

rupted" (*nirantara-kṣaṇa-utpāda*); and the word that Tscherbatsky renders by "series" is actually *saṃtāna*⁶², which is literally and etymologically a "continuum", and what he says is that "'lamp' is the name conventionally given to a continuum of lights so as to make a sort of unity", and that it is just in the same way that "this man, So-and-so's" name is conventionally given to what is really a continuing process, not a substantial "self". And herein there is no departure from early Buddhist doctrine in which *punar utpadāna* is already explained in terms of the lighting of one lamp from another, and there is no essence (*saṃtā*) that moves on. In any case, any division of the continuity of time into a series of immobile instants would be just as artificial as a division of time into a discontinuous series of hours or days, or as the division of a line into a series of points; one might as well think of time as a thing *created* by the jerky motion of the hands of a clock!

⁶² It is precisely this continuity (*saṃtāna*, which Dasgupta also misrenders by "series") that enables Cakrapāṇi to say that although the existence of the body is momentary (*kṣaṇika*), the connection of the Supreme Self with the body is not intermittent but constant (Comment on *Caraka-saṃhitā* 1. 1. 41). It is significant here, also, that Cakrapāṇi so well observes that "the constancy (or eternity) of the Self is a matter of its concurrence with its own past and future hypostatic experiences" (*nityatvaṃ cātmanah pūrvāparāvasthānubhūtartha-pratīśāhanāt*, Comment on 1. 1. 55), i.e. inasmuch as It is the one and only transmigrant. Thus what is for one a proof of the pseudo-identity of the transient self is for the other a proof of the real identity of the constant Self; and these are complementary, and by no means contradictory, propositions.

III GREECE

In discussing Time and Eternity in Greek contexts I shall refrain from entering into any long account of Greek "atomism" as a whole; since it appears that a distinction must be made between the physical atoms of which bodies may be a composite, and the atomic time that divides and unites periods of time from and to one another, just as the point divides or unites parts of a line from or to one another. Physical atoms must have some dimension, however small, if anything is to be "made of" them; but the time-atom is a zero, and explicitly "not a part of time". It would be truer (though not exact) to say that past and future are parts of the time-atom than it would be to describe a period of time as "made up of" time-atoms; just as the point is the principle and sine qua non of extension, but points, having no extension, cannot be added up to make a length, and we cannot say that extended things are "made up of" points. And so, with perfect logic, Plato does not speak of the elements as "atomic", but only as existing in particles "so very small as to be invisible", and only forming visible masses when these particles are assembled in sufficient numbers (*Timaeus* 56 C).

Aristotle, similarly, though an "atomic now" and "indivisible point" are essential to his thinking (*Phys.* 6. 3. 234A), is not an "atomist" in the material sense; he knows that "nothing continuous can be made of atoms" (ἐξ ἀτόμων), and that "all magnitude is continuous" (*Phys.* 232 A, cf. 241 B): atoms have *no* magnitude, and one cannot speak of atoms "next to" one another because what lies between two points is always a dimension (if not, they would be one and the same point), *Phys.* 231 A, B + 8. 8, 264 A, cf. 241 A. Our concern is only with the really and absolutely indivisible and undimensioned atom or point that gives a meaning to time or space¹, and not at all with such "atoms" as have now been actually "split", or with those of the "atomists" such as Leukippos for whom "there are an infinite number of them, and they are invisible owing to the smallness of their bulk" (Aristotle, *De gen. corr.* A, 8. 324 b 35)²; atoms that are "not mathematically indivisible", but each of which "has magnitude" and extension³, and of which, therefore, perceptible things *can* be constituted,—atoms that can, in fact, only be so called for so long as men have not yet been able to divide them, and which are really only *particles*⁴.

¹ "Non-spatial and non-temporal intuition is the condition of the interpretation of the space-time world itself" (W. M. Urban, *The Intelligible World*, p. 260).

² As cited by Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 4th ed. p. 335.

³ J. Burnet, *l.c.* p. 336.

⁴ And can therefore, quite logically, be thought of as constituent parts of great magnitudes. Atomic constitution implies, indeed, a discontinuity of matter, but does not require a dis-

Before Aristotle, Parmenides (Diels fr. 8 preserved by Simplicius) had set forth in the clearest possible terms the doctrine that "that which *is*", and being Now, is other than the things that only seem to be and since they come into being and pass away, cannot be said to *be*. This indivisible, omnipresent and altogether present One is unoriginated and indestructible; "it is complete, immoveable, and endless. Nor *was* it ever, nor *will* it be for Now it *is*, all at once, a continuous One . . . It is all alike . . . without beginning or end, since coming into being and passing away are excluded and far away from it, and true belief rejects them". When he goes on to say that "it cannot be called 'infinite', because it is in need of nothing", this sounds strange to us, but only means that it is not a void or chaos but a plenum, only "finite" in the sense that it is self-contained. And if he also calls the One a "sphere, equally poised from the centre in every direction; for it cannot be greater or smaller in one place than another", this implication of a bounding circumference (as it were dividing the light from the outer darkness), is no more inconsistent with the concept of an immaterial essence than is St. Bonaventura's thought of God as a circle of which the centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere (*l'in. mentis* 5).

continuity of the space in which they must be thought of as arranged, nor does it require that this space should be literally a void. All traditions speak of an original separation of heaven and earth, in order that there may be a room or space in which things can exist; but the space thus created is aerial rather than empty.

Parmenides goes on to say that that which *is* is what is true; and to contrast it with the world of mortal opinion that is characterised by opposite forms, the contraries, of which light and darkness are the types, of which he also says that one should be ignored, since it is merely a privation of the other, and being therefore an un-reality cannot be thought. Aristotle, to be sure, in *De caelo* 1. 298b 21, asserts that Parmenides is speaking all the time only about a sensible reality; but how could that be true of a description that expressly excludes an existence in time, and the realm of the contraries, which is itself the world of "sensible reality"? Indubitably, Parmenides is speaking of the Essence that others call "God", and it is significant that he not only enunciates the Now-ness of the One that is, but can only define it by negations of all that it is not.

For Plato, the world was made by Zeus according to a self-same, stable, living paradigm, not generated but eternal (*αἰδώς*); and as it would have been impossible to attach the quality of Eternity wholly to what was generated⁵, "he designed to make out of Eternity (*αἰών*, Skr. *āyus*, 'life') a something moving; and so, when He was ordering the whole Heaven (Universe), He made out of that Eternity that ever abides in its own unity a sempiternal (*αἰώνιος*) image, moving

⁵ An image is never like its archetype in all respects, or would be not an image, but a duplicate (*Cratylus* 432 C, D); in the present case the point is that "generation" and "eternity" are incompatibles.

according to number⁶, even that which we have called 'time' (*χρόνος*)⁷. For simultaneously He contrived the days and nights, and months and years, that were not before the generation of the Heaven (Universe)⁸. And

⁶ Cf. Skr. *jagat*, "the moving" i.e. the world. It should be noted, however, that motion includes "rest", which is not the same thing as "immoveability", but only a potential and temporarily inhibited motion; not to mention that things "at rest" are not thereby exempted from change and alteration. As Aristotle says, "Nature is the principle (or origin) of rest as well as motion", both of which are "in time" (*Phys.* 8. 3, 253 B + 6. 8, 239 A, 4. 12, 221 B) and impossible in the "now" (*ib.* 6. 3. 234 A): and our present concern is with this timeless "Nature" (Plato's *δαιμόνια φύσις*, *Timaeus* 37 B) as distinguished from its temporal manifestations, which is the distinction of the stasis of that which *is* from the motion-and-rest of things that *become*. This distinction is made already in RV. 1. 115. 1 where the Sun is the Self (principle) of "all that is in motion or at rest" (*jagatas lasthuṣas-ca*). Following Aristotle, St. Thomas (*Sum. Theol.* 1. 10. 4 ad 3) also points out that time "not only measures motion, but also rest".

⁷ *Χρόνος*, the father of Zeus, was later on assimilated to *χρόνος*, "time", although this is etymologically inconceivable. It is, in fact, Zeus, who, like Prajāpati, can be equated with the Year, and must be identified with time; that he overthrew his father means that, *qua* time, he subdivided Time; while that Kronos swallowed all his children, Zeus excepted, only means that Eternity is both the source of all times and their sink. For an analogous myth cf. BU. 1. 2. 5: "Whatever He (Death, Prajāpati, the Year, the Sun, who is also the Breath of Life) brought forth, that he began to eat".

⁸ In all these positions Plato is so closely followed by Plotinus (who ought much rather to be called a Platonist than a "Neo-" Platonist) that I have not thought it necessary to quote him here. An admirable summary of Plotinus on "Time

these are all parts of time; even as 'was' and 'shall be' are generated parts of time, though we casually misapply them to the Eternal Essence [when we call it 'everlasting'],—for we say that Eternity 'is', 'was' and 'shall be', although in truth of speech the 'is' alone is appropriate, while 'was' and 'will be' are properly applicable only to the becoming that proceeds in time, since both are movements; but it does not pertain to that which is always (*ἀεί*) self-accordant and motionless, to become older or younger by way of time, nor to 'have become so', nor to 'be' so now, nor to be 'about to be so' in the future, nor, in general to be subject to any of the conditions that are associated with what is sensible because of its 'becoming',—these being generated forms of time, which imitates Eternity and revolves according to number. Nor is it really accurate to say of what has become that it 'is' become, or of what becomes that it 'is' becoming, or of what will become that it 'is' about to become, or of the non-existent (*τὸ μὴ ὄν*) that it 'is' non-existent...⁹.

and Eternity" will be found in Dean Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, 2nd ed. 1923, 2. 92-103. Incidentally, the Dean remarks that "the kind of immortality which 'psychical research' endeavours to establish would be for him [Plotinus] a negation of the only immortality which he desires and believes in... Nor does Neoplatonism encourage the belief that the blessed life is a state which will only begin for the individual when the earthly course of the whole human race has reached its term". It has often, indeed, been recognized that Plotinus' position is thoroughly Indian; it by no means follows that he derived many, or any, parts of his doctrine from India.

⁹ The like ideas find expression even today, but in the lang-

"Time, then, became together with the Heaven (Universe), so that having been generated together they might also be dissolved together, if ever any dissolution of them should be; and it was made according to the paradigm of the Everlasting (*διαιώνια*) Nature, to be as much like it as was possible; for while the paradigm 'is' for all Eternity (*πάντα αἰῶνα*), the copy, on the other hand 'is' for all time (*ἅπαντα χρόνον*)"¹⁰ wholly

uage of the time. For example, Wilbur Urban, *The Intelligible World*, 1929, pp. 417-421: "The identification of being with that which becomes, with processes of evolution and devolution is impossible... There is no entropy of being... the two phenomenal categories of life and death [i.e. future and past] are moments in a larger life". That is as much as to say that *being* neither lives nor dies, and that nothing can be added to or subtracted from it; and that as in SB. 10. 5. 2. 13 our very *life* depends upon the presence of death within us,—it is one and the same Father who "killeth and maketh alive" (AV. 8. 3. 3; I Sam. 2. 6), one Death who both devours his children and generates them (PB. 21. 2. 1). Wilbur Urban's "terminus" [*a quo* and *ad quem*] corresponds to Aristotle's "moment" or "point" that as its "limit" defines and gives a meaning to existences; and it is not without good reason that Terminus (Hermes) was once a nomen Dei, who is, indeed, at once both man's beginning and his end.

On the other hand, a "scientific" author, J. B. S. Haldane, can write on "Time and Eternity" (in the *Rationalist Annual* for 1946) without for a moment suspecting that he is only discussing time and completely ignoring the traditional meaning of "Eternity"!

¹⁰ In *Meno* 85, 86 the "recollection" of things not learnt in this life is taken to show that the Soul must have existed "throughout all time" and is therefore immortal,—i.e. eternal (*ἀίδια*) and imperishable, *Phaedo* 106 D, E; but this argument

such as to have become, exist, and be about to exist", *Timaeus* 29 A, B, and 37 D—38 C.

The same distinctions are implicit in the *Cratylus* 439 E, where it is asked: "How can that which is never self-same 'be' anything? For if it is ever self-same, it is evidently not at that time transient, and if it is always self-same and 'itself', how can it ever change or move without relinquishing its own form?" (*ἡ αὐτοῦ ἰδέα*, exactly Skr. *sva-rūpa*)¹¹.

Eternity was referred to above as self-same "in Unity" and can hardly be other than the "One" of

from pre-existence (and repeated incarnation) is not a rigorous proof, because incarnation itself is a kind of dying, *Phaedo* 95 C, D, cf. JUB. 3. 9. 1 and 4. 9, and St. Bernard, *De grad. humilitatis* 1. 30, *Nascimur morituri: ideoque nascimur morituri, quia primus morimur nascituri*, and also the various Brahmanical and Buddhist contexts in which it is emphasized that immortality and birth are incompatible, and that the seeds of death are born with us. Cf. St. Augustine, *Sermo (de Scrip. N. T.)* 97. 3. 3, "From the moment a man is born, it may be said, 'He will not get over it'".

¹¹ This is the predicament of the positivist or "nothing-morist" (*nāstika*), that in acknowledging the reality only of that which can be grasped, he is attributing "reality" to things that cannot be grasped because they never stop to be, and is driven, in spite of himself, to postulate the reality of some such abstract entity as "Energy",—a word that is nothing but one of the names of God. As Wilbur Urban (*Language and Reality*, p. 708) remarks, "the scientist speaks of 'a machine that winds its own springs', therefore of a machine that is not a machine; of a 'natural selection' which is really not a selection",—and in so far as he resorts to these antinomies, abandons logic! "A machine that winds its own springs is as much a fiction as a thinking reed" (*ib.* p. 515).

which the nature is discussed at great length in the *Parmenides* 141 ff. where it is asked whether it "is" or "is not" and how the answer bears upon the nature of the "others". The answers describe the two contrasted natures of one and the same essence; at the same time they remind us very strongly of the Buddhist answers to the question, whether it can be said that an Arahant, after death, "is" or "is not", and of the attribution both of temporality and of timelessness to the Dhamma, and of the distinction of a Nibbāna with or without residual "assumptions". The One is both one and many, and neither one nor many; it both partakes and does not partake of time; it is and is not, changes and does not change. However, if it is, "it is all things and nothing at all"¹². Now, that it is both unchangeable and also changes, both static and in motion means that "it must itself be *in no time at all* . . . (for) there is no *time* in which anything can be at once static and in motion . . . When, then, does it change? . . . Is there this out-of-place-thing (*ἄτοπον*)¹³ wherein it might be,

¹² A significant formula that often recurs in the sayings of the Western "mystics" e.g. in *The Cloud of Unknowing*: "Let be this everywhere and this naught, in comparison of this nowhere and this naught . . . What is he that calleth it 'naught'? Surely it is our outer man, and not our inner. Our inner man calleth it 'All' . . . And therefore travail fast (earnestly) in this naught and this nowhere" (cc. 65, 70); and Jacob Boehme: "Nothing and All, or that nothing-visible out of which all things proceed . . . Whosoever finds it, finds nothing and all things".

¹³ *ἄτοπος*, rendered usually to be by "extraordinary", but here especially appropriate in its literal sense of "placeless",

'when' it changes? And of what sort? The moment (*ἐξαιφνης*)¹⁴! For the moment seems to signify a something from which there is change in both directions... there is this instantaneous nature that has no place (*ἄτοπος*), something enthroned between motion and stasis, not existent in any time; and it is into this and out of this that whatever is in motion changes to be static¹⁵, and that whatever is static changes to be in motion... But in changing, it changes instantaneously, and not in any time, but when it is neither in motion nor static; and in the same way as regards its other 'changes', as from non-existence (*τὸ μὴ εἶναι* = *pragabhāva*)¹⁶ to becoming (*τὸ γίγνεσθαι* = *bhava*), from

whatever is "not in any time" being necessarily also "not in any place". In Skr. *akāla*, "untimely" is used where in Gk. *ἄτοπος*, "out of place", would be said.

¹⁴ Here unquestionably "instant" or "moment" without duration, since it is synonymous with "not in any time". *Ἐξαιφνης* is defined by Aristotle (*Phys.* 4. 13. 222 b) as "minimally removed (from the indivisible now) by an imperceptible time"; in NT. the word is rendered by "suddenly"—Mark 13. 36, Luke 2. 13, 13. 9, Acts 9. 3, 22. 6, and similarly Mark 9. 8 (*ἐξαίφνης*) and Acts 2. 2 (*ἄφνω*); cf. St. Thomas Aquinas *Sum. Theol.* I-II. 113. 7 on the "suddenness" of the Holy Ghost, and also Plato, *Ep.* 7. 341 C. The word itself seems to mean "out of the unseen" (*ἐξ-ἄφανής*), while "sudden" means "going stealthily" (*sub-it-aneus*), cf. *ἄφνω* in the sense of "unawares".

¹⁵ "Static", to be distinguished from "at rest" in the merely relative and physical sense in which things "at rest" are really only in "unstable equilibrium".

¹⁶ Plato's four kinds of non-existence,—the "not yet" of things that may or will exist; the "no longer" (*μηκέτι*) of things that change and perish so as to "not be" what they

being one to being many, from being like (itself) to being unlike, from being small to being great, and conversely,—so that it is neither in a state of increase nor of decrease nor of equality"¹⁷ (*Parmenides* 147-157A). so that their participation is both in the Whole (of

Further, it is shown that the "others" participate in the One, but are not parts of it, for it has no parts;

were (like Cleinias, when he changes from being ignorant to being wise, *Euthydemus* 282 D); the "mutual" or "relative" (reference 3 in the text above, and also *Parmenides* 163 C, "absence of existence in which we say that it is not there", and *Sophist* 258 E "as regards others"); and "absolute" (*Parmenides* 163 C "non-existent in any way, shape, or manner", and *Sophist* 237 B *τὸ μηδαμῶς εἶναι*), are respectively identical with the Indian set of four kinds of non-existence, viz. in the same order, *prāgabhāva*, *pradhvamśābhāva*, *anyonyābhāva*, and *atyantābhāva*. Plato's discussions of non-existence will be found easier to follow if at every point we pause to consider which of the four kinds of non-existence is referred to: whether, for example, *πρὸς ἄλληλα* (*anyonya*), or *μηδαμῶς* (*atyanta*); otherwise, the discussion is indefinite, because *μή* and *οὐ* always imply a difference of some kind (*Sophist* 257 B, C) and non-existence is not the opposite of existence, but only to be contrasted with it, for there is no "opposite of being" (*ib.* 258 E),—just as the finite is not the opposite of the infinite, but only, so to speak, an excerpt from it. In the non-existent is "that which is uncharacterised" (*yad vai nāsti tad alaṅśanam*, ŚB. 7. 2. 1. 7); this is *anyonya*- in that it means freedom from affirmative limitations; so that when the Deity is described as *sad-asat* this is tantamount to *niruktāniruktam* and means that it is both with and without such definitions, or in other words both God and Godhead, the Godhead being uncharacterised and so, as Western mystics express it "free in its non-existence", and properly to be called "nihil".

¹⁷ I.e. past, future and present conditions of becoming.

which they are parts) and in the One, and it results for these others than the One "because of what they have in common with the One and with themselves, both that there are differences amongst themselves by which they are limited in their relation to one another and to the Whole¹⁸, and that 'their own authentic nature' (ἡ δ' ἐαυτῶν φύσις καθ' ἑαυτά) is unlimited. So that the things that are other than the One, whether as wholes or parts, are both unlimited and participant in limitation" (*ib.* 158 D). In other words, they bear within themselves the "trace" of the One's one-and-manyness, mortality and immortality, etc., being mortal as they are in themselves (ἐν ἑαυτοῖς) and immortal as regards their Selves (καθ' ἑαυτά)¹⁹, which last are their portion in and of the One in its "own form",—a distinction of the "man" from the "Inner man" (ὁ ἐντὸς ἄνθρωπος, *Rep.* 589 B = *ayam antah puruṣaḥ*, CU. 3. 12. 8) that, as in II Cor. 4. 16²⁰ corresponds exactly to the Indian distinction of the corporeal or elemental self (*śarīra-* or *bhūta-ātman*) from the unborn, indivisible Ultimate Self (*parama-ātman*), the Self of all things-become" (*sarva-bhūtānām ātman*)²¹.

The distinction of things as they are "in themselves" from what is "their own authentic nature" (as above,

¹⁸ See in Note 1.

¹⁹ "That which is the real self of each of us, and which we term the immortal soul" (*Laws* 959 B, tr. R. G. Bury). Cf. Luke 15. 17 εἰς ἑαυτὸν δὲ ἐλθὼν.

²⁰ Cf. II Cor. 4. 16 ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος διαφθείρεται, ἀλλ' ὁ ἔσω ἡμῶν ἀνακαινοῦται ἡμέρα καὶ ἡμέρα.

²¹ Jacob Boehme's "Being of all beings", *passim*.

and cf. Sophokles, *Philoctetes* 902, 903 contrasting man's "authentic nature", τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν with the "man", ἀνὴρ) is further clarified in terms of time and eternity in the *Philebus*, 53 D-59 A: "There are [in our existence] two things, one authentic Self (αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτό), and the other ever pursuing something other than itself... one that is ever for the sake (ἔνεκα) of the things-that-really-are, the other that which having become for the sake of (χάρων, perhaps 'for the love of') the former—(that is) for the sake of something (other than itself)—is ever becoming... (this last) being the becoming (γένεσις, *bhava*)²² of all things, and the other their essence (οὐσία, *bhāva*)... The truest knowledge (γνώσις, *jñāna*) is of that which is, and really is, and that is ever natured in accordance with itself (κατὰ ταῦτον ἀεὶ πεφωκός²³ = *svayambhū*, in later Gk. αὐτογενής);... but the technologists are not, as they imagine, students of this Nature (φύσις); what they spend their lives in the investigation of is the things of this world, how they become, what their passion is²⁴, and how they operate... taking no pains whatever to discover the

²² Which becoming is inseparable from its opposite, destruction (τὸ φθείρεσθαι), and both of these conditions are other than that third (Middle) and contemplative life in which there is neither gree nor gricf, *ib.* 55 A.

²³ Cf. τὸ αὐτοφύε, *Rep.* 486 E; Skr. *svaruḥ*, growing from its own roots: and contrast *εὐεργονής*, "parasitic".

²⁴ Literally, "how they suffer this or that" (ὅση πάσχει τι), i.e. as we should say, "how they are economically, or otherwise, determined". On the other hand, as Aristotle points out, things not in time are impassible (οὐδὲ πάσχει), change being impossible in that which has no parts (*Phys.* 4. 12. 221 B + 6. 10. 240 B).

things-that-really-are, but only those that become and will become and have become",—temporalia!

For Aristotle, "things eternal (τὰ δ' αἰδία) are neither generated nor destroyed" (*Nich. Eth.* 6. 3. 2): "eternal entities (τὰ αἰεὶ ὄντα), by the fact of their eternity, are not in time... the mark of which is their impassibility... In time all things are generated and destroyed... Time is made up only of the past and the future... the Now is not a part of time at all... Time cannot be divided into atomic parts" (*Phys.* 4. 12, 221 B + 13, 222 B + 10, 218 A + 8. 8, 263 B): and this is as much as to say that Eternity is Now, or not at all.

By the "now that is not a part of time" is meant, of course, the "atomic now" (ἄτομος νῦν) that marks the beginning or the end of any period of time, which end is also the beginning of another period of time, "for time is always in the beginning" (ἀεὶ ἐν ἀρχῇ, *Phys.* 4. 13, 222 B), and like movement, everlasting; or that, in other words, divides the past from the future. So the indivisible Now has the double function of dividing and uniting (ἡ διαίρεσις καὶ ἡ ἕνωσις)²⁵, and in these two functions is altogether like the undimensioned Point (στιγμή)²⁶ that simultaneously divides and

²⁵ "What we have called the Great Person (*mahāpuruṣa*) is the Year that scatters some things and unifies others", i.e. generates some in their diversity and puts an end to the existence of others (AA. 3. 2. 3): *pradhvamsayan*, not here "destroys" (empirically) but rather literally "makes dust of" in the sense that "dust thou art" (Gen. 3. 19), and *aikyā bhāvayan*, "slays", cf. BU. 4. 4. 2 *ekī bhavati*, "is dying".

²⁶ "Point" can be said either with respect to time or space: cf. Plutarch, *Mor.* 117E "the longest life is short and mo-

unites the parts of a line. As dividers, nows are always differentiated (ἀεὶ ἕτερον) by their relation to different pasts and futures, but as uniters always the same (ἡ συνδεδει, αἰεὶ τὸ αὐτό); just as in the case of points which as dividers are manifold (since a line can be divided in different places), but in the sense that the point is that which traces the undivided line, are "the same throughout" (*ib.* 222 A). "Nows", in other words, are all the same, but apparently differentiated by the really different times with which they are associated (*Phys.* 4. 11, 219 B); and that is just as, in terms of transmigration, the *one* "atomic Self" (*anur ātman*, Muṇḍ. Up. cited above) is empirically many by the superimposition of the empirical qualities of the many vehicles to which it is present, though it is really always the same and never discontinuous with itself; or to take a different example, just as space is unlimited but apparently differentiated by the boundaries of a

mentary (στιγμαῖος) compared to limitless Eternity", and Dante, *Paradiso* 17. 17 il punto a cui tutti li tempi son presenti, "the moment to which all times are present", and 33. 94 un punto solo, "a single moment".

The "point (of Time impartite) to which all times are present", and "from which point heaven and the whole of nature depend" (*Paradiso* 28. 41, cf. 13. 11 with RV. 1. 35. 6) is equally the motionless centre of all existence,—"Daz ist der zirkel, den diu sêle umbeloufen hat"—and when the soul has been her rounds and found the circle endless, then she casts herself into the centre, "in ein punt" (Meister Eckhart, Pfeiffer 503).

²⁷ In this paragraph, bracketed numbers refer to E. R. Goodenough, "A Neo-Pythagorean Source in Philo Judaeus", *Yale Classical Studies* III, 1932, pp. 117-164.

jar, but when the jar is broken the "space in which it was" is no longer identifiable. It is interesting that this last illustration is also used by Aristotle himself in *Phys.* 4. 4, 211 B, where he points out that if the imaginary spatial entity left behind when the vessel is removed were really identifiable, this would imply the existence of an infinite number of individual "places" existent in one and the same continuous space.

Here, in parenthesis, it may be observed that the dual functions of the instantaneous now or undimensioned point which divides and unites extents of time or space are precisely *logical* functions, and are, in fact the functions of *the* Logos that is at once the Divider (*τομεύς*) and Unifying Bond (*δεσμός*) of all things, notably as envisaged by Philo, who, starting from Gen. 15. 10 "He divided them in the middle, and laid the pieces opposite each other", describes the created world "as consisting of an almost infinite series of opposites [*ἑναντία, dvandvau*] held together in harmony by the very creative impulse or agent which had originally separated them out from primitive and unformed matter by a series of bisections" (132)²⁷, i.e. de-limitations or measurements²⁸. Just as for Heraclitus "reality is a *ἁρμονία* of opposite tensions, a single nature which develops itself in the twofold

²⁸ It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to say that the concept is referable to Plato, that "God is always geometrizing" (as we see Him in Blake's *Ancient of Days*, leaning out of the Sun, extending his compasses, cf. RV. 5. 85. 5 *māneneva tashivān antarikṣe vi yo mame pṛthivīm sūryeṇa*, cf. 8. 25. 18 and TS. 5. 4. 6. 5).

directions" (132), so for Philo the "Monad [Plato's 'One' as distinct from the 'others'] is not a number at all, but a premise (*στοιχείον*) and a principle" (*ἀρχή*), *Heres* 190,—and as such, of course, "ungenerated and indestructible" and "without beginning or end" Plato, *Phaedrus* 245 D + Aristotle, *Phys.* 8. 1, 252B, cf. 3. 4. 203 B). "The Monad is the image of God who is single in his unity and at the same time a pleroma", while "the *others* ... are held together (*σφιγγεται*)²⁹ by the Divine Word" (*Heres* 187, 188),—and so, "the Logos as being God in relation to the world ... is at once the Cutter of the universe and the glue binding it together" (133, 146). This "One" (*τὸ γὰρ ἓν*) is represented by the central light of the sevenfold *λυχνία*, of which the *golden*³⁰ material is the symbol of unbreakable extensibility and so of total presence (*Heres* 215f.)³¹, while elsewhere the characteristic symbol of the Logos is the Pillar, i.e. Axis Mundi.

It is emphasized by Philo (*Heres* 207 f. and passim), and recognized throughout the tradition, what is obvious enough, that all *creation* and *existence* involves a distinction or separation of contrary concepts; nothing

²⁹ I cannot here enlarge upon values of *σφιγγω* and *Σφιγγε*, except to say that the Sphinx is certainly not "the strangler", but much rather (as Clement of Alexandria also saw) "the bond" that holds the universe together.

³⁰ Gold, as in India, passim, being the recognized symbol of life, light, truth, and immortality.

³¹ Compare Daqīqī's wonderful vision of the seven candles that become one, and that are also seven men, and seven trees that are both seven and one, Rūmī, *Mathnawī* 3. 1985ff.

that was or will be, or that is "now" in the vaguer sense of the word, but is qualitatively "this" and "not that". So it is that for Nicolas of Cusa (*De vis. Dei* c. IX) it is of these contraries that the wall of Paradise, wherein God dwells, is built, and no one who has not overcome "the highest spirit of reason" [i.e. the Logos] that guards the undimensioned point that divides the contraries from one another and unites them can attain to the coincidence of opposites that subsists in the divine intellect: and in the same way in India, Liberation is "from the delusion of the pairs" (*dvandva-moha-nirmuktāḥ* BG. 7. 28, *dvandvātīto . . . na nibadh-yate*, 4. 22), "overcoming the pairs" (MU. 3. 1). It is inasmuch as "strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life" that "few there be that find it" (Math. 7. 14): "I am the door" (John 10. 9); "Now (*ἡ νῦν*) is the day of salvation" . . . In a moment (*ἐν ἄτομῳ*), the twinkling of an eye, we shall be changed" (II Cor. 6. 2 and I Cor. 15. 52). In other words, our opportunity is instantaneous, and this is apparent in all the traditional accounts of the passage of the Symplegades or Sundoor, whether Greek, Irish, American or Indian^{31a}; for example in the *Mahābhārata* (Poona ed. 1. 29. 4) where the "Active Door" is an ever revolving razor-edged wheel (as in Genesis "a flaming sword which turned every way") between the spokes of which "the Skyfarer, diminishing his body, darted in an instant" (*kṣaṇena*), — that very "moment without duration", of

^{31a} See my "Symplegades" in M. F. Ashley Montagu (Ed.), *Studies . . . Offered in Homage to George Sarton . . .*, 1947.

which we have been speaking, and "apart from which there is no side door here in the world".

In connection with the "door" one further point should be noted; in actual walls, doors are not necessarily median, but may be near or far from one or the other end of the wall, just as a line can be bisected not only in the middle, but anywhere: whereas Philo emphasizes that the logical Divider and Uniter is always in the middle and always makes divisions of two exactly equal parts. All that this apparent discrepancy means is that actual walls or lines are artificially delimited from a potentially indefinite extension in either direction, and that the position of the door or point is accidental. Whereas, if we think of the opposites, simply as past and future, or as extents on this or that side of a dividing point, the two parts are exactly equal in extent because both extents are indefinite and unlimited, and this will be true wherever the dividing point may be accidentally placed. It is precisely for this reason that in some versions of the myth of the Symplegades, the Hero, seeking to avoid the dangerous passage of the clashing opposites, is said to turn aside in each direction, trying to find a way around the barriers, but has to abandon such an endless quest, and return to the "point" of division and contact; for, indeed, he will find no other passage than that which is afforded by this point that retains its median position all down the line, wherever it may be, and than which Via Media there is no other Way. It is only by approaching the murity at right angles, that is to say along the Axis Mundi or Seventh Ray,

that one can hope to pass "through the midst of the Sun"; the Way is just as narrow as the Gate is strait.

To return to Aristotle; in discussing the essential identity of the indivisible Now, and the accidental distinction of the two Nows that delimit a given period of time he says, with reference to their difference that "if simultaneity as to time, and not being before or after, implies coincidence, and is in the Now, if the before and after are both in one and the same Now, then what happened ten thousand years ago would be simultaneous with what is happening today, and nothing would be before or after anything else" (*Phys.* 4. 10, 218 A). Again, whether One or accidentally two, the Now itself is not in time so as to be a part of it, but only in the sense that time surrounds it, much as the sea surrounds an island. Were the Now in time as a part is *in* a whole, "then everything would be in anything, and the universe in a grain of millet, only because the grain of millet and the universe are both existent at the same time" (*ib.* 4. 12, 221 A). It seems to me that the only purpose of these difficult statements is to distinguish the accidental simultaneity of things in time from their essential simultaneity apart from time, in the Now that unites the past and the future; and that it must be the whole of the past and the future, in neither of which is there any discontinuity, that meet in the Now that faces both ways. Aristotle can hardly have meant to deny the simultaneity of past and future in this One and Eternal Now, or to deny that there is a sense in which the universe is "in a grain of millet"; for if the grain and the uni-

verse are considered not in their extension but as regards their common and immutable essence that insists in the absolute Now, then it can be said that the universe is "in" the grain at the same time that the grain is in the universe,—in the words of William Blake, "a World in a grain of sand, and Eternity in an hour".

I do not propose to cite these doctrines in detail as they recur in the works of the Hermetists and Neoplatonists. I must, however, quote from "Hermes Trismegistos" a passage at once Platonic and Aristotelian, and one might say also "Indian":

"All things on earth are overtaken by destruction (*φθορά*); for without destruction there can be no origination (*γένεσις*). The things that come into being must needs arise from those that are destroyed; and those that come into being must be destroyed, if origination (or 'becoming') is to go on. But the things that come into being out of destruction must be false (*ψευδός*)⁸², because they become different at different times. For it is impossible for the same things to become a second time; and how can that be real (or 'true') which is not the same that it was before, . . . Man himself, insofar as he is a man, is not real. For the real is that which is absolutely self-subsistent, and remains what it is in itself; but man is a composite of many things, and does not remain such as he is in himself, but shifts

⁸² "False", but not necessarily deceptive, unless by our own fault we suppose that all *is* gold that glitters. An imitation is not unreal as such, but is not the reality of which it is an imitation.

and changes from one age to another, and from one form (*ιδέα*) to another. Oftentimes men fail to recognize their own children after a short interval, and children likewise fail to recognize their parents... You must understand that that alone that ever *is*, is real. But a man is not a thing that ever is... nothing is real that does not remain what it is... The [Supernal] Sun, who does not change, but remains what he is, is real... He rules over all things, and makes all things; him do I worship, and I adore his Truth, acknowledging him as the Maker, next after the Primal One⁸³. What then, is the Primal Truth (or Reality)? Only that One, who is not made of matter, nor embodied, who is colourless and formless, changeless and unalterable; and who is eternally”⁸⁴.

⁸³ I cannot agree with Scott that the passage referring to the Sun “is inconsistent with the text; the reference is not to the physical sun, but to the intelligible Sun, and Scott is falling into the error derided by Plutarch, that of confusing Helios with Apollo even when the word Helios really stands for Apollo. Cf. my note 7 in *Psychiatry* 8, 1945, p. 288, and the distinction, throughout tradition, of the sensible from the spiritual Sun. Put into Christian terms, all that Hermes is saying is that both the Son (“through whom all things were made”) and the Father are “true” or “real”, but the latter even more superlatively so.

⁸⁴ Scott, *Hermetica* 1.387-389 (Excerpt II A, Hermes to Tat). The last sentence might have been taken word for word from an Upanishad (e.g. KU. 3. 15), as a description of Brahma, That One.

Hermes (whom Plutarch and Hippolytus identified with “Reason”) also discusses “the three times” and remarks that “they are made one by their continuity; but “seeing that the

Plutarch, who may not be very “original”, but is a very good philosopher, quotes Heraclitus and goes on: “nor is it possible to lay hold twice of any mortal substance in the same state; by the sharpness and swiftness of the change in it there ‘comes dispersion and again combination’; or, rather, not at another time nor later, but *at the same instant* (*ἅμα*) it both takes its place and leaves it and ‘comes and goes’. So that that which is born of it never attains to being... Dead is the man of yesterday, for he has died into the man of today (*σήμερον* = Skr. *sadya*)... No one persists, nor is he ‘one’, but becomes many... and if he changes, he is not the same, and if he is not the same, he is not ‘himself’, but himself changes as other proceeds from other. Our sensibility, through ignorance of what really is, falsely tells that the appearance ‘is’.

“What, then, is that which really is? That which is eternal, unborn and unperishing, and to which time brings no change. For time is something moving, apparent in connection with matter in motion, ever

present does not stand fast, even for an instant (*κέντρον* = *punctus*), how can it be said to *be* ‘present’ (lit. ‘in-standing’) when it cannot stand in equilibrium?” (*ἔσση*) (Excerpt 10); and “that which is ever becoming is ever perishing, but that which has become once for all (*ἅπαξ*) perishes not at all” (Excerpt 11,5). All this is equally Aristotelian and Buddhist. The last corresponds exactly to BG. 2. 20 b, “nor having come to be, will he ever more come not to be”; any supposed objection to such an expression as “having come to be” falling away because the reference is really to That One who is “self-become” (*svayam-bhū*, *αὐτογενής*) and was not *brought* into being by any external cause. Cf. *infra*, p. 65, l. 1.

flowing (*ῥέον ἀεί*), not a retainer, but as it were a vessel of destruction and becoming, whose familiar 'after' and 'before', 'shall be' and 'has been' when they are said, are of themselves a confession of not being... For 'now' is crowded out into the future and the past, when we regard it as a point [of time]; for of necessity it suffers a division [is not an *ἄτομος νῦν*].

"But, it hardly need be said, God *is*, and He is not for any time but for the eternity (*αἰών*) that is motionless and timeless and undeviating, and wherein there is no before nor after, nor future nor past, nor older nor younger; but He, being One, has with one [indivisible] 'Now' filled 'for ever'." ⁸⁵

Finally, for Plotinus (*Enneads* 2. 4. 7 and 3. 7. 3-11), for whom "there are no atoms; all body is divisible endlessly", time and motion are continuous; and time, an imitation of Eternity, is "the life of the soul as she passes from one phase of activity or experience to another". On the other hand, Eternity, in the last analysis identical with God, "is a life changelessly motionless and ever holding the universal content in actual presence; not this now and now that other, but always all... self-same, for ever in the present Now... whole, in the full sense that nothing whatever is absent from it. So that nothing is in store for it: for if any-

⁸⁵ Plutarch, *Moralia* 392 C-393 A. In 422 C he speaks also of eternity "whence time, like an ever-flowing stream, is conveyed to the worlds as being "round about" (*πέρι*) all things, i.e. all-pervading. In another sense, of course, all things are "round about" eternity, as the circumference surrounds the centre. Cf. St. Augustine, *infra*, p. 106, n. 4.

thing were yet to come, that thing must have been lacking to it, and so it could not be the All. ... The word, Eternity (*αἰών*), itself means 'ever-being' (*ἀεὶ ὄν*). ... though 'always', spoken not of time but of the incorruptible and endlessly whole, is liable to introduce the false notions of stage or interval... it were better to say 'Being' simply, since 'everlasting' really adds nothing to the concept of Being... which has no connection with any quantity, such as instalments of time, but *is* prior to all quantity... Life, instantaneously entire, complete, nowhere broken into period or part, pertaining to the Self-existent by the very fact that it *is*, that has been the object of our enquiry, that is Eternity". And he adds that motion, the circling of all things round about their eternal centre, "is their seeking after perpetuity by way of futurity". After Plotinus, we reach the beginning of the Middle Ages, with St. Augustine and Boethius, in whom the Platonic tradition persists.