book of 'Sayings to Cyrnus' belongs to the same species as Hesiod's *Works and Days* and the maxims of Phocylides. It is a collection of ὑποθῆκαι, 'teachings'.<sup>16</sup> The word appears at the end of the prologue, immediately before the beginning of the maxims proper. 'I shall teach you, Cyrnus, in friendly fashion, the things which I myself learnt from the nobles when I was still a boy'.<sup>17</sup> The essence of his teaching therefore is that it is not the ideas of Theognis himself but the tradition of his class. An early attempt to reduce the principles of aristocratic culture and training to poetry was the *Teachings of Chiron*, mentioned in a previous chapter.<sup>18</sup> The aphorisms of Phocylides of Miletus are meant to be general guides to the conduct of life. The new attitude of Theognis is particularly significant when contrasted with the work of Phocylides on the one hand and of Hesiod on the other. His aim is to expound all the principles of aristocratic education, the hallowed doctrines which until he wrote had only been verbally transmitted from father to son. Thus his work is a deliberate parallel and contrast to Hesiod's codification of the principles of peasant wisdom.

Cyrnus, the young man to whom the poems are addressed, was bound to Theognis by Eros. The poet obviously considers that bond to be the basis of his educational relationship to him; and it was meant to make the man and the boy a typical couple, in the eyes of the class to which they both belonged. It is very significant that the first time we have an opportunity of studying the Dorian aristocracy closely we should find that homosexual love is a ruling motive in their character. We need not here discuss this phenomenon, which is at present the subject of such keen debate; for it is not the purpose of this book to describe society for its own sake. But we must point out the position and the basis of homosexual love in the spiritual life of the Greek people. It must be recognized that the love of a man for a youth or a boy was an essential part of the aristocratic society of early Greece, and was inextricably bound up with its moral and social ideals. It has been called, specifically, *Dorian* boy-love;<sup>19</sup> and the description is so far correct that the practice always remained

more or less foreign to Ionian and Athenian popular sentiment, as is shown by Attic comedy above all else. The customs of the ruling class naturally came to be adopted by the rich bourgeois; and among them was παιδικὸς ἔρως. But the Athenian poets and legislators who accept or praise it were chiefly aristocrats, from Solon (whose poems name boy-love as one of the best things in life,<sup>20</sup> comparable to sport and the love of women) to Plato.<sup>21</sup> And the aristocrats throughout Greece were very strongly influenced by the Dorian nobles. It is true, then, that the Greeks themselves even in the classical period had vastly different opinions of the morality of the widespread practice of homosexual love because it was connected with definite social and historical traditions. From this point of view it is much easier for us to understand why large sections of the nation despised or punished it, while in other social strata it had developed until, for men at least, it was part of the highest conceptions of moral nobility and spiritual perfection.<sup>22</sup>

It is, after all, easy to understand how a passionate admiration of noble bodies and balanced souls could spring up in a race which for countless years had prized physical prowess and spiritual harmony as the highest good attainable by man, and which had striven by grave and ceaseless rivalry, by exertion involving the utmost energies of mind and body alike, to bring these qualities to the greatest possible perfection. Men who loved the possessors of these enviable qualities were moved by an ideal, the love for *areté*. Lovers who were bound by the male Eros were guarded by a deeper sense of honour from committing any base action, and were driven by a nobler impulse in attempting any honourable deed.<sup>23</sup> The Spartan state deliberately made Eros a factor, and an important factor, in its ἀγωγή.<sup>24</sup> And the relation of the lover to his beloved had a sort of educational authority similar to that of the parent to the child; in fact, it was in many respects superior to parental authority at the age when youths began to ripen into manhood and to cast off the bonds of domestic authority and family tradition. It is impossible to doubt the numerous affirmations of the educational power of Eros, which reach their culmination in Plato's *Symposium*. Such, then, was the power which inspired the educational doctrines of the aristocrat Theognis. The erotic aspect of that power, which is easily overlooked in comparison with its passion-

of the two genera, tragedy and comedy, in Attic drama. Plato was the first to point this out: at the end of *The Symposium* he makes Socrates say that the true poet must be both a tragedian and a comedian<sup>3</sup>—a claim which Plato himself answered by writing *Phaedo* and *The Symposium*. All Athenian culture was aimed at realizing that ideal. Not only did it pit tragedy and comedy against each other in the same theatre, but it taught the Athenians (in Plato's words<sup>4</sup>) to consider all human life as both a tragedy and a comedy. Its complete humanity is a mark of its classical perfection.

Modern critics were unable to apprehend the unique beauty of Aristophanic comedy until they abandoned the historical pre-conception that it was a crude but brilliant predecessor of the comedy of manners,<sup>5</sup> studied its religious origins, and realized that it was an outpouring of the ecstatic Dionysian joy of life. It was necessary in fact to return to its psychical source in order to overcome the rationalist type of aesthetic criticism, which could not see the creative energy of nature in Attic comedy.<sup>6</sup> But we must go a little further back if we are to see the pure spiritual heights to which the Dionysiac fervour soared in Aristophanes.

The history of comedy is the clearest possible example of the direct growth of a lofty artistic form from a root deep in the soil of Attica. Its origins were obscure—unlike those of tragedy, for the whole development of tragic poetry from the earliest dithyrambic choruses and dances to its climax in the art of Sophocles was perfectly familiar to the Greeks of that time.<sup>7</sup> The reasons for this were not merely technical. Tragic poetry was from the very first the centre of serious public interest. It had always been the medium in which noble thoughts were expressed. But the drunken *kōmos* which marked the rustic festival of Dionysus, with the robust obscenity of its phallic songs, was not considered to be spiritual creation, *poiésis*, poetry in the full sense of the word. When comedy became literature, as in Aristophanes, it assimilated many very diverse elements which all originated from the old Dionysiac festival.<sup>8</sup> It contained, of course, the spirit of the holiday revel, the *kōmos*, after which it was named. Another important feature was the parabasis, the procession in which the chorus gave free play to its mocking humour, taunting the audience (the gaping onlookers at the

tion match as representatives of the old-fashioned and the new-fangled types of education. It is significant that the techniques of each system are not separately compared to prove which is superior. Instead, the Just Argument describes the old educational system<sup>36</sup> as personified in a particular type of human character: for an educational system can prove its worth only by the complete character which it produces, not by any abstract merits. At the time when the Just Argument was still flourishing, and decent behaviour was obligatory, children were seen and not heard. They went quietly along the streets (says the Just Argument) on their way to school, wearing no overcoats even when the snow fell thick as flour. There they learnt to sing old songs to traditional melodies. If one of them put in disgusting cadenzas and flourishes like modern musicians, he was flogged. That was how to bring up a generation of Marathon-warriors. But nowadays the children are weakened by being wrapped up in big coats, and it would make you choke with rage to see the young fellows awkwardly holding their shields in front of their bellies in the war-dance at the Panathenaea.<sup>37</sup> The Just Argument promises to teach the young man who entrusts himself to its educational régime to hate the market-place and keep away from the baths, to be ashamed of disgraceful conduct and fire up when insulted, to rise and make room when older men come in, to keep pure the divine image of modesty, not to visit dancing-girls, and not to contradict his father. He must practise wrestling, oiled and muscular, in the gymnasium, instead of making stinging-nettle-sharp speeches in the market-place or letting himself be dragged into court to argue his head off about pettifogging trivialities. Under the olive-trees of the Academy, he will run races, crowned with reed, against decent companions, smelling of honeysuckle and poplar-leaves and gentlemanly leisure, and enjoying the spring season when the plane-tree whispers to the elm. The chorus calls these men happy who lived in the fine old days when that kind of education flourished, and admires the sweet perfume of sophrosyné which is wafted from the words of the Just Argument.

Now its opponent, the Unjust Argument, rises,<sup>38</sup> almost choking with rage and eager to throw everything into confusion by its dialectic. It boasts of its ominous name—which it got for being the first to discover the art of making speeches to contradict the laws. To represent the worse cause and make it win,

the greatest display of power and the greatest political crisis which ever occurred in the history of Greece.

The more actual his subject, and the more active his interest in it, the harder it was for Thucydides to take up an objective attitude to it. His *purpose* as a historian must be understood from his endeavour to achieve a dispassionate point of view towards the enormous event which divided his world into two hostile armies. If he were not such a notable politician, his effort to be objective would have been less surprising, but also less great. His intention was to tell the plain truth, unaffected by partisanship and as accurately as possible—in contrast to the picturesque accounts of the heroic past given by the poets.<sup>16</sup> In itself, that purpose was inspired not by a political but by a scientific attitude like that of the Ionian physicists. But Thucydides won his great intellectual victory by transferring that scientific attitude from timeless nature to the political struggle of his own age, darkened and confused by passions and party-interests. His contemporary Euripides<sup>17</sup> had described nature and the drama which we now call history as separated by an unbridgeable gulf. There was, he said, no *historia*, calm ‘investigation’ of an ‘unchanging’ object, except natural history—physical science. Whoever entered political life was beset by hate and conflict.<sup>18</sup> But Thucydides, by transferring *historia* to the sphere of politics, gave a new and deeper sense to this ideal of the search for truth.<sup>19</sup> To understand the great innovation which he made, we must remember the peculiar Greek conception of action. According to Greek ideas, it was knowledge that moved men to act. So Thucydides’ search for truth had a practical end in view, and thereby differed from the disinterested *theoria*, contemplation, practised by the Ionian scientists. No Athenian ever believed that knowledge could exist for any other purpose than to lead to right action. That is the great distinction between the Ionians on the one hand, and Plato and Thucydides on the other, although the two Athenians moved in such different worlds. Many a historian has been called ‘an eye without a heart’, but it cannot be said that Thucydides was naturally fitted to take an objective view of facts because of some innate lack of passion. What gave him the strength to shake off his passions, and what he held to be the advantage of the objective knowledge which he

guished between the 'true cause' of the war and the disputed points which were its occasion; and he concluded that the true cause was the incessantly growing power of Athens, which threatened Sparta. The conception of *cause* is borrowed from the language of medicine, as is clear from the word πρόφασις which Thucydides uses; for it was medical science which first made the scientific distinction between the real causes of an illness and its symptoms.<sup>33</sup> To transfer, as Thucydides did, a distinction made in organic science to the problem of the origins of the Peloponnesian War, was not merely a formal act. It meant that the problem had been fully objectified, by being taken out of the sphere of moral law. And thereby politics were marked off as an independent field of natural causality. According to Thucydides' description, the secret conflict between opposing forces finally led to an open crisis in Greek politics. It is somehow a relief to recognize objective causality as Thucydides does, for it raises the observer above the hateful conflict of parties and the ugly problem of guilt and innocence. And yet it is also rather oppressive, because it makes events which had once seemed to be voluntary actions, subject to moral judgment, appear to be the results of a long, continuous, inevitable process conditioned by a higher necessity.

Thucydides describes that phase of the process which preceded the outbreak of war—the growth of the Athenian power during the fifty years after the defeat of Persia—in a famous excursus<sup>34</sup> which he embodies in his account of the immediate preliminaries to the conflict. He is justified in adopting this peculiar structural device by the fact that here he was compelled to go beyond the chronological limits of his book. Besides, as he himself says, his short sketch of the rise of the Athenian empire is valuable in itself, since before his time there was no adequate description of that important period.<sup>35</sup> Not only that. One has the impression that this excursus on the pentekontaetia, and everything that Thucydides says of the true causes of the war, were inserted in his account of the preliminaries of the war after it was written, and that he had originally confined himself to describing the diplomatic and military events which directly preceded the outbreak. The impression is created not only by the remarkable structure of this section, but also by the fact that Thucydides must have described the beginning of the war in his

served that the first unofficial meeting, attended only by a few Lacedaemonian allies complaining against Athens, was supremely important: he marked it out as the decisive moment, and signalized it by reporting not less than four speeches made by participants<sup>38</sup>—a greater number than occurs at one time anywhere else in the book. The meeting was chiefly concerned with the complaints of the Lacedaemonian allies against Athens; yet, according to Thucydides, the Spartans were not chiefly impelled to declare war by their allies' arguments, but by their own fear of a still greater extension of Athenian power in Greece.<sup>39</sup> In a real debate, this could not have been stated so openly, but Thucydides boldly passes over the problems of international law which must have been the chief subject of discussion, and, out of all the speeches delivered by the allies, records only the closing speech of the Corinthian delegation.<sup>40</sup> They are the deadliest enemies of the Athenians, because they are the second greatest commercial power in Greece, and therefore their natural rivals. They see Athens with the clear vision of hatred; and Thucydides makes them persuade the hesitating Spartans to a final decision by making a comparison between Sparta and the energetic adventurous Athenians. They describe the Athenian national character more impressively than any Athenian orator at a public festival—than even Thucydides himself in Pericles' funeral speech, which is a free composition of his own, and from which he borrowed a number of points for the Corinthian speech.<sup>41</sup> No one can seriously doubt that the latter was not really delivered by the Corinthian embassy in Sparta, but was essentially an invention of Thucydides himself. To write a speech in which Athens is praised by one enemy before another was a feat of the highest rhetorical skill.<sup>42</sup> But also it had a double historical purpose: its immediate aim was to describe the agitation which led to the war, and its higher aim was to analyse the *psychological basis* of the rise of Athens. Against the background of Spartan dullness and indolence, old-fashioned respectability and narrow-minded conservatism, the Corinthians describe the Athenian temperament with mingled envy, hate and admiration: restless energy, marvellous *élan* in planning and in acting, elastic versatility, capable of meeting any situation and not quelled but encouraged to new activity by failures—with these qualities the Athenian nation takes over and transforms everything that

elism is strengthened by his coldly analytical treatment of both phenomena: just as in discussing the origins of the war, he does not preach like a moralist, but examines, probes, and diagnoses like a doctor. He believes that his account of the collapse of public morality is a contribution to his description of the pathology of war.

This brief summary is enough to show that Thucydides covers all the great political problems which arise during a war. The occasions he chooses for discussing them are selected with the greatest care, and are certainly not always suggested by the normal flow of events. He treats similar facts in very different ways—sometimes deliberately placing the cruelties and agonies of war in the foreground, and sometimes passing over even greater horrors with a dispassionate mention, because it is enough to illustrate that side of war by a few examples.<sup>58</sup>

In his actual narrative of the war, as in his account of its origins, the problem of the rise and maintenance of political power is central—in fact, most of the separate questions mentioned above are connected with it. Thucydides does not treat it from the standpoint of an ordinary power-mad statesman: naturally enough, considering his political insight. He regards it expressly as a part of all human life, which is not wholly governed by the lust for power; and it is significant that the Athenians themselves, the most blatant and ruthless lovers of power, recognize justice as the highest standard within their own empire, and are proud of being a modern constitutional state based on justice instead of an oriental despotism. This is stated in the speech in which the Athenian envoy defends the foreign policy of imperial Athens before the Spartan assembly.<sup>59</sup> Thucydides considers that the degeneration of class-conflict within the state into a universal struggle of all against all is a grave sickness in the body politic.<sup>60</sup> But in the relation of one state to another it is different. For, although there too there are compacts governed by justice, the final arbiter is might, not right. If the opponents are roughly equal in strength, their relationship is called war; if one of them is vastly superior to the other, it is called domination. Thucydides illustrates the latter situation by the example<sup>61</sup> of the little neutral island Melos, which was overpowered by Athens with her command of the sea.

as a matter of fact, Alcibiades had far more real leadership than Nicias, though he guided Athens into danger and did nothing which would not profit himself. Yet he was able to 'control the people', as Thucydides says on a subsequent occasion,<sup>85</sup> when he eulogizes Alcibiades' service to Athens at the moment when civil war was threatening.

Similarly, in his character-sketch of Pericles, Thucydides emphasizes his influence on the people and his ability to 'lead it rather than be led by it'.<sup>86</sup> What made him superior to Alcibiades and all the rest was the additional fact that he was financially incorruptible, for that gave him the authority to tell the truth instead of saying what the public wanted to hear. He always kept the reins in his own hands: when the mob tried to kick over the traces he could frighten them and control them, and when they were discouraged he heartened them. Therefore Athens under Pericles was 'nominally a democracy, but actually a monarchy under the foremost man':<sup>87</sup> it was the monarchy of superior political ability. After the death of Pericles, Athens never had another such ruler. All his successors tried to imitate him, but none of them could acquire so much influence as he had, even temporarily, without flattering the mob and pandering to its passions. According to Thucydides, it was because there was no other man who could eliminate the influence of the people and its mob-instincts, surmount the democratic constitution, and govern like a king, that the Sicilian expedition failed<sup>88</sup>—quite apart from the fact that Pericles would never have undertaken it in the first place because it was directly opposed to his defensive strategy. For, in itself, the power of Athens was quite adequate to defeat Syracuse (so far Alcibiades' estimate was correct) if only party-jealousies within the state had not overthrown its brilliant leader. Even after the loss of the Sicilian war, Athens maintained itself for ten years more, until it was so enfeebled by continual dissension that it could resist no longer.<sup>89</sup> The quintessence of Thucydides' belief is, in so many words, that under the leadership of Pericles Athens would easily have won the Peloponnesian War.<sup>90</sup>

The picture of Pericles which he here displays in such a clear light, by contrast with later politicians, is more than the portrait of a much-admired personality. All his rivals and successors faced the same task of guiding Athens in the fight for its life,

cuse to co-operate in governing it, in such a way that (as Pericles advised) every individual should divide his life between his private vocation and his public duties; that was impossible in the absence of some active interest and true insight into the life of the state.

*Politeia* means not only the constitution of the state but the entire life of the state as far as it is conditioned by the constitution. Even though the constitution of Athens was not like the Spartan discipline, which regulated every detail of the citizen's daily existence, the influence of the state was an all-pervading spirit which deeply affected the life of every Athenian. In modern Greek, *politeuma* means *culture*—perhaps the last vestige of the ancient conjunction of life and politics. Therefore, Pericles' description of the Athenian *politeia* covers the entire content of private and public life: economics, morals, culture and education. Only when we conceive it with such fullness and concreteness do we realize that Thucydides' ideal of the state is no mere power-machine, but something rich in colour, shape, reality. It springs from Pericles' own ideal of the Athenian *politeia*, and without that living content it would be imperfect. The power of which Thucydides speaks is never simply *pleonexia*, mechanical and spiritless greed. The remarkable composite character which marks all the expressions of the Athenian spirit—literary, artistic, philosophical and moral—reappears in Pericles' conception of the state: he deliberately praises a synthesis of the rigidly communal outlook of the Spartan armed camp, and the Ionian principle of the economic and intellectual freedom of each individual citizen. Thucydides does not conceive the new type of state as a static thing, the rigid legal structure idolized in the early *eunomia*. But constitutionally and economically and spiritually he holds it to be a sort of Heraclitean harmony of radical and inevitable opposites, maintaining itself through its tension and its equilibrium. He therefore makes Pericles describe it as the interaction of delicately balanced opposites—self-support and enjoyment of the world's products, labour and recreation, business and holiday, spirit and ethos, thought and energy.<sup>104</sup>

That was the ideal which the great leader of the Athenians expounded, with the full majesty of language, in order to make them at the critical juncture fully aware of the supreme values

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