

A Theoretical Approach to the Craftsmanship Metaphor  
in Early Greek Cosmologies

1. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1459a 5-7

πολὺ δὲ μέγιστον τὸ μεταφορικὸν εἶναι. μόνον γὰρ τοῦτο οὔτε παρ' ἄλλου ἔστι λαβεῖν εὐφυΐας τε σημεῖόν ἔστι· τὸ γὰρ εὖ μεταφέρειν τὸ τὸ ὅμοιον θεωρεῖν ἔστιν.

But the most important thing by far is to be a maker of metaphor. It is the only thing that cannot be learned from others; and it is also a sign of a good nature. To make good a metaphor is to see the sameness.

2. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1457b 25-30

ἐνίοις δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ὄνομα κείμενον τῶν ἀνάλογον, ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἦτον ὁμοίως λεχθήσεται· οἶον τὸ τὸν καρπὸν μὲν ἀφιέναι σπείρειν, τὸ δὲ τὴν φλόγα ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου ἀνώνυμον· ἀλλ' ὁμοίως ἔχει τοῦτο πρὸς τὸν ἡλίον καὶ τὸ σπείρειν πρὸς τὸν καρπὸν, διὸ εἴρηται “σπείρων θεοκτίστην φλόγα.”

Sometimes there is no word for some of the terms of the analogy but the metaphor can be used all the same. For instance, to scatter seed is to sow, but for the flame coming from the sun, there is no word. Yet this action is to the sun what sowing is to the seed, and so you have the phrase "sowing the god-created fire."

3. Empedocles, B84 (Marwan Rashed's reconstruction, incorporating B87)

ὥς δ' ὅτε τις πρόοδον νοέων ὠπλίσσατο λύχρον	1
χειμερίην διὰ νύκτα πυρὸς σέλας αἰθομένοιο,	
ἄψας παντοίων ἀνέμων λαμπτήρας ἀμοργούς,	
οἷ τ' ἀνέμων μὲν πνεῦμα διασκιδνάσιν ἀέντων,	
φῶς δ' ἔξω διαθρῶσκον, ὅσον ταναώτερον ἦεν,	5
λάμπεςκεν κατὰ βηλὸν ἀτειρέσιν ἀκτίνεσσιν·	
ὥς δὲ τότε ἐν μήνηγξιν ἐεργμένον ὠγύγιον πῦρ	7
γόμεφοισ' ἀσκήσασα καταστόργοισ' Ἀφροδίτη,	7a (B87)
λεπτῆσ εἰν ὀθόνησιν ἐχεύατο κύκλοπα Κούρην,	
αἷ δ' ὕδατος μὲν βένθος ἀπέστεγον ἀμφινάεντος,	
πῦρ δ' ἔξω δῖεσκον, ὅσον ταναώτερον ἦεν,	
ἢ χοάνησι διάντα τετρήατο θεσπεσίησιν.	12

As when someone planning a journey prepares a lamp,  
gleam of blazing fire through a wintry night,  
fits linen screens against all the winds,  
and they scatter the blast of the blowing winds

but the light that is more diffuse leaps outwards,  
and shines across the threshold with its tireless beams;  
in the same way, after Aphrodite had fitted the ogygian fire  
enclosed in membranes with dowels of love,  
she poured the round-eyed Korê in filmy veils;  
these kept back the deep water flowing round about them  
but allowed the fire that is more diffuse to leap outwards,  
where they had been bored through with marvellous funnels.

#### 4. *Odyssey V, 247-259*

τέτρηθεν δ' ἄρα πάντα καὶ ἤρμωσεν ἀλλήλοισι,	247
<u>γόμεφοισιν</u> δ' ἄρα τὴν γε καὶ <u>ἀρμονίησιν</u> ἄρηρεν.	
ὅσσον τίς τ' ἔδαφος νηὸς τορνώσεται ἀνήρ	
φορτίδος εὐρείης, εὖ εἰδὼς τεκτοσυνάων,	250
τόσσον ἔπ' εὐρεῖαν σχεδίην ποιήσατ' Ὀδυσσεύς,	
ἴκρια δὲ στήσας, <u>ἀραρῶν</u> θαμέσι σταμίνεσσι	
ποιεῖ, ἀτὰρ μακρῆσιν ἐπηγκενίδεσσι τελεύτα,	
ἐν δ' ἰστὸν ποιεῖ καὶ ἐπίκριον ἄρμενον αὐτῷ,	
πρὸς δ' ἄρα πηδάλιον ποιήσατο, ὄφρ' ἰθύνοι,	255
φράξε δέ μιν ῥίπεσσι διαμπερές οἰσυσῆνησι	
κύματος εἴλαρ ἔμεν πολλὴν δ' ἐπεχεύατο ὕλην·	
τόφρα δὲ φάρε' ἔνεικε Καλυψώ, δῖα θεάων,	
ἰστία ποιήσασθαι...	259

#### 5. Empedocles, B35.16-17

τῶν δέ τε μισγομένων χεῖτ' ἔθνεα μυρία θνητῶν,  
παντοίαις ἰδέησιν ἀρηρότα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι.

And as they [the four elements] were mingled, myriads of mortal tribes poured forth,  
fitted together in all kinds of forms, a wonder to behold.

#### 6. Hesiod, *Theog.* 571-575

γαίης γὰρ σὺμπλασσε περικλυτὸς Ἀμφιγυήεις  
παρθένῳ αἰδοίῃ ἴκελον Κρονίδεω διὰ βουλάς.  
ζῶσε δὲ καὶ κόσμησε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη  
ἀργυφῆ ἐσθῆτι· κατὰ κρήθεν δὲ καλύπτρην  
δαιδαλέην χεῖρεσσι κατέσχεθε, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι.

For the much-renowned Lame One molded from earth  
the semblance of a reverend maiden by the plans of Cronus' son;  
and the goddess, bright-eyed Athena, girdeled and adorned her  
with silvery clothing, and with her hands she hung a veil  
well wrought from her head, a wonder to behold.

## 7. Xenophanes, B1.19-24

ἀνδρῶν δ' αἰνεῖν τοῦτον ὃς ἐσθλὰ πιῶν ἀναφαίνῃ,  
ὥς οἱ μνημοσύνη, καὶ τὸν ὃς ἀμφ' ἀρετῆς.  
οὔτι μάχας διέπειν Τιτῆνων οὐδὲ Γιγάντων  
οὐδέ <τι> Κενταύρων, πλάσματα τῶν προτέρων,  
ἢ στάσιος σφεδανάς, τοῖς οὐδὲν χρηστὸν ἔνεστι,  
θεῶν <δὲ> προμηθεῖην αἰὲν ἔχειν ἀγαθόν.

Praise that man who after drinking reveals noble thoughts,  
According to his memory and his eagerness for excellence,  
And does not recount the battles of Titans or of Giants  
Or of Centaurs, inventions of earlier men,  
Or fierce civil strife, things in which there is no profit at all:  
But forethought about the gods is always good.

Translations: LI

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