

Symplegades

by

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"Beyond the Clashing Rocks in the Other World, Beauty most marvellous is, Life's Herb, Life's Water"

Karl von Spiess

"All waits undreamed of in that region, that inaccessible land"

Walt Whitman

THE distribution of the motif of "Clashing Rocks"¹ is an indication of its prehistoric antiquity, and refers the complex pattern of the Urmythos of the Quest to a period prior at least to the population of America. The signs and symbols of the Quest of Life which have so often survived in oral tradition, long after they have been rationalized or romanticized by literary artists, are our best clue to what must have been the primordial form of the one spiritual language of which, as Jeremias says (*Altorientalischen Geisteskultur*, Vorwort) "the dialects are recognizable in the diverse existing cultures." Here, for the sake of brevity, we are considering only a single component of the complex pattern, that of the "Active Door."² It has been quite generally recognized that these

¹ The subject of "Clashing Rocks" is dealt with at considerable length by A. B. Cook in *Zeus* III, ii, Appendix P, "Floating Islands", pp. 975-1016.

² Here, in addition to A. B. Cook's references and those given below, we can only cite from the vast literature of the whole subject such works as G. Dumézil, *Le festin d'immortalité*, Paris, 1924; J. Charpentier, *Die Suparnasaga*, Uppsala, 1920; S. Langdon, *Semitic Mythology*, Boston, 1931; J. L. Weston, *From Ritual to Romance*, 1920; R. S. Loomis, *Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance*, New York, 1927; A. C. L. Brown, *The Origin of the Grail Legend*, Cambridge, 1943; E. L. Highbarger, *The Gates of Dreams*, Baltimore, 1940.

Wandering Rocks, "to pass between which thou must thyself find a means" (Julg), are the "Mythical forms of that wonder-door beyond which lie Oceanus, the Islands of the Blessed, the Kingdom of the Dead" and that they divide "this known world from the unknown Beyond" (Jessen in Roscher, *Lexikon*): that, as Cook, endorsing Jessen, says, they "presuppose the ancient popular belief in a doorway to the Otherworld formed by clashing mountain-walls." The Planktai Petrai, in other words, are the leaves of the Golden Gates of the Janua Coeli,³ of which in the Christian tradition, St. Peter, appointed by the Son of Man, is now the Keeper.

We begin with the problems of distribution of the motif, of which the meaning will develop as we proceed. In certain contexts, as pointed out by Cook (pp. 988-991) "dancing reeds" replace the floating or dancing islands, and although there is no indication in the classical sources of the notion of a dangerous passage between a pair of dancing reeds, this appears elsewhere, and it can hardly be doubted that it belongs to the original form of the story. Dr. Murray Fowler⁴ has called attention to an Indian context (*Satapatha Brâhmana* III. 6.2.8,9) where Soma, the plant, bread, or water of life, is to be brought down from above by the aquiline Gâyatri (Suparni, Vâc), Agni's vocal and metrical power, and we are told that it had been "deposited [for safe-keeping] within, i.e., behind, two golden leaves,⁵ that were razor-edged, and snapped together⁶ at every

³ For other material on this subject see my "Symbolism of the Dome", *IHQ*. XIV (1938), 1-56, and the "Svayamâtrna, Janua Coeli," *Zalmoxis, ii* (1939), 3-51.

⁴ "Ambrosiai Stelai", *Am. J. Phil.*, LXIII, 215, 216.

⁵ These *kusi* (or *-kusyau*) are primarily a pair of "leaves" or "blades" as of sword-grass, at the same time that they are in effect the two "leaves" or possibly "jambs" of an active Door; and in this connection it is not insignificant that Kusi is also a synonym of Dvârakâ, Krishna's "City of the Door". In SB. the *hiranmayau kusi* are said to be *diksâ* (initiation) and *tapas* (ardor), cf. *ibid.*, III.1.2.20; III.4.3.2 where it is *in* these as a "new garment" that the Sacrificer is qualified to enter the Sadas, analogically the Otherworld.

⁶ "Snapping together," for a door is also a "mouth" and our "leaves" or "rocks" are really the fiery Jaws of Death; as in *Rgveda* X.87.3 where the same verb is used of the bite of Agni's iron teeth, the upper and the lower. Cf. *Kausitaki Upanisad*, II.13, where the rolling mountains "do not devour" the Comprehensor.

winking of an eye." She tears out these leaves, and appropriates the life-giving power, which Indrâgni "extend for the generation of offspring" (*ibid.*, 13). In other words, the Falcon, successful Soma-thief, passes safely between these "two Gandharva Soma-wardens" and returns with the rescued prisoner, viz., that King Soma who "was Vrtra" (*ibid.* III.4.3.13, etc.) and now "made to be what he actually is,"⁷ the Sacrifice is now himself a God restored to the Gods" (*ibid.* III.6.3.16, 19). From the point of view of the Titans this translation of the "imprisoned, strictly-guarded Soma-Haoma"⁸ is a theft, but from that of the Gods a rescue and a disenchantment.⁹

In *Rgveda* VIII.91.2 (cf. IX.1.6) and the Brâhmana versions, *Satyâyana Br.* and *Jaiminîya Br.* 1.220 (translated by H. Oertel in *JAOS*, XVIII, 26-30) also *Pancavimsa Br.* VIII. 4.1, Apālā (alias the Daughter of the Sun Gayatri; Akupārā, etc.), prepares Soma (as *kawa* is prepared in the South Sea Islands) by chewing and Indra takes it directly from her mouth—"and whoever is a Comprehensor thereof, if he kisses a woman's mouth, that becomes for him a draught of Soma." Thus *in divinis*; in the ritual mimesis, where the Soma (substituted plant) is crushed in a pestle and mortar or more usually between two stones (as it were "clashing rocks") and two side of the Soma-press are "jaws," the stones are "teeth" and the skin on which they move is the "tongue," while the other "mouth" into which the juice is poured is that of the sacrificial altar in which also the Sacrificer, identifying himself with the victim, offers up himself. Thus the gates of entry (birth, from the human standpoint, death from the divine) and exit (death from the human point of view, birth from the divine) are both equally "jaws"—"the soul—every great soul—in its cycle of changes must pass twice through the Gate of Ivory" (Highbarger, *loc. cit.*, p. 110). The Sacrifice is always a pre-figured heavenly ascent; it is not that one does not wish to be "swallowed up" by the deity *by* whom one must be assimilated if one would be assimilated *to* him (cf. my *Hinduism and Buddhism*, pp. 23, 24, and *Rgveda*, VII.86.2 "When at last shall we come to be again *within* Varuna?"), but that one would not be demolished by the "upper and the nether millstones" through which the way leads; and hence "the Brahmans of yore were wont to wonder, Who will today escape Leviathan's jaws?": and it is actually only by the substitution of a "victim" (—a "sop to Cerberus"—) that one "comes safely through his maw" (*Jaiminîya Brâhmana* I.174). On the Jaws of Death see further my "Svayamâtrnâ, Janua Coeli," *Zalmoxis* II, 23, note 6.

⁷ The bringing down of Soma to earth, which is his coming into his kingdom, involves a passion and a resurrection. He comes forth in triumph: "even as Ahi, slipping out of his inveterated skin, Soma flows like a prancing steed" (RV IX.86.44).

⁸ L. von Schroeder, *Herakles and Indra* (Vienna, 1914), p. 45.

⁹ The contrary values are very clearly developed in the *Argonautica*, where the Rape of the Fleece and carrying off of Medea are, from her father's point of view, the acts of a

It will be recognized immediately that the Falcon's Quest—and we use this word deliberately to imply that this is, in fact, a Grail Quest—is identical with that of the doves that fetch ambrosia¹⁰ for Father Zeus from beyond the Planktai Petrai, always at the price of one of their number, caught on the way as they pass the Clashing Rocks (*Odyssey* XII.58f.): and that it corresponds at the same time to the Quest of the Golden Fleece, where it is, indeed, a winged "ship" that Athena (Goddess of *Wisdom*) drives between the Clashing Rocks that she holds apart, but it is like a bird that *Argo* flies through the air, and even so can only escape with the loss of her stern-ornament (or, as we might almost say, "tail-feather"), after which the rocks remain in close contact, barring the way to other mortal voyagers (*Argonautica* II.645 f.). The door is thus normally "closed"; for as we shall presently realize, it is one that can only be opened, in what would otherwise seem to

high-handed marauder; and (IV.1432 f.) Herakles' slaughter of the Serpent and theft of the Golden Apples are from the point of view of Jason's companions heroic feats, but from the point of view of the Hesperides themselves acts of wanton violence. In the same way, as Darmetester says, "In the Vedic mythology the Gandharva is the keeper of Soma, and is described now as a God, now as a fiend, accordingly as he is a heavenly Soma-priest or a jealous possessor who grudges it to man" (*SBE.23.63*, note 1). In such contexts, however, "grudge" is not the word; it is not with malice that the Cherub "keeps the way of the Tree of Life," or invidiously that St. Peter keeps the Golden Gates, or that Heimdallr guards the Bridge, or that the door is shut against the foolish virgins, but only to protect the fold against the wolves who have no right to enter.

The opposing interests of Gods and Titans are only reconciled when, as in the Vedic and Christian traditions, the Sacrifice is indeed a victim, but not an unwilling victim. It is only from our temporally human point of view that "good and evil" are opposed to one another, but "to God all things are good and fair and just" (*Heracleitus*, Fr.61), "to him in all conflicts both sides are right" (*Rgveda* II.7.15); and this is the essential meaning of the Clashing Rocks, that whoever would return home must have abandoned all judgment in terms of right and wrong, for *there*, as Meister Eckhart says, in full agreement with Chwang Tzu, the Upanisads and Buddhism, "neither vice nor virtue ever entered in." The Gods and Titans are the children of one Father, and have their appointed parts to play, if there is to be a "world" at all (cf. *Heracleitus*, Fr. 43, 46), and though one of these parts may be ours "for the time being," the Comprehensor must act without attachment, dispassionately, remaining above the battle even while participating in it.

¹⁰ On *ambrosia* and *amrta* see M. Fowler, "A Note on ambrotos," *Classical Philology*, XXXVII (1942), 77-79.

be a smooth and impenetrable wall, by a more than normally human wisdom.¹¹

An example of this "Open Sesame" motif (best known in connection with Aladdin's Cave) can be cited from Southern Africa: "In one of Schultze's [Hottentot] stories the fleeing heroine drops food behind her, delaying the pursuing Lion, who eagerly devours it. When the pursuer endeavours to follow, the rock closes and kills him. The opening and closing rock occurs in various combinations in South African mythology" (from a review of J. Schultze, "Aus Namaland und Kalahari," Berlin, 1907, in *Journal of American Folklore XXXI* (1908), 252). In such a sequence it is easy to recognize in the heroine, Psyche, and in the pursuer, Death.

To return now to the Cutting Reeds, we can cite an American Indian myth in which, amongst the series of living obstacles that bar the way of the hero Nayanezgani there are not only "Crushing Rocks" which he stays apart, but also "Cutting Reeds" which "tried to catch him, waving and clashing together." We are also told of these Cutting Reeds that "when anyone passed through them, the reeds moved and cut the person into little pieces and ate him" (M. C. Wheelwright, *Navajo Creation Myth* (1942), pp. 71, 96). Another reference to the "Slicing Reeds" will be found in the Franciscan Fathers' *Ethnologic*

¹¹ The door as an obstacle is the "barricade of the sky" (*avarodhanam divah*, *Rgveda* IX.113.8.), which divides the world of mortality under the Sun from the world of immortality beyond him; the Sundoor is the "Gateway of Truth" (*Lid Up*. 15, etc.), and as such "a forwarding for the wise and a barrier to the foolish" (*Chandogya Up*. VIII.6.5), cf. *Matthew XXV.1-12*, *Luke XI.9.19*, *John X. 9*, etc., and also my "Svayamàtrnnâ, Janua Coeli," notes 23, 31, 51. In marriage, the bride is assimilated to Sûryâ, the married couple's journey to a heavenly ascent (even the crossing of a "river" is provided for), and their new home (in which they are to "live happily ever afterwards") to the Other-world of Immortality. An analogy of the doorway to the dangerous Janua Coeli naturally follows, and we find that when it is reached the incantation is employed, "Injure her not, ye god-made pillars, on her way," these pillars being, of course the jambs of "the door of the divine house" (*Atharva Veda* XIV.1.61.63). No doubt it is for the same reason that the bride must not step on the threshold as she enters (*Apastamba Grhya Sûtra* II.6.9), for, evidently, to do so might release the trap, and therefore the bride must step over the threshold without touching it. There can be no question but that the European custom of carrying the bride across the threshold has an identical significance; the husband plays the part of psychopomp, and it is easy to see why it should be regarded as most unlucky if he stumbles and does not clear the threshold safely.

Dictionary of the Navaho Language (1910), p. 358.

The Cutting Reeds are, of course only one of the many forms of the Active Door, of which the passage is so dangerous. We shall consider now some of the other forms of the Wonderdoor, and to begin with the Clashing Rocks or Mountains themselves. Different forms of the Door may be associated in one and the same story. In a more elaborate Indian text, parallel to that of the Brâhmana already cited, the "golden blades" are represented by "two sleepless, watchful, razor-edged lightnings, striking from every side," and it is asked "How did the Vulture [Garuda, Eagle, Soma-thief] transgress these Soma-wardens, 'Fear' and 'No-Fear'?" (*Suparnâdhyaya* 24.2,3). These names of the Soma-wardens, also to be thought of as snakes or dragons, are significant because, as we shall presently come to see more clearly, the two leaves or jambs of the Active Door are not merely affronted by the very nature of a door, but at the same time stand for the "pairs of opposites" or "contraries" of whatever sort, between which the Hero must pass in the Quest of Life, without hope or fear, haste or delay, but rather with an equanimity superior to any alternative. When Alexander sought he did not find what Khizr found unsought (*Sikandar Nâma* LXIX.75). Taken superficially, "Seek, and ye shall find" is a very comfortable doctrine; but it should be understood that whoever has not found has never really sought (cf. *Nafahâtu'l Uns* as cited by Nicholson, *Diwani Shams-i-Tabriz*, 1898, p. 329).

In the same context (25.5) we find an obstacle described as consisting of "two razor-edged restless mountains." The text is obscure and admittedly in need of emendation,¹² but there is a clearer reference, the importance of which has been hitherto completely overlooked, in *Sankhayana Aranyaka* IV.13 (= *Kauryitaki Upanisad* II.13), to moving

¹² The text has *parvatâsthiraḥ* which, although it could mean "mountain domes," is implausible. Charpentier's suggestion of *parvataḥ sthiraḥ* ("stable mountains") contradicts the required sense. I have assumed *parvataḥ asthiraḥ* (an equally possible resolution of the crisis), "restless mountains"; the following *subudhnyah* need not imply "firmly grounded," but rather "deeply rooted," which is not inconsistent with motion, as will be obvious if we remember that our "floating islands" are, as it were, lotus leaves or flowers, not detached from their stems, but swinging upon them, as the leaves of doors swing on hinges.

mountains: here we are told of the Comprehensor of the doctrine that the powers of the soul are an epiphany of Brahma, that "verily, even though both mountains, the northern and the southern, were to roll forth against him, seeking to overcome him instantly, indeed, they would not be able to devour him."¹³ The immediate reference may be to the Himalayas and Vindhya, normally separated by the Gangetic Madhya-desa, but must be indirectly to Sky and Earth, who were originally "one", or "together," and can be reunited. The door of the world of heavenly light is to be found, indeed, "where Sky and Earth embrace" and the "Ends of the Year" are united (*Jaiminīya Upanisad Brāhmana* I.5.5; I.35.7-9; IV. 15.2-5).¹⁴ The Expert, for whom the antitheses are never absolute values but only the logical extremities of a divided form (for example, past and present of the eternal now), is not overcome by, but much rather transits their "north-and-southness" or, as we should say, "polarity," while the Empiricist is crushed or devoured by the perilous alternatives (to be or not to be, etc.) that he cannot evade.¹⁵

¹³ "No one becomes immortal in the flesh" (*Satapatha Br. X.4.3.9*), and whoever reaches the Other-world and the attainment of all desires does so "going in the spirit" (*atmany etya, ibid.*, I.8.1.31 and *Jaiminīya Up. Br.* III.33.8), "having shaken off his bodies" (*ibid.*, III.30.2-4),—the Platonic *katharsis* (Phaedo 67C).

¹⁴ On the Doors of the Year, and World's End see further "Svayamātrnā, Janua Coeli," notes 3 and 25 and "The Pilgrim's Way," *JBORS*, XXIII (1937), 452-471 and XXIV (1938), 118-119. The "Year" is Prajāpati, the Imperishable World, and, like a house is only his "who knows its doors" (SB. 1.5.3.2.3. I.6.1.19) or "ends," Winter and Spring. The end of the Year is also its beginning, so that the Year is endless or infinite (*ananta*) like a wheel (AB. III.43). The great symbol of the serpent biting its own tail represents the aeon (Jeremias, *Der Antichrist in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 1930, p. 4).

¹⁵ On the one hand, "everything composed of contraries is necessarily subject to corruption" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.* I.80.1; cf. *Phaedo* 78 C and *Digha Nikāya* II. 144), on the other, "The notions even of contraries are not contrary in the intellect for they belong to one and the same knowledge. Therefore it is impossible that the intellectual soul should be corruptible" (*ibid.*, I.75.6). That, in fact, "the knowledge which knows one thing knows also its opposite" (*ibid.*, I.14.8) is remarkably illustrated by the fact that in the oldest languages we so often meet with words that embody contrary meanings. On this important subject see Karl Abel, *Über den Gegensinn der Urworte*, 1884 (also in his *Sprachwissenschaftlichen Abhandlungen*, 1885; Freud's discussion in *Jahrb. f. Psychoanalytische und Psychopathologische Forschungen*, II, 1910, contributes nothing); R. Gordis, "Effects of Primitive Thought on Language," *Am. J. Semitic*

An unmistakable reference to the Clashing Rocks is to be found in *Rgveda*, VI.49.3, where the "Rocks" are *times*, viz., Day and Night, described as "clashing together and parting" (*mithasturā vicaranti*); *mithas* here (V *mith*, to unite, alternate, dash together, understand, and also kill, cf. *mithya*, contrarily, and *mithuna*, pair-ing) in combination with *tura* (V *tur*, to hasten, rush, overpower, injure), corresponding to *tustūrsamānau* (SA.IV.13=Kaus Up. II.13), rendered above by "seeking to overcome instantly" in connection with the two "rolling mountains." This is an important case, whether we consider Day and Night as *times* or as *light and darkness*,—Mitrâvarunau. Its bearing will be realised if we recall that the Vedic Hero's greatest feat is performed at Dawn; Indra has agreed that he will not slay Namuci (Vrtra, and Buddhist Māra) "either by day or by night," and keeps his word to the letter by lifting his head at dawn, thus dividing heaven from earth and making the sun rise (for references see JAOS.XV.143ff. and LV.375), —dividing the light from the darkness, and day from night. It is no wonder, then, that the Mahavira's feat is so often described as having been performed "suddenly"

Languages and Literature, 55 (1938), 270f; B. Heimann, "Plurality, Polarity, and Unity in Hindu Thought," *BSOS*, IX, 1015-1021, "Deutung und Bedeutung indischer Terminologie," *XIX Congr. Internaz. d. Orientalisti*, and "The Polarity of the Indefinite," *JISOA*, v, 91-94; Chwang Tzu (Giles), Ch. 2 and *passim*; my "Tantric Doctrine of Divine Biunity," *Ann. Bhandarkar Or. Res. Inst.*, XIX, 173-83; M. Fowler, "The Role of Surd in the Myth of Namuci," *JAGS*, 62, 36-40 (esp. note 18) and "Polarity in the Rigveda," *Rev. of Religion*, VII, 115-123. Also, on the *enantia* generally, Plato, *Theatetus* 157 B, etc., and Philo, *Heres* 207, 215, etc., as discussed by E. R. Goodenough in *Yale Classical Studies*, III (1932), 117-164. For example, one Egyptian sign stands for "strong-weak," which is meant depending on the determinant employed; one Chinese ideogram, "big-small," means "size," and generally speaking, abstract nouns are combinations of two opposites. So Zero (Skr.kha, see my "Kha and other words denoting Zero," in *BSOS*, VII, 1934) is the totality of 4- and — numerical series and, accordingly (like God), *et unicum et nihil et plenum*. That in so many of the oldest languages (with survivals in some modern) the same roots often embody opposite meanings, only distinguishable by the addition of determinants, is an indication that the movement of "primitive logic" is not abstractive (from an existing multiplicity) but deductive (from an axiomatic unity). The same synthetic bias can be recognized in the old duals (e.g., Mitrâvarunau) that denote, not the mere association of *two* "persons," but the biugity of *one*. Many of our profoundest religious dogmas (e.g., that of the divine procession *ex principe vivente conjuncto*) stem from these insights.

and "once for all" (*sakrt*, etc.), for whatever is done when it is neither Day nor Night (cf. *Rgveda X.129.3*) is done *ex tempore, sub specia aeternitatis* and forever.

Conversely, for those who are already in time and would be liberated, would "become eternal", Day and Night are as it were two impassible, revolving Seas or wandering Pillars, and one should not perform the Agnihotra (Sacrifice of the Burnt-Offering) either by Day or by Night but only at dusk after sunset and before dark, and at dawn after dark and before sunrise (*Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*, I.5)¹⁶ "Night and Day are the Sea that carries all away, and the two Twilights are its fordable crossings; and as a man would cross over it by its fordable crossings, so he sacrifices [performs the Agnihotra] at Twilight¹⁷... Night and Day, again, are the encircling arms of Death; and just as a man about to grasp you with both arms can be escaped [*atimucyeta*] through the opening [*antarena*] between them, so he sacrifices at Twilight... this is the sign (*ketu*) of the Way-of-the-Gods [*devayāna*], which he takes hold of, and safely reaches Heaven" (*Kausitaki Brāhmaṇa* II.9)¹⁸ In the same way for Philo Day and Night, Light and Darkness, are

¹⁶ Similarly in *Satapatha Br.* II.3.9.1,36; and in the *Avesta* (Weber, *Indische Studien*, IX, 292), where the *daevayaśna* is to be performed after dark and before sunrise. The contrary argument of *Aitareya Br. V, 29*, seems to me illogical. Indra had also agreed not to slay Namuci "with anything moist or anything dry," and does so with "foam". Both formulae recur in TS. VI.4.1.5. and 2.4 where the heart of the sacrificial victim is deposited "at the junction of wet and dry," and the sacrificial waters, originally liberated when Vrtra was slain, are to be collected "at the junction of shade and shining," viz., of night and day. The first of these actions "atones" or sacrifices the contraries, the second secures the "color of both" at once; and that is, of course, the "color" of the Otherworld, Brahmaloaka or Empyrean in which the darkness and light are not separated, but dwell together in one another (KU.III.1 and VI.5 and Jacob Boehme, *Three Principles* XIV.76,) and of Dionysius' "Divine Darkness, blinding by excess of light."

¹⁷ The parallel to the crossing of the Red Sea, from the Egyptian Darkness of this world to a Promised Land, will be obvious. The Agnihotra performed at twilight is a "Passover" in Philo's sense. By the same token, *brahma-bhuti*, "becoming Brahma," "theosis," is also "Dawn."

¹⁸ The return is obviously to the primordial condition of *Rgveda X.129.1-3*, where all is One, without distinction of Day and Night. KB. continues, describing Night and Day as the Dark and the Dappled (*syama-sabarau*, the "Dogs of Yama") an important datum for the iconography of Cerberus, but one that cannot be further discussed here.

archetypal contraries, divided in the beginning "lest they should be always clashing by median boundaries Dawn and Dusk, which are not sensible extents of time but "intelligible forms [*ideai*] or types" (*Opif.*33); and though he does not say so, it is evident that if anyone would return from the chiaroscuro of this world to the "supercelestial" Light of lights he will only be able to do so—if he *is* able—by the way of these "forms" in which the Day and Night are *not* divided from one another.

Thus the Way "to break out of the universe" (Hermes Trismegistos, *Lib.* XI.2.9, see note 46) into that other order of the Divine Darkness¹⁹ that Dionysius describes as "blinding by excess of light" and where the Darkness and the Light "stand not distant from one another, but together in one another" (Jacob Boehme, *Three Principles*, XIV,78) is the single track and "strait way" that penetrates the cardinal "point" on which the contraries turn; their unity is only to be reached by entering in there where they actually coincide. And that is, in the last analysis, not any where or when, but within you; "World's End is not to be found *by walking*, but it is within this very fathom-long body that the pilgrimage must be made" (*Samyutta Nikâya* I.62),

"Our soul is, as it were, the day, and our body the night; We, in the middle, are the dawn between our day and night (Shams-i-Tabriz, Tabriz ed., 252.12, cited by Nicholson, p. 239.)

H. Rink²⁰ records from Greenland the myth of the Eskimo hero Giviok, whose way to the Otherworld, in which he finds his dead son living, is confronted by "two clashing

¹⁹ "Of every land, that Dark Land is the best, In which there is a Water, the Giver-of-Life" (Nizâmu'd Din, *Sikandar Nama*, LXVIII.18). "There shines not sun, nor moon, nor any star... His shining only all this world illuminates" (*Katha Upanisad* V.15); "There neither sun, nor moon, nor fire give light; those who go there do not come back again; that is My supreme abode" (*Bhagavad Gita* XV.6); "There shine no stars, nor sun is there displayed, there gleams no moon; (and yet) no darkness there is seen" (*Udâna* 9). "When sun and moon have gone home, when fire is doused and speech is hushed, what is this person's light? The Spirit *atman*, Self) is his light" (*Brhadâranyaka Up.* IV.3.6, cf. JUB. III.1): "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (*Rev.* XXI.23).

²⁰ *Tales and Traditions of the Eskimo* (London, 1875), pp. 157-161.

icebergs," with only a narrow passage between them, alternately opened and closed. He cannot circumnavigate them because, when he tries to do so, *they always keep ahead of him* ("for there is no approach by a side path here in the world," *Maitri Upanisad* VI.30!). He therefore speeds between them, and has barely passed when they close together, bruising the stern-point of his *kayak*. As Professor Cook sees, this is "a mariner's version of the gateway to the Otherworld." In this northern setting, the floating islands are naturally thought of as icebergs.

In a more recent collection of Eskimo folktales²¹ the Clapping Mountains are connected, significantly, with the migrations of birds. "All of the birds who fly south must pass between them. Every little while they clap together, just as you clap your hands, and anyone caught between them is crushed to death. This dangerous passage is an ordeal appointed by the Great Spirit, and "any geese that cannot fly fast will be crushed." Whether or not the narrator "understood his material" we have no means of telling but it is impossible to doubt that the talking geese originally represented souls or that amongst them those who could not fly fast represented the uninitiated.

"Rocks-That-Come-Together" are well known all over America. They are mentioned by the Franciscan Fathers' *Navaho Dictionary* (*loc. cit.*) as "cliffs which bound together [crushing]"; in Fr. Berard Haile, *Origin Legend of the Navaho Enemy Way* (1938), p. 125, as "two rocks that clap together"; and in Wheelwright's *Navajo Creation Myth* (*loc. cit.*) as "crushing rocks" between which the Hero must pass. Other examples of the motif are cited from American sources by Paul Ehrenreich;²² in the South American Tupi saga of

²¹ C. E. Gillum, *Beyond the Clapping Mountains, Eskimo Stories from Alaska*, New York, 1943.

²² "Die Mythen und Legenden der Sudamerikanischen Urvölker und ihrer Beziehungen zu denen Nordamerikas und der alten Welt," *Zeit. f Ethnologie*, XXXVII, 1905, Supplement.

For some other parallels see S. Thompson, "European Tales among the North American Indians," *Colorado College Pub., Language Series*, 2 (1919), 319-471; A. H. Gayton, "The Orpheus Myth in North America," *J. Am. Folklore*, 48 (1935), 263-293; my "Sunkiss," *JAOS*. 60 (1940), 46-67 (esp. 55-57) and comment by M. Titiev, *ibid.*, 270. Many or most of these parallels have to do with the metaphysics of light, the progenitive

the heavenly ascent of two brothers, respectively human and divine, the way leads between clashing rocks, by which the mortal is crushed. In one North American version the door of the king of heaven is made of the two halves of the Eagle's beak, or of his daughter's toothed vagina, and with this Ehrenreich compares the Polynesian tale of Maui's brother crushed between the thighs of the Night Goddess. Ehrenreich holds that the "clashing rocks" are heaven and earth, the cleft between them being that at the horizon.²³ Franz Boas²⁴ cites the North American Indian story of the heavenly ascent of two brothers, who on their way must strike out the wedges from certain cloven tree trunks, by which they will be in danger of being crushed as the sides spring together. T. Waltz records that the Mexican dead had to pass between clashing mountains" (*Anthropologie der Natirvölker*, Leipzig, 1864, IV.166); and in Codex Vindobonensis (leaf 21) there is a picture of two individuals climbing over a succession of mountains, of which two are cloven and no doubt to be understood as "clapping," which might illustrate this deathway.

power (see "Sunkiss," note 13 for some of the references). One of the most remarkable is that of the Jicarilla Apache birth rite "where a cord of unblemished buckskin, called in the rite 'spider's rope,' is stretched from the umbilicus of the child towards the sun" (M. E. Opler, *Myths and Tales of the Jicarilla Apache Indians* [New York, Am. Folklore Society, 19381, p. 19). This combines the Indian symbolism of the Sun as a spider (cf. JAOS. 55.396-398) whose threads are rays (*śutrātman* doctrine), with the concept of the Sun equated with the vivifying Spirit, at the same time that it corresponds exactly to the Orthodox Christian conception of the Nativity, where (as at Palermo and in many Russian ikons) the Madonna is evidently the Earth Goddess, and a (seventh) ray of light extends directly from the (otherwise six-rayed) Sun to the Bambino.

Independent origins for such complex patterns are almost inconceivable: we are forced to suppose that we are dealing with a mythology of prehistoric and presumably neolithic antiquity. This is a consideration that will present no difficulty to anthropologists such as Father W. Schmidt, Franz Boas, Paul Radin or Josef Strzygowski, who recognize no distinction of mental ability as between "primitive" and modern man, who, if capable at all of such abstract vision, is radically disinclined for it, and certainly does not found his art and literature upon it.

²³ Cf. *Bṛhadaranyaka Up.* III.3.2 were, at the ends of earth, there is an interspace "as thin as the edge of a razor." This seems to mean at the horizon; but it is normally at the Sundoor that one reaches "world's end" and "breaks out of the universe."

²⁴ *Indianischer Sagen von der Nordwestkuste Amerikas* (Berlin, 1905), p. 335.

The notion itself of "Floating Islands" is typically, although not by any means exclusively, Indian. The "worlds" or states of being are often spoken of as "islands" (*dvipa*), India, for example, being Jambudvipa. That Earth in particular is such an island, originally submerged, and brought up in the beginning from the depths, is the basis of the adequate symbolism of Earth by a lotus flower or leaf, expanded upon the surface of the cosmic waters in response to the light of and as a reflection of the Sun, "the one lotus of the sky": hence the lotus or, lotus-petal moulding (which becomes in late Greek art the "egg-and-dart") represents the archetypal "support" of existence. By the same token the terrestrial Agni is "lotus-born" (*abja-ja*);²⁵ and that the manifested Gods and the Buddha are represented with lotus-pedestals, thrones or footstools (as in the parallel case of the Egyptian Horus) is as much as to say that their feet are firmly based upon a ground that is really an "island" floating upon and surrounded by an ocean of all the possibilities of manifestation from which the particular compossibles of any given world must have been derived. For all this, moreover, there is a close parallel in the case of Rhodes, the "Island of the Rose"; for, as has often enough been demonstrated, the rose is the precise equivalent in European symbolism of the lotus in Asiatic, and Rhodes, a land that rose from the depths of the sea, is preeminently the Island of the Sun, who made her his wife and begot seven sons upon her (Cook, p. 986). The famous Colossus of Rhodes, was of course an image of the Sun, and however late the legend may be that the legs (*jambes!*) of this image straddled the harbor, to form the *jambes* of a mighty door through which every ship must pass on entering or leaving port, the figure is manifestly that of a Sun-door²⁶

²⁵ In this connection cf. L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion* II (1923), pp. 555-557. Von Schroeder justly assimilates Loki, "Sohn der Laufey, d.h. der 'Laub-insel' " i.e., son of Leaf-island as his Mother, to Agni, the lotus-born, and to Apollo of Delos, an island that, having arisen from the sea, might be compared to the "water-born" (*abja*=lotus). Von Schroeder also compares Loki "Nadelsohn" to Agni *saucika* but cannot make out what the "Needle" is; it is, in fact, the Father, viz., the Thunderbolt, *vajra* (*keranos*), lightning from above, "leaf" (Earth) and "needle" (Axis Mundi) being the lower and upper "fire-sticks" in this generation. For the "needle" as the "tool" with which the Mother-goddess "sews" her work see *Rgveda* 11.32.4

²⁶ How such a figure could have been imagined can well be realised from Durer's

It is a highly characteristic feature of the "Active Door" that who-ever or whatever passes through it must do so with all speed and suddenly, and even so may be docked of its "tail"; which tail may be, in the examples already considered, either the stern-point of a boat, or one of two brothers, or if there is a flock of birds (doves of Zeus or Eskimo geese) then the last of the line; or if the Hero wins through his pursuer may be caught. Striking examples of these features can be cited in the widely diffused art and folktale motif of the "Hare and Hounds." We need hardly say that the Hare is one of the many creatures ("birds," men or animals)²⁷ that play the part of the Hero in the life-quest, or that the Dog is one of the many types of the defender of the Tree of Life; whatever details are suited to the symbolism of the robbery of a defended "garden enclosed" or "castle" are to be found amongst our variants. The hare-hunt has been discussed at length by the great folklorist Karl von Spiess,²⁸ who cites a riddle, of Greek origin, but also widely diffused in Europe. It runs:

"A wooden key, a watery lock; the Hare runs through, the Dog was caught." One modern answer is: bucket and sea, But the original reference is to the crossing of the Red Sea, Moses being the Hare and the Pharoah the Dog. It will be seen immediately that the divided sea is a type of the Active Door (cf. above, on Day and Night). which in this case

woodcut of the Angel whose "face was as the sun and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth" (*Revelation x.If.*). This revelation was made to St. John in Patmos, also an island risen from the sea. For a reproduction of Durer's cut and its later imitations see *Jahrbuch f. Hist. Volkskunde, II*, 153f.

²⁷ For example, the Boar, "thief of the Fair" (*vama-mosa*), i.e. of Soma, *Taittiriya Samhita, VI.2.4.2*. An excellent Rumanian version explains "Why the Stork has no Tail": the Water of Life and Death can only be reached by passing between two constantly clashing mountains into a valley beyond them; it is fetched by a stork, who on his return barely escapes with the loss of his tail (F. H. Lee, *Folktales of All Nations* [London, 1931], pp. 836-838).

²⁸ "Die Hasenjagd" in *Jahrb. f. Hist. Volkskunde V, VI* (1937), pp. 243-267. Cf. L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion, II* (1923), 664f. The Hare is normally the Hero, but may be the Dragon in disguise (Wratislaw, *Sixty Folk-Tales*, no. 43). See also John Layard, *The Lady of the Hare*, London, 1945, and my review in *Psychiatry* 8, 1945; and Philostratus, *Vit. Ap.* 3.39.

closes upon the pursuer. But the Hare does not always escape scot-free. Then, in the words of von Spiess, "This is the situation, viz., that the Hare has run into another world to fetch something—the Herb of Immortality. Thereupon the guardian Dog, pursuing the Hare, is hard upon it. But just where both worlds meet, and where the Dog's domain ends, it is only able to bite off the Hare's tail, so that the Hare returns to its own world docked. In this case the Dog's jaws are the "Clapping Rocks." In the other and more typical case in which the Hero is a "bird," and the Defender an archer,²⁹ the "minor penalty" is represented by the loss of a feather or a leaf of the herb, which falls to earth and takes root there, to spring up as a terrestrial tree of life and knowledge; in this case the Hero's wound is in his foot, and his vulnerability in this respect is related to the motif of "Achilles' heel."

Whoever seeks to interpret myths in a purely rationalistic way, and considers the story of the Hare by itself, might argue that it represents no more than an aetiological myth of popular origin. But actually, that such myths are transmitted, it may be for thousands of years, by the folk to whom they have been entrusted, is no proof of their popular *origin*; it is in quite another sense that *Vox populi vox Dei*. As von Spiess clearly saw, the Hare is not only to be equated with the heroic "bird," but also with the human and knightly heroes of otherworld adventures. We have, in fact, introduced the Hare at this point in order to lead up to the remarkable Celtic forms of the motif of the Active Door, in which the Hero escapes from its closing jaws almost literally by the skin of his teeth. In a typical form the story occurs in Chrétien's *Iwain* (vv. 907-969).³⁰ Iwain is

²⁹ For a part of this material, which I propose to discuss more fully elsewhere in a paper on "The Early Iconography of Sagittarius-Krsànu," see Karl von Spiess, "Der Schuss nach dem Vogel" in *Jahrb. f. Hist. Volkskunde V*, VI (1937), 204-235.

³⁰ W. W. Comfort, *Chrétien de Troyes*, Everymans Library, p. 192. Cf. G. L. Kittredge, *Gawain and the Green Knights*, 1916, p. 244, and A. C. L. Brown, *Iwain*, 1903, p. 80.

The Russian hero Ivan is, doubtless, Gawain-Iwain; at any rate, a Prince Ivan brings back two flasks of the Water of Life, from where it is kept between two high mountains that cleave together except for a few minutes of each day, and as he returns, they close upon him and crush his steed's hind legs (W. R. Ralston, *Russian Folk-tales*, 1873, p. 235 f.). Cf. A. H. Wratislaw, *Sixty Folk-Tales*, 1889, p. 280, 283.

riding in pursuit of the Defender of the Fountain Perilous, whom he has already wounded, and reaches the gateway of his palace, which was very high and wide, "yet it had such a narrow entrance-way that two men or two horses could scarcely enter abreast without interference or great difficulty; for it was constructed just like a trap which is set for the rat on mischief bent, and which has a blade above ready to fall and strike and catch, and which is suddenly released whenever anything, however gently, comes in contact with the spring. In like fashion, beneath the gate, there were two springs connected with a portcullis up above, edged with iron and very sharp... Precisely in the middle the passage lay as narrow as if it were a beaten (single) track. Straight through it exactly the (wounded) knight rushed on, with my lord Iwain madly following him apace, and so close to him that he held him by the saddle-bow behind. It was well for him that he was stretched forward, for had it not been for this piece of luck he would have been cut quite through; for his horse stepped upon the wooden spring which kept the portcullis in place. Like a hellish devil the gate dropped down, catching the saddle and the horse's haunches, which it cut off clean. But, thank God, my lord Iwain was only slightly touched when it grazed his back so closely that it cut both his spurs off even with his heels."³¹

Another variant occurs in *La Mule sans Frein*;³² here Gawain has crossed the Perilous Bridge of Dread (by which the Active Door is always approached) and reaches the castle from which he is to recover the stolen bridle; the castle is always revolving, like a mill-wheel or top, and the gate must be entered as it comes round; he succeeds, but the side of the moving gate cuts off a part of the mule's tail; and in any case, as A. C. L. Brown justly remarks, "a revolving barrier, or an active door of some kind, was a

³¹ Motif of Achilles' heel. Cf. *Aitareya Br.* III.27 where the Soma-guardian, Krsanu (Sagittarius) cuts off a claw from Gâyatri's foot.

³² See A. C. Brown, *Iwain* (Boston, 1903), pp. 80, 81, with other "variants of what may be called the active door type": and "The Knight of the Lion," *Pub. Modern Lang. Assoc.*, XX (1905), 673-706. Incidentally, we consider that "Symplegades" (=Skr. *mithastura*) is the best "catch-word" for our motif, because the contraries involved are not always "rocks", or even always the leaves of a door in the most literal and restricted sense of the word.

widespread motive of Celtic Otherworld story... before the time of Chrétien." So, too, for Kittredge, "these traits are not the personal property of Chrétien."³³

The Sky is, of course, the "revolving barrier" (cf. Philo, *Conf.* 100+Opif. 37), and the Sun the "active door." It should be superfluous to emphasize that the traditional symbols are never the inventions of the particular author in whom we happen to find them: "the myth is not my own, I had it from my mother." Euripides, in these words, shows that he knew better than such naive scholars as Sir J. G. Frazer and A. A. Macdonell, of whom the former saw in the theme of the Clashing Rocks "a mere creation of the storyteller's fancy" and the latter in the related and almost equally widely distributed motif of the Fallen Feather "probably a mere embellishment added by the individual poet"! Our scholars, who think of myths as having been invented by "literary men," overlook that the traditional motifs and traditional themes are inseparately connected. The traditional raconteur's figures, which he has not invented, but has received and faithfully transmits, are never figures of speech, but always figures of thought; and one cannot ask, which came first, the symbol or its significance, the myth or its ritual enactment. Nor can anything be called a *science* of folklore, but only a collection of data, that considers only the formulae and not their doctrine, "que s'asconde sotto il velame dei strani versi." The materials collected even in the present short article should suffice to convince the reader that, as the late Sir Arthur Evans once wrote, "The coincidences of tradition are beyond the scope of accident."

"The whirling castle," as Kittredge says, "belongs to the same general category as perpetually slamming doors and clashing cliffs [symplegades]... The turning castle has also its significance with respect to the Other World." This Otherworld is at once a Paradise and the World of the Dead,³⁴ and in post-Christian folklore to be identified with

³³ G. L. Kittredge, 1. c., pp. 244, 245. *On the Bridge*, *HJAS* 8, 196ff.

³⁴ "Or Zeus or Hades, by whichever name thou wouldst be called" (Euripides, Nauck fr. 912); Plato, *Laws* 727 D "Hades... realm of the Gods yonder," cf. *Phaedo* 68 A, B, "Hades," where and where only is pure wisdom to be found. The distinction of Heaven from Hell is not of places but in those who enter; the Fire, as Jacob Boehme is fond of saying, is one and the same Fire, but of Love to those who are lovers, and of Wrath to

Fairyland; it may be located overseas to the West, or Under-wave, or in the Sky, but is always in various ways protected from all but the destined Hero who achieves the Quest. It is the Indian "Father Shore" and Brahmaloaka, and we are especially reminded of the latter by the fact that it is so often called the "land of no return" or "Val sans Retour." This Otherworld can be regarded either as itself a revolving castle or city, or as a castle provided with a perpetually closing or revolving door. A notable example of the turning castle can be cited in the *Fled Bricrend*³⁵ where it belongs to Cu Roi (to be equated with Mananan mac Lir and the Indian Varuna) and revolves as fast as a millstone, while that its gateway is really the Sundoor is clearly indicated by the fact that the entrance "was never to be found after sunset." The protection of the Otherworld and its treasures may consist in whole or part of a rampart of fire;³⁶ and whether it be the Emyrean or, more rarely, the Terrestrial Paradise, the Door itself has terrible defenders, of types including Scorpion-men, sleepless and baleful Serpents or Dragons, Centaurs (notably "Sagittarius"), Gandharvas, Cherubim (*Genesis* III.24, etc.) and in many cases armed Automata. We shall discuss these elsewhere in a longer article to be devoted to the "Early Iconography of Sagittarius."

Here we are primarily concerned with the Active Door itself and its significance. We shall conclude with a brief reference to the type of the Active Door that is described as a Wheel. A western example can be cited in *Wigalois*³⁷ here, in pursuit of the magician Roaz—"a parallel figure to Curoi" (Brown, *Iwain*, p. 81)—Wigalois reaches a castle, with a marble gate, in front of which there turned a wheel "set with sharp swords and clubs". The *Mahabhârata* (Puna ed., I. ch. 29) describes what is assuredly the same

those who hate. So in the Celtic mythology, Joyous Garde and Dolorous Garde are one as places, differing only according to our point of view. This is important for the iconography of the "Door."

³⁵ Ed. G. Henderson, Irish Text Soc., II.103, § 80; cf. Loomis, *loc. cit.*, p. 365; Brown, *Iwain*, pp. 51-55; Kittredge, pp. 244-245.

³⁶ *Imran Maeile Duin*, § p 32; Larminie, West Irish tale of *Morraha*; *Mahabharata* (Puna ed.) I.29; *Suparnadhyaya*,

³⁷ Ed. Pfeiffer, Leipzig, 1847, see Brown, *Iwain*, p. 80.

Wheel much more fully: "There before the Soma Garuda beheld a razor-edged Wheel [*cakra*] of steel, covered with sharp blades, and continually revolving, as terribly bright as the sun, an engine [*yantra*] of unspeakably dreadful aspect, fitly devised by the Gods for the cutting to pieces of Soma-thieves; the Skyfarer [*khecara*]³⁸ seeing an opening therein, hovered, and making a cast of his body suddenly [*ksanena*]³⁹ darted through between the spokes... flew off with the Water of Life" (*amṛta*, Soma). So, too, in the *Suparnadhyana* (25.3,4) there is a mind-made Wheel of Indra's, ever revolving faster than the winking of an eye, which Garuda, the Soma-thief, with his "more than speed," passes (no doubt, through) and leaves behind him. To this very Wheel there is an illuminating reference in the much later *Katha Sarit Sâgara* (Bk. VI, ch. 29, in C. H. Tawney's version, 1880, I.257-259). Here Somaprabha is a daughter of the Asura Maya, the well-known Titan "artificer of the Gods" (to be identified with Tvastr, described in

³⁸ *Khe-cara* here, however, with special reference to the penetration of the *kha* (= *akasa*, *aither*, *claritas*, *quinta essentia*) of the Sundoor ("like the hole in the chariot-wheel," *yatha ratha-cakrasya kham*, *Bṛhadaranyaka Up.* V.10, *cf. Jaiminīya Up. Br.* I.3.6 and *Rgveda* VIII.91.7), an aperture that as Void or Space-absolute is to be equated with Brahma (*Chandogya Up.* III.12.7, IV.10.4, *Bṛhadaranyaka Up.* V.1 and see above, note 14); and is "within you" (*Maitri Up.* VII.11). "This turning disc is unique of heaven with the sun was the oldest divine symbol of the primordial religion—and also of the Chinese religion". (R. Schlosser, "Der Ursprung des chinesischen Kasch," *Artibus Asiae*, V, 165): "I saw Eternity the other night, Like a great Ring of pure and endless light... Some... soar'd up into the Ring" (Vaughn).

³⁹ The "moment" (*ksana*) of transition here corresponds to the "single moment of full awakening" (*eka-ksana-abhisambodha*) which in Prajñāpāramitā (Mahayana Buddhist) doctrine is the last step of the Via Affirmativa (*saikṣa marga*) and is an awakening to "Non-duality" (*advaya*), *i.e.*, from the illusion of Duality, followed immediately by the attainment of Buddhahood (see E. Obermiller, "The Doctrine of Prajñāpāramitā," *Acta Orientalia*, XI, 63, 71, 81), *Cf.* Acts II.2 (the "sound" of the Holy Ghost signifies suddenness). All spiritual operations are necessarily "sudden", because whatever is eternal is also immediate; "the now that stands still is said to make eternity" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I.10.2). So mythical events are eternal (*nitya*), "once for all" (*sakṛt*), "today" (*sadya*) or "now" (*nu*), *Rgveda* passim; and this "once for all" is what is really meant by the "long ago" and "once upon a time" of our fairy-tales. In any case, the passage of an interval that is "not a sensible extent of time" must be "instantaneous" by hypothesis XXVI.5; Dante, *Purgatorio*.

Rgveda X.53.9 as, *mayâ*⁴⁰ *vet*, Sâyana *devasilpi*—and in the last analysis with Thaumás, father of Iris, Hesiod *Th.* 265, cf. Plato, *Theatetus* 155 D, and with such blacksmiths⁴¹ as Daedalus, Hephaistos, Vulcan, Wayland and Regin). Somaprabhâ ("Soma-Radiance") assumes a human form and entertains her mortal friend Kalingasena with a variety of Automata, described as "self-empowered wooden puppets"⁴² There she explains to

⁴⁰ Maya (*V ma*, measure, fashion, make), the "Art" or "Power" of creation and transformation, is an essentially *divine* property and can be rendered by "Magic" only in Jacob Boehme's sense (*Ses Puncta Mystica*, V.1, see my *Hinduism and Buddhism*, note 257). In connection with the Titan Maya, Maya must be identified with his wife Lilâvati, who can be called "Illusion" only in the literal and etymological sense of the word, as being the "means" of the divine Lila, and the "Wisdom" who finds out the knowledge of "witty inventions" and belonged to the Lord "in the beginning of his way, before his works of old" (*Proverbs* VIII.12 f.).

The creation is always conceived in these terms, viz., as *maya-maya*, a "product of art"; this Vedantic *maya-vada* doctrine must not be understood to mean that the world is an "delusion," but that it is a *phenomenal* world and as such a theophany and epiphany by which we are deluded if we are concerned with nothing but the wonders themselves, and do not ask "Of what"? all these things are a phenomenon.

When Indra himself is the Soma-thief and Grail-winner it is by overcoming the "devices" (*mayah*) of the Titans that he makes the Soma "his alone" (*Rgveda* VII.98.5): and wielding this "power" himself "he casts appearances upon his own life-thread" *ibid.*, III.53.8). It is "by his Art (*mayaya*) that the Lord ("this is the mover in the hearts of mortal things") moves all these elemental-beings "that are mounted on their engines" at the same time the Operator himself is concealed by the Art in which he is "wrapt up" and that is very "hard to penetrate" but which those who reach him are said to "cross over" (BG. XVIII.61, VII.14.25). It is in this way precisely that Rajyadhara in KSS. VII.9 populates his "city"; this man and this world being the stages on which the archetypal Thaumaturgus and Playwright exhibits himself. There can be no greater mistake than to suppose that such stories as those of KSS. were composed only to amuse; it is a form of the pathetic fallacy that likewise explains the forms of primitive and popular art as products only of a "decorative" instinct. On *maya* cf. *JAOS* 66, p. 152, note 28

⁴¹ In connection with "smiths," compare the ballad of the "Two Magicians" (Child, no. 44), "then she became a duck, and he became a drake," etc., with *Brhadaranyaka Up.* I.44, "she became a mare, and he became a stallion," etc.,—a good illustration of the fact that collective memory preserves sometimes... archaic symbols which are in essence purely metaphysical... especially those symbols which are related to "theories," even if these theories are no longer understood. (Mircea Eliade, in *Zalmoxis*, II. p. 78). The "catchwords" of Folklore are, in fact, the signs and symbols of the Philosophia Perennis

⁴² For Automata in analogous western literature see note 43, and M. B. Ogle, "The

Perilous Bridge and Human Automata" in *Modern Language Notes XXV*, 1920, 129-136. N. M. Penzer, in discussing Automata (*The Ocean of Story*, III, 1925, pp. 56-59 and IX, 1928, p. 149) rather misses their "point" and so fails to make them move; that is, he considers them only from standpoint of the historian of literature, and makes no attempt at exegesis. Even here we can only deal with the theme very briefly. Not only is the world itself an "engine" devised by the Great Engineer (from whom, as St. Augustine says, all human *ingenium* derives), but all its inhabitants are in the same way wooden (hylic) engines driven by his power (cf. *Maitri Up.* II.6.)—"wooden", because the "material" of which the world is made is a "wood" (*daru*, *vane=hule*); and for the same reason the Artist "through whom all things were made" is inevitably a "carpenter" (*taksa*, *tektôn*, *armostes*).

From this point of view the myth of the City of Wooden Automata in the *Katha Sarit Sagara* (*Ocean of Story*) VII.9 can be understood if we compare its wordings with those of *Maitri Up.* II.6 where Prajapati (the biunity of the Sacerdotium and Regnum, represented in KSS. by the carpenter brothers Prâñadhara and Râjyadhara) beholds his conceptions (*prajah*) as it were stones or stocks until he enters into them, and from within their heart, by means of his rays-or-reins (*rasmayah=aktines* Hermes Trismegistus *Lib. x.* 22, cf. XVI.7). operates and governs them, as the potter or charioteer drives his wheel or vehicle—"This is the mover in the hearts of mortal things", *Paradiso* I.116. Râjyadhara's city is assuredly the same as that of the *Tripurarahasya* (Hemacuda section V.119-124, see *Q. J. Mythic Soc.*, XVIII.283) where the Prime Mover "though single, multiplies himself, manifests as the city and the citizens, and pervades them all, protects and holds them. Without him, they would all be scattered and lost like pearls without the string of the necklace (cf. BG. VII.7)... If that city decays, he collects the inmates together, leads them to another, and remains their master" (as in BU. IV.4.3,4). Alike for the Vedic tradition and Plato, Man is the "City of God" (*brahmapura*), and there can be no doubt that it is to this city that the myth of KSS, really points.

Sankarâçarya often explains the Aupanisada formulations of the "thread-spirit" (*sutratman*) doctrine, to which the "string of the necklace" refers, by the metaphor of the "wooden puppet" (*daru-putrika*, in comment on BU. III.4.1 and 7.1), as in KSS. It is in the same way that for Plato (*Laws* 644-645, 803-804) God is the Puppeteer and men his toys ("and as regards the best in us, that is what we really are"), and that for Philo (*Opif.* 117) we are puppets of which the strings are moved by the immanent Duke. This operation of his toys on the world stage is precisely what is called God's "Game" or "Sport" (*lila*), and it is by no means accidentally that KSS. describes the working of his puppets as Râjyadhara's "royal game";

All this is a game that the Divinity maketh for Itself;

For Its own sake bath It devised created things.

Angelus Silesius, *Cherubinische Wandersmann* II. 198).

For further references see my "Lila" in JAOS.61.98-101 and "Play and Seriousness" in *J.*

Kalingasenâ's father as follows: "O King, these cunning engines, etc., in their endless variety, are works of art that were made by my father of old. And even as this great engine, the world, is in essence a product of the five elements, so are these engines. Hear about them, one by one: that one of them in which Earth is the basis is that which closes doors and the like, and even Indra could not open what it has closed; the forms that are produced from the Water-device seem to be alive; the engine that is wrought of Fire gives forth flames; the Air engine performs such acts as coming and going; the engine of which Ether is the constitution utters language distinctly."⁴³

All these I got from my father But the Wheel-engine that guards the Water of Life that he only, and no one else, understands." Here it is highly significant that the magician, master of the Active Door, is also a maker of Automata, and further, that he is not originally a God, but a Titan. The Automata in this context are significant because, as remarked by J. Douglas Bruce,⁴⁴ the European "mediaeval automata.... are created for some special function, usually to guard an entrance." In the *Perlesvaus*, for example, Gawain comes to a turning castle, the door of which is guarded by two men "made by art and necromancy," while in the prose Lancelot the gate of the Dolorous Garde is defended by copper figures of armed knights.

The sun-bright Wheel that guards the supra-solar Otherworld is, naturally the Wheel of the Sun himself which Indra tears away from the Great Fiend when either he, or the Falcon for him, robs the Scorcher of "all life's support" (*Rgveda IV.28.2*, etc.).⁴⁵ It is also, in other words, the sparkling sun-hued Brahma Wheel of Fire of *Maitri Upanisad VI.24*;

Phil. XXXIX (1942), 550-552.

⁴³ The natural connection, cf. JUB.I.23.1 "the Voice speaks from the Ether" (*akasad*); so also Mbh. III.156.13 "an incorporeal Voice from the Ether" (*akasad*). Cf. JUB. I.28.3-4; Acts II.3-4.

⁴⁴ "Human Automata in Classical Tradition and Mediaeval Romance," *Modern Philology*, X (1913), 524 f.

⁴⁵ See also *Rgveda* IV.30.4, IV.31.4, V.29.10, VI.20.5,6, VII.98.10.

and the guarded Sundoor of *Jaiminya Upanisad Brâhmana* I.3, 5 and 6, where the "opening in the sky" is covered all over (concealed) by rays (the spokes of the "Wheel") and it is only by his Truth that the Comprehensor "is enabled to pass through the midst of the Sun" and is thus "altogether freed," attaining that Immortality, or Water of Life that rises in the Land of Darkness "beyond the Sun". Hence also the invocation, "Disperse thy rays and gather in thy radiance, that he-whose-norm-is-truth may see thy fairest form" (*Isa Upanisad*, 15, 16 etc.). "Disperse"; because these rays are the multitude of his powers by which all things are quickened and moved, and collectively the actuality or truth by which the "Truth of the truth" is concealed (*Brhadâranyaka Upanisad* I.6.3, II. 1.20, with *Jaimintya Upanisad Brâhmana* as above), just as also for Philo (*Opif* 71) and Dionysius the uncreated is hidden "by the piercing splendor and rushing torrent of the rays."⁴⁶ The Sundoor itself, thus hidden by the dazzling rays that illumine and enliven every living being, in whom they operate as the "powers of the soul", is precisely the "point" at the centre of the fiery Wheel, at which they intersect; and since, in most general case. the sun is "seven-rayed,"⁴⁷ and is situated in the middle, whence the six directions of the cosmic

⁴⁶ *Jaiminîya Up. Br.* 1.3.5 "through the midst of the Sun, concealed by rays," corresponds exactly to Plato, *Phaedrus* 247 B "the Immortals proceed steeply upwards to the top of the vault of Heaven and take their stand beyond, outside it".

⁴⁷ For the "seven-rayed" Sun see my "Symbolism of the Dome", *Ind. Hist. Qrtly.*, XIV (1938), 7-9, and *JUB.* I.28,29. Cf. note 21. This pattern, again is one of almost worldwide distribution; it is represented, for example, in the "seven gifts of the Spirit" and by the "seven eyes" of the Lamb, and those of Cuchullain.

Note that the "seventh and best ray," passing through the centre of the Sun-wheel to "break out of the dimensioned universe, intersecting everything" (Hermes Trismegistus, *Lib* XI.2.9) and so "bursting through the Sundoor," as *Maitri Up.* VI.30 expresses it ("for there is no approach by a side path"), bisects the three pairs of contrary spatial diameters; coinciding also, throughout its extent as Axis Mundi, vertical of the Stauros, and Vedic *skambha*, it "divides all things of the right hand from those of the left." This "seventh ray," is then, precisely the principle that is represented by Philo's (probably Pythagorean) "Severing Word" (*logos tomeus*, *Heres*, passim); and, accordingly, by "the central and seventh light" of the seven-branched golden Candle-stick, which "divides and separates the threes," and corresponds to the Sun attended by the other six planets (*Heres* 215 f.).

It follows naturally from these lucid formulations that the point at which the severing Axis intersects whatever plane of reference will be the "Sun-door" of the realm next

cross (*trivrd vajra*) extend, so that the universe is "filled" with light, it will be seen that the way in by what is called the "seventh and best ray," viz., that which passes through the solar disk and so out of the dimensioned universe, leads as before in the case of the Clapping Rocks between contrary pairs, in this case East and West, North and South, Zenith and Nadir. The Way is always a "Middle Way," or as Boethius expresses it, "Truth is a mean between contrary heresies" (*Contra Evtychen* VII).

It remains only to consider the full doctrinal significance of the Symplegades. What the formula states literally is that whoever would transfer from this to the Otherworld, or return, must do so through the undimensioned and timeless "interval" that divides related but contrary forces, between which, if one is to pass at all, it must be "instantly". The passage is, of course, that which is also called the "strait gate" and the "needle's eye." What are these contraries, of which the operation is "automatic"? We have already seen that the antithesis may be of Fear and Hope, or North and South or Night and Day. These are but particular cases of the polarity that necessarily characterises any "conditioned" world. A "world" without pairs of opposites—good and evil, pleasure and pain, love and hate, near and far, thick and thin, male and female, positive and negative, "all these pairs" (*Kausitaki Up. I.4, cf. Philo, Heres 132, 207-214*)—would be an "unconditioned" world, a world without accidents, change or becoming, logically inconceivable and of which experience would be impossible.

below it, and so on through the ascending hierarchy of the worlds until we reach the capstone of the cosmic roof which is the "*harmony of the whole edifice*" *Pausanias* IX.38.3, cf. "through the harmony," *Hermes Trismegistus Lib. I.14.25*), "like a great Ring" (Vaughn) or Flower (Pali *kannika*, see *JAOS 50 (1930), 238-243*), through which the Way leads on to the "Plain of Truth" of which there can be no true report in terms of human speech (*Phaedrus 247C, Kena Up. 1.2-8, etc.*). In other words, the Severing Logos is at once the narrow path that must be followed by every Hero, the Door that he must find, and the logical Truth and Highest Spirit of Reason that he must overcome if he would enter into the eternal life of the land "East of the Sun and West of the Moon." This is also the "Logos of God," the trenchant Word that like a two-edged sword, "sunders" soul from Spirit (*Heb. IV.12*); "sunders", because whoever enters must have left himself (Achilles' heel, all that was vulnerable in him) behind him; our sensitive soul being the "mortal brother" and the "tail" or "appendage" of which the Master Surgeon's knife—Islamic *Dhu'l-fiqar*—relieves us, if we are prepared to submit to his operation.

It is, then, precisely from these "pairs" that liberation must be won, from their conflict that we must escape, if we are to be freed from our mortality and to be as and when we will: if, in other words, we are to reach the Farther Shore and Otherworld "where every where and every when are focussed," "for it is not in space, nor hath it poles" (*Paradiso*, XXIX.22 and XXII.67). Here, under the Sun, we are "overcome by the pairs" (*Maitri* Up.III.1): *here*, "every being in the emanated-world moves deluded by the mirage of the contrary-pairs, of which the origin is in our liking and disliking... but to those who are freed from this delusion of the pairs... freed from the pairs that are implied by the expression 'weal and woe', these reach the place of invariability" *Bhagavad Gita* VII.27.28 and XV.5), i.e., the place of their coming together or coincidence (*samaya*), through their midst or in between (*samaya*) them.

It is then, deeply significant that, in the Greenland saga, the Hero, on his way to the Otherworld in which he finds his "dead" son "living," cannot circumvent the paired bergs (which are the "lions in his path"), for they "always get ahead of him" however far he goes to either side. It is inevitably so, because the contraries are of indefinite extension, and even if we could suppose an equally indefinite journey to the point at which "extremes meet,"⁴⁸ this would be still a meeting place of both extremes, and there would be no way through to a beyond or a within except at their meeting point; a cardinal "point" that has no fixed position, since the distinction of the correlated members of any pair of contrary qualities (e.g., long and short) is only to be found where we actually make it; and without extent, seeing that it is one and the same "limit" that simultaneously unites and divides the contraries of which it is no part,—"strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (*Matthew* VII.14). It is for the same reasons that the passage must be made so "suddenly" it is from the world of time (i.e., past and future) to an eternal Now, and between these two worlds, temporal and timeless, there can be no possible contact but in the "moment without duration" that

⁴⁸ "That eternal Point where all our lines begin and end" (Ruysbroeck, *The Seven Cloisters*, Ch. 19); Dante's "point at which all times are present", *Paradiso* 17.17; Meister Eckhart's "the point of the circle" (Pfeiffer p. 503).

for us divides the past from the future, but for the Immortals includes all times.

The "moment" has come at last to understand the poignant words of Nicolas of Cusa in the *De visione Dei* (Ch.IX, *fin.*): "The wall of the Paradise in which Thou, Lord, dwellest, is built of contradictories, nor is there any way to enter but for one who has overcome the highest Spirit of Reason who guards its gate," and to recall the promise, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (*Revelation of St. John, II.7*).⁴⁹ In this doctrine and assurance are reaffirmed what has always been the dogmatic significance of the Symplegades and of the Hero's Quest,—"I am the Door," and "No man cometh to the Father but by Me."

⁴⁹ "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts 1.7)..