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## II.

# Magic and Prestige of "Origins"

### *Origin myths and cosmogonic myths*

EVERY mythical account of the *origin* of anything presupposes and continues the cosmogony. From the structural point of view, origin myths can be homologized with the cosmogonic myth. The creation of the World being *the* pre-eminent instance of creation, the cosmogony becomes the exemplary model for "creation" of every kind. This does not mean that the origin myth imitates or copies the cosmogonic model, for no concerted and systematized reflection is involved. But every new appearance—an animal, a plant, an institution—implies the existence of a World. Even when it is a matter of explaining how, starting from a different state of things, the present situation was reached (for example, how the Sky was separated from the Earth, or how man became mortal), the "World" was already there, even though its structure was different, though it was not yet *our* world. Every origin myth narrates and justifies a "new situation"—new in the sense that it did not exist *from the beginning of the World*. Origin myths continue and complete the cosmogonic myth; they tell how the world was changed, made richer or poorer.

This is why some origin myths begin by outlining a cosmogony. The history of the great families and dynasties of

Tibet opens by rehearsing the birth of the Cosmos from an Egg. "From the essence of the five-primordial elements a great egg came forth. . . . Eighteen eggs came forth from the yolk of that great egg. The egg in the middle of the eighteen eggs, a conch egg, separated from the others. From this conch egg limbs grew, and then the five senses, all perfect, and it became a boy of such extraordinary beauty that he seemed the fulfillment of every wish (*yid la smon*). Hence he was named King Ye-smon. Queen Tchu-lchag, his wife, gave birth to a son who could transform himself through magic, Dbangldan."<sup>1</sup> Then the genealogy proceeds, relating the origins and histories of the various clans and dynasties.

The Polynesian genealogical chants begin in the same way. The Hawaiian ritual text known as the Kumulipo is "a genealogical prayer chant linking the royal family to which it belonged not only to the primary gods belonging to the whole people and worshipped in common with allied Polynesian groups, not only to deified chiefs born into the living world, the Ao, within the family line, but to the stars in the heavens and the plants and animals useful to life on earth. . . ."<sup>2</sup> And in fact the chant begins by evoking

"The time when the earth was hotly changed  
The time when the heavens separately changed  
The time when the sun was rising  
To give light to the moon," etc.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ariane Macdonald, "La Naissance du Monde au Tibet" (in: *Sources Orientales* [Paris, 1959], vol. I, p. 428). Cf. also R. A. Stein, *Recherches sur l'épopée et le barde au Tibet*, p. 464.

<sup>2</sup> Martha Warner Beckwith, *The Kumulipo. A Hawaiian Creation Chant* (University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45. "The rebirth of light each day, the annual return of the sun from the south to revivify earth, serve not only as symbols of this

Such ritual genealogical chants are composed by the bards when the princess is pregnant, and they are communicated to the *hula* dancers to be learned by heart. The dancers, men and women, dance and recite the chant continuously until the child is born. It is as if the embryological development of the future chief were accompanied by a recapitulation of the cosmogony, the history of the World, and the history of the tribe. The gestation of a chief is the occasion for a symbolic "re-creation" of the World. The recapitulation is at once a reminder and a ritual reactualization, through song and dance, of the essential mythical events that have taken place since the Creation.

Similar concepts and rituals are found among the primitive peoples of India. Among the Santali, for example, the *guru* recites the cosmogonic myth for each individual, but only on two occasions. The first time is "when a Santal is granted full social rights. . . . On this occasion the *guru* recites the history of humanity from the creation of the world and ends by narrating the birth of the person for whom the rite is being performed." The same ceremony is repeated during the funeral service, but this time the *guru* ritually transfers the soul of the deceased to the other world.<sup>4</sup> Among the Gonds and the Baigas, when the rituals in honor of Dharti Mata and Thakur Deo are performed, the priest recites the cosmogonic myth and reminds the audience of the important

human birth but as that birth's direct pattern or even its determining factor in the perfectionation of the race. . . . As Wakea, the sky world, bursts the bonds of night and rises out of the womb of waters where it has lain in darkness, so the child bursts the sheath where it lay within its mother's womb and emerges into the light of reasoning human life" (*ibid.*, pp. 182-183).

<sup>4</sup> P. O. Bodding, "Les Santals," *Journal Asiatique*, 1932, pp. 58 ff.

role that their tribe played in the creation of the World.<sup>5</sup> When the Munda magicians drive out evil spirits they recite the mythological songs of the Assur. The Assur inaugurated a new epoch not only for the Gods and spirits but also for human beings; hence the history of their exploits may be regarded as part of the cosmogonic myth.<sup>6</sup>

Among the Bhils the situation is somewhat different. Only one of their curative magical chants has the nature of a cosmogonic myth—*The Lord Song*. But in point of fact the majority of them are origin myths. *The Song of Kasumor Dâmor*, for example, which is believed to cure all illnesses, narrates the migrations of the Dâmor group of the Bhils from Gujerat to the southern part of Central India.<sup>7</sup> It is, then, the myth of the territorial settling of the group—in other words, the history of a *new beginning*, a counterpart to the Creation of the World. Other magical songs reveal the origin of sicknesses.<sup>8</sup> The myths that they tell are full of adventures and end by recounting the circumstances under which sicknesses appeared—an event which, of course, changed the structure of the world.

### *The role of myths in healing*

One detail in the healing ritual of the Bhils is of particular interest. The magician “purifies” the space beside the patient’s

<sup>5</sup> V. Elwin, *The Baiga* (London, 1939), p. 305; W. Koppers, *Die Bhil in zentral-indien* (Vienna, 1948), p. 242.

<sup>6</sup> W. Koppers, *Die Bhil*, p. 242; J. Hoffmann and A. van Emelen, *Encyclopaedia Mundarica* (Patna, 1930), vol. III, p. 739.

<sup>7</sup> L. Jungblut, “Magic Songs of the Bhils of Jhabua State,” *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, vol. XLIII (1943), p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35 ff., 59 ff.

bed and draws a *mandol* with corn flour. At the center of the design he puts the house of Isvor and Bhagwân, together with their figures. This drawing is preserved until the patient is completely cured.<sup>9</sup> The term “*mandol*” itself testifies to an Indian origin. This is, of course, the *mandala*, a complex design that plays a large part in Indo-Tibetan tantric rites. But the *mandala* is primarily an *imago mundi*; it represents the Cosmos in miniature and, at the same time, the pantheon. Its construction is equivalent to a magical re-creation of the world. Hence when the Bhil magician draws a *mandol* at the patient’s bedside he is repeating the cosmogony, even if the ritual songs that he sings do not expressly refer to the cosmogonic myth. The operation certainly has a therapeutic purpose. Made symbolically contemporary with the Creation of the World, the patient is immersed in the primordial fullness of life; he is penetrated by the gigantic forces that, *in illo tempore*, made the Creation possible.

In this connection it is of interest to note that, among the Navahos, the cosmogonic myth, followed by the myth of the emergence of the first men from the bosom of the Earth, is seldom recited except on the occasion of a cure or during the initiation of a shaman. “All the ceremonies center around a patient, Hatrali (one sung over), who may be sick or merely sick in mind, i.e. frightened by a dream, or who may be needing only a ceremony, in order to learn it in the course of being initiated into full power of officiating in that chant—for a Medicine Man cannot give a healing ceremony until he has the ceremony given over him.”<sup>10</sup> The ceremony also

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Hasteen Klah, *Navajo Creation Myth: The Story of the Emergence* (Santa Fe, 1942), p. 19. Cf. also *ibid.*, pp. 25 ff., 32 ff.

includes executing complex sand paintings, which symbolize the various stages of Creation and the mythical history of the gods, the ancestors, and mankind. These drawings (which strangely resemble the Indo-Tibetan *mandala*) successively re-enact the events which took place in mythical times. As he hears the cosmogonic myth and then the origin myths recited and contemplates the sand paintings, the patient is projected out of profane time into the fullness of primordial Time; he is carried "back" to the origin of the World and is thus present at the cosmogony.

The close connection between the cosmogonic myth, the myth of the origin of a sickness and its remedy, and the ritual of magical healing is admirably exemplified among the Na-khi, a people belonging to the Tibetan family but who for many centuries have lived in southeastern China, especially in Yunnan province. According to their traditions, in the beginning the Universe was duly divided between the Nagas and mankind, but later they became enemies. In their anger the Nagas afflicted the world with sicknesses, sterility, and every kind of scourge. The Nagas can also steal men's souls, making them sick. If they are not ritually reconciled, the victim dies. But the priest-shaman (*dto-mba*), by the power of his magical charms, can force the Nagas to free the souls that they have stolen and imprisoned.<sup>11</sup> The shaman himself can only fight the Nagas because the First Shaman, Dto-mba, first attacked them in mythical times with the help of Garuda. Strictly speaking, the healing ritual consists in the solemn recital of this primordial event. As a text translated by Rock expressly says: "If the origin of Garuda is not related, then

<sup>11</sup> J. F. Rock, *The Na-khi Nāga Cult and related ceremonies* (Rome, 1952), vol. I, pp. 9-10.

one must not speak of him."<sup>12</sup> The shaman, then, recites the origin myth of Garuda. He tells how eggs were created by magic on Mount Kailasa and how from these eggs were born the Garudas, who later came down to the plain to defend men against the sicknesses caused by the Nagas. But before relating the birth of the Garudas, the ritual chant briefly rehearses the Creation of the World: "At the time when heaven came forth, the sun, moon, stars and planets, and the earth was spread out; when the mountains, valleys, trees and rocks came forth . . . at that time there came forth the Nagas and dragons, etc."<sup>13</sup>

Most of these medical ritual chants begin by evoking the cosmogony. Here is an example: "In the beginning, at the time when the heavens, sun, moon, stars, planets and the land had not yet appeared, when nothing had yet come forth, etc."<sup>14</sup> Then comes the creation of the world, the birth of the demons and the appearance of sicknesses, and finally the epiphany of the Primordial Shaman, Dto-mba, who provided the necessary medicines. Another text<sup>15</sup> begins by evoking the mythical age: "In the beginning, when everything was indistinguishable, etc." and then goes on to describe the birth of the Nagas and Garudas. Then comes the origin of the sickness (for, as we saw earlier, "if one does not relate of the origin of the medicine, to slander it is not proper"), the means by which it is propagated from generation to generation, and finally the struggle between the demons and the shaman: "The ghost gives illness to the teeth and mouth, by shooting off the arrow, the *dto-mba* pulls out the arrow, etc.; the demon

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 98.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 97.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 108.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 386 ff.

gives illness to the body, by shooting off the arrow into the body, the *dto-mba* pulls it out, etc."<sup>16</sup>

Another ritual song begins: "One must relate . . . the origin of the medicine, otherwise one cannot speak about it. At the time when heaven, the stars, sun and moon and the planets came forth, and the earth appeared," etc., "at that time was born Ts'o-dze-p'er-ddu."<sup>17</sup> Then comes a very long myth explaining the origin of medicines: away from home for three days, on his return Ts'o-dze-p'er-ddu finds his parents dead. He decides to go in search of a medicine that will prevent death and journeys to the country of the Chief of Spirits. After many adventures he steals the miraculous medicines, but, pursued by the spirit, he falls to the ground and the medicines are scattered, giving birth to medicinal plants.

#### *Reiteration of the cosmogony*

Some of the texts published by Hermanns are even more enlightening. In the course of a healing ritual the shaman not only summarizes the cosmogony but also invokes God and *implores him to create the World anew*. One of these prayers begins, "The earth was created, the water was created, the whole world was created. The millet beer offering *chi* and the rice offering *so* were created . . ." and ends with the summons, "Come hither, ye spirits."<sup>18</sup> Another text gives "the genesis of *chi*, the genesis of the intoxicating drink *dyö*. This arose from an old tradition. The place of origin is where the Sang li and Sang log trees originated. In the interest of

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 489.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 279 ff.

<sup>18</sup> M. Hermanns, *The Indo-Tibetans*, pp. 66 ff.

the whole world and for our use, O messenger of God, come hither. Tak bo thing, the wonder-power-god, came down for the creation of the world. *Now again come down for the creation of the world.*"<sup>19</sup> It is clear that to prepare the ritual beverages *chi* and *dyö* it is necessary to know the myth of their origin, which is closely connected with the cosmogonic myth. But, even more significantly, the Creator is asked to come down again for a new creation of the World, for the patient's benefit.

We see that in these magical medical chants the *myth of the origin of the medicines* is always made an integral part of the *cosmogonic myth*. In the preceding chapter we cited some examples to show that, in primitive therapeutics, a remedy becomes efficacious only if its origin is ritually recalled in the patient's presence. Many Near Eastern and European incantations contain the history of the sickness or of the demon who brought it on, and at the same time recall the mythical moment when a divinity or a saint succeeded in conquering the scourge. An Assyrian incantation against toothache recalls that "after Anu made the heavens, the heavens made the earth, the earth made the rivers, the rivers made the canals, the canals made the pools, the pools made the Worm." And the Worm goes "weeping" to Shamash and Ea, and asks them what it will be given to eat, to "destroy." The Gods offer it fruits, but the Worm demands human teeth. "Since thou hast spoken thus, O Worm, may Ea break thee with his powerful hand!"<sup>20</sup> Here we witness (1) the creation of the world; (2)

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69. Our italics.

<sup>20</sup> Campbell Thompson, *Assyrian Medical Texts* (London, 1923), p. 59. See also the mythical history of the charm against snakebite invented by Isis in *ilto tempore*, in G. Roeder, *Urkunden zur Religion des alten Aegypten* (Jena, 1915), pp. 138 ff.

the birth of the Worm and of the sickness; (3) the primordial and paradigmatic curative act (destruction of the Worm by Ea). The therapeutic efficacy of the incantation lies in the fact that, recited ritually, it re-enacts the mythical time of "origins," not only the origin of the world but also that of toothache and its treatment.

Sometimes a solemn recitation of the cosmogonic myth is enough to cure certain sicknesses or imperfections. But, as we shall presently see, this application of the cosmogonic myth is only one among others. As the exemplary model for all "creation," the cosmogonic myth can help the patient to make a "new beginning" of his life. The *return to origins* gives the hope of a rebirth. Now, all the medical rituals we have been examining aim at a return to origins. We get the impression that for archaic societies life cannot be *repaired*, it can only be *re-created* by a return to sources. And the "source of sources" is the prodigious outpouring of energy, life, and fecundity that occurred at the Creation of the World.

All this is clearly apparent from the many ritual applications of the Polynesian cosmogonic myth. According to this myth, in the beginning there were only the Waters and Darkness. Io, the Supreme God, separated the Waters by the power of thought and of his words, and created the Sky and the Earth. He said: "Let the Waters be separated, let the Heavens be formed, let the Earth be!" These cosmogonic words of Io's, by virtue of which the World came into existence, are creative words, charged with sacred power. Hence men utter them whenever there is something to *do*, to *create*. They are repeated during the rite for making a sterile womb fecund, during the rite for curing body and mind, but also on the occasion of a death, of war, and of the recitation of

genealogies. A contemporary Polynesian, Hare Hongi, puts it this way: "The words by which Io fashioned the Universe—that is to say, by which it was implanted and caused to produce a world of light—the same words are used in the ritual for implanting a child in a barren womb. The words by which Io caused light to shine in the darkness are used in rituals for cheering a gloomy and despondent heart, the feeble aged, the decrepit; for shedding light into secret places and matters, for inspiration in song-composing and in many other affairs, affecting man to despair in times of adverse war. For all such the ritual includes the words (used by Io) to overcome and dispel darkness."<sup>21</sup>

This is a remarkable text. It presents direct and incontrovertible testimony concerning the function of the cosmogonic myth in a traditional society. As we have just seen, this myth serves as the model for every kind of "creation"—the procreation of a child as well as the re-establishment of a military situation in jeopardy or of a psychic equilibrium threatened by melancholy and despair. This fact that the cosmogonic myth can be applied on various planes of reference seems to us especially significant. The man of the traditional societies feels the basic unity of all kinds of "deeds," "works," or "forms," whether they are biological, psychological, or historical. An unsuccessful war can be homologized with a sickness, with a dark, discouraged heart, with a sterile woman, with a poet's lack of inspiration, as with any other critical existential situation in which man is driven to despair. And all these negative, desperate, apparently irremediable situations are reversed by recitation of the cosmogonic myth, especially by the words by which Io brought forth the Universe

<sup>21</sup> E. S. C. Handy, *Polynesian Religion* (Honolulu, 1927), pp. 10-11.

and made light shine in the darkness. In other words, the cosmogony is the exemplary model for every creative situation: whatever man does is in some way a repetition of the pre-eminent "deed," the archetypal gesture of the Creator God, the Creation of the World.

As we have seen, the cosmogonic myth is also recited on the occasion of a death; for death, too, constitutes a new situation, which must be accepted and assumed without cavil if it is to be made creative. A death can be "botched" as a battle can be lost, as psychic equilibrium and joy in living can be destroyed. It is no less significant that among disastrous and negative situations Hare Hongi reckons not only impotence, sickness, and senility, but also lack of inspiration in poets, their inability to create or fitly recite poems and genealogies. It follows from this, first, that among the Polynesians poetic creation is homologized with every other important creation and, in addition—since Hare Hongi mentions reciting genealogies—that the poet's memory is itself a "work" and that the accomplishment of this "work" can be assured by solemn recitation of the cosmogonic myth.

We can understand why this myth stands so high in the estimation of the Polynesians. The cosmogony is the exemplary model for every kind of "doing": not only because the Cosmos is at once the ideal archetype of every creative situation and of every creation but also because the Cosmos is a divine work; hence it is sanctified even in its structure. By extension, whatever is perfect, "full," harmonious, fertile—in short, whatever is "cosmicized," whatever resembles a Cosmos—is sacred. To do something well, to work, construct, create, structure, give form, in-form, form—all this comes down to bringing something into existence, giving it "life," and, in the last

analysis, making it like the pre-eminently harmonious organism, the Cosmos. Now, to repeat, the Cosmos is the exemplary work of the Gods, it is their masterpiece.

This regarding the cosmogonic myth as the exemplary model for every "creation" is admirably illustrated by a custom of the Osage Indians. When a child is born among the Osages, "a man who had talked with the gods" is summoned. When he reaches the new mother's house he recites the history of the creation of the Universe and the terrestrial animals to the newborn infant. Not until this has been done is the baby given the breast. Later, when it wants to drink water, the same man—or sometimes another—is called in again. Once again he recites the Creation, ending with the origin of Water. When the child is old enough to take solid food the man "who had talked with the gods" comes once more and again recites the Creation, this time also relating the origin of grains and other foods.<sup>22</sup>

It would be hard to find a more eloquent example of the belief that each new birth represents a symbolic recapitulation of the cosmogony and of the tribe's mythical history. The object of this recapitulation is to introduce the newborn child ritually into the sacramental reality of the World and culture and thus to validate the new existence by announcing that it conforms with the mythical paradigms. But this is not all. The newborn child is also made a witness to a series of "beginnings." And one cannot "begin" anything unless one knows its "origin," how it first came into being. When it "begins" to suckle or to drink water or to eat solid food, the child is

<sup>22</sup> Alice C. Fletcher and F. La Flesche, *The Omaha Tribe* (Bureau of American Ethnology, 27th Annual Report, Washington, 1911), p. 116, n. a.

ritually projected into the time of "origin" when milk, water, and grains first appeared on earth.

*The "return to origins"*

The idea implicit in this belief is that *it is the first manifestation of a thing that is significant and valid*, not its successive epiphanies. Similarly, the child is taught not what its father and grandfather did but what was done for the first time by the Ancestors, in mythical Times. To be sure, the father and grandfather simply imitated the Ancestors; hence it might be thought that imitating the father would produce the same results. But to think this would be to disregard the essential role of the *Time of Origin*, which, as we have seen, is considered a "strong" time precisely because it was in some sort the "receptacle" for a *new creation*. The time that has passed between the *origin* and the present moment is neither "strong" nor "significant" (except, of course, for the periods during which the primordial Time has been re-enacted); and for this reason it is neglected or an attempt is made to abolish it.<sup>23</sup>

In this example we have a ritual in which the cosmogonic myths are recited for the benefit of an individual, as in the case of healers. But the "return to the origin" that makes it possible to relive the time when things were first manifested is an experience of primary importance for the archaic societies. We shall discuss it more than once in the course of the following pages. But here we may cite an example of the solemn recitation of the cosmogonic and origin myths in the collective festivals of Sumba Island. When events of impor-

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, ch. II and *passim*.

tance to the community occur—an abundant harvest, the death of some eminent person, etc.—a ceremonial house (*marapu*) is built and on this occasion the narrators recount the history of the Creation and the Ancestors. "In all these cases the narrators respectfully refer to 'the beginnings,' i.e. the inception of the principles of the very culture which should be preserved as the most valuable treasure. A remarkable fact of this ceremony is that the recital actually takes the form of an interchange of question-and-answer by two persons constituting as it were each other's counterpart, since they are singled out from two groups with a mutual exogamous conubial relationship. So these two spokesmen in those critical moments represent the total group together with the dead, and consequently the recital of the tribal myth (which should at the same time also be conceived as cosmogonical), will benefit the group as a whole."<sup>24</sup>

In other words, we here have collective rituals, performed at irregular intervals and including the construction of a cult house and the solemn recitation of origin myths of cosmogonic structure. The beneficiary is the whole community, including both the living and the dead. On the occasion of the re-presentation of the myths the entire community is renewed; it rediscovers its "sources," relives its "origins." The idea of a universal renewal brought about by the religious re-presentation of a cosmogonic myth is documented in many traditional societies. We have discussed it in *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, and we shall return to it in the following chapter. For the mythico-ritual scenario of the periodic renewal of the World can show us one of the most significant functions of

<sup>24</sup> C. T. Bertling, *Notes on Myth and Ritual in Southeast Asia* (The Hague, 1958), pp. 3-4.

myth, both in archaic cultures and in the earliest civilizations of the East.

### *Prestige of "beginnings"*

The few examples we have given make it easier to perceive the relations between the cosmogonic myths and origin myths. First and most important is the fact that the origin myth frequently begins with a sketch of the cosmogony: the myth briefly summarizes the essential moments of the Creation of the World and then goes on to relate the genealogy of the royal family or the history of the tribe or the history of the origin of sicknesses and remedies, and so on.<sup>25</sup> In all these cases the origin myths continue and complete the cosmogonic myth. In the case of the ritual function of certain origin myths (in cures, for example, or, as among the Osages, myths intended to introduce the newborn infant into the sacrality of the World and society), we get the impression that their "powers" are due in part to their containing the rudiments of a cosmogony. This impression is confirmed by the fact that in some cultures (Polynesia, for example), the cosmogonic

<sup>25</sup> The custom persists even in developed societies possessing writing. S. N. Kramer remarks in regard to Sumerian texts: "The Sumerian poets usually began their myths or epic poems with a cosmological statement that had no direct bearing on the composition as a whole. Part of this introduction to 'Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Nether World' consists of the following five lines:

'After Heaven had been moved away from earth,  
After earth had been separated from heaven,  
After the name of man had been fixed,  
After (the heaven-god) An carried off the heaven,  
After (the air-god) Enlil carried off the earth . . .'

(S. N. Kramer, *From the Tablets of Sumer* [Indian Hills, Colo., 1956], p. 77.) So too in the Middle Ages many chroniclers began their local histories with the Creation of the World.

myth not only can possess an intrinsic therapeutic value but is also the exemplary model for every kind of "creation" and "doing."

This dependence of origin myths upon the cosmogonic myth is easier to explain if we bear in mind that, in both cases alike, there is a "beginning." But the absolute "beginning" is the Creation of the World. There is more than a mere theoretical curiosity here. It is not enough to *know* the "origin," it is necessary to re-establish the moment when such-and-such a thing was created. This finds expression in "going back" until the original, strong, sacred Time is recovered. And as we have seen and shall see more in detail later, recovering the primordial Time, which alone can ensure the complete renewal of the Cosmos, of life, and of society, is brought about primarily by re-establishing the "absolute beginning," that is, the Creation of the World.

Professor R. Pettazzoni has recently argued in favor of regarding the cosmogonic myth as a variant of the origin myth. "The result is that the creation-myth shares the same nature as the myth of beginnings. . . . Our analysis has allowed us to tear the creation-myth from its splendid isolation. It is no longer a *hapax genomenon*, but takes its place in a well-filled class of analogous phenomena, the myths of beginnings."<sup>26</sup> For the reasons just rehearsed we find it difficult to share this point of view. A new state of things always implies a preceding state, and the latter, in the last analysis, is the World. It is from this initial "totality" that the later modifications develop. The cosmic milieu in which one lives, limited as it may be, constitutes the "World"; its "origin" and

<sup>26</sup> R. Pettazzoni, *Essays on the History of Religions* (Leiden, 1954), pp. 27, 36.

"history" precede any other individual history. The mythical idea of the "origin" is part and parcel of the mystery of "creation." A thing has an "origin" because it was created, that is, because a power clearly manifested itself in the World, an event took place. In short, the *origin* of a thing accounts for its *creation*.

The proof that the cosmogonic myth is not a mere *variant* of the *species* "origin myth" resides in the fact that cosmogonies, as we have just seen, serve as the model for all kinds of "creations." The examples that we shall analyze in the following chapter will, we believe, further support this conclusion.