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Chapter II. Logos Appropriated By Ontology

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II. Logos appropriated by ontology

The Sceptical approach will be seen to have been seminal for Neoplatonism, but its negative account of the power of reason should not be regarded as disposing of it. For at the end of the Hellenistic period powerful religious forces were appropriating the language of rationalism for the purposes of advancing a cosmology which combined a deistic view with an emphasis on the importance of reason in the making of reality, and in man's experience of reality. The late Hellenistic era is a period in which all kinds of currents of thought converged, and in which there appears to have been a kind of intellectual telephone exchange which received and enabled all types of communication. The birth of Christianity inaugurates a new tradition of philosophy which will develop parallel to the continuing tradition of Greek Philosophy: but this same Greek tradition seems to be infused with a new spirit whose origins are difficult to detect. The last century before Christ conceals many mysteries from the intellectual historian, and in particular the sources and influences on these two traditions, the Patristic and Neoplatonic, remain difficult to pinpoint. The academic succession in Athens and Alexandria is no longer a guide to what is important in the realm of intellectual forces: whatever one thinks about the result, it has to be admitted that the formative influences in the developing Western philosophical tradition lie outside the Greek philosophical curriculum.

Philo is a case of a religious thinker who embraces the Greek tradition within a general religious framework, and it is clear that he was an important influence over some Christian philosophers. Wolfson's attempt (Philo, I & II) to demonstrate fundamental and far-reaching influence on the part of Philo's works falls far short of proof, but we can nevertheless see Philo as an important representative of a new type of syncretistic literature which combines the apparatus of Greek rationalism with religious conceptions, in this case those of Judaism.

Philo's use of the term logos exploits to the utmost its twofold meaning. That the term could mean both "speech" and "reason" has been a constant theme since its earliest appearances, and the association of reason with a language-like faculty is of great importance to Philo. Most authors hitherto have exploited this ambiguity in one way or another, but with Philo another facet is now added to this already rich term. Logos becomes an hypostasis. This development has been noted to appear in embryonic form in Aristotle, and is fully extended in Philo. The view will later be put that Philo has identified his logos with the world-soul of Plato's Timaeus: the term is for him Biblical, arising from The Septuagint, but the interpretation he gives to it is Platonic. Logos thus becomes a being and an archetype, a source and princi-

ple of being, able to compete with the first principles of the Presocratics. It retains its ancient meanings, and the notion of discursive reasoning, or of reasoning in discourse, is now written into the basic elements of the universe. The other main consequence is that Logos now has a threefold meaning: speech, reason and hypostasis are now all available to him who wishes to play on words, or simply to explore the depth of the concept brought forward by the Greek language. (The Fathers certainly made much use of this possibility with their use of the adjective λογικός.)

Philo has a great deal to say on the uses and functions of language, and much of it is quite positive. There is little trace of the failure of confidence in language which is characteristic of the writers of late antiquity, though there is a strong attack on certain uses of language, such as the Sophists' eristics.

The utility of speech is stressed in various ways. He regards words as an important means of release, seeing emotions which are stifled and suppressed as becoming more intense where verbal expression is lacking. Joseph's brothers are said not to have given verbal expression to their hatred of him, thus rendering it increasingly violent. (This is one of the very few ancient statements of the modern notion of the evils of self-repression, and the necessity of emotional release, and for Philo words constitute the safety-valve.) Elsewhere the voice is said to have a dual capacity, for speech and song (The Special Laws I.342), and both are said to be of benefit to the soul, and both are described as health-giving and life-preserving medicaments (*pharmaka*). Song has three characteristics, each of which has therapeutic value for the life of the soul: rhythm checks its irregularity, melody cures the discordant, and measure the immoderate elements in the soul. Speech restrains the impulse towards evil, and helps redress the balance in those who have become dominated by foolish thoughts. It is the "source of the greatest benefits" (343). Philo sees verbal expression not only as a means of externalising the unspoken deliberations of the mind, but also as having the power to turn back to the mind, influencing its processes.

> Speech, like the bird, is swift in its movements. It is quickly broadcast into the environment.
> For speech is naturally light and winged, moving swifter than an arrow, and shooting in every direction. Once spoken the word cannot return, but when carried outwards courses away at high speed, strikes the ears and passing through the whole hearing process immediately issues in sound. But speech is twofold, true and false. (On Change of Names 248)

In a series of graphic images Philo thus describes the lightning movement of the word, and its irrevocable character: once spoken it has been unleashed. Speech is undeniably powerful, and it can be of therapeutic value for the soul, but it is also undeniably ambivalent. There are falsehoods, sophistries

and blasphemies within its ample capacities, and Philo sometimes turns to this other aspect of language. Joseph's wandering on a plain is interpreted as his being lost in a contest of words, and there follows a development of this theme of verbal strife (The Worse Attacks the Better 28, 35). Cain and Abel are described similarly as debating each other, and the dreariness of lengthy arguments is referred to. Juggling with words and sophistry are condemned, and eristics treated as part of such verbal wrangling. Abel is praised for his ignorance of such arts:

> Now Abel never learned the arts of speech, but knew the beautiful by thought (*dianoia*) alone. (37)

In this passage we have a foreshadowing of the notion to be found frequently in the thought of late antiquity, which contrasts thought with language, to the disadvantage of the latter. Wordless thought is more likely to capture its goal, be it God or The One.

The transcendence of the beings to be apprehended, and the loftiness of the mysteries of the universe make it inevitable that speechlessness will overtake the person who seeks to discuss the divine. The beauty of the ideas given in the account of the world "transcend our speech and hearing, being too great and holy for the mental organs" (On the Creation 4). Despite their sublimity, those ideas should not be passed over in silence: Philo is less enthusiastic about the virtues of silent thought than many of his Alexandrian successors. In fact the word σίγη does not occur in his writings, though ἡσυχία sometimes conveys the sense of silence in his work. Philo considers the human mind, when animated by love and longing for wisdom (*eros* and *pothos*) to be capable of grasping more than it can normally reach, but his attack on speech does not mean that this impulse of the mind goes on its way unaided by speech. He does not propose the abandonment of speech, and his emphasis on the role of Logos in the construction of discourse must surely be the explanation of this: what he attacks is useless, idle, unproductive speech; in a word, Sophistry.

And so in this passage Moses is said to be waging war against the Sophists in Egypt, who cast spells like magic over the minds of their hearers. Abel's lack of verbal skills is juxtaposed with Moses' speechlessness before God (Exodus 6.12), and Moses' lack of eloquence is emphasised on the basis of this story. He fails to find the appropriate language for the great thoughts which his mind has apprehended; the sea of rhetoric springing from the mouths of the sophists is simply baseless. "They will be seen to display the prowess of men shadow-boxing, and not that of actual combatants" (41). Abraham is said to abandon the body, sense and speech, this being Philo's interpretation of Genesis 12.1, which describes Abraham's forsaking of "land, kindred and his father's house" (The Worse Attacks the Better 159). It is thus

the case that speech is included with all the aspects of existence in the body. He who abandons them will meet with the "powers of Him who is". Speech is part of living in the body.

Thus Philo occasionally refers to language in a pejorative way and he usually castigates idle or useless language by referring to it as sophistry. Among other things that are dismissed under this heading, there is included disputation and eristics, which are apparently held to be the sophistic activity. Probabilities and plausible arguments do not bring knowledge of the truth, but only "disputation and eristic strife" (Alleg. Interp. III.233). There is therefore a production of words which are useless and misleading. Philo develops an interest in the articulated word: he has the idea of the "word which has become" (λόγος γεγωνός). Abraham means "the chosen father of sound", and the change in his name from Abram means that he has adopted the role of spokesman. The father of the word which has become is mind itself; having grasped the good, it comes forth in sound (On Cherubim 7). Philo is close here to the Stoic idea of the logos which is brought forth (*logos prophorikos*). The ideas of an emerging logos, which springs from a higher and purer source, and which takes on some sort of clothing, is clearly extremely important for the subsequent history of the idea.

We turn now to the hypostasis Word. In the course of an allegorical interpretation speech is said again to have Mind as its father, and again Mind is said to have speech as its "hearth" or "living-room", secluded from the rest of the dwelling. Mind enters its living-room to display the conceptions to which it has given birth, and thus speech (logos) is the faculty of rendering overt the hidden deliberations of the mind (The Migration of Abraham 3). God also has a house, namely his Word, which is prior (πρεσβύτερος) to all that has come into existence. Philo presents the Word as an instrument by which God carried out his purposes, comparing it to a rudder used to guide things on their course. In this way Philo appears to see a pattern of similarity between the human word and the divine Word, since both are the behavioural tools employed by their proprietors to realise their intentions. Both represent the public face, as it were, of internal purposes and deliberations. This idea finds more formal expression in respect of the Word of God, in the On The Cherubim (127), where Aristotle's fourfold categorisation of causes is used to clarify the matter. The cause of the universe is God (ὑφ' οὗ), the substances from which (ἐξ ὧν) it was made the four elements, the instrument through which it was constructed (δι' οὗ) being the Word of God, and the final cause of its making is the goodness of God. In this view then, the Word corresponds to Aristotle's instrumental cause, through which a thing comes into existence. (Aristotle's doctrine of causation is outlined in the Metaphysics 1013ᵃ–1014ᵃ, and in the Physics 194ᵇ: he himself classifies logos as final cause in The Parts of Animals 639ᵇ.) Philo considers that it is important to get these distinctions clear, since one may otherwise commit gross errors of

spiritual understanding, mistaking for example the instrument for the cause. "Right reason" recognizes the true state of affairs: Joseph's particular failing lay in this failure to grasp God's causative status in Aristotelian terms. Right reason would have seen that dreams are interpreted by God, rather than through God.

The "reason of God" is that in which all things are written, and in which the formation of all other things has been engraved. The hypostatization of logos is evident here, since it appears as a primal principle from which intellectual entities derive their function. Logos is a force which ensures that the ideas are borne in on reality, and that the appropriate human receptors are attuned to them. It is the guarantee of the intellectual function. One notices the tell-tale use of the word "write" (ἐγγράφεσθαι) for the explanation of how the composition of things is in the divine reason: it is *written* in the divine reason. The making of the world may be "incomprehensible", but its principles are nevertheless written somewhere: language is not about to be lightly abandoned, since the word/reason principle stands at the very source of the created world. Philo's commitment to language is very great, and he is far less willing to recommend an escape from it than some later Christian philosophers.

The human faculty of speech was not a mistake on the part of the Creator, and the relation of the human mind to speech functions as a microcosmic representation of the relation between God and his Word. The parallel is not absolute, to be sure, and the higher ontological level carries with it certain distinct features. "Whatever God speaks are not utterances (ῥήματα) but deeds" (The Decalogue 47): Philo is commenting on Exodus 20.18, which emerges in the LXX as "the people saw the voice". Just as the voice of man is audible, so the voice of God is visible. This point is made in greater detail in The Unchangeableness of God 83:

> God then speaks unmixed unities. For his Word coming forth is not a percussion of air, nor is it mixed with anything else at all, but it is incorporeal and naked, differing in no way from unity.

God's speech is thus transferred into acts in order to preserve it from the same limitations as apply to human speech. Here Philo refers to the dyadic character of human speech, being constituted as it is by a combination of breath shaped by the tongue, which merges with its kin, the outside air. Two elements are needed, and speech is therefore not something which can be attributed to God, who is pure unity. "His Logos", therefore, "is his deed" (The Sacrifices of Abel and Cain 65): there was no interval between his speaking and the result.

The Word of God in Philo is a subordinate power, whose specific function appears to be the guidance and composition of the world. It is described as

the "most sure and stable prop of the whole": in a reinterpretation of Plato's World soul, the logos is said to be the force which extends itself from the centre to the boundaries of the world, combining and unifying its parts. The word is an unbreakable bond of the universe, separating and organising the four elements in order to make of them a constructive whole (Noah's Work... 8). Plato had envisaged such a force in the Timaeus, where he has a craftsman/god construct the universe out of the materials he found at his disposal. The demiurge formed the elements into a beautiful and ordered living creature, using as his model the eternal world of the forms (Timaeus 29): "he brought it into order out of discorder" (30A). He built reason into soul, and soul into body (30B); he made it into one single whole made of all wholes, perfect, ageless and free from ailment (33A); he constructed the world soul in the shape of a cross bent over into two complete circles, and built all physical reality into it (36E); and the soul of the world was invisible, but partaking in reason and harmony.

The world soul is the archetype of Philo's logos, and it has a considerable development in later Greek and Christian philosophy, partly explored by Daniélou (Message...). The demiurge and the world soul merge in a single creative and sustaining principle. Apart from the passage cited above, one may also refer to The Sacrifices of Abel and Cain (8): through the Word by which the universe was made, God draws the perfect man to himself. In a passage closely reminiscent of the Timaeus, we are told that God gave the universe shape (σχῆμα) and figure (τύπος); that when he had perfected the universe, he stamped it with his image and idea, namely his own Word (On Dreams II.45). Both God and his Word are unnamable: after the wrestling match described in Genesis (32.29), Jacob asks his antagonist for his name. Philo comments that the master refuses to give his personal and proper name (ἴδιον καὶ κύριον), and that names are the symbols of created beings. It is only to be expected, then, that both God and his Word should remain nameless (On The Change of Names 14). The Logos is the archetype on the basis of which mind is formed: "... for it is the human mind (*nous*) which is fashioned according to the archetypal idea, the Word which is above all (The Special Laws III.207). The Word as archetype of the human mind reappears in On Rewards and Punishments (163), where in addition it is claimed that God has granted mankind kinship (συγγένεια) with the Divine Word.

The Word thus bridges the gap between man and God, by assuring continuity in the intellective and ontological relationship between them. Wolfson (Philo I.282) goes to some lengths to argue that the idea of such intermediaries in Philo is a fiction: he concludes (289) that "if his Logos and powers and ideas are in some respects employed by God as intermediaries they are selected by Him for that task not because of the need to bridge some imaginary gulf between Him and the world, but rather, as Philo himself suggests, for the purpose of setting various examples of right conduct to men". Wolfson's

view is not at all clear, and seems mainly directed at rebutting Zeller's charge of inconsistency in Philo (Die Philosophie der Griechen III, 2[4], 407, 413), considered to result from the attempt to combine a transcendent god with a material universe, so that some interaction is possible. There is also an attempt to differentiate Philo's handling of this problem from that of Plotinus, who later saw the impossibility of multiplicity (which characterizes the world) coming into existence from the One (Enn. V.1.6). Plotinus' solution was to argue that the world came into existence at the hands of some intermediary force.

However Philo's solution is precisely that of Plotinus, and is an absolutely classic example of Neoplatonist metaphysics. God deals with the Word, who deals with the world and humanity: as the world is to the Word, so the Word is to God, but the relationships are not wholly comparable. God's Word is his deed, as we have noted, but the Word comes forth in speech and writing: there is therefore a relationship of a continuous sort, despite this asymmetry. Relations at a higher ontological level are transposed into a form appropriate to a lower level where the downwards movement is taking place. The Logos of the World is more than just a pattern, or blueprint, as Wolfson claims (285), and it is more than a mere model for men (loc. cit.). Whilst it is true that the Word sometimes emerges as an instrument, like a rudder or a tool, it also contributes actively to the world on its own account. It causes mind to order itself according to the ideas (loc. cit.); it sustains and unifies the world in its many parts (loc. cit.). The Word is the image of God stamped on the world, but unlike a mirror image it has its own life and activity.

In conclusion then, Philo preserves the notion of discourse with his concept of Logos, combining the ideas of reason and speech, but he goes in the direction of the Stoic *spermatikos logos.* He makes the logos first principle, and a creative and sustaining force, developing this notion in a much more thoroughgoing way than the Stoics had done. But somewhat similarly to the Stoic view, the hypostasis Logos leaves its traces in the appropriate form throughout the whole of material and human reality. Just as a Presocratic *arche,* such as fire, would entail the essence of reality being fiery, so Philo's first and originating principle means that the fundamental ingredient of reality is logos, word/reason. Reality is "*logikos*".

It is clear that a new stage has been reached. New concepts bring new words, and in late Greek the verb λογόω is coined: it means to "logofy", or introduce the characteristics of logos into an entity. This piece of linguistic evidence demonstrates the change in the meaning of logos, and highlights the new developments. Plotinus uses the verb to refer to the imprinting of logos on reality (III.2.16, l. 21), and it is found elsewhere in Neopythagorean and Neoplatonic Greek. Logos is no longer merely a "rational tale": it has become an element in reality. It is now a real and existent force; it does not bear the same relationship to reality as design to the designed object, for example. It is both design and stuff.

Philo marks the significant stage of the combination of the language of Greek rationalism with religious sentiment, and this same tendency is found among the Gnostics. This group must have come from the same mould as Philo, combining Greek and Eastern religious ideas, but their writings are marked by a greater degree of speculative zest. This imaginative aspect of Gnosticism goes hand in hand with the absence of authoritative documents: unlike Philo, who works from the Jewish scriptures, the Gnostics engage in a free hermeneutic of a variety of texts, from all kinds of sources. The Gnostics create new myths, using their background of Greek philosophy, Jewish religion, and other oriental influences. Hans Jonas' view (The Gnostic Religion 102), that the Gnostics effected a remythologization, is well-known, and he believes that they deliberately welded together mythical systems in order to communicate highly sophisticated ideas. How conscious this process was may be open to doubt, but there is no doubt that they created personal sagas around abstract intellectual principles, such as Wisdom, Intelligence, and Unity.

Primarily affected by this mythicization process is the notion of Logos. In the first place it is objectified as an entity, that is, it is hypostatized, and then it takes on a semi-personal dimension. This is not so clear in Philo, where the Word is merely hypostatized, but in the Hermetic documents to which we now turn, the Logos is portrayed very much as a kind of cosmic entrepreneur. This being the case, it must have been very easy for John, in writing his gospel, to identify Jesus with the Word thus defined.

Logos was identified with many mythical figures, and Leisegang has given a list of such identifications (PW 25, 1061 ff.), of which the best-known cases combine logos with Hermes/Mercury, Isis, Pan, Helios and the Dioscuri. Of these the most significant is the identification with Hermes which is first found in Plato's Cratylus (407E). Here "Hermes" is said to be related to the term ἑρμηνεύς, or interpreter: Hermes is thus to do with speech (logos), and this etymology plays a considerable role.

It is recalled later in Plutarch (On Isis and Osiris 378 B), where Hermes is made equivalent to Logos, and as Logos points out that Nature "undergoing change of shape in function of the intelligible brings about the creation of the world". This is Hermes/Logos in his role of revealer and instructor, and it represents a considerable shift in the direction of the logos theology of the Hermetic treatises and John's gospel. Cornutus, a first century A.D. Stoic philosopher, has a crucial passage in this context (Theol. Graec. 16): Hermes is the logos; he was sent by the gods, who made man alone of all creatures on earth *logikos.* Hermes/logos is said to be the herald (κῆρυξ) and messenger (ἄγγελος) of the gods, announcing through speech their will: "for we know the will of the Gods through the notions given to us in discourse (logos)". Just prior to the redaction of John's gospel then, Cornutus declares Hermes to be the word of the Gods, and their ambassador, announcing their will to mankind.

The Hermetic treatises are hard to date with any precision, but is generally supposed that they were written about the second or third century A.D., and that they represent an already long-established tradition. They combine Greek philosophical notions, such as *nous* and logos with religious speculations of a cosmic and metaphysical kind. And so the Poimandres (I.4) describes a kind of chaos:

> Then this darkness changes itself into a kind of moist nature, shaken in an unspeakable way, emitting smoke, as if from fire, and producing a certain sound, an indescribable mournful sound. Then there emerged from it an inarticulate shout, such as could be compared to the voice of fire. But ... holy word (logos) came out of light down against nature, and an unmixed fire sprang from the moist nature, upwards towards the higher.

(I have followed the text as given by Nock/Festugière though there are some difficulties. C. H. Dodd for example, in The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel [37], diverges from both Reitzenstein and Nock/Festugière at certain points in the text. Intellectually speaking the most significant difference lies in the passage where I have translated "... compared to the voice of fire". For φωνῇ πυρός he reads φωνὴν φωτός, which is confirmed by the MSS, but which seems to make no sense, since it is impossible to compare something to the "sound of light".)

The position, then, is that nature was emitting a sound which was not speech, and indescribable, resembling the sound of fire, when the holy word (*hagios logos*) came down upon nature, similarly to the way in which it descended on the soul in Philo (see p. 44). Poimandres continues by explaining that the light from which the logos emerged was God or Mind, who preexists moist nature. The logos which comes forth from the light/mind is the son of God. At a certain point the Word of God leaps upwards and is united with the Intellect/demiurge, and together they give rotational movement to the planets. Since the logos has deserted the lower levels, the creatures there are devoid of reason, being irrational or a-logical (*aloga*). There is frequent mention of the *alogos* in Poimandres: in I.24 he mentions "nature without reason" (τὴν ἄλογον φύσιν). He is speaking of the "ascension" and the dissolution of the body which this entails: the body is given up to qualitative change (ἀλλοίωσις) and one's physical form is no longer seen. The sense receptors return to their sources, whereas spirit (θυμός) and desire (ἐπιθυμία) return to "nature without reason". After this man is launched upwards across the harmony of the spheres, losing in successive belts various aspects of his humanity, such as the ability to increase and decrease, or the capacity to feel desire, audacity and temerity. His goal is the ogdoad, the intelligible world in the mythology of Hermetic and Gnostic literature, and part of his former nature is deposited with the element of reality which lacks reason. Not that this

sector is inert or devoid of life: the a-logical beings in fact have souls. The importance of intellect in the soul is emphasized; if it leaves the soul, the soul neither sees nor hears, resembling an irrational (*alogos*) creature. "So great is the power of the intellect!", exclaims Poimandres (loc. cit.). Similarly in 12.4 we are told that when the human soul is not guided by intellect, it falls into the same state as the beings devoid of reason.

The Neoplatonic principle of resemblance between ontological levels is evident in much of this kind of literature, and it is preserved in the relation between the rational beings and men. Intellect (*nous*) is from the "very being of God, if indeed there is a substance of god". It is deployed like the rays of the sun, not being cut off from its source when it acts. The intellect in men, then, is god, and some men are very close to the divine. In the beings devoid of reason, intellect is found in the form of instinct: as Nock/Festugière point out (I 178, n.3), the idea that the goals of animal instinct may be comparable to those of the human intellect can be found in Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 1153^{b}32. Poimandres notes that in man, intellect constitutes a counterbalance for instinct, whereas in the animals it co-operates with instinct (12.2).

Distinctions also exist within the class of beings who have reason (logos). The fourth tractate (3) notes that reason has been given to all men, whereas intellect (*nous*) has not. God did not distribute the latter equally to all men, though not because he felt jealousy towards some, this being an emotion which belongs to lower reality. It was intended that intellect should constitute the prize after which souls should strive, not a faculty automatically bestowed on all men. All those who were baptized with intellect share in knowledge (*gnosis*), and are perfect, since they have received intellect. Those who did not listen to the proclamation (κήρυγμα) are called the *logikoi*, presumably because they have logos only, and "they are ignorant of why they have come into existence, and at the hands of whom" (4.4). These men experience sensations which are like those of beings without reason, and they attach themselves to physical objects of desire, passing over things worthy of contemplation. This is the first indication of a dramatic new development in the career of reason: it is now associated with ignorance.

Logos is also used of speech in the Hermetic treatises, as for example in 9.1, where the speaker refers to his "Perfect Discourse": in the same passage intellection (*noesis*) is said to be the sister of speech. The two are said to be the instruments of each other, "since no discourse finds voice without intellection, and no intellection manifests itself without speech". Elsewhere (12.13) a distinction is made between voice and logos: animals are said to have voice only. The two are sharply distinguished, since men are said to have discourse (logos) in common, though their tongues differ, whereas each species of animal has its own specific voice. There follows an interesting statement of the unity of mankind in the matter of intellectual capacities (12.13):

But among men, father, is not logos different from race to race? It may be different, child, but mankind is one. Thus logos is one, and is translated, and is found to be identical in Egypt, Persia and Greece.

Logos is therefore a universal faculty, which remains undifferentiated despite the heterogeneity of speech. This view of logos is of course associated with the claim that there is a general law by which logos is an ingredient of reality, including human reality, a law which makes rationality possible and guarantees the possibility of knowledge. This is a very common view: the distinctive Hermetic contribution is to make intellect the more important of the logos/*nous* capacities, and to make those who have logos only a lesser group than those who possess intellect. Logos is a faculty which belongs to all men, but in itself it is not adequate for their enlightenment. There is evident here a desire to introduce nuances into the generally held wisdom of the age on the subject of the "logical" faculty, and to make room for an élite in the gnostic manner.

In 1.6 Nous is the father, and the Word is the son, but here again it is stated that they are not separated from one another, "since their union is life". In this way both principles of Intellect and Word are distinct, yet inter-dependent: their distinctness is emphasised by the Father/Son terminology, and it serves to suggest the existence of a mediating principle in the form of the Son. Yet the principle of continuity is preserved, so that the difference between the two is not absolute. In fact, the bringing together of the two is "life".

In retrospect then, Hermetism provides a picture of logos as a dynamic force: while not exactly personified, it moves up and down and from task to task with vigour and panache. In the first place, it comes down upon matter, and then leaps upward to be united with Intellect and the demiurge, to engage in the work productive of physical and cosmic reality. The departure of logos leaves a category of "a-logical" creatures, who have life but not reason: all men, on the other hand, are "logical", but those who are merely thus are in an inferior class, since the highest goal is reunification with Intellect/*nous*. Logos is distinguished from *nous*, but it is also associated with it, in a way which means that there is within reality a graduated series of intellectual capacities.

The hypostatization of Logos reaches a new stage with the redaction of John's Gospel, where word is not only ontologically objectified, but also personalised and historicised. Hermetic treatment of logos veers towards personification in that it attributes action and purpose to logos, but its myth is extra-temporal and extra-terrestrial. Other Gnostic material will be examined later, and the same thing will be found to be true, but with John's treatment there is an attempt to make logos enter time and space: the hypostatized logos is now attached to an historical figure, and the Johannine identification

of logos with Jesus constitutes one of the foundations of Patristic philosophy. The same obscurity about origins and intellectual milieu surrounds John's Gospel, as that which surrounds the Hermetic documents. It is probably earlier than they, but must be in touch with a similar tradition. John writes as follows:

> In the beginning was the logos, and the logos was with God, and the logos was God. The logos was with God in the beginning. All things were made through him, and without him was made nothing which was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in darkness, and the darkness did not grasp it. (1.1–5)

The first two words, ἐν ἀρχῇ, are held by many to be a conscious recollection of the first words fo Genesis, and this is a plausible hypothesis. It is however equally likely that there is an allusion to the Greek notion of *arche,* as originating first principle: after all, it has already been noted that Aristotle identified the logos as *arche.* Nothing in the above quotation is new, or even unexpected. The tendency to differentiate between logos and God, whilst simultaneously associating them as if to annul or mitigate the distinction initially postulated, is found both in the Stoic logos, and in the text of Poimandres cited above. Here logos and *nous* were both distinguished and identified. John simply borrows the emanationism of the hypostatised logos from his predecessors, and they seem to belong to the Stoic and Middle Platonist group. However he does go further by actually personalising the logos:

> And the logos became flesh and dwelt among us... (1.14).

At this point the Johannine prologue makes its most radical step in the direction already taken by others. With Philo we have seen the logos as the deed of the Father, and as the name of the Father: with Cornutus we have seen the logos as the herald and interpreter of the Father: with John we are provided with a logos which is the bodily representation of the Father, his incarnation. The cohabitation of the logos with the human race means that at last the logos has been completely historicized. Ever since it became an entity, the relationship of logos with the material world had been problematic: from Aristotle onwards the question had been how, precisely, the logos was in things. John's answer is that the logos is embodied, and his answer is distinctive in that he sees it in one person only, whereas it had always been treated as an overall characteristic, or a uniformly distributed force. Now the logos is concentrated in one individual, a leader and guide, and the source of the view is probably the fusion of Greek thought with Jewish messianic concepts.

John brings the logos into time and history. It is now subject to evolution and process, and this too must be the contribution of the Jewish linear view

of history. Suspicion of time was very marked in both Platonism and Gnosticism, and it is henceforth to be a hallmark of Christian orthodoxy that it endorses the element of process in human experience. John does not of course introduce the notion of history, but he introduces tense into his verbs. The first chapter has John the Baptist uttering the paradox:

> After me there comes a man who came to be before me, because he was before me.

John is playing tricks with time and sequence, in order to highlight the entry into time of the previously timeless logos. The past, the present and the future are all envisaged: "the hour is coming, and now is ..." (5.25). The language of apocalyptic infuses the Gospel with a sense of past, present and future, and the temporalisation of the logos must be added to its incarnation, as John's chief contribution.

Gnostic logos doctrine is quite diverse. The sources of Gnosticism lie within the religious syncretism prior to the beginnings of Christianity, but there follows a response to Christian doctrine. In this case there is much Gnostic reflection on the Johannine prologue.

As Elaine Pagels notes (The Johannine Gospel... 14), one theme which unites the diversity of the Gnostic movements is the treatment of the earthly Jesus. The idea of the historicization of the divine is the issue which polarizes Gnostics and orthodox, and Irenaeus' claim (Against the Heresies 1.10.3) that the basic postulate (*hypothesis*) of the faith is being challenged by the Gnostics shows the way in which the notion that the word became flesh constituted a major point of division. In general it is not denied by the Gnostics that Jesus enjoyed an historical existence, but the significance of this is contested. That the incarnation occurred, that it could be dated, that a description of its unfolding could be given, is not so much at stake as that these things are the essentials. For the Gnostics the emphasis on the historical Jesus singles out that which is irrelevant: what matters is the hidden meaning, symbolised by the events in the life of Jesus. Thus Heracleon attacks those who interpret the incarnation literally, as being excessively attached to the flesh (Origen, Commentary on John 13.19). On this type of view, the historicity of an event is merely a guarantee of its outer skin, which in any case is subject to perishability and change: the reality which one should be concerned with is that which the event signifies, or symbolises, and which may be some theological truth.

But there was another important tendency among the Gnostics, namely that of multiplying entities between the upper and lower levels of reality. According to them the Johannine prologue referred to a group of eight beings, called the ogdoad, whose names were Father, Charis, Monogenes, Aletheia, Logos, Zoe, Anthropos, Ecclesia. The Gnostics found no reference to Jesus in the first verses of John, and in any case separated the saviour who became

flesh from the Logos, who remained within the Pleroma. (The ogdoad constitutes the Gnostics' collection of intelligible principles and the Pleroma denotes the "fulness" of the divine realm, descended from the ogdoad, and usually composed of thirty beings.) The "animal Christ" (A.H. I.7.2), who actually underwent suffering, was in fact very far down the scale. As Irenaeus observes (I.9.1), John would have written differently had he wished to refer to the generation of the ogdoad in his prologue.

Basilides distinguishes between the Logos and Christ. According to Irenaeus' account (A.H. I.24.3), Nous originates from the unbegotten Father; Logos springs from Nous; from Logos Phronesis; from Phronesis Sophia and Dynamis, and from the last two are descended various powers, principalities and angels. It is Nous who is called Christ, and is sent by the Father to save those who believe in him from the "power of those who made the world" (I.24.4). He appeared as a man and performed miracles, and in order not to experience suffering, he transformed Simon of Cyrene into a being who passed for Jesus, and he was crucified through ignorance and error. Jesus, however, took on the form of Simon, and stood by laughing at those crucifying his twin. None of this, however, is the work of logos, who stands below Nous, or Christ, in Basilides' ontological hierarchy. The Barbelognostics, on the other hand, distinguish between Nous and Christ, who are seen as partners, Nous being created in order to assist Christ (A.H. I.29.2). Logos is again separate, and unites with *Ennoia* to produce the self-originate. In these views we see two things: the proliferation of levels of reality, and the tendency to push logos down to a low stage among these levels.

Valentinian Gnosticism has by far the most developed logos doctrine, seemingly a result of its greater proximity to the orthodox tradition. The accounts of Irenaeus and Hippolytus give much clear information on this area of Valentinian teaching, and of the Nag Hammadi sources, the Tripartite Tractate offers a logos theology which seems to bring it quite close to this branch of Gnosticism. In it Logos and Life are frequently coupled, as cosmic principles, and they emerge from Nous (as the only begotten Father). Nous itself is fathered by Bythos (depth) and Silence, and it is clear that Gnostic mythicising of this kind betrays considerable interest in how thought and language emerged from the prior stage of the silent deep: the myth conveys an interest in the genesis of discourse, which is considered to be a thing to be explained. The birth of Nous is the most important stage in its genesis, and then from Nous follows the birth of Logos and Life, who father Man and Church (Irenaeus, Against the Heresies I.1.1: system of Ptolemaeus). This account is confirmed by Hippolytus (Refutation 6.29.5), reporting the Valentinians in general, except that he adds that the principle which brought forth Logos and Life was a Dyad, a twofold being consisting of Nous and Truth. The same view is given by Irenaeus in I.11.1, where a combination of four dyadic principles produce the ogdoad. Some, Irenaeus reports (I.12.1), be-

lieve that the order of production of logos and life should be reversed, and that they should be said to follow Man and Church in the order of generation. The evidence of Epiphanius (Panarion 31.5.7) confirms the idea that there was some confusion over the proper order, since it refers to the tetrad deriving from Father and Truth, as Man, Church, Logos and Life. This tetrad came into existence in one step, and was not the result of two stages of dyadic procreation, and it seems likely that there was some confusion over the details of the process of generation.

What of the identification of Jesus with the Logos? Epiphanius (31.7.3) reports of Valentinus that he calls Jesus by all kinds of names, such as Saviour, Christ, Logos, Cross, Limit and Limit-setter. But he was not the first logos, it is said, but a much lower creation who already possessed a body from above, and was passed on through the virgin Mary as through a pipe. He was brought forth simply to save the spiritual race on earth. The system of Ptolemaeus refers to "Jesus whom they also call Saviour, and Christ and Logos" (Irenaeus I.2.6), although there are several Christs provided for. The first Christ is higher than the second, which is the fruit of the Pleroma and who has angels for bodyguards (Irenaeus I.2.6; 3.1). The multiplication of beings in this system of thought leads to an emphasis in orthodox credal statements on the idea of the "one Lord Jesus Christ", and Irenaeus states it this way in I.3.6: in I.4.1 he outlines the type of thought to which he objects, with the Christ on high acting as saviour of the tragic figure of Sophia. Her violent desire is resolved when this Christ extends form to her, since she lacked shape and form. This logos was present to her invisibly, and eventually abandoned her. He had not given her knowledge, and after his departure she strained for him: "she strained herself to search after the light which had departed from her, and she was not able to comprehend it". (Irenaeus I.4.1)

Is there a symbolic meaning of Logos throughout this complex mythicising process? It is often associated with the provision of knowledge, or of voice. In the treatise On the Origin of the World, preserved in the Nag Hammadi Corpus, there is a most revealing statement about its function.

> Moreover the Logos who is more exalted than anyone was sent for this work only, so that he might announce concerning what is unknown. He said "There is nothing hidden which will not appear, and what was unknown will be known" (Matthew 10.26). (Trans. Bethge and Wintermute, ed. Robinson p.178)

The logos is here the voice for that which lives beyond human comprehension. Similarly, in the Valentinian system of Marcus the production of Truth is described (Irenaeus I.14.4).

This myth should be described in detail, since it is wholly devoted to the origins of discourse. For the first time in Greek thought the generation of language takes precedence over the generation of matter. Truth utters a

word, which is a name, and the name is that of Christ Jesus. She then falls immediately silent, and Marcus (the Gnostic to whom this revelation was being given) expects something more: he is rebuked because he does not understand the power of this name, and its numerological significance is expounded. Truth is described in her physical features, each part of her body represented by a letter of the alphabet. The composite whole is called "Man" and is said to be the source of all speech and sound, and the expression of all that is unspeakable: the mouth of Silence. One must listen to the self-begotten word, which comes from the mouth of truth (I.14.3), and this is presumably the name Jesus Christ. The system of Marcus is concerned at this point with the origins of speech and knowledge, and there is an investigation of the origins of language which closely resembles the theory of the origin of numbers in Plotinus. Words are treated as elements, and letters are said to be constantly producing other letters to infinity. Marcus makes the aeons word-elements, and gives them the power by which each can utter itself: none of them is by itself capable of enunciating the whole.

The whole idea of the seminal process of the growth of reality, familiar from Neoplatonism, is here merged with a concern for accounting for the origins of discourse, and Marcus' variation of this typical scheme is very striking. His views provide a valuable insight into the wealth of the Gnostic imagination, and the way in which philosophical problems receive mythological treatment: Marcus offers an aetiology of language.

The first word (logos) ever enunciated was *arche* (beginning: Irenaeus I.14.1), and thus Marcus ingeniously reinterprets the Johannine "In the beginning was the Word". Pondering and interrogating that mystical phrase, Marcus must have reformulated it as follows: "the Word was the Beginning", or perhaps "the Beginning was the Word Beginning". His own original statement, then, consists in seeing the first and engendering event as a spoken word. The breaking of silence by speech is the first move in the creative process, and the old Presocratic *arche* is found to lie in the fact of utterance, and that utterance is the very word "*arche*". According to the myth the Father, in his desire to create, opened his mouth and spoke.

> ... he opened his mouth, and sent forward a word which was similar to himself. This stood near and showed him what he was: a form, manifested from the invisible. The enunciation of his name took place thus: he spoke the first word of his name, which was "beginning" (ἀρχή), and this word was made up of four letters, or elements (στοιχεῖα) ... (Irenaeus I.14.1)

The word articulated by the Father therefore bears some resemblance to him, and it reveals something about Him to himself. His name is therefore "Beginning", and is said to consist of four στοιχεῖα: this word can mean "letters", but it has an important use in Greek scientific speculation, designating the

primary particles of Empedocles, and then of Plato, as expounded in the Timaeus. In fact in this dialogue (48B) Plato refers to fire, air, earth and water as the στοιχεῖα of the all (or the universe), and the context is so close that we may surmise that Marcus had this passage in mind, together with a section from the Theaetetus, shortly to be discussed. For the four letters of the word "Beginning" are treated as generative forces, like the four elements of Empedocles, as reinterpreted in Plato's Timaeus. Various other names and sets of letters are pronounced, and each letter has its own image, pronunciation and appearance. "The sounds are those which have given form to the immaterial and unbegotten aeon..." Marcus envisages the creative process on the following model: the word Delta contains five letters, each of which have names, delta, epsilon and so on. Each of these contain letters which themselves have names, and so on to infinity, and in this way a word seems to engender an endless series of other words. He seems here to be borrowing the machinery of Neoplatonism, in particular the idea of procession from the One, a notion used to explain the engendering of the World. Plotinus, for example chooses number as his seminal influence, and has a number of henads (or units) which are both autonomous and heteronomous (terms which could be used to describe Marcus' stoicheia), and which themselves descend into multiplicity.

> Thus all number is prior to beings...
> Since Being comes from the One, and the latter was one, it must itself be number. For this reason they say that forms are henads and numbers. (Ennead VI.6.9)

Thus the emanationism of the Platonic account of the genesis of reality is reworked to provide an account of reality which has speech and its origins as the prime factor.

The manufacturing of discourse reaches a stage where the name Christ Jesus is pronounced by Truth, as noted above (Irenaeus I.14.4). Truth then falls silent, and Marcus expects her to say more: The Tetrad explains to him that he has underestimated the words already spoken. This name is not a trivial name, she tells him, but one of great power. It is not a ancient name, but a special name, consisting of many parts among the aeons of the Pleroma. Jesus contains six letters (in Greek), and there are a total of twenty-four letters emanating from the powers above. One need not go into the detailed arithmetic of those letter/elements, but it is interesting to note that there is category of semi-vowels which occupy the middle position between consonants and vowels, "receiving of the outflow of those above, and elevating those below" (Irenaeus 1.14.5). This is a typical Platonic scheme, with graduated levels of being, from higher to lower, but with each level operating as link in the chain, and in some way sharing in the characteristics of both the level above and that below. Marcus is observing a distinction in quality be-

tween consonants and vowels, the unvoiced letters and the voiced. As reality proceeds to be generated, it moves from silence to consonant, to semi-vowel, to vowel, to voice which forms all things: from silence to word, in fact. The seven vowels, representing the most articulate stage of the process of the generation of speech, belong to Man and Church, which we have frequently seen to represent one of the last stages in the creative process. The voice goes forth from Man, and forms all things, and there is a distinction between echo and voice which has some utility in the system. The echo gives things form. The stages of reality correspond to stages in articulation:

Father and Truth: nine letter/elements, being the consonants π, κ, τ, β, γ, δ, φ, χ, θ
↓
Logos and Life: eight letter/elements, being the semi-vowels λ, μ, ν, ρ, σ, ζ, ξ, ψ
↓
Man and Church: seven letter/elements, being the vowels α, ε, η, ι, ο, υ, ω

The number of letters in each case is conveniently in descending order, whilst the stage of articulation, or voicing is advanced, and so there is symmetry within the descent/creation model typical of these emanationist systems. There are seven heavens at a lower stage in the creation process (Irenaeus I.14.7), and each of these utter the vowels: the first heaven utters alpha, the second epsilon, the third eta, and so on until the seventh, which gives voice to omega. Together, the seven heavens sound out the praises of him who produced them, and the sound of this goes up to the Father: its echo returns to earth, and gives shape and form to things there.

It is possible that there is in this material another allusion to the logos doctrine of John: 1, since in verse 14 the additional feature is adduced, that with the presentation of the logos in the flesh, his glory (*doxa*) was beheld. In Marcus' story, the combined utterance of the seven vowel sounds praises the father, and "the glory of this sound is sent up again to the Forefather" (I.14.7). In the next section it is said that the seven powers glorify (*doxazousi*) the Logos by their sounds. Whilst this may be a reference to John 1.14, there is also at stake the wider Jewish concept of the glory of God, and thus Irenaeus mentions Marcus' use of Psalm 19 (18).1: "The heavens declare the glory of God". The logos is substituted for God in Marcus' account, and the following verses of the Psalm give a probable source for much of Marcus' theorising:

Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.
There is no speech, nor are there words;
Their voice is not heard;
yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world (2–4).

Marcus' use of the logos concept is strikingly distinct from that obtaining in general during this period, for he emphasises the concept of speech in its externalised sense, as voice. The word which, when spoken, was the beginning of things, was the word "beginning", and then follows an aetiology of speech in mythical form which progresses to the eventual utterance of vowels, which are regarded as the expression of voice at its most articulate, of sound at its furthest remove from silence.

The discussion of elements, words and vowels recalls most clearly the famous passage in Plato's Theaetetus, in which Socrates seems to encounter great difficulties in giving his account of knowledge. Accordingly, he relates a dream he has had, about the unknowability and inexplicability of the ultimate elements of reality (201E). Reasoning, it is said, arises out of the combination of names (202B), but what of the primal elements, who have no explanation and about whom no combination of names is possible? These elements have names, but the names do not explain them. Socrates claims to be unhappy about the view which they have agreed on, namely that the elements (στοιχεῖα) are unknowable, and that only things which are combinations of such elements are knowable. The argument moves to the analysis of letters and syllables: are syllables knowable, since they are single entities? There is a distinction made between vowels and consonants, but all letters are equally unknowable:

> And so it is quite right to say that they are inexplicable (*aloga*), since the most distinct of them, the seven vowels, have only voice, but no explanation (*logos*) at all. (203B)

It is clear that Marcus draws on this fund of material for his own philosophical fantasy, since he uses the idea of the letter as element, but promotes it to a creative function never imagined by Socrates in the original discussions.

Marcus' logos theology involves the by now inevitable notion of logos as an entity among the pantheon of transcendental beings, but also stresses the voice aspect of logos, out of its broad range of meanings. The importance of logos in the cosmic process is not then that it endows reason, or that it disseminates thought processes into the fundamental material of the cosmos, but that it breaks the silence. The Father, who dwelt in silence, decided to make speakable that which was unspeakable, and to give form to the invisible. The two acts are associated in Marcus' view, since the giving of form and the establishment of physical reality, is the result of speech coming into existence. The primary particles of physical reality are the letters of the word "beginning".

The Tripartite Tractate, one of the longest and most legible of the Nag Hammadi discoveries, contains frequent reference to a logos theology and in some respects can be classified as being close to Valentinian Gnosticism in thought. In 76, it refers to the intention of the Logos to do something good,

and to the fact that he gave glory to the Father. He had attempted to achieve something which lay beyond his powers, in bringing forth a perfect being; and what he produced was therefore defective. Much of the Tripartite Tractate is devoted to the construction of the Logos, and his work has the two distinct aspects of the paradox of creation. It brings into existence both the world and the beings which transcend it, but since these same beings are a down-flowing from the perfect being, they are imperfect and insubstantial. The Tractate frequently speaks in positive terms of what is made by the Logos, as for example in 99, where in response to the "lust for power" (trans. Attridge, Mueller) of the two orders of the Psychic and the Hylic, he gave each an appropriate rank, and an area of jurisdiction. Each of the archons receives a command and a place, and the result is a complete hierarchy of beings in levels of subjection and dominance. In 96 his work of "beautification" is described, and part of his task is said to be the preservation of that which is good in the Pleroma. Yet not all his work has the character of beauty or goodness, because it is the logos who carries on the act of rashness which results in creation. He is only one of the aeons, one who wished to comprehend the Father: he was last to be produced, and was young in age. He looked into the depth, and doubted: because he looked away from the light, since he could not bear it, he looked down and was therefore afflicted with self-doubt, division, forgetfulness and ignorance, both of himself and of true being. The Logos is thus a painfully inadequate artisan of the created world, though he is not to be condemned (77). He became weak, like a female who has lost her virility (78). The Logos, being defective, brought forth defective things (78), and they were weak and incapacitated by their nature (81).

The drama of the Logos is played out on the basis of his unsuccessful grab for knowledge, and his subsequent living out of a career, which though it is ostensibly creative and constructive, is uninformed. The Tripartite Tractate begins with a long discussion of the Father, his qualities and his negated qualities. He is of course incomprehensible, immeasurable and illimitable: the standard negative statements about the highest principle. The Father dwells in "untastable sweetness" (56), with the Son who has existed with him from the beginning. Their offspring are like kisses given by them, since the kiss is one and many at the same time, and springs from thoughts which are at once good, and insatiable (57, 58). They produce a group of aeons (intelligible principles) which produce others; the entire group of aeons has a "love and longing for the perfect, complete discovery of the Father" (71). He does not wish them to know him, and it seems from the text that being known would detract from his being, and that out of a desire to preserve his autonomy, he keeps the aeons from knowledge of him. Among the aeons, there is one, younger than the rest, which is destined to become the Logos. This one (74) desires to grasp the incomprehensible, despite the limits on language set in his level of existence (the Pleroma). This aeon is a unity, though not from

the Father or the Son; he has the nature of wisdom, and intends to examine what is hidden. He intended to do something good, but attempted an act which he was incapable of achieving. The Father drew away from him, in order to maintain the existing limits (76). He became convinced that he would obtain knowledge of the unknowable, and so overextended himself, with the result that he became ill with self-doubt, and he failed to attain the Father. And so he produced things which were only shadows, images and likenesses: he had not been able to bear gazing into the light, and therefore looked into the depth and developed doubt (77). His predictions lack reason and light, and belong to vain thought (78).

In this way the production of the world, which the Tripartite Tractate is careful not to condemn, is based on ignorance and failure. That which was to be the inspiration of the Logos, this younger member of the aeons, was not grasped, with the result that the world was based on misunderstanding and on an unplanned movement. The problem of knowledge, and the impossibility of gaining it, is at stake in all this. All the aeons are imbued with the desire for knowledge, but they are kept from it. What we inhabit springs from this intellectual failure. With astonishing virtuosity, the Tripartite Tractate reverses the whole late Greek and early Christian notion of the Logos: it is now the principle of failed reason. In many respects Gnostic thought parodies or reverses the mainstream ideas of the Greek and Jewish traditions, and the present example is an ample testimony to this part of Gnosticism, which one might describe as its negative dependency on traditional systems. Though the Tripartite Tractate stresses that one should not condemn the movement of the Logos, since it is the cause of an order which was destined to be (77), the whole thrust of the document is that the world is seriously impaired, and that living in it is living an imperfect life. The cause of this is its creator, the Logos, or the aeon who wanted to have ultimate knowledge, but failed.

The dethroning of logos is completed in the Tripartite Tractate. Its position was weakened once it had become an hypostasis, and it was therefore possible to locate it on a scale of being. The last Gnostic view described retains the connection of logos with reason and discourse, but regards this as a low-level faculty. Reason is in fact ignorant, and all its works are tainted with ignorance. That which was isolated by the Presocratics as the route to truth, has become the cause of ignorance. Marcus, on the other hand, stresses the role of logos as that which breaks the silence clouding the transcendent realms, and that which ultimately produces voice. Marcus is concerned with language in its most material form, but he too sees the process as a descent from purer reality. Marcus' speculation is that the beginning of reality was a word, namely *arche*, and that the letters of this word form the primary elements of sensible reality.

Aristotle begins the process of the reification of logos, and once it has become an entity, it can be appropriated by anyone. Philo demonstrates this by

making it into the intermediary which renders the Father intelligible in discourse to the world, but the Gnostics also appropriate it for certain tasks in their myths of descent into matter. And it is here that the deconstructionist tendency of the Gnostics reveals itself at work, for they focus on the underside of reason, that negative aspect of it which suggests epistemological failure. The limits of reason become their interest, and its incapacity is what they see, spread across material reality. The reification of logos contributes a new verb, to "logofy", and gives the logos the power to stamp itself on reality, for better or for worse. Reality itself is now known as "logical" (*logikos*), and is held to have the characteristics of logos, with all its competence, and all its incompetence. For the revisionist Tripartite Tractate, this reality lacks substance, since the Logos only succeeded in creating images and phantasms, and "that which is dead is ignorance" (Tri. Trac. 105).