

CHAPTER V

A COMPARISON OF OTHER ASPECTS OF THE NORTHERN AND MERIDIONAL CULTURES

The comparative study of the Meridional and Northern structures and of their realisations can be generalised and extended to domains other than that of the family. The subject of this study makes it necessary to commence at this point. On the other hand, it was not unimportant to know, despite current opinion, which of the two sources had first offered to woman the possibility of self-development.

THE IDEA OF THE STATE: PATRIOTISM

The sedentary life and the nomadic life not only gave rise to two types of family, but equally to two forms of the state. Collectivism is the logical consequence of agricultural sedentarism. This led, at an early date (especially in the particular case of Egypt) to what André Aymard calls the *imperial vocation* of the Near East.

AFRICA

It is known that the form of the Nile valley demanded from the population, from the time they installed themselves there, undertakings and a general communal activity on the part of the nomes and all the towns to cope with natural phenomena, such as the floods of the river. The obligation to break the too-narrow isolating limits of the primitive family, that is the clan; the necessity of having a strong central power transcending the individual and co-ordinating the work, administrative and cultural unification, all this was implicit in the material conditions of existence. Thus the primitive clans soon merged, to become no more than administrative divisions (the nomes).

The state appeared with its apparatus of government perfected to the smallest details, without our being able to trace, except through legend, the anterior existence of a period of nomadic life. And this is valid for Egypt, Ethiopia and the remainder of Black Africa.

The feeling of patriotism is, above all, a feeling of national pride. The individual is subordinated to the collectivity, since it is on the public welfare that the individual welfare depends: thus private right is subordinated to public right. This does not mean that the individual is a negligible quantity and that the Meridional civilisations, in contrast to the Northern ones, put little value on human individualities or on human personality.

EUROPE

In Europe, among the Aryans, the nomadic style of life makes of each clan, that is of each family, an absolute entity, an autonomous cell, independent in all its purposes, self-sufficient from an economic or other point of view. In addition, the head of the family does not have to account to anybody, there is no authority higher than his own, no religion above his, no morality outside domestic morality. This situation, born during nomadic life, perpetuated itself for a long time after sedentarisation; Fustel de Coulanges showed that individual right among the Aryans was anterior to the foundation of cities, and that this is the reason why, for a long time, the state had no power to interfere in the private life of families, that is to say that in Rome and Greece during whole centuries a man could kill his son, his wife or his slaves, or sell them, without committing a crime against the state, which was then the city. Public authority stopped at the door of a man's house.

The time when man believed only in domestic gods is also the time when only families existed. It is quite true that these beliefs were able to continue afterwards, and even for a very long time, when cities and nations were formed. Man cannot free himself easily of opinions which have once taken control of him.¹

As the author remarks, these institutions, conceived solely for nomadic life, were to form a barrier to political and social evolution

for a long time after the establishment of sedentary life.

One can thus catch a glimpse of a long period during which men knew no other form of society than the family. It was then that domestic religion arose, which could not have been born in a society otherwise constituted, and which was even an obstacle to social development. It was at this time also that there was established ancient individual right, which was later to clash with the interests of a wider-reaching society, but which was in perfect harmony with the state of society in which it was born...

In death itself or in the existence which followed it, families did not mix with each other. Each continued to live separately in its tomb, from which strangers were excluded. Each family had also its own property, that is, its portion of land, attached inseparably to it by its religion: its gods the Termes (the boundary stones) guarded the enclosure, and its Manes watched over it. The isolation of each property was so obligatory, that the two domains could not border one on the other, and there had to be left between them a stretch of land which was neutral and which remained inviolate.²

Joint use, even between two houses, was a sacrilege. On the formation of the cities, the law of isolation prevailed.

Between two neighbouring cities there was something more impassable than a mountain: this was the series of sacred boundary stones, this was the difference of cults, this was the barrier which each city raised between the stranger and its gods.³

Nothing could be common to two cities. Because of the religion, no other form of social organisation than the city was possible. Each was sovereign, with its own system of weights and measures, its calendar, its feasts and its records and could not conceive of any overriding authority. When a town was conquered, says Fustel de Coulanges, it could be sacked, all the inhabitants killed or sold as slaves, but foreign sovereignty could not be substituted for that of its citizens and the town governed as a colony. The very nature of the institutions was opposed thus to the unification of the territories to form a nation.

It is thus, following on an outside influence, probably Southern

and Egyptian and aided by the changing conditions of life, that the Greco-Latins reached, little by little, the idea of a national unity, of an empire. Fustel de Coulanges correctly remarks:

If the political institutions of the Aryans of the East are compared with those of the Aryans of the West, almost no analogy can be found. If, on the contrary, the domestic institutions of these different people are compared, it will be perceived that the family was constituted on the same principle as in Greece and Italy.⁴

While the domestic institutions of the Aryans belonged to them in their own right, their political institutions seems to have been borrowed from outside.

This particularism of institutions, which did not provide for the case of the foreigner, and the xenophobia which was a consequence of it, explains the frenzied patriotism of the Greco-Latins. The free man, when a stranger in a town, at least until the first revolutions, was obliged to become the 'client', that is, the slave, of a citizen of the city which protected him. The idea of a stranger being free and enjoying a juridical individuality never occurred to the Greco-Latins. *To kill a stranger was not a crime; the law making no provision for his case, he was unable to lay a complaint against anyone and could not be tried by any tribunal. A man was only a man at home.*

The little country was the family circle, with its tomb and its hearth. The great country was the city, with its Prytaneum and its heroes, with its sacred precinct and its territory marked by religion. The sacred ground of the fatherland, said the Greeks. This was not an empty word. This soil was truly sacred for man, since it was inhabited by his gods. State, city, fatherland, these were not abstract words, as in modern times: they really represented an ensemble of local divinities who were worshipped daily by those who believed in them with all their souls...

...Such a fatherland is not only a domicile for man; let him leave these holy walks, let him pass the sacred limits of the territory and he will no longer find any religion or any social tie of any sort. Everywhere else, other than in his native land, he is outside ordered existence and outside the law; everywhere else he is without gods and outside normal life. It is only there that his dignity as a man and his duty lie. Only there can he be a man.⁵

Greco-Latin patriotism, Northern, is therefore specifically different from Egypto-African patriotism, with regard to the reasons which are at their origin. The xenophobia of the Northern countries, in contrast to the xenophilia of the countries with a patriarchal régime was such that at the time of Herodotus, in the fifth century, only a soothsayer had as yet acquired Athenian nationality, while in Egypt, according to Fontanes, from the time of the twelfth dynasty, Black, White and Yellow men had already been admitted to live as equal citizens.⁶

As much as the strength of individual right revealed the existence of a nomadic period preceding the beginnings of the formation of the cities, so was public right, with time, going to take precedence over private institutions; and finally, the life of the individual was going to be completely subordinated to that of the state. In reality, individual liberty in the patriarchal age only existed for the heads of families. Later it no longer existed for anyone, with the strengthening of the authority of the city-state; the latter took charge of the education of the children, could direct each citizen to perform any definite task, exiled those among the citizens who were too virtuous (ostracism) and even intervened in their private feelings:

There was nothing in man which was independent... Private life did not escape the omnipotence of the state. Many Greek cities forbade the men to remain unmarried. Sparta punished not only those who did not marry, but even those who married late. In Athens the state could lay down the labour to be done, and in Sparta, the use of leisure. It exercised its tyranny in the smallest things: in Locri, the law forbade men to drink pure wine; in Rome, Meletus and Marseille, this was forbidden to women. It was common practice for dress invariably to be determined by the laws of each city: the government of Sparta regulated women's hairstyles, and that of Athens prohibited their taking more than three robes when travelling. In Rhodes the law prohibited the shaving of beards, in Byzantium, it punished by a fine anyone found to possess a razor at home; in Sparta, on the contrary, it required moustaches to be shaved off.

The state had the right not to tolerate malformations or deformities among its citizens. Consequently it ordered the father, to whom such a child was born, to put it to death. This law was to be found in the ancient codes of Sparta and Rome. We do not know if it existed in Athens; we only know that Aristotle and Plato included it in their

ideal forms of legislation. There is in the history of Sparta a trait which Plutarch and Rousseau admired greatly. Sparta had just suffered a defeat at Leuctra and many of its citizens had perished. On receiving this news, the parents of the dead had to show themselves in public with cheerful countenances. The mother who knew that her son had escaped the disaster and that she was going to see him again, had to weep and show signs of distress. The mother who knew she would never see her son again, showed her joy and ran through the temples thanking the gods. *Such was thus the power of the state which ordered the reversal of natural sentiment and was obeyed.*⁷

What indeed remains of the individual liberty which seems so characteristic of the Northern cradle since antiquity? Nothing, for the period in which we are interested; we have seen it ceased to exist shortly after the establishment of sedentary life, and that even before, it was only valid for the 'pater familias'.

After contact with the Meridional states and with the end of nomadic life, the Northerners were to conceive a particular type of state which remained marked by the after-effects of the preceding period. It very soon developed into a totalitarianism which in our day would be known as 'nazism' and which has no counterpart in the South, in Egypt, Ethiopia and the rest of Black Africa. It is quite probable that the Egyptian citizen was crushed under the weight of taxes and forced labour at the time of the construction of the pyramids, but he never knew this intrusion of the state in his private life. It is impossible to quote from the history of Ancient Egypt, Ethiopia or Black Africa, a single instance where the authority of the state had imposed the abandonment of children for the sole reason that they were born deformed, or had allowed any limitation on their birth. On the contrary, the respect for life and the human person was such that, according to Herodotus, when a Nubian citizen was condemned to death, the state was content to order him to do away with himself, but his own mother then watched, out of patriotism and civic duty, that the sentence was carried out and took it upon herself to do it if her son failed to do so. This recalls, it is true, the death of Socrates, condemned to drink hemlock. But the Southern influence, in Northern countries, was not confined to the framework of the state, it was also to be found at the legislative level, in the improvement of living conditions and the equality of the citizens. When Solon was

in nomadic life, showed itself less adaptable to the new conditions of life of the citizens who served it. It therefore explodes under our very eyes, so to speak, during the historical period, to give way to the Meridional type of state: that which one can call the territorial state, in contrast to the city-state, covering several towns and trans-forming itself at times into an empire. Such was the evolution of the Roman city until the moment of its apogee, when it could consider the Mediterranean as an inland sea: *mare nostrum*.

The evolution of patriotism was a corollary to that of the state, with the disappearance of Aryan xenophobia.

ROYALTY

The necessities of collective agricultural life required, at an early stage, the existence of a co-ordinating secular authority, which was not long in transcending society to take on a supernatural or divine character:

From the beginning, the king was god almost literally in order to bring to mind his all-powerfulness and his superiority over the common man. It was on the contrary the literal expression of a belief which constitutes one of the essential particularities of Egypt. This belief has, moreover, evolved since then, but it has never lost its force.⁸

King-god; this idea never seems especially to have struck the attention of the Aryans; the kings among them were, at the most, intermediaries between divinity and the ordinary mortal, to whom they transmitted the divine commands within the framework of a well-established ceremonial ritual. But they were in the eyes of all, and this even in the most far-off times.

At this time, when the social function of the Aryan king was still not superfluous, the latter, remarks Fustel de Coulanges, enjoyed a holy and inviolable authority. Royalty was well able to do without all the repressive apparatus needed by modern states to make themselves obeyed.

Royalty was established quite naturally, at first in the family, later in the city. It was not devised by the ambitions of certain people; it was born of a necessity which was manifest to the eyes of all. During

designated by the Athenians to draft a code which would govern their public and private life, he drew his inspiration officially from Egyptian wisdom. Plato relates that he went to Egypt to become initiated by the Egyptian priests who, at the time, considered the Greeks as children; in fact they were only younger in the ways of civilisation.

Could one reconcile the status given to the individual in Meridional societies, with the cases of human sacrifices found in them? In fact these latter are common to all humanity. Among the Greeks, in the beginning, the bodies of conquered enemies were eaten either cooked or raw; traces of this custom are to be found in the *Iliad*. Agamemnon, the commander of the Greeks, sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia, before leaving for Troy, in order to appease the gods of victory. His grandfather had already served to his brother, at table, the flesh of his nephews. This was, according to tradition, at the origin of the frightful destiny which overtook the House of the Atreus, that of Agamemnon. Among the Hebrews Abraham marks the dividing line; it was from his time on that customs became less harsh and that one saw the beginning of the substitution of animals for human beings destined for sacrifice. The replacement of Isaac, his son, by the ram brought by an angel, following the terrible divine command which tradition is at pains to justify, can only be interpreted in this manner.

In Egypt, scenes representing perhaps human sacrifice, which go back to prehistoric times, are sculptured on the Palette of Narmer, discovered by Quibell at Hierakonpolis. In contrast it seems that the Hebrews still practised sacrifices of this kind until the fifth century, at the time when Herodotus visited Egypt. They have also been reported among certain Germanic tribes.

In Black Africa, this only survived in a very fragmentary form, in Dahomey, in the Mossi country, contrary to widespread belief. As to anthropophagy properly speaking in the cases where it really existed, it was linked especially with economic penury, as was the case in Europe during the Middle Ages, or in antiquity for the armies of Cambyses marching against Ethiopia.

The difference between the two cradles therefore not only gave birth to two different types of family; it was also responsible for two types of state, irreducible one to the other. But the Northern city-state, which was a sedentary organisation based on ideas acquired

long centuries it was peaceful, honoured, and obeyed. The kings had no need of material force – they had no armies, no finances; but, sustained by beliefs which had a hold on men's minds, their authority was holy and inviolable.⁹

There reigned, consequently, a confusion between the priesthood and the secular power. One was really a priest-king, interpreter of the divine will, but not a god. When royalty was overthrown, and the religious beliefs remained, people turned to 'fate' to learn the divine will regarding the choice of magistrates.

Plato expressed the thoughts of the ancients when he said: 'the man whom fate has chosen, we say is dear to the gods and we find it right that he should command. For all the positions which touch on sacred things, we leave to the gods the choice of those who are agreeable to them and we rely on fate to decide'. The city believed thus that its magistrates were received from god.¹⁰

The reasons which presided over the choice of an African king and of the one who could be called his first magistrate, were quite different. It was not the gods who nominated the most suitable candidate, by the intermediary of drawing lots and on the basis of one knows not what criterion.

The choice of the African, whether he was ancient Egyptian, Ethiopian or came from another part of Africa, particularly the Bantu, was linked with the idea he had of the world of beings and of essences; thus to a whole ontology and metaphysics which the Rev. E. Tempels calls 'Bantu Philosophy'. The whole universe is divided up into a series of beings, of quantitatively different forces, which are thus also qualitatively different. From this is derived a hierarchy or natural order. Each of these pieces of essences, of ontological beings, appears to us in the guise of a material body, either animated or inorganic. These forces, said to be vital forces, are additive, that is to say, that if I carry on me in the form of talisman, amulet, – call it what you will – the organ where the vital force of an animal is supposed to be fixed (claw or tooth of lion, for example), I add this force to mine. For an enemy coming from the outside to be able to destroy me in an ontological and consequently in a physical fashion he must total, by similar means, an amount of vital force superior to that at my

disposal, now that I have associated with my own that of the lion. This universe of forces is governed by a weight, a sort of law of gravitation, which requires that the position of each body be naturally a function of the weight of the beings, of its quantity of vital force. The opposite would break the universal harmony and the natural accomplishment of phenomena would be seriously disturbed. It is to an ontological disorder of this nature that is imputed the appearance of droughts, poor harvests, clouds of locusts and epidemics of plague, etc... Therefore it is order and natural harmony which requires that every living or inorganic being should be in its place, and particularly that man must occupy his own proper place.

Such is the necessity which governs the choice of the king. The latter must be, among all living people, the one having the greatest quantity of vital force. It is only subject to this condition that the country will never know any disaster. It will be understood why, according to Herodotus, the macrobian Ethiopians designated as king the strongest and healthiest one among them. An insight can also be obtained into the profound meaning of the feast of Zed in Egypt, said to take place at the ritual death of the king. When the king, at the end of a long reign and having reached a certain age, had really lost his vigour in the eyes of all, the question arose of renewing this by magic rites which, it was said, could only augment his vital force since at the end of the ceremony he was apparently as old as before. If his vigour had changed, this could only be in an ontological fashion in the domain which can be called, in a human being, his vital force.

It seems that, in these primitive times, the king was purely and simply put to death, after reigning a certain number of years, at the end of which it was considered that the vigour which permitted him to carry out his functions was exhausted.

During the reign ceremonies of the same kind were repeated. They were jubilees: but the meaning of most of them was richer than that of simple feasts. They were concerned with restoring to the king in their former vigorous freshness, the religions and magical forces on which depended the prosperity of the country. Doubtless these ceremonies represented an adaptation of the brutal customs which, in the beginning, terminated in putting him to death and replacing him by a younger successor.¹¹

Seligman has shown that this vitalist conception of ancient Egypt is exactly the same as that of the rest of Africa, even in the present day.¹² Among certain African peoples the king was in fact put to death after a reign – the duration of which varied, but in the case of the Mboum of Central Africa was ten years; the ceremony taking place before the harvest of the millet. Among the peoples who still practise the ritual of putting their kings to death must be cited the Yoruba, the Dagomba, the Tchamba, the Djoukon, the Igara, the Songay, the Wouadai, the Hausas of Gobir, of Katsina and of Daoura, and the Shillouk.¹³ This practice also existed in ancient Meroë, that is, in the Sudan at Khartoum, and in Uganda-Ruanda.

Such a king was at the same time a priest, who in Egypt, delegated his priestly functions to an official who performed them daily in the temple.

The African king was distinguished from the Northern king by his divine essence and by the vitalist character of his functions. One was a man-priest, the other was a god-priest among the living: the king of Egypt was indeed the hawk god Horus, living for the greatest benefit of all even in his sporting activities:

Hunting and fishing, he still carries out his conventional rôle of sovereign, since he always shows himself in so doing, skillful, strong and careful, while hunting at least – even crocodiles and hippopotami existed in the swamps – to clear the country of wild animals.¹⁴

The king in Egypt and in Ethiopia was also the leading farmer; he is often to be found depicted as digging the first sod (a sign of blessing?) to open the excavation of a canal. According to Caillaud, who discovered Meroë, he was called the first farmer in the land of Sennar, that is in Nubia. It was to him that was owed the fertility of the fields and the absence of social disasters of all sorts. It was also considered quite normal that he should take – ritually, so to speak – a fraction of the harvests of everyone, for the upkeep of his own family and his servants.

It was so in the early kingdoms until the administrative apparatus introduced corruption. Obviously the function of defending the country was also incumbent on the king, but in the agrarian meridional countries, during the long periods of peace, the military rôle of the

king was toned down and took second place after his priestly and agricultural rôle. Things went on this way, until the time when the Southern world was menaced and invaded by the Indo-Europeans, during the second millennium.

Numbers of the Egyptian sovereigns seem to have lived peacefully, and the frequent eulogies of peace, almost in modern tones, constitute not the least remarkable oddity in even the official literature of Egypt.¹⁵

Before the attacks on the Northerners, war was not a prerogative of the South, neither was agriculture that of the North. It was therefore, in all probability, on contact with the Southern world of the Aegean that the Northern invaders of Greece and Italy acquired, little by little, the habit of practising, of respecting and even finally of considering agriculture as something sacred, as is the custom in the southern cradle. There is indeed something contradictory in nomads making the cultivation of the earth into something divine. Thus many proofs exist to show that on the Italian peninsula it was the Etruscans who initiated the Romans, even including the ritual marking out of towns by means of the plough. *In Greece, tradition says that it is to Cecrops and Etyptios, both sons of Egypt, that one must go back for the adoption of agriculture as a national activity.*

RELIGION

In the domain of religion, as well, the difference between the Northern and Meridional conceptions is no less great.

Mircea Eliade, in his *History of Religions*, wished to show the universal character of certain religious beliefs, such as the chthonico-agrarian rites which were to be found more or less in all societies at their origins. However a thorough examination of the facts forces us to reject this point of view. It is inconsistent, for example, for the culture and religious thought of a nomadic people to commence by agrarian rites. It would therefore only have been after settlement that the Aryan nomads adopted, at the same time as agriculture, the rites and religion corollary to it. So that if allowances are not made for chronology, there is a risk of generalising beliefs which, in the beginning, were very strictly localized.

Eliade has clearly shown that with the discovery of agriculture was born a religion founded on a cosmic triad, become atmospheric: the sky, or father-god, through the rain, fertilized the earth or mother-goddess so that the vegetation-daughter could be born. These three cosmic divinities were not long in becoming anthropomorphic – meaning, to become incarnated in human beings – in the persons of Osiris, Isis and Horus, but a period when without any doubt the Aryans were still nomads and practised quite a different kind of worship, on which comparative linguistics allows us to shed some light. The evidence of Caesar is formal on this point and confirms that until a recent period, the Northern and Meridional beliefs remained distinct.

The practices of the Germans are very different: for they have no Druids to preside over the worship and scarcely bother with sacrifices. They count only the gods they can see and whose benefits can be felt, Vulcan, the sun and the moon: they have never heard of the others.¹⁶

From Tacitus we discern that the Meridional influence was already among the Suebian Germans (the Swabians of today) who 'made sacrifices to Isis', beginning thus to adopt the agrarian rites of the South. Vendryes has shown what was the extent and depth of his recent Meridional religious influence.

From Fustel de Coulanges we learn that the religious base of the nomadic patriarchal family was ancestor worship.

It is a great proof of the antiquity of these beliefs and these practices to find them at the same time among the peoples living on the shores of the Mediterranean and among those of the Indian peninsula. It is certain that the Greeks did not borrow this religion from the Hindus, nor the Hindus from the Greeks. But the Greeks, Italians and the Hindus belonged to one and the same race: their ancestors, at a far distant period, had lived together in Central Asia. It was there that they first conceived these beliefs and established these rites. The religion of the sacred fire dates, therefore, from the far-off and obscure period when there were still no Greeks, Italians or Hindus and when there were only Aryans. When the tribes separated from each other, they carried this worship with them, one to the shores of the Ganges,

the others to the shores of the Mediterranean. Later among these separated tribes which had no further contact with each other, one worshiped Brahma, another, Zeus and still another, Janus; each group made its own gods. But they all preserved, as an ancient legacy, the first religion they had conceived and practised in the common cradle of their race.¹⁷

According to the author, it can be seen that the gods of nature, such as Zeus, were adopted at a relatively late date, contrary to the opinion which says that their origin dates back to the time of the steppes and is based on linguistic analogies which are at least doubtful. In showing that there is nothing in their nature to prevent their being worshipped by strangers and that they are not xenophobic, he contrasts them with the family gods, which could not suffer the presence or the worship of a stranger. Domestic worship separated individuals even to the grave, for even in the after-life the families did not mix. For a long time this form of worship was supreme over others; Agamemnon, victorious general, returning from Troy, addressed himself first to his family gods to thank them:

It is not Jupiter he is going to thank; it is not in a temple that he was going to take his joy and gratitude; he offers the sacrifice of thanksgiving at the hearth in his home.¹⁸

In the beginning, the national divinities themselves were domestic, and belonged to private families.

It needed considerable time before these gods left the bosom of the families which had conceived them and regarded them as their patrimony. It is even known that many of them never were detached from this sort of domestic bond. The Demeter of Eleusis remained the private divinity of the family of the Eupolmides; the Athena of the Accropolis of Athens belonged to the family of Butades. The Potitii of Rome had a Hercules and the Nautii, a Minerva...

It happened in the course of time that the god of a family, having acquired great prestige in the minds of men and appearing to be powerful in proportion to the prosperity of that family, a whole city wished to adopt it and devote to it a public cult in order to obtain its favours. This is what happened to the Demeter of the Eumolpides, the Athena of the Butades and the Hercules of the Potitii.¹⁹

This private domestic character is a common feature of the Aryan and Semitic gods. Indeed, even after the triumph of monotheism in the human consciousness, Jehovah was to remain the god of his 'chosen people', as he was, in the beginning, the tribal god whom no stranger could worship. There is no universal salvation: He only loves and saves his own. Like Zeus, He is vindictive and irascible and makes His presence felt by thunder.* He must even have been, in the beginning, a sort of Agni god – fire worship – so typical of the Northern cradle. It will be remembered that it was in the form of a long column of smoke, a burning bush or some other volcanic manifestation, that He appeared either to Moses or the people as a guide. Fustel de Coulanges insists that, for a considerable length of time, the idea of a universal god never touched Greco-Roman thought.

It must be recognized that the ancients, excepting certain rare superior intellects, never represented God as a unique being exercising power over the whole universe. Each of their innumerable gods had his own little domain: to one it was a family, to another, a tribe and to a third, a city: this was the world which sufficed to the providence of each of them. As to the God of the human type, some philosophers were able to guess at it, the mysteries of Eleusis made it possible to glimpse at it for the most intelligent of their initiates, but the mass of the people never believed in it. For a long time man only understood the divine being as a force which protected him personally, and each man or group of men wished to have his own gods.²⁰

The inclination was probably not to monotheism, because Fustel de Coulanges counted the number of gods there were in Rome: they were more numerous than the citizens: 'there are in Rome more gods than citizens.'²¹

What is known of primitive worship in this city allows us to say that the Latins did not, in the beginning, exhibit their gods. This peculiarity, instead of arising from a spirit of abstraction, conforms rather to the necessities of nomadic life. The same material reasons which necessitated the cremation of ancestors in order to render their

* It would be interesting to study the etymology of Thor, the expression by which the Semites of today (Arabs) designate Mt. Sinai where Moses spoke with Jehovah through the voice of thunder. Thor is the Germanic god of thunder.

ashes portable, forbade also the carrying of sculptured figures of ancestors or of other gods during the long journeys. It must therefore be recognised that the material non-representation of a divinity seems to originate in a Northern cultural trait. The Scythians themselves, in spite of their primitive state, only depicted Ares (Mars, god of war) in the improvised form of a sword planted on a heap of wood.

The religious situation was quite different in the south, in Africa. With the aid of the mildness of their physical surroundings, the Nubians and the Egyptians had, at an early date, more than a thousand years before the Greco-Latins and the Semites, the idea of an all-powerful God, creator of all living things, benefactor of all humanity without distinction, and of whom anyone could become a disciple and gain salvation. Such a god was Ammon who, until the present day, is the God of the whole of Western Africa: he is the one described by Marcel Griaule in his *Dieu d'Eau* (God of Water); Amma, God of the Dogons, is indeed the god of water, of humidity, of fertility. He has the same attributes as Ammon, in the Sudan as well as in Nigeria among the Yoruba. Plutarch, in *Isis and Osiris* thinks that the name signifies, in Egyptian 'hidden', 'invisible'. It can be remarked that, in a present-day African language like Walaf, whose kinship with ancient Egyptian is not to be doubted, the root *Amam* means the fact of being, which is existence, in contrast to nothingness.

However that may be, in Egypt the worship of Ammon was not long in enriching and making very important the caste of priests who served it. There followed the reaction of Akhnaton, surrounded by circumstances which are not very well known. Breasted considers this pharaoh as the first inventor of the purest form of monotheism in the history of humanity.²² The God Aton as conceived by him was not distinguishable by any form of statuary representation; the solar disc symbolised his power, and by its brightness and its rays gave fresh life to all nature. It had, therefore, one trait in common with the Northern gods, and certain historians are inclined to think that this fact could be linked either with the central origin of the grandmother of Akhnaton, or to the influence of his wife Nefertiti.

When Herodotus insists on the piety of the Egyptians and when he affirms that 'they are also the first to proclaim the doctrine that the soul of man is immortal', historians do not think that he exaggerates.²³

Certainly there can be found, as a particular trait in Egypt and in Black Africa, this unrestrained worship of animals, this zoolatry, which the Greeks jeered at so much, and of which André Aymard remarks that no traces were to be found in Semitic Asia. These beliefs – whether they are given the name of totemism or zoolatry – which make possible the identification of a human being and an animal, taken and analysed from the outside, misled, for a certain time, Western thinkers such as Lévy-Bruhl. It was following a generalised study of these that the latter affirmed that the principle of identity ought not to operate among peoples whose members were capable of considering themselves at one and the same time as animals and authentic human beings; they would be ruled by a primitive pre-logical mentality, the difference between which and that of the civilised adult white male could not be made up by intellectual progress accomplished in a human lifetime. There were two distinct levels. The author before his death, retracted this and considered that the word 'symbolism' would be more exact to characterize this type of mentality.

In reality, only a knowledge of the ontology of the peoples under the reign of zoolatry would have allowed one to avoid falling into these errors. In a mentality where the essence of things, ontology *par excellence*, is the vital force, the exterior forms of beings and of objects become secondary and can no longer constitute a barrier either for totalling two vital forces or for identifying two of them, because they are equal quantities or because the beings they animate have been led in their existence to proceed to a social contract, a sort of blood pact. Thus, if the beauty of the plumage of the parrot or of the peacock attracts me, becomes confused with my aesthetic ideal, there is nothing to prevent me from choosing it, for this single particular trait, as my totem. I might also have been tempted to choose the lion, because of its strength, or the falcon, because of its vigilance... Evidently, all these choices which, in the beginning, were made at the level of the clan, express themselves by an identification of essences which is only conceivable by a vitalist mentality, governed by a philosophy of the Bantu type. And it is seen that it is not due to change that among the Blacks of Black Africa and the ancient Egyptians, who all practised totemism or zoolatry, that vitalism was at the basis of their conception of the universe. While in the Semitic

and Aryan world the association of an animal and a human being had, as André Aymard has remarked, only a symbolic character; in the African world the philosophy which is the basis of life, allows us to identify these two beings without contradicting the principle of identity, without our being able to evoke a prelogical mentality. Here, the exterior form is not the first reality, it is perhaps not illusory, but secondary, and no serious classification could come from it. The pharaoh and the falcon were one and the same essence, although enjoying different exterior forms: Diana's hind or the Gallic cock are only symbols, otherwise the Indo-Europeans would have known totemism.

It was within the framework of such thought, that were logically situated the philosophical doctrines such as that of the reincarnation or metempsychosis of Pythagoras. Herodotus, in paragraph 124 of his second book takes up ironically the attribution of this doctrine to Pythagoras. He says there that he knows someone in Greece who, wishing to give himself a reputation as scholar and philosopher attributed to himself this doctrine which was invented by the Egyptians, but who, by discretion, he does not wish to name.

The conception of life after death and that of moral values are the natural ornaments of religion and philosophy. In this domain the Meridional and Northern conceptions remain irreducible and bear, undeniably, the imprint of the cradles in which they were born.

In the nomadic cradle, where reigned an endemic state of war following on a lack of central power to decide between tribes and individuals, the defence of the group was the first concern. And all moral values related to war, contrary to all expectations for those people coming from the Southern cradle. It was only possible to enter the Germanic paradise Valhalla if one were a warrior fallen on the field of battle. In this case only did the Valkyries come to gather the body of the dead fighter and take it to paradise. But there as well the gods passed their time, to prevent boredom, in fighting among themselves during the day, and in drinking at night. They would all have died of hunger had not Frigga, the daughter of Wotan, cultivated golden apples for them in her garden. For the rest, the gods were mortals like other men; they were corrupted by life and were all to die so that another world, pure and regenerated, could again be born. Such is the thought contained in Wagner's *Tetralogy*, which was adopted in a particular manner by the Nazis, but which

is nothing else than that contained in the *Niebelungen*:

Those who fell in battle or who died of their wounds were admitted to heaven, the dwelling-place of the gods (Valhalla) where lived the Valkyries and where Fricka, the wife of Odin, received the heroes and presented them with the drinking-horn. The shades passed their days in fighting and their nights in feasting, and the German wished for no worthier recompense for his valour. Besides, these gods were no more immortal than the world created by them; they let themselves be corrupted, like men, through evil habits; they will then be condemned with the world and will perish, but in the same way as night follows the day, they will be reborn, purified, no longer to die. The elements of the primitive epics are to be found once again, mixed with ancient and Christian traditions in the Eddas, collections of Scandinavian traditions composed in Iceland from the tenth to the thirteenth century.²⁴

A young German had the right to shave his beard only by moistening it with the blood of an enemy killed in battle. Robbery was an honourable exercise in risk and hardening when it was committed outside the tribe, according to Tacitus.

The Greek Olympus is identical with the Germanic Valhalla as far as the moral values which reign there and the occupations and the sentiments of the gods are concerned. Zeus triumphed by force over the rest of the gods in a battle waged with the help of Prometheus. His soul was the seat of indescribable intrigues, criminal ideas and choleric outbursts. He recoiled before no injustice, no sentiment, however horrible it was, he, the master of Olympus, who could covet the wife of another god.

The Assyrian conception of the Beyond was very close to that of the Aryans; among the Assyrians, indeed, it was the soldier who fell in battle who went to paradise. Their cruelty was proverbial: it has been thought – and not without dread – that if their art is so anatomical, this is due to the deep knowledge of the human muscular system obtained in skinning their prisoners alive, especially the chiefs. Nothing was more commonplace among them than the mutilation of a member, the putting out of an eye or the cutting off of an ear or a nose.

In this way, during all the nomadic period and for a long time

after settlement in fixed abodes, the idea of justice seemed unknown to the Aryans. All their moral values were the opposite of those of the Southern cradle and were only to become milder on contact with this region. Crime, violence, war and a taste for risk, so many sentiments born of the climate and the early conditions of existence, all predisposed the Aryan world, extraordinary as this may appear, to a great historical destiny. When the Aryan threw himself against the Southern cradle to conquer it, he was to find it badly defended, without any notable fortifications, since it was accustomed to a long period of peaceful coexistence. It was after having been subjected to these first invasions that the Egyptians, particularly, raised fortifications, at the gates of their country, as at Sinai. It was following on similar circumstances that the Sidonians fortified their town, which was nonetheless destroyed in the twelfth century B.C. to give way to Tyre.

The Nubians and Egyptians of antiquity felt very comfortable in their own country and did not wish to leave it; they were not conquerors, but were distinguished by their spirit of justice and piety. When Queen Candace took command of her armies, it was to defend the national soil against the troops of Augustus Caesar commanded by the general Petronius. She fought nonetheless with such energy that Strabo said '*she had a courage surpassing that of her sex*'. Egypt only became a conquering and imperialist nation by reaction, by self-defence after the occupation of the Hyksos, under the eighteenth Dynasty; particularly under Thothmes III who is often called the Napoleon of Antiquity. He conquered Palestine and Syria and pushed the frontiers of Egypt as far as the upper Euphrates at Kadesh. For this seventeen expeditions were required. On the eighth he left Egypt by sea and landed in Phoenicia, had boats built at Byblos and had them carried across the desert to the Euphrates, which he was thus able to cross and defy the Mitanians. The renown of this victory assured him the subjection of those great warriors the Assyrians, the Babylonians and the Hittites, who all paid tribute to him. Consequently the Egyptian domination under Thothmes III extended to the foothills of the Elamite chain. The Egyptians practised at that time a sort of assimilation policy, which consisted of taking the young princes who were heirs of the conquered kingdoms, giving them an Egyptian education and sending them back home, so that they could transmit Egyptian civilisation.

The conquests of Shaka who is also called the Napoleon of South Africa of modern times are, in many respects, equal to those of Thothmes III.²⁵

The spirit of conquest seems to have entered West Africa during the Islamic period with religious conquerors such as El-Hadjj Omar in the nineteenth century.

As to the attitude of Samory, it is to be compared with that of Vercingetorix. There was a national resistance.

It was therefore on contact with the outside world that Black Africa, as a whole, was to study ardently in the school of war, and to excel in this finally; so easy is it for the human being to adapt himself, especially when this is dictated by necessity.

To the mediocrity of living conditions offered by nature, the Northerners responded by religious conceptions of a meagre nature, strongly imprinted with materialism. They had, so to speak, no reason to be grateful to this hostile nature.

It was quite different for the Southern cradle which seems to be the favoured land of religious idealism. The Egyptian gods transcended humanity by their virtues, their generosity and their spirit of justice. At the birth of their nation, Osiris was already there, with his spirit of equity: in the beyond, on his divine throne, he presided over the tribunal of the dead; his absolute justice is symbolized by the scales of Thot and Anubis, which weigh the actions of the dead before rewarding them or punishing them. This is the same state of mind met everywhere in Black Africa; on this subject can be invoked the testimony of Ibn Batouta who visited the Sudan in the thirteenth century:

WHAT I HAVE SEEN TO BE GOOD IN THE CONDUCT OF THE BLACKS

Acts of injustice are rare among them: of all peoples, this is the one least inclined to commit these and the sultan (African king) never forgives anyone who is guilty of one. Through the length and breadth of the country reigns perfect security; people can live there and travel without fear of robbery or depredation. They do not confiscate the goods of white men who die in their country, even when the value of these is immense, they do not touch them; on the contrary, they appoint trustees of the inheritance, chosen among the white men and

it remains in their hands until the rightful owners come to claim it.²⁶

The ensemble of these moral conceptions and the social solidarity resulting from them gives to Black Africa the following triple character upon which one can ponder.

Black Africa is one of the lands of the world where man is poorest, that is, who at the present time, possesses the least; but it is the only country in the world where destitution does not exist in spite of this poverty, thanks to the existence of a rightful solidarity. It is also the first country in the world where criminal activity is weakest. It would be interesting to compare the statistics of crimes committed in the rest of the world with those – especially crimes of debauchery – actually committed by genuine Africans in Black Africa.*

LITERATURE

The accent will be placed on the essential difference between Greek literature and that of Egypt: the particular taste of the Greeks in developing the tragic style.

We can try to find the reason for this by disregarding the stimulation of the creative will of artists by artificial means, such as the awarding of prizes at the Olympiades.

The themes always deal, through the action of destiny, with a blind fatality which tends systematically to destroy a whole race or line of descent. They all betray a feeling of guilt, original with and at the same time typical of the Northern cradle. Whether it is a question of Oedipus or the Atrides and Agamemnon, there is always a flow, a crime committed by the ancestors, which has to be expiated irremediably by their descendants, who, from this fact and despite whatever they do, are utterly condemned by fate. Aeschylus tried to reduce the severity of this state of affairs by doing his utmost to introduce the idea of justice, which would allow an innocent posterity no longer to be punished, but to be absolved.

The Semitic conception is identical. The original sin was committed by the very ancestors of the human race and all humanity,

* If one reflects that in the U.S.A., according to a recent report of the F.B.I., a crime is committed every few seconds, the necessity of encouraging in Black Africa preventive sociological studies will be understood.

an irresistible feeling which draws them back to a state of primitive identification with nature. The metaphysical consolation afforded us, as I have already said, by all real tragedy, the thought that life, at its basis, and in spite of the changeableness of appearances, remains imperturbably powerful and full of joy; this consolation appears with manifest clarity in the form of a chorus of satyrs, of a chorus of natural entities, whose life exists in an almost indelible manner behind all civilisation; who in spite of the metamorphoses of generations and the vicissitudes of the history of peoples, remain eternally unaltered.

The profound soul of the Hellene is fortified by the accents of this chorus, this soul so incomparably fired to feel either the slightest or the most cruel sufferings; it had contemplated, with a penetrating eye, the terrible cataclysms of what is called the history of the world and had recognised the cruelty of nature; it found itself then exposed to the danger of aspiring to the Buddhist annihilation of the will. Art saved it and through art – life reconquered it.²⁹

Unfortunately, the ecstatic rapture of the Dionysian state stops with the music, and the reality of everyday life reappears in all its nakedness and with all that it contains of cruelty and deception; while this short vision of 'pure truth' is sufficient to destroy the will and make all human activity appear almost absurd.

In this sense, Dionysian man is similar to Hamlet; both looked into the essence of things with a determined eye; they looked and were disgusted by action because their activity could change nothing of the eternal essence of things: it seemed to them ridiculous or shameful that it be their business to put right a world out of order. Knowledge kills action and for the latter the mirage of illusion is necessary – that is what Hamlet teaches us. It is not the cheap wisdom of Hans the dreamer who, by thinking too much and as if by an excess of possibilities, cannot bring himself to act; it is not thought, no! – it is real knowledge, the vision of the horrible truth, which destroys all impulse, all motive for acting, in Hamlet as well as in Dionysian man.

Then no consolation can any longer prevail; desire leaps over a whole world towards death and despises the gods themselves; existence is denied, and with it the false reflection of its image in the world of gods or in an immortal beyond. Under the influence of the truth beheld by him, man no longer discerns now from

anywhere anything but the horrible and absurd of existence; he understands now what is symbolic in the fate of Ophelia; he can now recognise the wisdom of Silenus, the god of the forests; disgust mounts to his throat and in this imminent danger of the will, art appears like a saviour bringing a healing balm; it alone has the power to transmute this disgust of what is horrible and absurd in existence into ideal images, with the aid of which life is rendered possible. These images are the sublime, where art masters and subdues the horrible and the comic, where art delivers us from the disgust with the absurd. The chorus of satyrs of the dithyramb was the salvation of Greek art; the accesses of despair, evoked just now, disappeared thanks to the mediating world of these companions of Dionysius.³⁰

For the author, the satyr, like the shepherd of modern idylls, symbolises an aspiration towards the original primitive state: it represents nature still free from all taint of knowledge, still not violated by any civilisation. So, in the eyes of the Greeks, it was exactly the opposite of a mere puppet.

The satyr...symbolises the whole of the sexual power of nature that the Greek had learnt to regard with an apprehensive and respectful amazement.³¹

Nietzsche, until this, had only stressed the effect of tragedy, that is to say, of Dionysian music, by plastic Apollonian means, on the soul of the civilised Greek. After having insisted on this salutary effect, he penetrated more deeply into the subject matter of the drama to bring out the sentiments which are the basis of it and which serve to support it. They are the same as those mentioned above; the feeling of crime, guilt, original sin and then, although less clearly expressed, a terrible feeling of embarrassment towards woman, who has been made the scapegoat of Aryan society. All these sentiments are specifically Indo-Aryan and Semitic; Nietzsche insists on them in the case of both peoples, in different degrees, to account for the pessimistic ideas which are at the foundation of their conception of the universe and of civilisation. It is in an analysis of the legend of Prometheus that he finds the arguments permitting him to support this point of view:

and that all the celebrated personages of the Greek theatre, Prometheus, Oedipus, etc., are only disguises of the original hero, Dionysus. That behind these disguises is hidden a god, such is the essential cause of the typical ideality, so often admired, of these glorious figures...

In this way we possess all the constituents of an idea of a profound and pessimistic world, and at the same time also the teaching of the mysteries of the tragedy.

What then was your purpose, O sacrilegious Euripides, when you tried to enslave once more this dying person? He perished in your brutal hands and you then had recourse to a disguise, an imitation of the myth...

We recognize on the other hand, the action of this anti-Dionysian spirit, enemy of the myth, in the growing importance of psychological refinements and of the depiction of characters in the tragedy of Sophocles. The character must no longer be generalized, developed into an eternal type, but must on the contrary act individually by accessory traits and artificial shades of meaning, in the most scrupulous precision of all the lines, so that the spectator no longer receives an impression of the myth but that of a striking natural truth and the power of imitation of the artist....

But it is in the denouement of the dramas that is most clearly manifested the new anti-Dionysian spirit. The end of ancient tragedy evoked the metaphysical consolation outside of which the taste for tragedy remains inexplicable; these harmonies of peace from another world, it is perhaps from an Oedipus at Colonus that they resound most purely. Now the spirit of music has abandoned tragedy and the latter is dead, in the strict sense of the word; for where can one henceforth derive this metaphysical consolation?

So, to the tragic discord, a satisfactory earthly ending was sought; the hero, after having been sufficiently tortured by fate, obtained by a fine marriage, by divine tokens of esteem, a well deserved reward. The hero had become a gladiator to whom, after he had been appropriately flayed and covered with wounds, was eventually accorded his liberty, the 'Deus ex machina' has replaced the metaphysical consolation.³³

The explanation of the birth of the tragedy by Nietzsche remains, in spite of everything, inadequate; the reader finds many difficulties in the way of grading the rôles of music and of suffering, in the conception of the author. Is it the pure form of music, with its divine

The legend of Prometheus is an original property of the entire Aryan race and a document which testifies to its faculty for the profound and the tragic; and it would not even be difficult to believe that this myth had the same characteristic significance as the legend of the fall of man had for the Semitic race, and that there existed between these two myths a degree of kinship similar to that between brother and sister. The origin of this myth of Prometheus is the inestimable value accorded by a naïve humanity to fire... But that man could have fire freely at his disposal and that he did not receive it as a ray of light, seemed to the primitive soul to be a sacrilege, as stealing from divine nature. Whatever humanity could acquire of the highest and most precious it obtained through a crime and it must thereafter accept the consequences, that is, the torrent of ills and torments with which the angry immortals must afflict the human race in its noble ascension. This is a harsh thought which, by the dignity it confers on crime, contrasts strangely with the Semitic myth of the fall of man, where curiosity, lying, covetousness, in short a whole procession of the more specially feminine sentiments are regarded as the origin of evil. What distinguishes the Aryan conception is the sublime idea of effective sin considered as the true Promethean virtue; and this furnishes us at the same time with the ethical foundation of pessimistic tragedy; the justification of human suffering, the justification not only of the transgression of man, but also of the evils which are a consequence of it.³²

In the beginning tragedy was therefore entirely a setting for human suffering whatever the cause of this: Nietzsche is categorical: the primitive hero of all Greek tragedy is Dionysus, later heroes are only his masks, his transfigurations. In the same way the Dionysian tragic element of the drama was gradually whittled down from this beginning. The individualization of the general types, the refinement of the psychological study of the characters by Sophocles, the imitation of the myth by Euripides, in short, the advent of the *Deus exmachina*, succeeded in destroying the ancient tragedy:

It is an indisputable tradition that Greek tragedy in its oldest form had as a sole object the sufferings of Dionysus, and that during the longest period of its existence, the only hero on the stage was precisely Dionysus. But it can be affirmed with equal certitude that before and until the time of Euripides, he never ceased to be the tragic hero,

...for the Egyptians do not all worship the same gods, excepting Isis and Osiris, the latter of whom they say is the Grecian Dionysus.³¹

The 'father of history' is convinced of the foreign origin of the god, for all his attributes are in contrast to the manners and customs of the Greeks. He is an adopted figure. How did he arrive on the national soil? Herodotus tell us this:

Melampus, the son of Amytheon, cannot, I think, have been ignorant of this ceremony - nay, he must, I should conceive, have been well acquainted with it. He it was who introduced into Greece the name of Bacchus, the ceremonial of his worship, and the procession of the phallus. He did not, however, so completely apprehend the whole doctrine as to be able to communicate it entirely, but various sages since this time have carried out his teaching to greater perfection. Still it is certain that Melampus introduced the phallus, and that the Greeks learnt from him the ceremonies which they now practise. I therefore maintain that Melampus, who was a wise man and had acquired the art of divination, having become acquainted with the worship of Bacchus through knowledge derived from Egypt, introduced it into Greece, with a few slight changes, at the same time that he brought in various other practices. For I can by no means allow that it is by mere coincidence that the Bacchic ceremonies in Greece are so nearly the same as the Egyptian - they would then have been more Greek in their character, and less recent in their origin. Much less can I admit that the Egyptians borrowed these customs, or any other, from the Greeks...³²

It can thus be seen how Dionysus, the Egyptian national god, was introduced at a late date into Greece and the rest of the Northern Mediterranean. He probably used a land route, which would explain the numerous inscriptions relating to his worship which are to be found in Thrace and to which Grenier makes allusion. But no fact, no other tradition would permit us to situate his origin in Thrace or in Asia. We must now examine his attributes, which contrast so clearly with Greek and Aryan customs in general. They explain, at the same time, the indescribable enthusiasm with which the women welcomed him, and the resistance to the pitiless struggle which the men in the Aryan Mediterranean put up against him.

Wagnerian effects on the soul, or is it human suffering, of which music is only the particular tragic expression, which is the fundamental element? The author would seem to prefer the first hypothesis, when the second seems more justifiable. The delicacy and nuance of his thoughts do not allow his point of view to be confused with that of de Gobineau on the birth of art in general. The latter states without ambiguity that, wherever there exists a valid art, it is the result of a synthesis of two complementary factors: the one of Black origin and arising from sensibility, the inferior aspect of the human being; the other, or Aryan origin and arising from reason, from the cerebral, the superior side of the human being. It is tempting to identify this double aspect with the Dionysian and Apollonian components of Nietzsche. And if this is so, Nietzsche's book could have been entitled not *The Birth of Tragedy*, which is restrictive, but *The Birth of Art*.

It seems more satisfactory to consider tragedy as the staging of the most distressing ideas, of the destiny of a people, by a privileged member, that is, a rational artist, whose soul has been able to serve as a repository for all the collective emotions. In this case, music, or rather the musicality of dramatic expression, is only the reflection of a reality profoundly experienced and transposed to the stage.

By proceeding chronologically from this hypothesis another explanation could be attempted.

One first idea seems out of the ordinary. Why did the Greeks choose, not a native myth, but the foreign legend of Dionysus? For Dionysus is indeed a foreign God, easily identified with Osiris, whether one starts with the Greek tradition or that of Egypt. Nietzsche himself remarks that, according to legend, Dionysus was cut in pieces and thrown to the winds by the Titans, during his childhood; his mother Demeter was plunged into mourning and was only to be comforted on learning that she could again give birth to a Dionysus: the god was to be reborn. When he was cut into pieces he was worshipped under the name of Zagreus. There can easily be recognised in this 'Greek' legend the myth of the death and the resurrection of Osiris, cut into pieces and scattered by his brother Seth; the latter representing the god of evil, of sterility and of jealousy. In the same way Osiris was reborn. According to Herodotus, the Egyptians considered Osiris and Dionysus as identical.

The Indo-Europeans experienced a great deal of trouble to present clearly and faithfully the myth of Dionysus, without transforming it by making it coarse, immoral, lewd, etc., when the spirit, the nature of Dionysus 'mounted on his panther' is opposed to lust. As has been shown by Turel, Dionysus is not the god of anarchy in the domestic life, the conjugal union is sacred to him, as well as the fidelity of those who are married, but he is the enemy of physical restraint, of all that which is anti-natural; he is on the side of the development of human beings and, in particular, of that of woman. He is the god whose teaching contains all the secret aspirations of the Aryan woman, so constrained and stifled by society. He is the god of individual liberty, of the duality of sexes in the human order. To present him in the form of a Bacchus, god of wine, always drunk and in search of lewd pleasures without end is, so to speak, a sacrilege. Dionysus is none other than the exportation to the Aryan countries of the Meridional social, conjugal and domestic ideal. From that time the myth throws a garish light on reality; the enthusiasm of the women, as much as the resistance of the men, is explained in Greece, as in Rome: the women, married or not, who practised the worship of Dionysus were condemned to death by their guardians. We are present here at a dramatic aspect of the struggle between the meridional and Aryan values to take hold of human consciousness. The degree of a civilisation is measured by the relations between the man and the woman. Dionysus is the liberator of the Aryan woman; he spreads his teachings in Greece, at the moment when one could see in this country two brothers marrying the same woman to ensure the only thing which counted in the Aryan world - a line of descent.

Those among modern sociologists who compare, perhaps unconsciously, technical progress and moral progress, cannot avoid distorting, in the inferences they draw from their enquiries in meridional countries even today, this moral advantage of matriarchal agricultural societies, in explaining the place occupied by women in these by the sway of a primitive instinct still solidly rooted in the coarse materiality of the earth - Dionysian goddess of fertility like Isis - in contrast to the spirituality of the ethereal regions where Apollo reigns without dispute: the god of pure reason who has no need of woman to give birth to Hera, his daughter.

Other sociologists, on the other hand, restore to this set of beliefs their real significance.

The mysteries (of *Dionysus-Bacchus*) which had deposed much of the former transport were a worship of natural fertility, of generation and of life. But it is no longer a question of terrestrial life;...³⁶

Certainly, at the moment of initiation, among other practices linked with agricultural life and the worship of fertility, 'there is uncovered the phallus hidden under a piece of cloth; it is made to fall, with other symbols, on the bowed recipient. The effect of these ceremonies was, in likening the bacchant to his god, to assure his eternal bliss.'³⁷

To Grenier, who quoted Cumont, the mysteries of Bacchus, which were thus practised in Rome, were of Egypto-Asiatic origin. The liturgic material of this worship is a collection of fertility symbols, which is the opposite of pornographic representations; these are the elements of an agrarian religion. The processions, at the time of the feasts of Dionysus in Egypt, such as are described by Herodotus, are exactly the same, to the last detail, as the processions which accompany, on the 25th of December, the lamps in Senegal: these are processions celebrating the birth of Christ, but it was most probably not the Western Christians who introduced these particular rituals to Africa, unless the Meridional 'carnivals' of Europe had this character, which would have to be verified. It is therefore probable that there is here a juxtaposition of two fragments of traditions, apparently different, but both fundamentally sacred. It seems essential, to reproduce the passage of Herodotus to which allusion is made, to make fast the ideas and facilitate research.

...In other respects the festival is celebrated almost exactly as Bacchic festivals are in Greece, excepting that the Egyptians have no choral dances. They also use instead of phalli, another invention consisting of images a cubit high, pulled by strings, which the women carry round to the villages. A piper goes in front and the women follow, singing hymns in honour of Bacchus. They give a religious reason for the peculiarities of the image.³⁸

Now that the moral nature of the gods has been sufficiently revealed at the same time as the Meridional and Aryan domestic conceptions, there can be seen more clearly the catastrophes and upheavals

European societies; it must have broken the bronze armour with which the Aryan man surrounded these, opened the floodgates of the feminine consciousness, brought the exaltation and hope of the woman to their highest degree, and posed with the conscience of the Aryan man the gravest problem he had ever had to solve. Life on the Eurasian steppes, under the conditions of nomadism – it has been seen – had given him the habit of seeing in woman less a companion in society than an instrument for ensuring his descent, of paying a debt to his ancestors by prolonging the racial line and in not letting it die out with him, in assuring thus his immortality. Here economic conditions are essentially concerned: they have imposed this style of life and the religious and moral superstructure pertaining to it. But man is established in sedentary life; it goes without saying that most of the ideas inherited from the nomadic life have become inadequate, particularly the social ideas, if one may say so. The drama comes from the acquisition of new habits: a conscience cannot be cleansed by wiping it over with a sponge. The only ideas suitable for the new style of life are foreign ideas fashioned in the agricultural sedentary Meridional world at the same time. The shock of these on the Aryan's consciousness was to produce the most terrible upheaval that had ever been experienced. These are not simply imaginary views or gratuitous speculations. It has been seen that in the reality of everyday life, in Rome as in Greece, this shock gave rise to a definitive reaction, which went as far as murder among the men, since it is impossible to over-estimate the number of women actually condemned to death for the simple fact that they had become disciples of Dionysus. But a practical attitude, provisionally efficacious, is insufficient to resolve such a deep and delicate problem of social morality. This must, therefore, inevitably be placed and thought over again on the higher level of art and of philosophy; only at this level, where serenity of mind is more guaranteed, can one try to find a solution of a permanent character, and in default of this, pose the problem, in a more or less veiled fashion, without resolving it. Such a transposition of reality is peculiar to art, and it can be understood how the Greek tragedy had found its favourite theme in the myth, however foreign, of Dionysus. By its double character it was more suitable than the indigenous legends. Dionysus,

of Osiris, is the god who suffered, physically speaking, in so far as he was hacked to pieces. The Egyptians only showed this aspect of the physical suffering of Osiris, reflected in the moral suffering of Isis. As Nietzsche has underlined, Dionysus is a prototype; he was to be the divine disguise which would cover all forms of suffering of the human conscience among the Greeks; Prometheus, Oedipus, etc., are only replicas of him. But it is impossible to stage Dionysus without transposing on him, consciously or unconsciously, the social conflict born of the eruption of the god into the Aryan world. It is this aspect of the problem which shows through in the choirs of satyrs. The rôle of the satyrs symbolises a social situation, a problem that the Greeks seem to have been apprehensive of facing correctly or suitably; they were thus led to deform it, to disfigure it, to the point that at first sight it becomes unrecognizable, by parodying the rôle of the satyrs. The satyr is a Greek creature, added to the Egyptian myth of Osiris, of Dionysus.

As has been stressed by Nietzsche, the fundamental character of the myth was to become blurred in the later theatre of Greece: it was scarcely to be detected in the permanence of the subjects dealt with, the tragedies bearing almost without exception the names of women as titles. Euripides who, moreover, dealt with almost the same subjects as Aeschylus and Sophocles, wrote *Helen*, *The Phoenician Women*, *The Trojan Women*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Electra*. Even where apparently, as in *Oedipus*, the title is a masculine name, the content varies little and one is brought back by some indirect means, to the same problem.

The analysis of the legend of Prometheus led Nietzsche to make of effective criminality a constitutional element of the Aryan consciousness.* By going deeply into the myth of the blacksmith in Black Africa and in Ancient Egypt, we arrive easily at a hero equivalent to Prometheus, the fire-stealer and benefactor of humanity by the new techniques he brings. Here also the idea of crime is not absent, but it is diminished and reduced rather to the level of a grave mistake – a sort of indiscretion committed with regard to the gods. Its consequences would only be fatal to the descendants of the man who

* Let us remember the combats of the gladiators which were a national sport. 'Christians' covered with pitch whose bodies were transformed into lighted torches illuminated the gardens of Nero; so many crimes were committed at the very apogee of Roman civilisation.

committed it and they would be restrictive; there would in no way arise any feeling of permanent guilt weighing on the whole of humanity and obliging the latter to create for itself a pessimistic universe. The universe of the Meridional world is optimistic. Osiris had no feeling of guilt, neither has his son Horus, nor his wife Isis. *Seth, the criminal, is the only one who could have this: it is he who is the personification of evil and only he, to the exclusion of all the rest of right-thinking humanity, will suffer the consequences.*

The sentiment of Aryan guilt is the same as the Semitic sin arising from the 'fault of a woman' and certain exegetists see in this the result of knowledge: knowledge = consciousness of good and evil. The apple which Adam was made to eat by Eve could only symbolize that. On these grounds it is really through his knowledge that Prometheus became a sinner and a criminal: Nietzsche does not make this comparison since for him knowledge and the determined contemplation of pure truth must lead to inactivity, if there were not the magic art as succour.

Here also the explanation of Aryan criminality, of Semitic sin, does not stand up to comparison and analysis. It cannot be denied that the ancient Egyptians had acquired knowledge of a degree required by the foregoing exegeses. They would then, in consequence, have acquired the same sense of guilt, contracted the same notion of sin, extending to every human being, if such were the fatal corollary, in the human conscience, of the acquisition of knowledge. It was certainly otherwise and the Egyptian mental universe – and the Meridional, in general – is quite optimistic, in a conscious and reasoned manner. It would not be exact to say, or to maintain, that the Dogons of the Cliffs of Bandiagara had at their disposal a philosophic system of speculative thought conscious of itself; but it is not exaggerated to admit that they have a coherent cosmogony which explains, in a satisfactory manner for their consciousness, all aspects of the Universe, as has been shown by Marcel Griaule in *God of Water (Dieu de l'Eau)*. Among them, the primitive ancestor had also stolen the secret of the gods; a fault had been committed from the beginning in procreation, but this was rather a fault found among human beings, created by the gods after a certain experience, and it was immediately corrected and reabsorbed, instead of forming till the end of time the sentiment of some unknown, irrational, undeserved fault

which must be expiated throughout one's whole life.

Consequently, it is by referring to the respective cradles of the Aryans and the Meridionals, that one can understand this divergence in the contents of the human consciousness which apparently should be one, uniform. It has already been seen that, in passing from South to North, geography, climate and the conditions of existence effectively reversed the moral values, which become opposed to each other like the two poles: every defect here is a virtue there. It is by remembering the criteria of the war-like, northern morality particularly of the Aryan Germans, a morality necessitated by the conditions of life, that one can understand the slow formation, through contact with antagonistic outside influences, of a feeling of moral unease terminating in the idea of guilt among some of them, of sin among others, both specifically Northern sentiments, although collective. Nietzsche was therefore right in making criminality and sin a constitutional component of the Aryan conscience... The slight nuance which he introduces between the innermost recesses of the Aryan and Semitic consciences seems valid; but it shows that the Semites are basically Indo-Europeans, that they served as a cushion, as a buffer between the two cradles in the same way as the Slavs between the Aryan world and the Far East. In both cases there was a more or less profound upheaval of normal traits and original physiquies.

Tragedy is therefore a specific creation of the Aryan consciousness which was the sole thing, perhaps in the world, to contain from the beginning the elements indispensable to its birth.