THE SPHAIROS-GOD EMPEDOCLES' TWO POEMS

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In the history of Greek philosophy, Empedocles of Akragas is treated mostly as a stepping-stone from Parmenides to Plato, which, of course, is correct. We remember that he attempted to resolve the blatant contradiction between Parmenides' "true" account of Being and his "untrustworthy" account of the cosmogony by asserting that there were four changeless elements (or "roots," as he called them), which were mixed together and then separated by the alternating dominance of two "forces," Love (or Aphrodite or Harmonia) and Strife (also poetically called Ares). The cosmos arose between two periods in the world-cycle. At one point everything would be blended together by Love, then, as Strife entered in and gained increasing mastery, the elements formed new and less even mixtures until, at last when Strife had pushed Love outside of the cosmos, the four elements were completely seperated from their partners, forming, presumably, four concentric spheres of Earth, Water, Fire, and Aither respectively. Then Love entered in and the process reversed itself, generating another cosmos as the transition back was made. Such seems to be Empedocles' account in his poem "Peri Phuseoes" or "On Nature," as I shall call it.

We are also given fragments from another poem, the "Katharmoi" or "Purifications." A very different person seems to have written this work, for there is no materialistic, mechanistic account of mixing and seperating offered, but a mystical religious doctrine of the primal blood-sin, fall, and redemption of the wandering human soul instead. Included in the "Purifications" are injunctions against the slaughter of animals and the eating of meat, a doctrine of reincarnation, the story of a Golden Age when men lived in peace under the rule of Cypris (Aphrodite), as well as a description of Empedocles himself travelling from town to town, honored as a god, who works wonders and heals the sick.

The effort to relate these two poems constitutes the major critical problem in Empedocles. There have been two prominent solutions. One was to imagine a youthful Empedocles, proudly expounding the latest from of Ionian rationalism, brought low by political exile, and undergoing a theosophic religious conversion in a slightly dotty old age. Such, at least, was the view of Wilamowitz and Diels. The other solution simply reversed the chronology, the "Purifications," which is openly adressed to the citizens "of the great city of yellow Akragas" (B112), being the work of enthusiastic youthful arrogance, the "On Nature" reflecting the sobered wisdom of the mature thinker in exile, who addresses his thought to his only friend, one Pausanias. (B1)[1]

These theories, I'm afraid, tell us more about the relation of religion and science in the 19th Century than about Empedocles. There have been, of course, several mediating theories, notably those of Cornford, Charles Kahn and M.R. Wright.[2] The nub of the problem is really how, given the physical world of the poem "On Nature," can Empedocles posit a transmigrating soul (or, properly, "daimon")? Either it is the result of the temporary mixture, which perishes when we die, or it must be identified with a part of the mixture, one of its constituents, which is eternal. The only other solution is that Empedocles introduced an entity which could not be explained by the four elements and two forces, and so is inconsistent. Cornford argued that the daimon is a portion of the force of Love:

> It is possible, by an effort of imagination, to picture the soul as a portion of Love, contaminated, in the impure embodied state, with a portion of Strife, and to identify it with the numerical proportion, ratio, or harmonia of the elements, considered as an organizing principle capable of passing from one compound to another and holding them together. To a mind which had not attained to conceiving anything as totally 'immanent,' such a logos might present itself as an extremely rare substance or fluid force, pervading the bodily elements.[3]

This strikes me as an accurate and sound interpretation, and I intend to try to vindicate it in the course of this paper. The connecting link between the two poems, I shall argue, is Empedocles' mortal god, the Sphairos, a living sphere which is born and dies.

The question is what exactly is this daimon composed of Love? Kahn put forward the interpretation that the daimon is a portion of the force of Love pure and simple, considered apart from the mixture of the elements. In fact, Kahn believed that it sought to purify itself from the elements. This period in the world-cycle for Empedocles is one of increasing Strife; Love is gradually losing her control and is retreating toward the limits of the cosmos. Thus the purified daimon can escape this vale of sorrow and join-up with its kindred spirits in some Uranian place.[4] Recently, however, Kahn came to reconsider this position, regarding the daimon as immanent in the elements, not something opposed to them, "as their principle of unity, homogeneity, and mutual adjustment." The perfect state of Love is not realized apart from the elements, but in their "complete fusion," which is "realized in the Sphere."[5] Unfortunately Kahn's decision to identify the spiritual home of the

daimones with their unity in the Sphairos is left undeveloped. In fact, Kahn had previously criticized Cornford's view that ultimately, as the Sphairos was realized, the daimones would lose their individuality as the cosmos became more and more a blended unity. With his change to viewing Love as a principle of immanence, he must concede this point to Cornford as well. Empedocles never says the gods or daimones are eternal; instead, they are described as "long-lived."[6] Indeed, as shall be seen, Empedocles' highest god, the Sphairos, is transitory, perhaps even instantaneous.

M.R. Wright, who has given us a definitive edition of the fragments, has developed Kahn's thesis, and has tried to harmonize the notion of the daimon as an immanent, organizing principle of the elements with the idea that the cosmos is undergoing a period of increasing Strife and that Love is retreating toward the periphery.[7] The daimon, in her view, must be a "perfect mixture" of the elements. This makes the daimon ideally intelligent, since for Empedocles awareness depends on like elements knowing like. Thus, what suffers transmigration for Wright is not a portion of Love per se, but a perfect mixture dominated by Love, which goes from body to body until it becomes so refined that it joins the retreating part of the cosmos still governed by Love.[8]

There is an obvious and fatal flaw to this theory: Empedocles explicity states that at one time all the elements are united by Love, and at another all are "scattered and divided" by Strife.[9] There is no indication that some of the elements escape the cosmic law. This does not exclude the possibility that Empedocles believed that this daimon with its "glorified body" lasted out until the end when Strife became completely dominant. But we must assume that at one point in the cosmic cycle Strife has total dominion over the elements, that is, over the cosmos, and that Love has been pushed outside and has reached a nadir.

Let us take stock: of Empedocles' two poems, one "scientific" and one "religious," we only find the mention of a transmigrating daimon in the "religious" poem, the "Purifications." Can this idea be made compatible with his "scientific" poem, the "On Nature"? While it is possible to say with many scholars, indeed the majority, that Empedocles either was inconsistent or changed his mind, it is certainly a more fruitful hypothesis for us to attempt to see the works as representing a consistent doctrine.[10] Now, we may ask, what possible connecting links can be found and how can the troublesome daimon of the "Purifications" be compatible with the principles of "On Nature"--indeed, what exactly is the relationship of the two poems as works, i.e., why did Empedocles write them?

My hypothesis takes the following course: the two poems

share many common features (both refer to the four elements, the world cycle, Love and Strife and, most importantly, the Sphairos); the daimon for Empedocles represents a transitional portion of Love, temporarily adrift in a world rent by Strife, but which ultimately is unified in the Sphairos-God; and the two poems are related by regarding the "Purifications" as a public, exoteric and moralistic work, and exhortation to the "good life" as well as a purificatory introduction to the "esoteric" or advance teachings of the "On Nature," which itself may have provided the theoretical basis for disciples learning a method of medical therapy from Empedocles.

Let us focus on the notion of the daimon. What exactly is Empedocles claiming when he calls himself a daimon, who has been "a boy, a girl, a bush, a bird, and a silent sea-fish" (B117), who is now an "outlaw from the gods and a wanderer because I trusted in raging Strife"? (B115) We are also informed that those who live lives of progressive purification "at last live among men as prophets, bards healers, and rulers; and from these they bud-forth (anablastousi) as gods, highest in honor." (B 146) This gives a clear description of Empedocles self-conception, for he was known for his curative and prophetic powers, his desire to ennact a just, democratic rule, and, of course, for his poetic gifts.[11] The next step up, that is, the next incarnation after living the most blessed life of mortal men, is that of a daimon-god. And, in fact, we hear Empedocles making this claim for himself: "I travel among you as an immortal god, mortal no longer. . ." (B112), and elsewhere claims superiority to "mortal men, who undergo many deaths." (B113)

In Greek religion, the daimones were the original animistic nature spirits as well as the protective tribal ancestor or hero spirits. As the Olympian pantheon emerged and was elevated, daimones became secondary or intermediary spirits. Hesiod (whom Empedocles emulates in many respects) describes the men of the Golden Age becoming "sacred spirits" (daimones hagnoi) after they died, who accomplish good deeds on earth, watch over men in cases at law or cruel misdeeds; they are invisible, "hidden in air," and also have the power to bless men with wealth and good fortune.[12] This conception operates, I believe in Empedocles. That is, he probably believed that the daimones of men who lived purified lives persisted in a higher form after death as mighty, protective spirits. Hippolytus, the 3rd Century bishop, at least states that "Empedocles spoke much about the nature of daimones, saying that there were a great many of them and that they go up and down directing earthly affairs."[13] Such a view is also echoed in Plato's discussion in the Symposium of the great daimones (of which Eros is one) which are "the envoys and interpreters that ply between heaven and earth, flying upward with our worship and

prayers, and descending with the heavenly answers and commandments." Plato has Diotima add that daimones constitute "the medium of the prophetic arts, of priestly sacrifice, initiation, and incantation, of divination and sorcery. . ."[14] Plato is drawing on the tradition which regarded daimones not only as powerful spirits working for the good of man, but as creators of harmony. This is borne out in the speech of the pedantic physician, Eryximachus (who tends to speak as an Empedoclean-Alkmaionian practicioner) who lumps al the "arts of harmony"--medicine, agronomy, gymnastics, astronomy, and sacrifice--under the rule of Eros.

Empedocles too regarded the presence of harmonies of all kinds as evidence of the rule of Love--Aphrodite or "Harmonia." His various activities as poet, prophet, healer, and political leader would be logically connected by this idea, just as they were for Plato's Eryximachus and Diotima. So, let us remember that, whatever else they may be, daimones for Empedocles are spirits which work toward the creation and preservation of cosmic harmonies, and as such represent the force of Love immanently present in and governing the elements, as Cornford stated. But what are these harmonies--what are they harmonies of? Clearly, of the elements. If ultimately everything can be reduced to mixtures and separations of the four elements, ultimately the only harmonies we can speak of are harmonies between these basic entities.

And this leads us to Empedocles' most extraordinary doctrine: his account of knowledge and perception and his account of the Sphairos-God. First, as I mentioned, Empedocles is noted for articulating the "like knows like" doctrine: we perceive earth by earth, fire by fire, water by water, and aither by aither.[15] Accordingly, those beings which have the evenest mixtures of the elements, i.e., those approaching the ideal ratio of 1:1:1:1, will perceive best and most clearly. Empodocles identified perception with knowledge, and so such beings will be most intelligent as well. What is odd is that Empedocles identified this ideal mixture with blood, specifically with the blood around the heart (or phren), which, like most ancient people (including Aristotle), he believed to be the center of intelligence. He describes how earth "anchored in the perfect harbors of Aphrodite" (the womb?) receives "almost equal portions" of the other three elements, from which "came blood and the other forms of flesh," the variations being due to the slight variations in the mixtures. (B 98) The purest mixture is near the heart, "nourished in the seas of blood, surging to and fro, and there above all is what men call thought (noema). because for men the blood around the heart is thought." (B105) This interpretation is backed up by Theophrastus.[16]

We need but think of the episode in the Odyssey where Odysseus must speak with the shades of the dead. He prepares a

drink of blood mixed with barley, honey, milk and wine which they must drink ere they can speak, or, since the two were not distinguished, think.[17] Thus, for Empedocles, for there to be intelligence, there must be a physical mixture of the elements which approaches the ideal ratio. The degree of perfection in the mixture is due to the degree of power, i.e., the amount of the "portion" of Love governing the elements. To the extent that there is a presence of a portion of Strife, the mixture will tend to be unequal, and, in fact will be destablized, since Strife makes the elements avoid each other. Conversely, any portion of Love which is seperated from the elements cannot have intelligence or perception. When Love is completely excluded from the cosmos under the full sway of Strife, we must imagine her as weak and as senseless as the "strengthless heads of the perished dead" whom Odysseus meets. This, to my mind, completely refutes the original thesis of Kahn that the purified state of Love (and the daimones) is when they are separated from the "impure" elements. Such a moment does exist in the cosmic cycle for Empedocles, but it is when Strife is triumphant. The "purified state" ultimately is at the opposite end of the cycle, when Love has conquered all the elements in the cosmos and evenly blended them together.

This condition marks the realization of Empedocles' Sphairos, the most perfect creation of Love, an enormous spherical living being composed of blood, filled with pure intelligence, and completely at peace, since it knows no Strife or division. Though it is generated out of the elements and disappears back into them, Empedocles calls it a god simply because it marks the highest, fullest achievement of the cosmos. His sphere-god recalls, of course those of Xenophanes and Parmenides, whom Empedocles is consciously adapting. Like the former he warns that his god cannot be thought of in anthropomorphic terms, "For he is not equipped with a human head on his body; nor do two branches sprout from his back; he has no feet, no swift knees, no hairy genitals. . ."[18] This passage, which occurs twice in the fragments, ends differently in each case. One concludes, "but he is a sphere, equal to himself in every direction

. . .He is without break or seam (apeiron),[19] a rounded sphere, rejoicing in encircling solitary stillness."[20] The other ending reads, "but he is mind (phren), holy and unutterable, darting through the whole cosmos with swift thoughts."[21] This latter characteristic is understandable when we realize that the Sphairos is composed of the ideal thought-substance: his thoughts literally fill the cosmos, for he is one huge phren. There is no part of the cosmos then which is not god, which, that is to say, alive and thinking. In this condition, the elements approached true unity as much as possible, the condition Parmenides identified with Being. Being, we must

remember, for the Greeks was not a bland, empty, abstract concept, but denoted what was truly and most fully alive.[22]

The daimon must not, however, be confused with the heart-blood. The physical mixture is perishable; the daimon is what transmigrates from one compound to the next. It, in fact, is what constitutes the compounds. This points again to Cornford's interpretation: the daimon strictly speaking is a portion of Love, which is conceived as a quasi-fluid force which has power over the elements; it is a tangible harmony which transmigrates. Such a Pythagorean notion is entirely appropriate to Empedocles, who certainly was aware of Pythagorean teachings and may have been a renegade member of the community itself.[23] Both the "Purifications," with their Pythagorean injunctions, and the "On Nature," which says there are ratios for all things, are products of a Pythagorean context.

Thus, I believe Cornford's point that at some times the seperate daimones lose their individuality as they become increasingly absorbed into the One being brought about by waxing Love is correct. The cosmos at this point in the cycle is much like a developing embryo: the elements are gradually being knitted together to form one whole creature--the Sphairos. Just as the parts become functioning members of the whole, so they cease being separate individuals. And the final stage, the Sphairos, has all the elements blended perfectly together. There is no part of the cosmos at that time which does not exhibit the harmony of 1:1:1:1. If the daimon is a harmony, there could be no seperate daimon unless it exhibited a different harmony or ratio. It is with the introduction of Strife that there is increasing plurality. At a time "appointed by Necessity," Strife enters the cosmos and the process of seperation begins. This moment corresponds, I believe, to the mythical "fall" recounted in the "Purifications." The daimon's crime is to have "trusted in raging Strife." This would be most fateful at that time when Strife makes its destructive entry into the Sphairos. Moreover, this embodies the primal crime, which for Empedocles is bloodshed and slaughter. The Sphairos is a living being composed of blood; the entry of Strife wounds it mortally. Its one harmony becomes pluralized into a number of lesser harmonies until the cosmos itself "dies" under the full sway of Strife. Every lesser harmony thus reflects a portion of Strife as well as Love, which may explain Plutarch's observation that "Empedocles holds that there are two fates or spirits (daimones), which take each of us into their care at birth and guide us."[24]

This leads to final point, namely, how are such two different poems related? The answer lies in the addresses of the poems themselves. The "Purifications" is addressed to the citizens of Akragas, the "On Nature" to one Pausanias. As many examples show, addressing a person in a work was meant as a rhetorical

device.[25] By "the citizens of Akragas" I think Empedocles meant "the public at large," i.e., the work was "exoteric," This explains its mythological style, its moralistic function, as well as its religious goal. It sought to create a just community through purificatory conduct. It may also have acted as an introduction to the "esoteric" teachings of the "On Nature," for in order to understand the "higher teaching" one must first purify the heart--quite literally for Empedocles.[26] The "On Nature," then, is appropriately addressed to the "disciple"--Pausanias, and contains the more difficult, indeed radical parts of Empedocles' doctrine, which would be incomprehensible to the average Hellene.

But why should Empedocles finish the "On Nature," as he does, with the extraordinary claim that "you" (Pausanias) will learn cures for sickness and helps for old age, to control wind, rain, and weather, and even "lead forth from Hades the strength of a perished man?" (B111) There are no such cures extant in our texts, nor do the ancients mention them. The work offers only a general explanation of the workings of the cosmos. The answer to this I suggest, is that Empedocles in fact taught a system of therapy--as did the Pythagoreans and his rough contemporary Alkmaion. Among the Western Greeks, medicine, the restoration of natural harmonies, was part and parcel of philosophy, and the medicine taught was notoriously filled with ritual and magic.[27] It is not an un-Greek notion, after all, that the end of philosophy is both praxis and arete.

Empodocles, then, is a kindred spirit to Paracelsus, Bruno, or Michael Servetus. As Clara Millered advises, "The important thing in understanding him is to stop thinking at the right moment."[29] In trying to reconstruct the poetic and imaginative unity of his system, we move into a pre-logical realm. But there is a true effort toward a system in his thought, something which was only achieved by Aristotle after the elements of logic were articulated. Nevertheless, we should not allow the demands of modern logic to blind us to what was the vision which we held. And this is realized in that most astonishing feature of his thought, the mortal Sphairos-God, who is born and dies repeatedly and from whose dismembered body we arise.

NOTES

1. For discussions of the critical literature see W.K.C. Gutherie, A History of Greek Philosophy, Vol.II (Cambridge, MA: 1965), p. 122 ff. and Charles Kahn, "Religion and Natural Philosophy in Empedocles' Doctrine of the Soul," in A. Mourelatos, ed. The Presocratics (Anchor Books: 1974), p. 426.
2. See F.M. Cornford, From Religion to Philosophy (New York, 1912), p. 224 ff., and his essay "Mystery Religions and Pre-Socratic Philosophy," in The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. IV (New York: 1926), p. 563 ff., Charles Kahn, Op. Cit., and M.R. Wright, Empedocles: The Extant Fragments (New Haven, CT: 1981). See also H.S. Long, "The Unity of Empedocles' Thought" AJP, 1949, pp 142-58, Hazel Barnes, "Unity in the Thought of Empedocles," CJ, 1967, p. 18-23, and Kirk and Raven, The Pre-Socratics, 2nd ed. (1984).
3. F.M. Cornford, "Mystery Religions and Pre-Socratic Philosophy," p. 569.
4. This is also Gutherie's view (see HGP, II, 167. ff). Not all scholars accept this, e.g. Jean Bollack and Friedrich Solmsen. See A.A. Long, "Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle in the Sixties," in Mourelatos, p. 397 ff. However ingenious the efforts to view our world-period as one of increasing Love are, I think the whole tenor of the "Purifications" (especially the Hesiodic reference to the Golden Age of Cypris) makes this highly unlikely. The problem with my theory is why should Empedocles strive for purification when Strife is going to win out anyway? The answer, I believe, is that the daimones can still endure the world-cycle in a better condition (perhaps, as Wright suggests, at the periphery of the cosmos) until at last Strife conquers all the elements. A parallel may be seen in Hinduism. Eventually the "night of Brehman" will come for all, but it is better to have endured the cycles in as blessed a state as possible rather than undergoing continual and degrading painful rebirths.
5. See Kahn's "Retractiones" appended to his original article in Monrelatos, p. 455.
6. See Fragments 21 where in fact he describes the gods as generated from the elements. The only deathless (immortal) things are the roots and Love and Strife, though at other times he speaks of other things (including himself) as "immortal" (see Fragments 112 & 147). Such passages should not be taken too literally, especially since they occur in the "Purifications," which uses terms the average Greek would understand.
7. See Wright, p. 73 ff.
8. See Wright, p. 71-76; compare with Guthrie p. 259-63.
9. See Fragment 117 which is quite explicit on this point.
10. As Peirce says we should: ". . .if I had the choice between two

hypotheses, the one more ideal, the other more materialistic , I should prefer to take the ideal one upon probation, simply because ideas are fruitful of consequences. . ." (Collected Papers V: ss 598). In this case the "more ideal" hypothesis is that which seeks connections where none are supposed, i.e. that the two poems represent one world-view, not two. It is the one which leads us toward greater evidence, one way or the other.
11. See Wright, p. 3 ff. and Guthrie, HGP, Vol. II, p. 132 ff.
12. Hesiod, Works and Days, 11. 123-26. For a discussion of the concepts of daimones see Martin Nillson, A History of Greek Religion, trans. F.J. Fielden (New York: 1964) p. 106 ff.
13. Cited in Guthrie, HGP Vol. II, p. 264.
14. Symposium 203a, 204e (Michael Joyce translation).
15. See Fragment 107 for the clearest statement of this. Because Empedocles adds that we see Love by Love and Strife by Strife, Kirk and Raven assume the well-proportioned soul must have Strife in it too (Presocratic Philosophers, p. 368). This is just plain wrong: Strife is a principle of discord and dissolution and disharmony, and as such hampers correct perception of compounds. Empedocles is just saying that all mortal things have a portion of Strife in them and that is how they perceive Strife (or, presumably, feel anger and aversion toward things).
16. See de Sensibus 10.
17. Odyssey XI, 1.29.
18. B29 and B134, placed by Diels-Kranz in the "Purifications," (because it is too "religious" for the "scientific" poem) is explicitly assigned by Tzetzes to "the third book of the "On Nature!" (See the discussion in Wright, p. 253 ff.) Friedrich Solmsen has argued that this passage actually belongs in neither poem, but in Empedocles' "Hymn to Apollo" (see "Empedocles' Hymn to Apollo", Phronesis XXV, 1980, p. 219 ff.). This strikes me as implausible: not only is this one of the few fragments explicity assigned to one of the poems, but the fact that Empedocles uses a nearly identical expression elsewhere in the poem (which is not unusual for him), seems to clinch the argument for me.
19. Guthrie remarks that apeiron could "describe both spherical and circular shape" and "was used of spheres and rings, to indicate that one can go on around them without ever coming to a bounding line" (HGP, Vol. II, p. 85). Here the idea is that the Sphairos is a seamless "blend."
20. See Wright, p. 188-90, who appends B 28 as a continuation of B 29. "Solitary stillness" is my rendition of the troublesome word, monie, which may come from monos (alone) or meno (to be at rest, or at home). Empedocles may have had both meanings equally in mind, at both work: the Sphairos is the only thing there is in the cosmos when it exists, it is self-sufficient and self-enclosed, and is also completely at peace and complete.

21. B 134 (see note 18 above). Like Wright (and others) I cannot agree with Darcus ("Daimon Parallels the Holy Phren in Empedocles," Phronesis XXII, 1977, pp. 175-90, that the only two thoughts or phrontides of the Sphairos are Love and Hate. The Sphairos contains no Strife and phrontides refer to the like elements perceiving their like. In the case of the Sphairos, all four elements would perceive their like everywhere (since the mixture is even) and we must imagine that the whole universe is filled with the highest degree of consciousness possible. This is Empedocles' version of "nous noeseos": the Sphairos is pure, self-contained self-thinking (again, this resembles Parmenides' to eon which is both Being and Thought at once).
22. As it is for Plato, at least in the Sophist (248 e ff.), for Aristotle's prime mover (Meta. XII), and for Plotinus' realm of Nous (Plotinus even distinguishes the "seminal power," dynamis, of the One from the bare, sterile dynamis of matter: see Enn. III: viii: 10,1). As I mentioned in the previous note, even Parmenides' One must be thought of as a living intelligence, not a dead block universe, because for Parmenides as for Empedocles like knows like, and nous knows Being. As he says in Fragment 3, "Thinking and Being are the same." This is repeated in B 8.
23. On Empedocles' relationship to the Pythagoreans see Diagenes Laertius who recounts the tale that Empedocles was ostracized from the Pythagorean community for breaking the laws of secrecy and also states that he was thought to be a student of Hyppasus and Brontius. See the discussion in Wright, p. 3-6. Parmenides, who was also reputed to be a teacher of Empedocles, is reported by Diogenes as having been a Pythagorean as well, a view which Guthrie takes seriously.
24. Plutarch, de anim. tranq. (Moralia) 474 b (Wheelwright translation). See Cornford, From Religion to Philosophy, p. 239.
25. Hesiod addresses the Works and Days to his brother Perses, Alkmaion addresses Brontius, Leon, and Bathyllus, Lurcretius addresses Memmius, Plutarch's Lives speaks to one Sosias.
26. At B 110 Empedocles urges Pausanias to subdue or confine these teachings "deep in your phren." For a materialist like Empedocles, knowledge could literally be understood as achieving and maintaining a proper physical harmony. This further supports the role of the "Purifications" and a preparation for higher teachings: one would literally have to purify the phren, to "get it in shape," before it could receive the truth. See Wright's discussion, p. 258 ff.
27. See Guthrie's discussion of Alkmaion (HGP, Vol. I, p. 341 ff.), and Wright's discussion of Empedocles as a physician, (p. 6 ff.). There were several competing traditions of medicine at this time, and the Western Greek tradition was noted for its attempt to incorporate religion and magic with its cures. Empedocles is

directly attacked by the more empirical writers of the Ancient Medicine and the Sacred Disease, the latter lumping him in with those who cure the sick "by purificatory offerings and incantations" (cited in Wright, p. 14).
28. Clara Millered, On the Interpretation of Empedocles (Chicago, IL: 1908), p. 21. I would like to acknowledge the valuable comments given me for an earlier draft of this paper by John Anton, Bill Kerr, Diana Robin, Friedrich Solmsen, and Warren Smith.