

SOUL AND COSMOS IN PRESOCRATIC PHILOSOPHY

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I

'Cosmos' in this paper stands for the world around us as it presented itself to the Presocratic minds, as well as for the order in terms of which they tried to comprehend it, in short for what I would like to call the 'outer dimension' in which human existence is set. The term 'cosmos' approximating this sense was probably not used prior to the Pythagoreans, nevertheless we speak of cosmogony and cosmology also in the case of the earlier Ionians.¹

No unambiguous sense can be given to 'soul' in Presocratic thought. Ψυχή in Homer stands for 'life', 'breath', i.e. for the 'breath of life' (*anima*) which leaves man upon death, to continue in the dank region of Hades as a shadowy, witless double of the deceased. 'Its esse', says E. R. Dodds, 'appears to be superesse and nothing more'.² While a necessary condition of life, it has no function in actual living. Soul in a sense closer to our own, as that which makes human nature what it was to be, was discovered by the philosophers, answering, as it were, to the Delphic admonition 'Know thyself'.³ Sometimes it is spoken of as ψυχή, sometimes as δαίμων; my own term 'inner dimension' is to refer to both. It will be my thesis that a concern for this inner dimension emerged gradually in the Presocratic period by differentiation from the outer dimension, i.e. from the cosmos. I shall follow this development through three stages marked by Anaximenes, Heraclitus and Empedocles.

II

I quote Anaximenes' fragment 2:

As our (οἶον) ψυχή being air holds us together and rules us (συγκρατεῖ), so breath and air encompass the whole cosmos.⁴

1. Compare Diels' essay "Ueber Anaximanders Kosmos" (1897) and Jäger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford 1947), p. 35f.

2. *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Beacon Press 1957), p. 138.

3. Compare Heraclitus, DK 22 B101: "I searched myself". (DK = Diels-Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* 11th ed., Zurich/Berlin 1964).

4. Aetius, 1,3,4 = DK 13 B2. I take this fragment, though unlikely to correspond literally to Anaximenes' text, as an adequate rendering of the

On the face of it, this sentence appears to suggest an assimilation of soul and cosmos rather than their differentiation. But what has been assimilated must first have been distinguished, and it is precisely here that their differentiation has occurred. This may become more obvious when we compare Anaximenes' fragment with the doctrine of his predecessor Anaximander which appears to fuse human and cosmic fate. As I have argued elsewhere⁵, the law of recompense that governs the coming-to-be and passing-away of τὰ ὄντα is binding on cosmic forces and men alike. As Diels put it, 'one man, one cosmos after another come into being and deserve to perish'.⁶ More recently von Fritz remarked on the anthropomorphic character of the Anaximandrian cosmic forces of hot and cold in which physical and emotional properties are fused.⁷ Similarly Anaximander's anthropogony is ingeniously interlaced with his cosmogony. The remnants of his philosophy offer no scope for an outer/inner distinction.⁸ Anaximander leads us back to a level of consciousness where man experienced himself in and through the cosmos, as part of nature as it were, and inextricably involved in its processes.

With regard to Anaximenes' soul/cosmos analogy, reference has frequently been made to Orphic influence. So-called Orphic poets, according to Aristotle, express the view that 'the soul comes in from the whole when breathing takes place, being borne in upon the wind'.⁹ But the date of Aristotle's source is uncertain, and it must remain an open question whether Anaximenes borrowed from the poets or they were influenced by the views of the philosophers. In fragment 2 Anaximenes draws an analogy between soul and cosmos in terms of their function, viz. between συνέχειν/κρατεῖν on the one hand, and περιέχειν on the other. In Anaximander περιέχειν had been paired with κυβερνᾶν, and if we take this as understood, it would complete the analogy.

It is still the breath soul to which Anaximenes refers, and which

gist of his doctrine. Cp. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* I (Cambridge 1962), p. 131f.

I read συγκρατεῖ = συνέχει καὶ κρατεῖ. The doxographer himself remarks on the synonymous use of πνεῦμα and ἄηρ. On a different reading of the fragment by James Longrigg see note 10 below.

5. Seligman, *The Apeiron of Anaximander* (London 1962, Greenwood reprinting 1974).

6. *Der antike Pessimismus* (1921), p. 11.

7. "Der ΝΟΥΣ des Anaxagoras", *Arch. f. Begriffsgeschichte* 9 (Bonn 1964), p. 94.

8. Soul is not mentioned in our sources, except Aet. IV, 3 2 = DK 12 A29, which may be discounted.

9. De an. I,5 410b28 (DK 1 B11).

he makes substantially the same as, and perhaps a portion of, his cosmic ἀρχή. It is significant that this identity has here been explicitly stated, and thereby cosmos and soul have been differentiated as at the same level — an incipient outer/inner distinction.¹⁰ This differentiation enabled Anaximenes to free cosmology from its human connotation, and led to his more scientific understanding of cosmic processes in quantitative terms: rarefaction of air into fire, condensation into wind, cloud, water, earth and stone, associated with warming and cooling respectively. Although he draws a further analogy with the temperature of the air in breathing-in and breathing-out, he refrained, as far as we can gather, from extending his cosmological analysis to the life of the soul; the soul does not transform itself into any of the other elements.

Finally ψυχή, though still conceived as the 'breath of life' in the Homeric tradition has, in contrast to Homer, been given a function in actual living. It is the vital power that holds us together and rules us.¹¹ Further, since Anaximenes is reported to have held that air is divine and possesses eternal motion, we may conclude that he considered the soul too as godlike and everlasting.

III

Heraclitus' thinking represents a further stage in the gradual differentiation of soul from cosmos. His saying, 'I searched myself' (n. 3 above) implies a recognition of the inner dimension in its own

10. I do not think that Anaximenes' analogy constitutes an argument from one to the other. Kirk who tried to reconstruct four variants of possible inferences had to admit the possibility that no logical argument was intended. See Kirk and Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* [KR] (Cambridge 1957), p. 160f.

James Longrigg, "A Note on Anaximenes' Fragment 2 (Diels/Kranz)", *Phronesis* IX (1964), not only denies that there is an argument from micro- to macrocosm but also that there is an analogy. He reads οἶον in B2 as 'for example' against the traditional rendering 'as . . . so' (p. 5 above). He follows those who wish to excise συγκρατεῖν and ὄλον τὸν κόσμον as later glosses, and takes what is left as supporting reasons why Anaximenes held air to be the 'basic form of matter': for example the soul is air, and air surrounds the earth.

But even in the supposed absence of an analogy we should still have the differentiation of soul and cosmos. Apart from that it seems unlikely that they were adduced as 'examples', for between them they cover all that is. On the inappropriateness of 'matter' or 'material substrate' in the context of Ionian philosophy see my *Apeiron* (n. 5 above), pp. 28ff.

11. Aet. 1,7,13 (DK 13 A10) speaks of air as the powers that interpenetrate elements and bodies. Compare Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy*

right. We will approach him, though, against the background of Anaximenes' doctrine. Fire ($\pi\upsilon\rho$) is the principle of the physical world, much as air in Anaximenes was. As the latter condensed in various stages into water and earth, so fire in Heraclitus — an even finer and more volatile 'substance' — turns into sea (i.e. water), then half of that into earth, half back into fire¹², while earth once again is dispersed into sea, and so on (DK22 B31). Unlike Anaximenes, he did not conceive of these processes in terms of rarefaction and condensation¹³, he spoke of exhalation¹⁴, a term which will be of some importance in connection with his view on soul.

Fire is a constituent of the physical world but at the same time stands for the order ($\kappa\acute{o}\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma$) which prevails *in* the physical world, and which Heraclitus therefore describes as an 'everliving fire, kindling in measures and extinguishing in measures' (22B30). Fire, then, is both real and symbolic, i.e. we may discern two senses of 'fire' in Heraclitus. It is in the second sense that fire is representative of the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, the law of measure and proportion that governs the 'cosmic' interchanges (which involve fire in the first sense).¹⁵ The symbolic force of Heraclitus' principle is brought home to us when we consider that in giving out heat fire consumes its fuel. It thus epitomizes his view that things live one another's death (e.g. B36, 62, 77), that things feed on their opposites¹⁶, and are thus bound into unity, e.g. day-night, summer-winter, and ultimately life and death themselves (B57, 67, 88, cp. B15 and 48).

Not unlike Anaximenes' air, fire, given its symbolic significance (sense 2), rules and steers all things (B64, 66). But in contrast to Anaximenes' $\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\acute{\eta}$, fire is not in the extant fragments described as

(Harper 1957), p. 128, who characterizes $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ in the Ionians as an inward spontaneous principle of activity.

12. $\pi\rho\eta\sigma\tau\acute{\eta}\rho$ = storm with lightning (Diels: Glutwind, Guthrie: burning).

13. Contra Simplicius, *Phys.* 23,33 (DK 22 A5), cp. KR, p. 147 n.

14. The extant fragments do not elaborate on exhalation. Diogenes, IX,1,9 speaks of light exhalation from the moist and dark exhalation from earth, but this is not authenticated for Heraclitus. Nor is Aristotle's dual exhalation view — moist and dry.

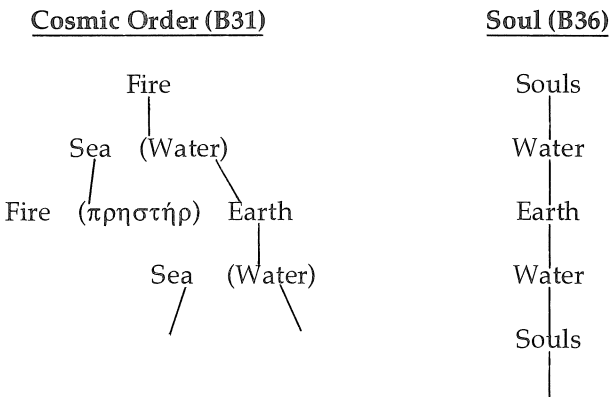
Guthrie, *op. cit.* vol. I, p. 432 seems to follow Aristotle and Philoponus in suggesting that Heraclitus imagined fire as invisible vapour, i.e. dry exhalation. But 'kindling and extinguishing' (B30) suggest flaming fire.

15. These interchanges should not, however, be understood as large scale cosmic transactions, nor do they have cosmogonical import: the world-order is uncreated (B30). The interchanges are ubiquitous and incessant. This is in accord with the river simile (B12, 49a, 91).

16. Aet. II,13,8 (DK A11) points out that according to Heraclitus the stars are nourished by exhalations from the earth.

encompassing (περιέχον), which would have assimilated it to αἰθήρ, the ‘blazing’ upper air, recognized as of old. Nevertheless this has been Guthrie’s interpretation.¹⁷ But again neither αἰθήρ, nor ἀήρ (air) — the latter with one dubious exception¹⁸ — are in our fragments.

In looking for a differentiation of soul from cosmic order in Heraclitus we should keep in mind the essentially dynamic character of his thinking which underlies his conception of both, and which finds its telling expression in the so-called river fragments. But there is also a very striking parallel between his psychological and cosmological doctrines. In B36 he tells us that it is death for ψυχαί to become water, death for water to become earth and so on, i.e. the ‘turnings’ of soul and fire are roughly the same:



Guthrie (I, p. 433) points out that “by substituting in B36 ‘souls’ for the expected ‘fire’ Heraclitus has emphasized the substantial identity of the two”. But has he? Some indirect evidence is provided by B12 where Heraclitus is quoted as saying that souls are exhaled from moisture (τῶν ὑγρῶν). For taking B12 and the suggestive B36 together we can see how Aristotle might have arrived at a similar identification when he wrote,

17. See Guthrie, *op. cit.* vol. I, p. 466f., also KR, p. 200. Guthrie points out that prior to Aristotle, or a very little before him, *aither* and fire had not been clearly distinguished. But Empedocles, a hundred years earlier, had conceived of them as two distinct elements.

18. DK B76, doubted by Diels (DK I, p. 168 n.), Kirk, *Heraclitus The Cosmic Fragments* (Cambridge 1962), p. 343 f., KR, p. 206 n.1. Defended by Guthrie, I, p. 453 and Kahn, *Anaximander* (New York 1960), p. 152 n.1.

Heraclitus says that soul is the ἀρχή [!], which means to say the exhalation, from which he derives all other things.¹⁹

Guthrie by identifying soul with fire, and fire with αἰθήρ (p. 9 above) can point to the popular belief of Heraclitus' own time that soul consists of αἰθήρ and upon death returns to αἰθήρ.²⁰ But in Heraclitus souls upon death cease to exist. They turn into water from which after a prolonged circuit souls once again come to be. There is no re-turning of individual souls to an encompassing αἰθήρ. A belief in the immortality of the soul, as implied in the popular view, Heraclitus did not entertain.²¹ The personality that emerges from the fragments suggests that he steered clear of popular views, which he despised, no less than of the doctrines of his predecessors.

But all told, there remains the analogy between the sequences in B31 and B36 which, though not sufficient to establish a substantial identity (such as Anaximenes had asserted outright) between ψυχή and cosmic fire, reveals the extent to which Heraclitus' thought about soul was still cast in the cosmic mould. But while the life and death cycle of souls is largely determined by the cosmic pattern, the fate of the living soul is *not*. B118 does indeed state that a 'dry' soul is wisest and best, but this does not imply that souls are 'dry' and hence wise by nature, i.e. akin to fire in sense 2, the rational principle — πῦρ φρόνιμον (B64) — let alone are constituted by fire in sense 1.²² It suggests a norm, and hence a task. Although

19. *De an.* 405a25. At 405a5 Heraclitus is not mentioned by name among those who thought that soul was fire. The only doxographical testimony for the identification comes from Aet. IV,3,4 (DK 18,9) in a summary statement which does not carry much weight.

20. Guthrie, *The Greeks and their Gods* (1949, Boston 1962), p. 263 and *History I*, p. 470f.

21. As against Guthrie I, p. 481 and KR, p. 209f. See Martha C. Nussbaum, "Ψυχή in Heraclitus II", *Phronesis* XVII (1972), pp. 155ff.; compare n. 22 below.

22. The praise of the dry, the wise soul in B118 must be contrasted with B117 and its scathing remark on the drunkard whose soul is 'moist' (surely he has lost his reason), and B77 which tells us that for souls it is pleasure or death to become moist. Drunkard and pleasure-seeker are half-dead already; their ψυχή, their life principle is being swamped.

These fragments in conjunction with B24, 25, 27 and 98 have led commentators to ascribe at least limited survival to the dry, the wise soul. Any such interpretation — e.g. Wheelwright, *Heraclitus* (1959, Athenaeum 1974), pp. 66 & 76ff. and KR, p. 211 n. 3 — rests on the presupposition that souls consist of fire (in sense 1) so that a preponderantly fiery soul, i.e. a soul wise in sense 2, may not suffer water-death (B36) right away but may turn into an intermediate state of smoke, which would suggest smelling (B98, cp. B7), and may be what men least expect (B27).

Heraclitus states in unmistakable terms that the general run of men fall miserably short of this distinctly human task, he does not, in contradistinction to subsequent thought, attach any otherworldly sanctions to it. The task, of course, is the philosopher's way: to recognize what is common, namely order and logos (B2, 89). But most men are as though asleep, engrossed in a private world of their own. And 'when asleep', Heraclitus says, 'we see sleep' (B21) but 'when awake, we see death' (*ibid.*). When awake in his sense, he seems to tell us, we are aware not only of our own state, which is life, but also of its opposite, death, and so of the logos which conjoins them.

Heraclitus has discovered νόος and φρήν, i.e. reason, as essential ingredients of ψυχή, which he therefore understands, in contrast to the physical world, in a normative sense. This in turn implies an element of contingency, which is absent from the cosmic order, and it is in this context that we may read B119: Man's character determines his destiny (δαίμων).²³ But the differentiation goes still further. While the logos of the cosmic order may be grasped by the wakeful soul that has νόος and φρήν (which most men lack), to the soul itself belongs a logos that increases itself (B115). While the cosmic order is balanced and contained by measure and proportion (B31, 94), we 'can never penetrate to the limits of soul', Heraclitus says, 'so deep (βαθύς) a logos does it have' (B45).²⁴ Here we may see an intimation that we cannot ever fathom the depth of the inner dimension, and hence of its logos. The ultimate secret which eludes us may be, not the hidden harmony of the cosmos and the unity of all opposites, but the absence of any opposition whatsoever, that is (in modern terms) contrast-free thinking. This may be what Heraclitus means by 'divine insight which human nature does not possess' (B78). 'For God', he tells us, 'all things are fair and good and just' (B102). And 'man', another fragment goes, 'is infantile in the eyes of the deity,

But when understood ironically and as directed *ad homines*, B27 and 98 offer no evidence for even limited survival (cp. Nussbaum, *op. cit.*), while B24 and 25 can be understood in the light of B29. B77 and 117 show that water may invade the soul while still alive without an intermediate stage, and B118 can only be invoked for survival by confounding the two senses of fire which we have to distinguish in Heraclitus.

23. δαίμων is here not to be understood as an aspect of soul (see on Empedocles below).

24. In the words of Nussbaum, *op. cit.* pt. I, p. 15, there are no limits to man's power to develop his understanding. H. Fränkel, *Dichtung u. Philosophie d. frühen Griechentums*² (Munich 1962), p. 433 points out that in Heraclitus' time 'depth' connoted the idea of elemental, inexhaustible power.

as a child in the eyes of man' (B79). From this we may conclude that if there is a divine element in the soul, it is not for man to realize it.

IV

The development I have been following culminates in Empedocles' two separate philosophical poems *On Nature* (περὶ φύσεως) and *Purifications* (καθαρμοί) where a complete differentiation of cosmos and soul has taken effect. The former is a work on cosmology, science and natural history, the latter is concerned with human salvation, with the fate of the δαίμων, variously rendered 'demi-god' or 'spirit'.

In Hesiod²⁵ the δαίμονες were the souls of the men of the golden age, forming a link between gods and humans. In Empedocles the δαίμων stands for the most important aspect of what I have called the inner dimension — the soul; but ψυχή is not Empedocles' term²⁶ and the δαίμων no longer fulfills the traditional soul function as the life principle of natural creatures. The δαίμων has gained autonomy: it is the principle of its own life.

In the *Purifications* we read of heinous crimes committed by the δαίμονες, leading to their exile from the blessed ones, which may be understood as a fall from the golden age. 'Clad in an alien garment of flesh' they wander through a hostile world for a myriad years, hated strangers, doomed to be reincarnated in all kinds of mortal forms.²⁷ Empedocles speaks of himself as a δαίμων²⁸ who, finally purified, is now incarnated as a seer, healer, poet and leader of men (31B146). He is on the verge of leaving behind 'what men are wont to call life'²⁹, and of being readmitted to the company of the gods (B147) — 'a god himself, no longer a mortal' (B112,4). He is escaping the wheel of rebirth, and we may surmise that in writing these lines Empedocles felt close to (what we call) death.³⁰

The dividing line between φύσις and δαίμων does not, however, quite run where we might expect it. Man's cognitive functions,

25. *Works and Days*, v. 121ff.

26. It occurs once in the sense of 'life' (DK 31 B138).

27. B115, 126. See p. 15f. above for further comment on fr. 115.

28. i.e. he is identified with his spirit or soul.

29. DK: 'was man so Leben heisst' (B15).

30. According to the doctrine of the physical poem, there is neither birth nor death of living things, only mingling and separation (of elements), which people wrongly name birth and death, though Empedocles admits that he himself follows the custom (B9). In view of the numerous autobiographical passages in the *καθαρμοί* (of which the doctrine of elements forms no part) we may be permitted to follow his example.

which have become prominent in Heraclitus' *ψυχή* conception, are not considered in the *Purifications*. They are dealt with in the poem on nature and accounted for in physiological terms: it is the blood around the heart which is man's power of thought (B105). Since Empedocles' physiology is based on his doctrine of roots or elements — air (or *aither*), fire, earth and water — and blood is claimed to be an evenly proportioned mixture of these (DK A86, B98, cp. 107)³¹, it becomes clear that an important aspect of psychic activity has here remained within the purview of cosmological thinking. Thus the *δαίμων* is not only deprived of its natural life giving function, it is also devoid of intelligence.

Searching for its significance, we note that the theme of the *Purifications* is obviously a religious one. Yet the poem on nature, too, is written in a religious vein. The four elements bear the names of divinities, and it is still a matter for debate whether the four theological fragments (B131-4) should be considered as part of the *Purifications* rather than as an Appendix to *On Nature*.³² More important, the cosmic sphere of the beginning, dominated by Love (subsequently disrupted by Strife) in which the four elements were closely intermingled in harmonious unity (B27,28)³³, even if understood as the image of a lost golden age, has an eschatological quality, and this no doubt is enhanced in the reader's mind by the significance given to the reign of Love in the *Purifications* (B128). True, in the physical poem Love and Strife, as the combining and separating forces that make for an articulated world and its creatures, are corporeally conceived (B17,20f.), and though they are discerned by the mind rather than by the eye, the mind too is comprehended in physiological terms, as already noted.³⁴

Although it may be difficult to arrive at a neat categorization of the two poems, we may not be far wrong in understanding them as outward and inward looking respectively, with the intellect (*νόος*)

31. On the view (B109) that we perceive air by air, fire by fire etc., and love by love, strife by strife, portions of these must be blended into the mixture as well.

32. The latter view is taken by Kahn (following Bignone) as against DK, in "Religion and Natural Philosophy in Empedocles' Doctrine of the Soul" (1960), reprinted in Mourelatos ed., *The Presocratics* (Anchor 1974), p. 429 n. 8. But compare Reinhardt, "Empedokles, Orphiker und Physiker" (1950), reprinted in *Um die Begriffswelt der Vorsokratiker* (Darmstadt 1968), pp. 504ff.

33. The *Σφαῖρος* is deified; compare similarities in the description with the theological fragment (B134), on which see Reinhardt (n. 32 above). See also Aristotle, *Metaphys.* 1000b3: *Ἐδδαμυνέστατος θεός*; cp. Empedocles B31.

34. B59,1 speaks of Love and Strife as *δαίμονες* (here = divinities), but this has no bearing on the 'spirits' which are the concern of the *καθαροί*.

assigned to the former dimension, while the moral concerns of guilt and need for purification appertain to the latter. There still remain numerous echoes of either poem in the other, but these, in my opinion, should not tempt us to try to assimilate them to one another. Empedocles was a scientist and a physician but also a poet and a mystic, he was an heir to Parmenidean logic as well as an initiate to mystery rites, and probably at one time a member of the Pythagorean order.³⁵ From his point of view the two poems must have appeared *complementary*, in so far as they present two aspects of human existence, each irreducible and both equally valid. Περὶ φύσεως, whatever its religious allusions, gives a naturalistic, if not materialistic account of the world and its creatures; it deals with men and women as natural beings, who have evolved within the great cosmic process, and like trees, beasts, birds and fishes³⁶ are but transitory compounds of elemental portions into which they will once again be dissolved.³⁷ It cannot be expected to provide a rationale for the exiled spirit as which Empedocles must also have experienced himself;³⁸ its presence in the physical world cannot be accounted for within the conceptual framework that determines the latter.

The καθαρμοί, in their turn, identify man as that very spirit, the δαίμων, i.e. they identify man with his immortal soul³⁹, that

35. Compare Guthrie, *History II*, *passim* on the richness of Empedocles' multi-faceted personality.

36. B21,10ff. (cp. 23, 6ff.). Empedocles adds to these natural species 'the long-lived gods, richest in honour' which we may take to refer to the traditional deities of popular belief, in contrast to the theological fragments B131-4 (compare p. 13. & n. 32 above, see also Guthrie, II p. 257f.).

37. Joseph Owens, "Aristotle on Empedocles Fr. 8", *Can. J. of Phil.*, Suppl. Vol. II (1976), reads φύσις in B8 of *On Nature* as 'stable nature' (which following Plutarch had been rendered 'birth' by DK, Guthrie and others) pointing out that φύσις in this sense belongs alone to the four elements and Love and Strife. But on either reading, he concludes, Empedocles was 'intent on denying to men a special nature of their own'. I agree that this is so as far as the physical poem is concerned — on the *Purifications* in this respect see n. 46 below — but we may here note that Uvo Hölscher, "Empedokles", *Anfängliches Fragen* (Göttingen 1968), pp. 209ff. finds existential significance even in περὶ φύσεως, and in fr. 8 in particular, namely a human concern with death and immortality. As against Hölscher I am inclined to doubt whether the 'stable nature' of Parmenidoid elemental portions, running through transitory mortal compounds, offers any consolation to man's longing to escape an 'end in baneful death'.

38. Cp. Plutarch, *de exilio* 17, 607D, quoted in KR, p. 359.

39. Cp. p. 15 above. Man is his soul, he does not, as we are wont to say, have a soul. On this point see Fränkel, *op. cit.* p. 311f.

portion in him that has its true home elsewhere. But the *Purifications* cannot, any more than the physical poem, tell us how the incarnated δαίμων can act *in* the physical world through its 'alien garment of flesh'.⁴⁰ Yet, that it must do. Its purification can only be achieved in the here and now, and even its fall and continued failing, as I shall suggest presently, involve its previous incarnation in human form.⁴¹ But the question 'how?' is unanswerable. It remains an unresolved paradox, inherent in human nature when understood as the meeting point of *physis* and spirit. Empedocles evaded it in writing two separate poems.⁴²

We will now go back to the beginning of the καθαρμοί where we hear, as already mentioned, of the perpetration of crimes — bloodshed and perjury — and the consequent exile of the δαίμονες (B115,3-6). In ascribing such sins to the δαίμων⁴³ rather than to man himself, Empedocles seems to have picked up a mythological motif from Hesiod concerning the failings of immortal gods and their exile from Mount Olympus.⁴⁴ Surely in the context of the *Purifications* it must be the incarnated δαίμων, man in fact, who has committed these sins and is still committing them. If that was not so, the admonitions and warnings (B136,145) which Empedocles addresses to his fellow citizens would hardly make sense. Yet it is the δαίμων, the temporary indweller of earthy forms that has been tainted, that bears responsibility and is punished by exile from its divine home for a myriad years. What is at issue, then, is the purification of man as a moral being, in distinction from his transitory natural existence.

It is the moral aspect (rather than as in Heraclitus the intellect)

40. Nor can either poem solve the problem of the *daimon's* memory of previous incarnations (B117): not the καθαρμοί because they offer no account of intellectual processes, not *περι φύσεως*, given its doctrine that upon what we call death, individual creatures, and so their blood *cum* mental powers are dissolved into their elemental portions. B15 affirms no more than the pre- and after-existence of these.

41. I consider the fall and exile of the δαίμων as a mythical counterpart of the biblical narrative of the fall of man and his expulsion from paradise, which has parallels in other cultures.

42. Assuming that the καθαρμοί is the later of the two poems — so Kahn, *op. cit.* pp. 433f., 448ff. — we can perhaps now see that it supplements the earlier work. It brings to the fore an important aspect which could not possibly have been dealt with in a scientific account of the physical world and its creatures, an aspect moreover, which must have been close to Empedocles' heart as the autobiographical passages testify.

43. Following the reading of DK: 'wenn einer . . . aus der Zahl der Dämonen'.

44. *Theog.* 793-804; this passage is not concerned with δαίμονες, cp. reference in n. 25 above.

which Empedocles has brought to light as the essence of the soul. While it is quite correct to say with Guthrie that Empedocles has added to traditional material [Hesiod] the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls and cycle of births⁴⁵ — the sense of sin and responsibility which the καθαρμοί convey is Empedocles' own.⁴⁶

On the face of it Empedocles' stricture is directed against the sacrificial slaughter and eating of animals, and this can be linked with his belief in the kinship of all nature and doctrine of transmigration, both of which he shared with Pythagoras. In the *Purifications* the point is made that a man might kill and devour his own son or parent who has been reincarnated in animal form, a mother her own children (B137). But Empedocles' language is ambiguous on this issue and allows for a more radical interpretation. He seems to allude to the Orphic myth according to which the Titans slew and ate the divine child Dionysus in the form of a bull. He may have had in mind the ill-fated Tantalus family and the abominations of Atreus who had a meal prepared of his brother's children which he served up to their own father.⁴⁷ Or he may have thought of the tearing apart of live animals by the frenzied Bacchic women. What speaks to us from the καθαρμοί is Empedocles' deep awareness of a collective guilt, together with an impassioned appeal to his fellow men (B136, 145) to purify themselves, i.e. purify the δαίμων (which each of them also is). Coupled with this is his dual lament for the failing of the human race (B124) and his own involvement (B139). The moral perspective in his conception of the soul is bound up with a recognition of the fateful power of man's racial heritage (preserved in the mythical tradition) which alone the individual can overcome. And once again this is not an intellectual but a moral task, and it seems perfectly consistent that while Empedocles addressed his philosophy of nature to a chosen disciple, Pausanias, the cry of the καθαρμοί goes out to all men.

What he demands amounts to a renunciation of strife and return to love, to a state of primal innocence. Empedocles, more than any of his predecessors, recognized the forces of love and strife, of union and separation, attraction and repulsion as fundamental in

45. Guthrie, *op. cit.* II, p. 252.

46. With reference to n. 37 above, insofar as the δαίμονες are incarnated in *all* forms of mortal creatures, it might appear that the καθαρμοί do not ascribe a special nature to man either. But no, man has moved to the center of the stage, and it is *he* who must work his purification. His *task* is his special nature.

47. Mentioned by Werner Jäger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford 1947), p. 146, who also refers to Orestes' matricide.

nature no less than in human life (B17,22-24). Hence they play a pivotal role in both poems. *Περὶ φύσεως* enshrines the melancholy realization that natural existence is intrinsically dependent on *both* love and strife. The blissful sphere of love cannot last. It *must* be disrupted, otherwise there could be no world, no life on earth. This is the 'broad oath' that determines the phases of nature (B30).

But in the moral perspective of the *καθαρμοί*, the mythical golden age when Love was queen (B128,1-8) was disrupted by man. It was he who put his 'trust in raving strife' (B115,14) and defiled paradise (B128, 9-10, cp. 130). The broad oaths of the *Purifications* (B115), in contrast to the physical poem, are not concerned with what goes on in the cosmos. They seal the fate of the *δαίμων* which man can only escape by renouncing strife altogether, and this means the termination of his physical existence. His divine portion can only come into its own after he has left the world, but what man does *in* this world is of vital importance to that end.*)

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