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KSENIJA ATANASIJEVIĆ ON EMPEDOCLES

Abstract: The chapter discusses three publications from 1925 that Ksenija Atanasijević dedicated to Empedocles' life and work. It focuses on two interpretative problems addressed by scholars of the late 19th and the early 20th century: the status of the two motive forces, Love and Strife, and the relationship between Empedocles' physics and his ethics and theology. By examining Atanasijević's take on these two interpretative questions, this article points to her original philosophical insights and highlights their validity for contemporary scholarship on Empedocles.

Keywords: Empedocles, motive forces, material principles, physics, ethics and eschatology

During the third decade of the 20th century, Ksenija Atanasijević published a series of articles dedicated to early Greek philosophy.[1] Thematically, a majority of them were concerned with the doctrines of particular philosophers, from Heraclitus and Xenophanes to Pythagoras and Pythagorean theory of the transmigration of the soul, to Parmenides' doctrine of being and Democritus' ethics. Such broadly formulated topics (and titles)

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1 "Heraklitova filozofija" [Heraclitus' Philosophy], *Misao* 1922; "Demokrit kao etičar" [Democritus as an Ethicist], *Srpski književni glasnik* 1923; Prve filozofske hipoteze Jonaca [First Philosophical Hypotheses of the Ionians], *Misao* 1924; "Ličnost Pitagore sa Sama" [Pythagoras of Samos as a Person], *Misao* 1925; "Empedokle iz Agrigenta" [Empedocles of Agrigentum], *Misao* 1925; "Eleaćanin Ksenofan" [Xenophanes of Elea], *Misao* 1925; "Pitagorejsko učenje o seljenju duša" [Pythagorean Doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls], *Nova zora* 1925; "Empedoklovi religijski fragmenti" [Empedocles' Religious Fragments], *Kalendar Vreme* 1925; "Eleaćanin Parmenid, tvorac učenja o biću" [Parmenides of Elea, the Founder of the Doctrine of Being], *Volja* 1927; "Stara grčka atomistika" [Ancient Greek Atomism], *Misao* 1927; "Komediograf i filozof Epiharm sa Kosa" [Epicharmus of Kos, Comic poet and Philosopher], *Misao* 1927; "Počeci filozofiranja kod Grka" [The Beginnings of Philosophy among Greeks], *Rad JAZU* 235 (1928).

discussed on a relatively small number of pages, point to summary expositions; nevertheless, taken together, the titles also reveal a comprehensive approach to the earliest period of Greek philosophical thought. Moreover, these discussions demonstrate Atanasijević's familiarity not only with the works of the philosophers in question but also with relevant scholarship of the time. Most importantly, the articles contain Atanasijević's original scholarly insights, and, as I will try to demonstrate in the case of her account on Empedocles, have generally stood the test of time.

Ksenija Atanasijević published three articles about Empedocles of Acragas (in *Misao* 1925 (3/4), pp. 699–702 and (5/6), pp. 891–905, and in *Kalendar "Vreme"* 1925, pp. 64–65), which discuss his life as well as his natural philosophy and religious views. In these articles, Atanasijević presents her own translations of a number of extant fragments, which she uses as a basis for her insightful interpretation of the philosopher's doctrine.[2] In addition, in her concise exposition of Empedoles' theories Atanasijević places Empedocles' life and work in a broader socio-historical context, relying on the idea of intellectual interconnectedness of early Greek thinkers. This approach is reflected in the two interpretative theses that can be gleaned in Atanasijević's discussion of Empedocles' philosophical work. Both can be linked to the exegetic tendencies recognizable in the Empedoclean scholarship around the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. However, it is important to note that, in connection with each of these theses, Atanasijević offers her unique perspective, and her original approach differentiates her views from those of the scholars of her time. The aim of this article is to show the innovativeness of Ksenija Atanasijević's interpretation of Empedocles and clarify how her understanding of the philosopher's person and poetic work fits in with current scholarship. It is important to note that recent literature has the advantage of possessing an additional, substantial piece of Empedocles' work – verses found on the Strasbourg papyrus, published at the very end of the twentieth century.[3]

First interpretative thesis – Empedocles' eclecticism

According to Atanasijević (1925b), Empedocles' work was considered eclectic already in antiquity (p. 902), and this opinion is shared by historians of philosophy more or less contemporary with Atanasijević. This

2 Atanasijević translates around fourty fragments, some of which only partially. To my knowledge, these were the only translations of Empedocles' verses into Serbian prior to publication of Marjanca Pakiž's translation in 2021 (in Šćepanović, 2021).

3 See Martin & Primavesi, 1999.

eclecticism reveals itself in the following features of Empedocles' natural philosophy:

a) *Empedocles adopted Parmenides' theory of being*[4]

Concretely, this remark concerns Parmenides' teaching about the impossibility of coming to be out of nothing and perishing into nothing,[5] which is taken up by Empedocles in the fragments of the so-called "Eleatic set."[6] Some of these verses closely resemble Parmenides' and it is widely recognized that Parmenides' claim that there cannot be absolute generation and destruction is of crucial importance for the development of Empedocles' own cosmological system. However, Empedocles does not subscribe to all the consequences of this claim: in his world, unlike that of Parmenides, there is qualitative diversity and change, for he introduces four different material principles – fire, air, earth and water – which ceaselessly combine under the influence of two motive powers, Love and Strife, and thus create perishable things.[7] The six basic entities of Empedocles' universe are un-generated, imperishable and homogeneous within themselves, like Parmenides' one Being.

b) *Empedocles' explanation of the world of phaenomena rests on Heraclitus' idea of eternal change* (DK22 B31)[8]

Among Atanasijević's predecessors and contemporaries, Empedocles' alleged indebtedness to Heraclitus was particularly strongly advocated by Eduard Zeller (1856, p. 696).[9] John Burnet, on the other hand, pointed to the difficulty of detecting obvious traces of Heraclitus' doctrine in Empedocles' verses. He therefore viewed Empedocles' cosmology as an original attempt to reconcile Eleatic doctrine with our everyday sensory experience (Burnet, 1892, pp. 238–239). The importance of sensory evidence for Empedocles' choice of the four basic elements of the cosmos can hardly be exaggerated, which the philosopher himself indicates in his verses,[10] but when it comes to his discussion of cosmic change, it is indeed possible

4 As Inwood remarks, Empedocles' acceptance of Parmenides' conclusions about being is selective (Inwood, 2001, pp. 26–30). So, for example, Empedocles clearly does not subscribe to Parmenides' monism or to his denial of motion.

5 See Parmenides DK28 B8.1–21 (especially verses 12–15).

6 Trépanier, 2004, p. 67ff. The fragments in question are DK31 B9–15 and they come from two ancient sources, Plutarch's *Adversus Colotem* and Pseudo-Aristoteles' *De Melisso Xenophane Gorgia*.

7 See e.g., B21.8–11, B26. 3–7, B35.7 and 16–17.

8 Cf. Empedocles' fr. B16.

9 Cf. more recently Inwood, 2001, pp. 23–24.

10 See especially B21 and B38.

to recognize connections with other early philosophical accounts on the topic, including Heraclitus'.[11] This, however, does not take away from the originality of Empedocles' detailed explanation of all change by means of global cyclical repetition of mixing and separating of the four basic materials of the universe.[12]

c) *The concept of primary matter is something Empedocles inherited from his predecessors*

According to Atanasijević (1925b), Empedocles' originality lies in the fact that he combined four primary matters already mentioned individually by his predecessors (p. 893). However, the statement that earth has that role in Xenophanes and Parmenides is unwarranted. Actually, Aristotle pointed out that Empedocles added earth as the fourth element to the three elements already mentioned by earlier natural philosophers, water, air and fire (*Metaph*. 984a8). Besides, as I have already noted, Empedocles himself underscores that the presence of the four elements can be observed in the world around us, both in the great masses of sea, earth, sun and sky, and as constitutive parts of other things. In her brief overview of Empedocles' philosophical thought, Atanasijević does not elaborate on the above statement, but she does make an important remark in this connection, which warrants a detailed discussion. She tells us that the greatest innovation of Empedocles' cosmology, as compared to those of his predecessors, is his explicit distinction between motive powers (Love and Strife) and material principles (water, air, earth, and fire; Atanasijević, 1925b, pp. 893 and 904).

How original is Empedocles' cosmology?

Some influential scholars at the end of the 19th century ascribed to Empedocles a "fully developed hylozoistic system" (Rohde, 1894, 491)[13] and suggested that his four elements should be considered to be themselves 'alive'. This claim is based on the fragments that point to the apparent immanent tendency of the elements to group according to type (the so-called principle of attraction of like to like[14]). Atanasijević (1925b) rejects this suggestion as an "arbitrary deduction" (p. 904), but the question

11 For a linguistic parallel see Šćepanović, 2022.

12 Cf. Atanasijević, 1925b, p. 905.

13 Cf. Gomperz, 1896, p. 127.

14 This principle has a broad application in Empedocles, who refers to it in cosmological fragments (e.g., B37 and 62) as well as in those which explain sensation and thought (e.g., B109, 113, 114).

of how the influence of Love and Strife on the elements relates to their tendency to group according to kind has continued to attract scholarly interest to this day.[15] Here I will briefly reassess the issue as reflected in Empedocles' cosmological fragments.

In the central and most elaborate fragment of Empedocles' cosmology, the philosopher explains how the powers of Love and Strife affect the four roots: Love brings them together into one and Strife separates them into many (B17.7–8, 16–18). In constantly combining – joining and separating – the elements in this way, the two forces contribute to coming to be and passing away of the wide variety of perishable things (B17.34–35, B21.7– 12). Love is responsible for harmonious compositions of the elements, Strife breaks these structures up (B20 DK, the example of living beings). In addition to this, Empedocles occasionally also talks about each of the elements being drawn to its own kind, apparently without any external stimulus. So, in fragment B37 we read: "Earth increases its own kind, and aether aether" (transl. Laks & Most, 2018). In B62 "fire separating off" (κρινόμενον πῦρ) is said to move upwards "wishing to reach what is similar to it" (θέλον πρὸς ὁμοῖον ἵκεσθαι).[16] This is believed to refer to the macrocosmic phase of gradual separation of each of the elements from their global mixture.[17] For, periodically, all the elements come together into one, under the increasing influence of Love and form a harmonious composition. Strife then destroys the harmony and starts to distribute the elements into four individual masses. Thus, the movement of the elements towards their own kind mentioned in B37 and B62 may be said to accord with the effects of their gradual separation from the cosmic one, brought about by Strife.[18]

In fragment B22, however, Love (Aphrodite) is said to make things similar (ὁμοιοῦν), but this seems to concern 'assimilation' of *different* elements and also of their combinations: thanks to Aphrodite, some things are "rather prone to mixing" (κρᾶσιν ἐπαρκέα), whereas Strife makes certain things hostile to one another (συγγίνεσθαι ἀήθεα). Between the 'extreme' cosmic stages, while one of the forces gradually increases and the other diminishes, both powers make the elements constantly recombine. Some of the elements, and also some of the perishable things composed of

15 See e.g., Primavesi, 2013, pp. 698–700.

16 In the process, fire "drew upward ... saplings of men and women" (B62.2). For a discussion of the creation of human beings see Solmsen, 1965, pp. 133–135 and McKirahan, 2010, pp. 278–280.

17 Ancient testimonia (Euseb. 1.8.10, Aet. 2.6.3) also mention separation of fire from the harmonious mixture ruled by Love.

18 Cf. Inwood, 2001, p. 50: "Thus strife works in conjunction with natural tendency of each element to unite with itself, the principle of 'like to like.'"

them, mix easily with one another (water and earth, for example), while others do not combine (e.g., oil and water).[19]

All the described movements of the elements can be explained by the effects of Love and Strife, but Empedocles' descriptions, as Aristotle notes (*Metaph*. 950b23), lack consistency (οὔτ' ὁμολογούμενον ἐν τούτοις εὑρίσκει). For, even though Love is supposed to be the factor of joining and Strife of dividing, Aristotle remarks that each of Empedocles' motive powers is said to do both – bring together and separate:[20] on the macrocosmic level, Love periodically gradually *brings* different elements *into one* even mixture and, at the same time, *dissolves* elemental masses, and Strife *breaks up* the mixture while, at the same time, starting to *collect* the elements into four distinct masses.[21]

While this apparent 'inconsistency' is easy to explain, there are further difficulties arising from the way in which Empedocles speaks about Love and Strife that have to do with the ontological status of the two forces. Questions of whether they are corporeal and, if they are, how they physically relate to the four elements have been addressed since antiquity. Empedocles himself (B17.18–20) describes Strife as being "separate from the elements" (δίχα τῶν) and Love as being "in them" (ἐν τοῖσιν) "equal in length and in breadth" (ἴση μῆκος τε πλάτος τε). This led Aristotle to conclude (*Metaph*. 1075b1) that Love is both a principle of motion, because it combines, and a material principle, as it is a part of the mixture (αὕτη δ' ἀρχὴ καὶ ὡς κινοῦσα, συνάγει γάρ, καὶ ὡς ὕλη, μόριον γὰρ τοῦ μίγματος). Similarly, Theophrastus (*Phys*. *Dox*. fr. 3) claims that Empedocles views the powers sometimes as efficient causes (ποιητικὴν δίδωσι δύναμιν) and sometimes as similar to the elements (τοῖς τέσσαρσιν ὡς ἰσόστοιχα). Aristotle's commentator, Alexander of Aphrodisia (*In Metaph*. 62.15–16), explains that Love and Strife are in the elements, but are not material. The inconclusive evidence of the fragments and the confusing testimony of later ancient authors has led to conflicting modern interpretations too: some scholars take it that Love and Strife are not material,[22]

19 See B91, 92, 93.

20 See Atanasijević, 1925b, p. 894 (esp. n. 3)

21 *Metaph*. 985a24–29: πολλαχοῦ γοῦν αὐτῷ ἡ μὲν φιλία διακρίνει τὸ δὲ νεῖκος συγκρίνει. ὅταν μὲν γὰρ εἰς τὰ στοιχεῖα διίστηται τὸ πᾶν ὑπὸ τοῦ νείκους, τότε τὸ πῦρ εἰς ἓν συγκρίνεται καὶ τῶν ἄλλων στοιχείων ἕκαστον· ὅταν δὲ πάλιν ὑπὸ τῆς φιλίας συνίωσιν εἰς τὸ ἕν, ἀναγκαῖον ἐξ ἑκάστου τὰ μόρια διακρίνεσθαι πάλιν.

"[Empedocles] in many places mentions Strife as uniting and Love as separating. So, when Strife starts dissolving cosmic mixture into elements, each of them gradually forms a homogeneous whole. When Love again starts mixing them gradually, it breaks up these elemental masses."

22 E.g., Wright, 1981, pp. 33–34 and Schofield, 2007, pp. 290. According to these authors, Empedocles is primarily concerned with the equality between the powers of

while others see them as corporeal.[23] Atanasijević's (1925b) insistence on Empedocles' "explicit separation of Love and Strife from the elements" (p. 904), as pointed out above, is directed against the claim that the elements have an inherent tendency to group with their own kind.[24] On the other hand, she does not discuss the question of whether the two motive powers are material. It seems reasonable to suppose, with Inwood (2001), that their separate existence would imply corporeality.[25] As for the attraction of like to like mentioned above, Empedocles also uses this principle in his explanations of perception and thinking.[26] The effect that this kind of attraction has on the elements does not contradict the influence of Love and Strife, but a clear distinction between them is nevertheless not to be found in the extant fragments. If we take into account relevant ancient testimonies too, it is safe to conclude, together with Atanasijević, that Empedocles' poetic language lacks precision and is to blame for the existence of different interpretations of the nature of his cosmic principles.[27]

Despite pointing to the lack of clarity in Empedocles' poetic descriptions of key concepts of his cosmology, Atanasijević (1925b) stresses the philosopher's originality in introducing both a complex material principle and distinct motive powers that produce movement and change. She argues (1925b, p. 905) that in doing so, Empedocles manages to preserve Parmenides' ground-breaking idea about impossibility of absolute becoming and perishing, while at the same time accounting for the reality of the perceptible world of variety and change. Atanasijević particularly stresses Empedocles' effort to explain a wide range of natural phenomena by means of these basic principles and she singles out his innovative idea of four different cosmic phases and the different stages in the development

Love and Strife and the elements. This equality, Wright believes, consists in the fact that they are all uncreated, unperishable and unchangeable.

23 E.g., Burnet, 1892, pp. 245–246 and, more recently, Inwood, 2001, p. 51.

24 According to Aristotle (Arist. *de An*. 404b12 and 410b1–15), Empedocles' elements are ensouled. Trépanier suggests that Aristotle's and Theophrastus' criticism is to be blamed for the fact that the doxography ignores Empedocles' hylozoism (Trépanier. 2017, p. 168, n. 72).

25 Inwood, 2001, p. 51: "There can be no serious question about their corporeality. If Empedocles is vague about the meaning and implications of corporeality and speaks at times as though love or strife was an incorporeal power, that must be put down to the conceptual naivety of his day. It is unreasonable to expect a clear conception of the corporeal and its nature until the incorporeal is invented to contrast with it."

26 See n. 14. Cf. also fr. B90, B107 and 110. All six fundamentals seem to be included in these explanations too (see Wright 1981, pp. 233–235).

27 She labels Empedocles' expression "mythically obscure" (Atanasijević, 1925b, p. 894). In *Rhet*. 1407a31–35 Aristotle tells us that ambiguity of Empedocles' poetic expression covers for the lack of actual content.

of living beings that go along with them.[28] The two cosmic powers, Love and Strife, anticipate the modern scientific concepts of the forces of attraction and repulsion, and, according to Atanasijević (1925b), by introducing these two principles, Empedocles transferred the two main human emotions to the cosmic level (p. 905).

In the following section, I will discuss Atanasijević's view of the relationship between human and cosmic realms in Empedocles' philosophy.

Second interpretative thesis – Empedocles' natural philosophy and his religious doctrine are not connected

Various ancient sources mention two titles in connection with Empedocles' verses, and Diogenes Laertius in his biography of Empedocles talks about seemingly two poems entitled Περὶ φύσεως and Καθαρμοί (D.L 8.77).[29] Together, he says, they encompassed five thousand hexameters, of which less than a tenth has been preserved. The cosmological content described above, along with various astronomical explanations, as well as Empedocles' detailed account on human physiology and on the composition and functioning of plants and animals, has been connected with the title *On Nature*, whereas *Purifications* is believed to have contained Empedocles' account on ethics, theology and eschatology, which is characterized by the philosopher's belief in reincarnation. Due to the obscure nature of a smaller number of fragments classified under the second title, and their apparent connection with Orphic and Pythagorean mystical movements and ideas, which were current around the same time,[30]

28 Atanasijević (1925b, pp. 896–898) does not explain how she understands the relationship between the cosmic phases and different stages of Empedocles' zoogony (for the relevant explanations see McKirahan, 2010, pp. 267–280 and Primavesi, 2016, pp. 18–26). Importantly, however, she supports the idea of double cosmogony within each cosmic cycle – one during the increase of Love, the other during the increase of Strife – despite the lack of direct evidence. This is the predominant view in the contemporary scholarship on Empedocles (see e.g., Primavesi, 2008, pp. 12–15).

29 Apart from Diogenes, the first title, sometimes in the form of a thematic description, is mentioned by Hippocrates (*VM* 20) and Galen (*De elementis ex Hippocratis sententia* 9.27); and according to Diogenes already Theophrastus ascribed this title to Empedocles' philosophical poem (D.L. 8.55). The second title is mentioned by Aristotle's pupil Dicaearchus (D.L. 8.63), by the grammarian Herodianus (*Prosod. cath.*, Cod. Vind. hist gr. 10) and Diogenes Laertius (8.54). For more information about thematic differentiation of the two groups of Empedocles' fragments see Šćepanović, 2021, pp. 33–37 and pp. 39–41 for an overview of the discussion about the number of Empedocles' poems.

30 See Šćepanović, 2021, pp. 126–128.

the predominant view in the scholarship of the 19th and early 20th century was that the 'rational' *On nature* and the 'mystical' *Purifications* are so different[31] that they can only be products of different stages of Empedocles' life. The scholars could not agree, however, whether Empedocles' religious views or his natural philosophy belong to his mature phase.[32]

Atanasijević (1925b) agrees with the prevailing view that Empedocles' natural philosophy and his religious views are not connected (p. 901). However, she notes evidence of the philosopher's 'mysticism' in both poems (albeit more in the *Purifications*)[33] and, unlike her contemporaries, argues that rational and mystical currents *coexisted* in Empedocles and that he let them both develop and expressed them "without trying to connect or reconcile them" (Atanasijević, 1925a, pp. 701–702). She grounds this remark on the idea of complexity of Empedocles' character (Atanasijević, 1925b, pp. 902–903).

In the second half of the twentieth century, however, scholars started to re-evaluate the thesis about a strict division between Empedocles' natural philosophy and his ethics and theology. The publication of the Strasbourg papyrus at the end of the century, furthermore, opened up a path for new interpretations not only of Empedocles' philosophy but also of his philosophical personality.

The unity of Empedocles' philosophy

The most evident connection between Empedocles' natural philosophy and his ethical and theological account is found in a fragment quoted by several ancient authors and described by Plutarch as belonging to "the beginning of Empedocles' philosophy" (Plut. *De exil*. 607C). In the fragment Empedocles recounts the punishment envisaged for the long-lived *daimones* (δαίμονες οἵτε μακραίωνος λελάχασι βίοιο), whenever one of them commits a crime (εὖτέ τις ἀμπλακίῃσι ... φίλα γυῖα μιήνῃ), in which case the *daimon* is destined to wander "away from the blessed ones" (ἀπὸ μακάρων), among the four hostile elements (στυγέουσι δὲ πάντες) of the physical world. In the process, the fallen *daimones* come to assume different forms of mortal beings (φυομένους παντοῖα ... εἴδεα θνητῶν). Em-

31 Rohde (1894), Burnet (1892) and Jaeger (1947) argue that the two poems contradict each other (Wright, 1981, p. 57, n. 1).

32 Diels (1898) and Wilamowitz (1929) believe that Empedocles' religious views reflect his maturity, unlike Bidez (1894) and Kranz (1935). See Wright, 1981, p. 57, n. 1.

33 From the numeration of the fragments, we can conclude that Atanasijević uses Diels' edition of the fragments. She also mentions the editions of Sturz, Karsten, Stein and Mullach (Atanasijević, 1925, p. 702, n. 6).

pedocles inserts himself into this context as one of the fallen *daimones* (τῶν καὶ ἐγὼ νῦν εἰμι), an "exile from the gods" (φυγὰς θεόθεν) who relied on raving strife (Νείκει μαινομένῳ πίσυνος). Elsewhere too Empedocles speaks of his earlier incarnations (B117) and of a former bliss (B119 and 128). The mention of strife in fragment B115.14 and the description of the fallen *daimon*'s wanderings between earth, sea, sun and aether (B115.9–11) are evocative of the eternal components of the universe – water, air, earth and fire, and their movers Love and Strife. In Empedocles' *physics*, they are said to be responsible for coming to be and passing away of all "mortal beings" (γένεα θνητῶν), including "long-lived gods" (θεοὶ δολιχαίωνες, B21). These, on the other hand, are believed to be equivalent to the "long-lived *daimones*" mentioned in B115. Its story of sin and punishment in the form of banishment from the gods, and the mention of various reincarnations of the fallen *daimones* reflects Empedocles' *ethics and theology*.

This apparent linking of Empedocles' religious doctrine with the prominent features of his cosmology in B115 motivated some scholars to re-examine the fragment's positioning in Empedocles' philosophical work, which had been strictly divided into two distinguishable poems.[34] Moreover, a revision of this division was suggested in the second half of the twentieth century.[35] Finally, at the very end of the century, the publication of a papyrus containing Empedocles' verses[36] brought to light such a combination of already recorded and previously unknown hexameters that supported the view of unity of Empedocles' philosophical work.[37]

In an only partly legible group of hexameters ("ensemble d") of the Strasbourg papyrus (*P. Strasb*. d.1–14), a couple of verses condemning consumption of meat, which are also quoted in Porphyrius' treatise *De abstinentia* (*Abst*. 2.31.5), appear to be placed in the context of Empedocles'

34 See in particular Van der Ben, 1975. Sedley (1989, p. 275) argues that Plutarch's explanation that B115 belonged to the beginning of Empedocles' philosophy could refer to any of the two Empedocles' philosophical works (cf. Trépanier, 2004, p. 36 and Primavesi, 2013, p. 689).

35 Osborne, 1987a.

36 According to the report of Otto Rubensohn, who bought the papyrus in Egypt, it was found folded into a collar placed on a mummy. At the time of its restoration in the Strasbourg library, the papyrus was broken into over fifty pieces. The text found in them has now been grouped into five textual wholes ("ensembles a–f"), while ten pieces have remained isolated (e–k). Some of the reconstructed verses had already been familiar from quotations in other authors, while others are completely new. See Primavesi, 2008, pp. 5–9.

37 Here I leave aside the question of the number of Empedocles' philosophical poems, which is not necessarily connected with the issue of unity of his philosophy as a whole.

cosmic cycle. It is Empedocles' belief in reincarnation that makes meat-eating ethically unacceptable (cf. B136, 137, 139). The speaker regrets his own consumption of meat (d 5 ⟨οἴ⟩μοι ὅτι οὐ πρόσθεν με δι⟨ώλεσε νη⟩λεὲς ἦμαρ, /⟨πρὶν⟩ χηλαῖς ⟨σχέ⟩τλι᾽ ἔργα βορ⟨ᾶς πέρι μητ⟩ίσα⟨σθαι·⟩): "Alas that the pitiless day did not destroy me,/ before I contrived terrible deeds about feeding with my claws!" (transl. Laks & Most, 2018).[38] This lament is uttered with regard to the apparent upcoming period of death and destruction ([Ἅρ]πυιαι θανάτοιο ... [ἤδη παρέσ]ονται "Harpies of death ... will soon be present"), which is to follow after the phase filled with love (d 3–4 Φιλίην ... νυν ἔχουσιν "for us ... now full of Love"). This is reminiscent of the cosmic stage mentioned above, in which Strife disturbs Love's dominance and increases its own influence over the four elements, gradually separating them into four distinct masses. At the end of this process, all mortal creatures, including the long-lived *daimones*, are inevitably destroyed.[39]

Do the cosmic and daimonic cycles coincide?

The above interpretation of the papyrus verses, along with the content of fragment B115, may be taken as an incentive to revisit particular questions that have been asked about the relationship between Empedocles' cosmology and his ethics: should the fall of the *daimones* from the divine realm, described in B115, be taken to coincide with the cosmic stage in which Strife gradually takes over the rule over the elements from Love?[40] And is the return of the fallen *daimones* to the divine bliss, for Empedocles clearly envisages this possibility (B146),[41] to be placed during the opposite cosmic process, when Love begins to rise and eventually prevails, bringing all of the elements into a single even mixture (called Σφαῖρος)?[42]

Although these and related questions became prominent only in the second half of the twentieth century, when the relationship between the two supposedly distinct segments of Empedocles' philosophy started to

38 The quotation in *De abstinentia* is somewhat different from the verses on the papyrus. The quotation mentions the sin of touching meat with one's lips (χείλεσι), the papyrus of tearing it with claws (χηλαῖς).

39 Primavesi (2008, pp. 59–60) believes that the verses refer to the cosmic period of increasing influence of Strife and that they announce the future destruction of living beings. His reconstruction of the damaged text also includes mention of vortex (v. 8), which occurs in the cosmological context of fragment B35.

40 Osborne, 1987b.

41 Laks (2005, p. 266): "Since the banishment of the culprit divinity is said to last 30,000 seasons (115.6), the divinity must recover its primitive status once this period is over."

42 See B27 and 28.

be re-examined, a couple of remarks that Atanasijević made about this relationship may be shown to still be relevant. First, Atanasijević notes that Empedocles' explanation of the world is *mechanistic*.[43] This remark undoubtedly stems from the fact that Empedocles' cosmos has its immanent order, which rests on the "broad oath" established between Love and Strife (fr. B30). They exchange their powers regularly, without any external influence, and the exchange is continuous (B26.8–12). Second, Atanasijević is confused as to the exact cause of the fall of *daimones*.[44] This confusion may be taken to refer to the vagueness of the statement about Empedocles' "trust in raving Strife." Is it to be understood in terms of the crime of "murder" (φόνῳ) mentioned in B115.3? If the crime coincides with the breakup of the perfect cosmic harmony ruled by Love, some scholars wonder whose blood is there to be shed, for nothing is distinguishable in the *Sphairos*?[45] And, if the crime happens after the breakup of cosmic unity,[46] as the influence of Strife increases, the question remains, are all *daimones* bound to fall? The language of fragment B115 seems to indicate that *daimones* have a choice (Empedocles' "trust" in Strife), and Laks convincingly distinguishes between "an absolute necessity" ("necessity no matter what") that regulates the cosmic cycle, and "a hypothetical necessity" of the *daimonic* cycle.[47] Moreover, the determinism of the cosmic cycle does not fit well with the idea of punishment for the culpable deity. What is the purpose of the correction if the *daimon* will return to the state of bliss anyway? And then, since the cosmic cycle ceaselessly repeats, will the *daimon* commit a crime again?[48] As Warren (2007) notes, "there seems to be no alternative course of action than simply waiting for the cycle to come around. Nothing the *daimōn* does will affect that, just as perhaps it was inevitable that as Strife exerted a cosmic influence, the *daimōn* might be led to transgress

43 Atanasijević (1925b, p. 902) makes this brief remark to stress the difference between Empedocles' cosmology and his dramatic depiction of the consequences of animal sacrifice (B137).

44 Atanasijević (1925b, p. 901) seems to confuse the fall of humans (allegedly suggested by fr. 119) and the fall of *daimones* (fr. 115). This is not surprising, as the relationship between the two categories of mortal beings is not clear. If Empedocles, a human, is actually a fallen *daimon*, are all humans fallen *daimones*? (For different responses see Laks, 2005, pp. 274–276; Warren, 2007, p. 151 and Šćepanović, 2021, p. 122).

45 Warren, 2007, p. 148 and n. 17.

46 For this kind of interpretation see McKirahan, 2010, pp. 285–289.

47 Laks, 2005, p. 273: "whereas the beginning of a new cycle is prompted, in the cosmic cycle, by the disruption of Sphairos by Neikos, the beginning of a new demonic cycle is prompted by the crime of a divinity."

48 Laks (2005, p. 273) argues that, if the two cycles coincide, the necessary repetition of crime would make the punishment for the fallen *daimon* redundant.

the gods' decree" (p. 149).[49] The scarcity of the relevant evidence and the inconclusiveness of the extant fragments resulted in different explanations of the *daimonic* cycle. But, although modern scholars explain the relationship between the *daimonic* and cosmic cycles differently, they no longer consider them to be strictly separated.[50] At the same time, the mechanistic nature of the cosmic cycle makes it difficult to fully and confidently integrate the *daimonic* story of sin and purification into it.[51] Its main focus is to define human responsibility and action and it also appears to be strongly connected with religious practice (see e.g., fr. B136 and 137).[52]

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In keeping with the common understanding of Empedocles' philosophy in the scholarship of her time, Atanasijević holds the view that Empedocles' natural philosophy is completely separate from his ethics and theology. However, she correctly insists on the "richness of Emepedocles' spirit," which motivated him to offer an explanation of reality "from two different points of view" (Atanasijević, 1925a, p. 702). We could say that in modern scholarship this statement would be modified to suggests that Empedocles' doctrine presents us with a comprehensive explanation of different aspects of the same reality: he teaches, on the one hand, about the origin and composition of the natural world, including the generation and functioning of human beings, and, on the other, about the rules of life (and afterlife) for human beings, thereby following the same pattern.

Concluding her overview of Empedocles' philosophy, Atanasijević claims that one should not expect to find a clear explanation of the nature of the two motive forces, Love and Strife, in his verses, nor a straightforward connection between an explanation of the world and doctrine about the afterlife. This 'lack of clarity' in Empedocles' presentation of the two topics or, more precisely, in the evidence that we possess of them, is at the same time an indication of their continuing appeal and relevance. Moreover, it is in connection with these topics that we can fully appreci-

49 McKirahan (2010, pp. 288–289) suggests that the fallen *daimon* does have a limited influence on its circumstances in the perishable world.

50 For the view that the *daimonic* cycle is not to be integrated into the cosmic one, see O'Brien, 2001, p. 138ff. and Laks, 2005, p. 270ff. For the integration view, see the following note.

51 See, however, Inwood, 2001, p. 61ff. and McKirahan, 2010, pp. 287–289.

52 Laks, 2005, p. 277: "what Empedocles is doing by setting up two structurally distinct although related stories is articulating the problem of the relationship of (human) responsibility and action (ethics) with the objective course of events (physics)."

ate Atanasijević's knowledge of early Greek philosophy and her scholarly insight: she rightly stresses the importance of Empedocles' distinction between causes of motion and material causes, and she convincingly clarifies that there is harmony in the complexity of Empedocles' philosophical doctrine.

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