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ON THE UNITY OF ORPHIC AND MILESIAN THOUGHT

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For Shlomo Pines

In the first volume of *A History of Greek Philosophy* W. K. C. Guthrie points out that "the promulgators of *teletai* in the name of Orpheus were concerned in the religious sphere with the same problem of the relation between the One and the Many which in a different form was the problem of the Milesian philosophers."[1] Elsewhere Guthrie provides a more detailed explanation of the similarities and differences between the Orphic and the Milesian treatment of the One-Many problem:

> Sixth-century religious and philosophical thought . . . was dominated by one central problem, the problem of the One and the Many. This appeared in two forms, one referring to the macrocosm, the other to the microcosm. In its first form it was the problem of the Milesian natural philosophers, who asked: "What is the relation between the manifold variety of the world in which we live and the one primary substance out of which, as we are convinced, it must in the first place have arisen?" In its second form it was the problem of the religious minds of the age. Their question was: "What is the relation of each individual man to the divine, to

[1] W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* (6 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962–81) 1. 132. Cf. Otto Gruppe, *Die griechischen Culte und Mythen in ihren Beziehungen zu den orientalischen Religionen* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1887) 1. 643–48.

> which we feel we are akin, and how can we best realize and actualize the potential unity which underlies the two?"[2]

This typological observation requires, in my opinion, some qualification: the sharp distinction Guthrie draws here between the Orphic and the Milesian formulations of the problem is untenable.[3]

That the Orphics were concerned with the "macrocosmic form" of the One-Many problem is clear from the Orphic verses which are quoted in the Derveni papyrus and seem to date ca. 500 BCE:[4]

> [So Zeus swallowed the body of the god,]
> of the Firstborn king, the revered one. And with him all
> the immortals became one, the blessed gods and goddesses
> and rivers and lovely springs and everything else
> that then existed: he became the only one.[5]

This is precisely what is said in the more detailed version of this story in the Orphic *Rhapsodies*, where, after the swallowing, another creation follows: Zeus regenerates the world out of himself according to his own design. The text of the Derveni papyrus, though corrupt, leaves no doubt that here too, Zeus regenerates the world.[6]

But what about the "microcosmic form" of the One-Many problem in the Milesians? I share Guthrie's view that G. S. Kirk's argument against the existence of the analogy between the microcosm and macro-

[2] W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Boston: Beacon, 1955) 316. Following the discovery of the Derveni papyrus few would deny that the Orphic teachings known to us from later sources originate in the 6th century BCE. See R. Merkelbach, "Der Orphische Papyrus von Derveni," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 1 (1967) 21–22; M. L. West, *The Orphic Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984) 110. As Walter Burkert ("Orpheus und die Vorsokratiker: Bemerkungen zum Derveni-Papyrus und zur pythagoreischen Zahlenlehre," *Antike und Abendland* 14 [1968] 101) put it, "Immerhin ist durch den Fund wieder bewiesen, dass ein Minimalismus notwendigerweise falsch ist."

[3] Guthrie himself is not unaware of the existence of the "macrocosmic form" of the One-Many problem in the Orphics, for he points out that the swallowing of Phanes and his whole creation by Zeus is "a mythological counterpart to the speculations of the natural philosophers about the production of the manifold world out of unity" (*Greeks and Their Gods*, 319). Nor is he unaware of the "microcosmic form" of the problem in the Presocratics, see idem, "The Presocratic World-Picture," *HTR* 45 (1952) esp. 91–94.

[4] West, *Orphic Poems*, 108; cf. Merkelbach, "Derveni," 21.

[5] Col. xii, West's translation. In West the column numbering is higher by one than in other publications. On the reading of αἰδοῖον in xii.1 see idem, *Orphic Poems*, 85.

[6] Cols. xvii–xix. Otto Kern, *Orphicorum Fragmenta* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1922) frg. 167. Cf. Burkert, "Orpheus," 101–2; West, *Orphic Poems*, 90–93.

cosm in Anaximenes[7] is untenable. The very fact that Anaximenes makes air both the divine principle of the universe and human being's soul is sufficient reason to affirm a conscious analogy between the cosmic divinity and man's soul.[8] I discuss below more subtle instances of this analogy in the early Presocratics; for the moment let me simply state that, at the very least, the "microcosmic form" of the One-Many problem was not alien to the Milesian thinkers.

This being the case, it is clear at the outset that in both the Orphics and the Milesians the One-Many problem appears in two forms. A further qualification of Guthrie's observation which I consider warranted concerns his formulation of the problem. Guthrie's wording seems unnecessarily loose and abstract, for examination of the two forms of the One-Many problem in both the Orphic and the Milesian contexts will be seen to allow for a far more specific definition.

The first question is whether, in the Milesian doctrines, the "macrocosmic form" of the One-Many problem was treated only diachronically (the Many arises out of the One and is eventually reabsorbed into it)[9]

[7] G. S. Kirk, *Heraclitus: The Cosmic Fragments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954) 312.

[8] Guthrie, *Greek Philosophy*, 1. 131–32; idem, "Presocratic," 91.

[9] Doxographic sources dependent on Theophrastus attribute the doctrine of the periodic destruction of the world into ἀρχή to all the early Presocratic thinkers: *Phys. Opin.*, frg. 2, *apud* Simplicius *Phys.* 24.13 (12 A 9. This and all further unidentified edition references are to Diels-Kranz.); cf. Ps.-Plut. *Strom.* 2 (12 A 10) and Hippolytus *Ref.* 1.6.1 (12 A 11); *Phys. Opin.*, frg. 1, *apud* Simplicius *Phys.* 23.33 (18, 7); cf. Diogenes 9.9 (22 A 1). This attribution seems to find support in those passages in Aristotle in which he touches on the material monism of the Presocratics: *Phys.* 3.5, 204b 33–205a 7; *Met.* 1.3, 983b 6–11; 3.4, 1000b 25–26; 11.10, 1066b 37–1067a 8; *EN* 10.3, 1173b 5–6; cf. Hermann Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* (1889; 4th ed.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965) 179.

In recent decades, the rejection of the doxography of the periodic destruction of the world as unsound has become common, and the ease with which scholars reject this doxography indicates that in their eyes the idea of cosmogonical cycles is devoid of any sense or functional connection with the rest of the doctrine(s). Thus, e.g., Guthrie while accepting the periodic reabsorption of the world into ἀρχή in Milesian thought, points out that in Anaximander this doctrine "did not occupy the central place" (*Greek Philosophy* 1. 389). However, since the formation of the world out of ἀρχή and the world's eventual reabsorption into ἀρχή are two phases of the same process, it seems to me at least strange to affirm the importance of the first phase while deprecating that of the second phase. Denying the importance of the doctrine is only a step away from dismissing the very existence of such an "irrelevant and bizarre hypothesis" (G. S. Kirk, "Some Problems in Anaximander," *Classical Quarterly* n.s. 5 [1955] 29). But if we agree that "there is nothing whatever in 'the appearance of nature' to suggest successive worlds" (idem, in G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957] 122); we must also acknowledge that there is nothing in 'the appearance of nature' to suggest the world's formation,

or also synchronically (the One underlies the Many during its existence). That Anaximenes treated the problem synchronically as well as diachronically does not require special demonstration. The reports of Simplicius and Hippolytus[10] make it quite clear that Anaximenes had, as Kirk puts it, "thought of a way in which air could become other components of the world, like sea or earth, *without losing its own nature.*"[11] This means that the single principle out of which the manifold plurality has arisen is at the same time the single principle which underlies this plurality and to which it is reducible. According to Aristotle this applies to Thales as well, and I am not inclined to disbelieve him on this point.[12] It follows that the opposition between the single ἀρχή and the manifold world is not so much opposition between the One and the Many as it is the opposition between two states of the One—the states of homogeneity and heterogeneity. The cosmogony is the rise of the Many *within* the One which, though allowing inner differentiation, does not cease to be the One. This is precisely what is said in Diogenes' report that, according to Anaximander, "the parts change, but the whole is unchangeable."[13] The Milesian doctrines thus describe the manifold world as arising out of a single principle and in some way continuing as such despite its apparent plurality. What is the motivation for such a view?

The principle out of which the manifold world arises is divine.[14] Since the One is the Divine One, that is, the single god, reduction of the Many to the One amounts to asserting that the world as a whole is a deity. This is, in my opinion, the point of the synchronic treatment of the "macrocosmic form" of the One-Many problem in the Milesians, and I do not know a more appropriate definition for such a view

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specifically, its formation out of one material principle, either.

Below, I hope to show that the periodical reabsorption of the world into ἀρχή is not as "irrelevant and bizarre" an idea as Kirk thinks, but was just as important as that of the formation of the world.

[10] Simplicius *Phys.* 24.26 (13 A 5); Hippolytus *Ref.* 1.7.3 (13 A 7).

[11] Kirk and Raven, *Presocratic Philosophers*, 145; emphasis added. For the opposite view see Joachim Klowski, "Ist der Aër des Anaximenes als eine Substanz konzipiert?" *Hermes* 100 (1972) 131–42.

[12] *Met.* 1.3, 983b 6, 17 (11 A 12). Cf. Erich Frank, "The Religious Origin of Greek Philosophy," in his *Knowledge, Will and Belief: Collected Essays* (Zürich/Stuttgart: Artemis, 1955) 75–76. For the opposite view see Jaap Mansfeld, "Aristotle and Others on Thales, Or the Beginning of Natural Philosophy," *Mnemosyne* 37 (1985) 109–29.

[13] Diogenes 2.1 (12 A 1).

[14] See Werner Jaeger's excellent discussion of the subject in his *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1947) 18–37.

than pantheism, more specifically, cosmogonical pantheism, the implications of which I shall discuss below. But first I wish to examine the "macrocosmic form" of the One-Many problem in the Orphics.

The diachronic treatment of the One-Many problem is reflected in the Orphic myth of Zeus' swallowing and recreation of the universe, an act wherein all things are unified into Zeus and then become many again. But the myth also reveals the synchronical treatment of the problem: in absorbing the universe Zeus becomes identical with it, as is stressed in the hymn-like verses which follow the swallowing episode in the Derveni papyrus (col. xiii–xv):

> Zeus was born first, Zeus last, god of the bright lightning,
> Zeus is the head, Zeus is the middle, from Zeus all things are made,[15]
> Zeus is the king, Zeus is the ruler of all, god of the bright lightning.[16]

The pantheistic character of this conception of Zeus is obvious.[17] My conclusion is that the Milesians and Orphics shared a pantheisitic idea and combined it with a "historical view" of the universe: pantheism was cosmogonical in the Milesians and theogonical in the Orphics.

Now, to the "microcosmic form" of the One-Many problem. According to the Orphic *Rhapsodies*, the soul is immortal and undergoes a series of incarnations. A soul upon leaving an animal body floats with the wind and enters another body, but upon leaving a human body is judged beneath the earth and is rewarded by being sent to the meadow beside Acheron and the misty lake or punished by being sent to Tartarus and the plain of Cocytus. After three hundred years have passed, the soul is reincarnated. Its final end is its release from the cycle of reincarnations, which is achieved through purification rites assisted by Dionysos and Kore.[18] The parallels between the *Rhapsodies*

[15] Cf. Plato *Leg.* 4.715e (1 B 6): "God who, as the old saying has it, holds beginning, end and middle of all that exists."

[16] These verses appear as the first, second, and seventh lines of the Orphic hymn quoted in the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo* (Kern, frg. 21a) and are also found in the Orphic *Rhapsodies* (Kern, frg. 168). It is possible that the fifth verse of the hymn ("Zeus is the breath of all, Zeus is the onset of untiring fire") is referred to in the Derveni papyrus commentary (col. xv). See Merkelbach, "Derveni," 24; Burkert, "Orpheus," 97; Pierre Boyancé, "Remarques sur le papyrus de Derveni," *Revue des Études Grecques* 87 (1974) 97–98. West (*Orphic Poems*, 90 n. 36) dismisses this possibility.

[17] Cf. Merkelbach, "Derveni," 22; and Boyancé, "Remarques," 95.

[18] Kern, frgs. 156, 222–24, 228–38. Cf. Aristotle *De anima* 1.5, 410b 29; Plato *Rep.* 363c–d.

and the Orphic poem quoted in the Derveni papyrus make it very plausible that, if not all, at least the core of the Rhapsodic conception of soul belongs to the earliest Orphic lore. This conclusion is strongly corroborated by the fact that in the 5th and 6th centuries BCE kindred conceptions were current in Greece.[19]

The soul's incarnation, that is, its entering into a mortal body which is entirely alien to it, must dim the soul's divine nature, while its eventual release from bodily existence restores its true nature. This pattern, the soul's sinking and subsequent ascent, has its archetype in the Orphic Dionysos myth. According to this Dionysos was devoured by the earth-born Titans and recreated anew by Zeus; the Titans were blasted by Zeus' thunderbolt and from the ashes arose the race of human beings who therefore consist of both earthly Titanic and heavenly Dionysiac elements.[20] The myth not only provides an anthropogony, but also expresses the eschatological idea of salvation by purifying the soul of the evil, earthly, "Titanic" element mingled with it.[21] The soul's story is thus a part of the story of Dionysos. Its origin lies in Dionysos' suffering and it shares the god's experience. Like him, it "dies" mingling with a heterogeneous element which entombs or imprisons it,[22] and like him, it eventually rises to life.

[19] Cf. Pindar *Olymp.* 2, composed in 476 BCE, in which we find a conception of soul very similar to that of the *Rhapsodies.* See also Pindar's frgs. 124, 130, and 133. Another parallel is Empedocles' *Katharmoi.* Pythagoras of Samos, who flourished ca 530 BCE, was notorious for promulgating the doctrine of metempsychosis and after-life judgment. But even Pythagoras was not the first to introduce this conception, as some scholars contend. See, esp., Herbert Strainge Long, *A Study of the Doctrine of Metempsychosis in Greece: From Pythagoras to Plato* (Princeton: n.p., 1948) 28; and recently Charles H. Kahn, "Pythagorean Philosophy before Plato," in Alexander Mourelatos, ed., *The Pre-Socratics: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1974) 166–67. A generation or two earlier the transmigration doctrine is reported to be already taught by Pherecydes of Syros; this must be the same doctrine, for metempsychosis is pointless if the ethical consequences it involves are not developed.

[20] Kern, frgs. 35, 39, 140, 210, 210b, 214, 220, 224; Olympiodorus *In Phaed.* 1.3.5; cf. Plato *Legg.* 710c. On the antiquity of the myth see Martin P. Nilsson, "Early Orphism and Kindred Religious Movements," *HTR* 28 (1935) 202; K. Ziegler, "Orphische Dichtung," *RE* 18, col. 1365; W. K. C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion: A Study of the Orphic Movement* (2d ed.; London: Methuen, 1952) 107–30; Burkert, "Orpheus," 101; cf. E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951) 155–56.

[21] Cf. Nilsson, "Early Orphism," 224–25; Burkert, "Orpheus," 104.

[22] Cf. Plato *Crat.* 400b–c. E. R. Dodds (*Gorgias* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1959] 297–98) suggests that while the jail analogy is Orphic, the view of the body as the tomb of the soul is Pythagorean. Cf. Diels, *DK ad* 1 B 3.

Returning to the Milesians, what are the implications of the combination of pantheistic conception with a cosmogony of the Milesian type? Since the ἀρχή and the manifold world are different states of the single deity (the states of homogeneity and heterogeneity), in becoming the manifold world the cosmic deity loses the purity of its nature and sinks; its true nature is subdued because of mingling with a heterogeneous element that has arisen in it. But this heterogeneity is an interim state which the deity eventually overcomes, restoring its original nature. The analogy between the story of the Milesian deity and the Orphic story of Dionysos is striking. But even more striking is the analogy between the story of the Milesian deity and that of the Orphic soul.

As the Orphic soul when mingled with a body assumes the function of governing principle of the complete human being, so that part of the Milesian cosmic deity which has retained its original nature in the course of the rise of heterogeneity within the ἀρχή assumes the function of a divine principle governing the entire world.[23] For this reason the story of the Milesian deity is, in fact, the story of the sinking and the ascent of the cosmic soul.[24] In Orphic thought sinking of the individual soul results in the heterogeneous unity of the human being, while its ascent is the supercession of the human being and the restoration of the soul's original nature. Similarly, in Milesian thought the sinking of the cosmic soul results in the heterogeneous unity of the world, while its ascent is the extinction of the world and the restoration of the cosmic soul's original nature (the deity's return to the state of ἀρχή). Heterogeneity arises in the Milesian deity, as in the Orphic soul, more than once, but while the Orphic soul attains final purification after a certain number of cycles, the Milesian cosmic soul undergoes such cycles endlessly.

The only explanation I can see for the Milesian conception of the sinking and rising cosmic god is that it plays, in the Milesian doctrine, the part played by the Dionysos myth in the Orphics. Indeed, it is natural for the individual soul to be conceived as identical with or in

[23] This relation between the unchanged, pure portion of the ἀρχή and the rest of the manifold world is stated explicitly in Anaximenes (Aëtius 1.3.4 [13 b 2]; but see Karin Alt, "Zum Satz des Anaximenes über die Seele: Untersuchung von Aetios Περὶ ἀρχῶν," *Hermes* 101 [1973] 129–64), obviously follows from Aristotle's discussion of the Anaximandrean Apeiron (*Phys.* 3.4, 203b 6 [12 A 15]), and can be inferred for Thales on the basis of Aristotle's remark in *De anima* 1.5, 411a 7 (11 A 22).

[24] Cf. Olof Gigon, "Die Theologie der Vorsokratiker," in H. J. Rose, et al., *La Notion du Divin depuis Homère jusqu'à Platon* (Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique 1; Geneva: Vandoeuvres 1954) 139.

some way akin to the cosmic soul, the divine ἀρχή.[25] Consequently, the rise of the human being, the heterogeneous unity of soul and body, should be a result of the mingling of the cosmic soul with an alien element that has arisen in it. As in the Orphics where the rise of the race of humanity is a part of the story of the god Dionysos, so in the Milesians the rise of humanity is a part of the story of the cosmic deity. But while in the Orphics the story of soul reproduces that of a specific god, in the Milesians the story of soul reproduces that of the cosmic god as its microcosmic analogy. This view, then, necessarily involves the eschatological idea found in the Orphics, namely, the soul's liberation from the heterogeneous element with which it mingled when it became human being.

But the means of deliverance differ. Deliverance from bodily existence was achieved by the Orphics through the participation in τελεταί and καθαρμοί, that is, through the performance of certain religious rites, and through the so-called Orphic life of purity. However, though the demand to live a "pure life" could be a part of the Milesian teaching, religious rite definitely had no place in Milesian thought.[26] Since the material at our disposal does not offer any suggestions as to the means by which the Milesian thinkers may have hoped to achieve their eschatological goals, in what follows I attempt to fill this gap. I also hope to verify the conclusions arrived at thus far by examining Heraclitus' doctrine, which I regard as a direct continuation and development of Milesian thought.[27]

The doctrine of Heraclitus, like that of the Milesians, is cosmogonical pantheism.[28] The divine fire undergoes endless alternation, extinguishing and rekindling (B 30). When extinguished, fire turns into the manifold world (B 31) of which it is the sole constituent, since nothing exists but fire in various degrees of purity (B 30, 31). Thus when extinguished, fire, upon mingling with a heterogeneous principle that has arisen in it, sinks, and when rekindled, reascends, purging the

[25] Cf. Aristotle *De anima* 1.2, 405a 24. Aristotle's generalization, though inaccurate (as seen from his reference to Heraclitus' soul as identical with Heraclitus' first principle, and at the same time as "exhalation"), reflects the kinship between soul and ἀρχή in the Presocratics. Cf. Guthrie, "Presocratic," 91–92.

[26] Cf. Burkert, "Orpheus," 103–4.

[27] Cf. Charles H. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979) 19–20 and *passim*.

[28] Interpreting Heraclitus' doctrine as cosmogonical, I share Kahn's hope that "the recent denial of cosmogony for Heraclitus will turn out to be a temporary overreaction, an exaggerated by-product of our emancipation from the authority of the Stoic and doxographical interpretations" (Kahn, *Heraclitus*, 135).

heterogeneous element and restoring its initial homogeneity.

Being divine, fire is conscious. When fire is in the state of heterogeneity, the divine reason is concentrated in an unextinguished, pure portion of fire, namely, in the fiery component of the world which "steers all things" (B 66). So all that happens in the world takes place in accordance with the divine reason, the Logos (B 1; cf. B 72),[29] and is bent to the divine law (B 114). The content of the deity's consciousness is the true picture of reality: the knowledge that the universe is the single deity-fire (B 30, 31), and the variety of things is, in fact, the One (B 50, 102; cf. B 51, 67). This is why the god's understanding excels that of human being (B 102; cf. B 78, 79) who grasps the single deity as a plurality of discrete things (B 57, 102, 79); this is why the deity is "the only wise" (B 32), its wisdom being true, monistic vision of the universe (B 50).

Being akin to fire,[30] soul shares its divine reason, the Logos (B 45, 115, 113).[31] When it is moistened, that is, when it commences bodily life, it mingles with an evil heterogeneous element which subdues its divine nature and estranges it from the divinity and its reason, the Logos (B 2); it "dies" (B 77; cf. B 62).[32] The moistened soul, that is, human being, sinks into a sort of sleep, a "private world" of dreams (B 89; cf. B 73),[33] and loses awareness of the true nature of things (B 72, 1), principally, of their essential unity (B 57, 51). As a result, human being is misdirected as to its true end and right conduct (B 110, 20, 29, 104, 73; cf. 121, 125a). But the moisture only subdues the divine nature of soul; it does not totally repress it. In fact even in bodily life the soul is able to attain the degree of dryness needed for it to become wise and good once more (B 118; cf. B 39 and Plutarch *Def. orac.* 41), that is for it to actualize its divine nature and restore its communion

[29] In his exhaustive study *Les verbes 'DIRE' en grec ancien* (Collection Linguistique 51; Paris: Klincksieck, 1946), Henri Fournier shows, *inter alia*, that λέγειν, which "n'était pas originellement un verbe déclaratif, mais c'était un mot qui traduisait l'activité et les lois de l'esprit," having become a part of the suppletive system of *verba dicendi* did not lose "des sens rationneles étymologiques" (53, 208). Accordingly, the derivative λόγος means both "word," "speech" and "reason," "thought," see ibid., 217–24.

[30] Whether Heraclitus' soul is of a fiery or airy nature makes no difference in the context of the present discussion.

[31] Cf. Sextus *Adv. math.* 5.126 ff. The Logos is the "common understanding," as emerges from the contrast "common Logos: private understanding" in frg. 2. Therefore the "understanding common to all" in frg. 113 is equivalent to the (common) Logos. Cf. Guthrie "Presocratic," 95–98. See also A. Delatte, *Les Conceptions de l'Enthousiasme chez les Philosophes Présocratiques* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1934) 6–21.

[32] Cf. Delatte, *Les Conceptions*, 18.

[33] Cf. ibid., 10.

with the Logos. By increasing the soul's logos (cf. B 115) human being attains the understanding which enables right conduct: "Understanding[34] is the greatest virtue, and wisdom is to speak truth and to act with knowledge according to the nature of things" (B 112).[35]

Heraclitus' high esteem for the dryness of soul (B 118; cf. B 77, 117) implies that human being's goal is to purify its soul of the evil influence of the wet bodily principle. We may go further and say that its final end should be the soul's release from bodily life; for purification is complete only when the wet element has been totally purged (cf. B 96). But is not death the deliverance of soul from bodily life? Were this the case, Heraclitus' insistence on the importance of "understanding" and right conduct would have been unnecessary and inexplicable. We can therefore assume that bodily death does not deliver the soul; the conclusion that Heraclitus believed in transmigration of the soul seems unavoidable. Indeed, we know that according to Heraclitus, souls can exist both in the body and alone (B 36, 12). After death they descend into Hades (B 98) and experience things of which living people are unaware (B 27), and the way in which one dies determines the soul's portion (μοῖρα; B 25; cf. B 24).[36] These striking coincidences of detail between the Heraclitean and the Orphic conceptions constitute, I believe, sufficient evidence for the conclusion regarding the existence of the transmigration doctrine in Heraclitus.[37] (It may be noted that Thales' statement that "all is full of gods" or "daemons"[38] gains new meaning when viewed in this perspective.)

[34] Diels was undoubtedly right in reading τὸ φρονεῖν, instead of σωφρονεῖν, in the MSS in frgs. 116 and 112. The interpretation in the spirit of popular morality which these two fragments underwent called for the emendation of the "inappropriate" φρονεῖν to the more "natural" σωφρονεῖν. Frg. 113, which does not allow such a reinterpretation, retained the original φρονεῖν.

[35] It would be a mistake to see in the understanding urged by Heraclitus a variety of theoretical inquiry into reality, for it is something quite different: it is sharing the deity's vision of reality, the Logos; put differently, it is a type of communion with the divine.

[36] Cf. also cryptic B 63.

[37] The similarity between the Heraclitean and the Orphic conceptions of the soul was observed and discussed by Karl Reinhardt (*Parmenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* [Bonn: Cohen, 1916; reprinted Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1959] 192–201); Delatte (*Les Conceptions*, 6–21); and Guthrie (*Greek Philosophy*, 1. 476–82). See also Eduard Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (ed. Wilhelm Nestle; 6th ed.; Leipzig: Reisland, 1920) 1/2. 908; *Herakleitos von Ephesos* (ed. Hermann Diels; 2d ed.; Berlin: Weidmann, 1909) 20; Daniel Babut, *La religion des philosophes grecs, de Thalès aux stoïciens* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974) 31.

[38] Aristotle, *De anima* 1.5, 411a 7; Aëtius 1.7.11 (11 A 22, 23).

Thus, human being's end is deliverance from bodily existence, that is, the rising up of the descended soul. The first step toward this end is communion with the Divine through its Logos which the human being shares and which one reveals by "searching oneself" (B 101, 116, 113, 45; cf. B 115). In its communion with the deity, human being acquires understanding of the true nature of things, that is, realizes what its true end is and how it can be achieved. This understanding is reached by cultivating the divine principle in human being, the soul's logos, and living in accordance with it (B 2, 41[39] 112, 113; cf. B 39, 50), arduously struggling to suppress the bodily principle (B 85), which requires abstention from bodily inclinations (B 85, 4).[40] The life lived in accordance with the Logos will be one of righteousness and valour (B 24, 25, 28, 29, 33, 43, 44, 49, 104; cf. B 16, 23).

To recapitulate, the cosmic deity-fire sinks periodically, losing its purity and producing the world, then rises, restoring its initial purity. The story of the soul is part of that of the deity. The soul results from the deity's sinking, though, of all that exists, it is closest to the deity's original nature. The soul's experience reproduces that of the deity: like the deity it sinks, mingling with the evil heterogeneous principle, and like the deity it eventually rises, purified of the heterogeneity. To rise anew, soul must atone for becoming wet, that is, for sinking into bodily life (cf. B 77). For in becoming wet, soul is in conflict with the deity, since a moistened soul becomes a part of the heterogeneous element within the deity, the element by the elimination of which the deity returns to its initial purity. The soul's elevation from bodily existence consists in restoration of communion with the divine and struggle to conquer the same evil principle in the microcosm that the deity must overcome in the macrocosm (carried out by acting in accordance with the Logos). This way of life, which is in harmony with the deity, eventually delivers the soul from bodily existence, that is, fully restores its divinity, allowing it to join the fiery deity.[41]

This brief sketch of Heraclitus' doctrine as I understand it makes apparent the close kinship between the Milesian and Heraclitean macrocosmic outlooks. The fact that the doctrine of soul described above is

[39] In reading frg. 41 I follow Kirk (*Heraclitus*, 386): "Wisdom is one thing: to be skilled in true judgment, how all things are steered through all."

[40] Sexual abstinence comes to mind, cf. B 20 (cf. Hippolytus *Ref.* 7.29 *ad* Empedocles' frg. 115.1–2). Also referred to may be dietary restrictions and abstentions, such as the abstention from wine, cf. B 117, and therapeutic procedures to increase and maintain the soul's dryness, cf. Diogenes 9.4.5 and the *Suda* (22 A 1, 1a).

[41] Cf. Aëtius 4.7.2 (22 A 17). See Guthrie, *Greek Philosophy*, 1. 480.

simply a corollary of the macrocosmic vision[42] legitimizes the generalization of the Heraclitean conception of soul for the Milesians, as long as it is carried out at the level of general ideas rather than concrete notions. It may, I believe, be safely inferred that the Milesians held the doctrine of transmigration, saw liberation from bodily existence and reabsorption into the divine as the soul's end, and believed this end to be attainable through communion with the divine and subsequently living a pure and righteous life to actualize the divine and suppress the bodily principle.

Now we can draw some conclusions about the early Presocratic and Orphic teachings. To quote Karl Joël, Orphism and the first Presocratic doctrines "blühen gleichzeitig auf im 6. Jahrhundert, sind Kinder eines Zeitgeistes."[43] These teachings shared a common doctrine of soul: its divine nature, sinking, transmigration, and eventual rise and reunion with the divine. They also shared a common doctrine of the path to its salvation, namely, suppressing the evil bodily principle—the life of righteousness and abstention. Both the Orphics and the Ionians derived their doctrines of soul from their teachings about the divinity and shared a pantheistic idea of the divine.

The points of difference between the Orphics and the Ionians arose not from a difference in basic outlook, but from the fact that the shared outlook was molded in different ways. To begin with, the way in which communion with the divine is achieved is different. While the Orphics required participation in collective rites, *καθαρμοί*, the Ionians favored personal insight.[44] This difference followed from the strict Ionian pantheism which required abandonment of rite and traditional theogonism. Thus three major differences between the Ionian thinkers and the Orphics may be noted: (a) the rigorously pantheistic doctrine, as distinct from the unsystematic pantheistic intuitions of the Orphics; (b) the consequent abandonment of rite, as opposed to the Orphic ritualism; and (c) the transition to cosmogony, as opposed to the Orphic theogonism.

To return to the starting-point of our discussion, the definition of the problem confronting the thinkers of the 6th century BCE, I have tried to show that the two separate forms of the problem Guthrie proposes, the

[42] For this reason, though certain specific points of Heraclitus' doctrine of soul could have been inspired by the Orphics, the doctrine as a whole cannot be the result of such an influence.

[43] Joël, *Der Ursprung der Naturphilosophie aus dem Geiste der Mystik* (Jena: Diederichs, 1906) 142. Cf. Guthrie, "Presocratic," 87, 103.

[44] Cf. Heraclitus' criticism of rites and mysteries (B 5, 14).

Orphic and the Milesian, and the consequently vague definition with which he accommodates both—"the problem of the relation between the One and Many,"—are unnecessary. The problem of the Milesians was exactly the same as that of, as Guthrie puts it, "the religious minds of the age . . . : 'What is the relation of each individual man to the divine, to which we feel akin, and how can we best realize and actualize the potential unity which underlies the two?'" Though formally differing in their vision of the divine and our relation to it, the Orphics and the Milesians experienced the world precisely in the same way, and this experience was essentially mystical. They envisaged the universe as permeated with the divine and strived to join it. They sought direct and immediate association with the deity in sharing the deity's experience—the Orphics, by imitating this experience in mysteries revealed by Orpheus, the Ionians, by imitating it in their everyday life, that is, by conscious participation in the mysteries of the cosmic life revealed as such by their personal insight. They hoped to eventually be united with the deity for eternity as a reward for living a life of devotion and self-discipline.

One general point may be made in conclusion. There is a fundamental problem confronting historians of Greek philosophy: I refer to the well-known problem of the rise of Presocratic thought. I doubt that I can improve on Michael Stokes' summary of the current state of the problem:

> The Peripatetics, and therefore the other Greeks, tell us of no sound reason why it was that Thales allegedly "founded this kind of philosophy." Nor can it be said that more recent writers supply any more definite reason why the great step of postulating a single constituent for the material universe should have been taken in the early sixth century BC . . . A common line of approach is to stress the close kinship between material monism and the scientific outlook . . . but it entirely fails . . . to supply a reason why we should put the birth of the material monism in the sixth century rather than the fifth. It fails to show why in particular it should be the sixth century which gave birth to this extreme form of simplification. In this context the suggestion that "there seems to be a deep-rooted tendency in the human mind to seek . . . something that persists through change" should be received cautiously; the suggestion is that this deep-rooted tendency in the human mind sprang suddenly above the surface in the sixth century BC . . . and no explanation is forthcoming either for its long dormancy or for this precipitate efflorescence. We are sometimes, in effect, asked to credit the Greeks with a mind more scientific than their predecessors or neighbors, so that on its first contact with Eastern myth it

> transformed the myth into a scientific hypothesis . . . If this belief ever had anything to commend it, it has nothing now, when anthropology has been allowed to shed light on Greek irrationalities; and the Milesians are in any case not the first recorded Greeks to have demonstrable points of contact with Eastern myths . . . It is not necessary to be a Marxist to appreciate the importance of economic and social factors in the history of ideas . . . [but this theory] would not even begin to suggest a reason why that abolition [of personal and arbitrarily interfering gods as a result of the rise of the Milesian merchant class] should be accompanied by the postulation of a single material for everything . . . There simply has been suggested in print no good reason for so strange a beginning to Greek philosophy.[45]

If my interpretation is correct, Greek philosophy originated as a trend within the religious movement of the 6th century BCE, a century of great religious ferment and intense moral searching. This trend, which I would define as speculative pantheism, began to lose its religious pantheistic color as a result of changes in the mental climate in the first half of the 5th century. It was gradually transformed into speculation the motivation of which was not primarily religious and which properly can be called philosophical. In other words, the teachings of the Milesians and Heraclitus—and, one can safely add, of Pythagoras and Xenophanes, were not philosophical in their intended significance, and the differences between Orphic and early Presocratic thought acquire significance only when viewed from the standpoint of the ultimate results of the historical development of the latter. In the 6th century Orphic lore and Presocratic speculation were kindred teachings, differences between which resulted from different shaping of current religious and moral ideas rather than from any real divergence in the basic outlook.

Two distinguished scholars, M. P. Nilsson and W. K. C. Guthrie, have, in the pages of this journal, shown how Orphic lore and Presocratic speculation were deeply rooted in the popular outlook of the age. Thus Guthrie called attention to the fact that

> in bare but significant outline, a common picture of the nature of the Universe, of living creatures, and of divinity was shared by a surprising number of Greek philosophical and religious thinkers of the 6th and early 5th centuries BC . . . This world-picture was not

[45] Michael C. Stokes, *One and Many in Presocratic Philosophy* (Washington: Center for Hellenic Studies, 1971) 38–39.

> the creation of any one of them, but rather seems to have been assumed by all at the outset, as is also suggested by certain indications in Greek literature that it was shared by the unphilosophical multitude.[46]

I fully accept Guthrie's conclusion, although my vision of the common world-picture, and particularly, my interpretation of the intended significance of the early Presocratic doctrines, differ from his own. For this reason I cannot accept Guthrie's explanation that "all shared common background which was neither rational nor mystical exclusively." The background was mystical, while rationalism was the particular way in which the Ionians shaped the popular mystical outlook. As Nilsson put it,

> Mystic, ascetic, and cathartic religious ideas were widespread in the archaic age and appealed strongly to the people . . . Orphism is but one of the many currents of mystic and cathartic ideas . . . [and] can only be rightly understood if taken in connection with the whole of the stream of religious ideas in the archaic age.[47]

The same applies to early Presocratic speculation: it is simply another of these currents of mystic and cathartic ideas, and its rise and intended significance can be properly understood only against this historical background.[48]

[46] Guthrie, "Presocratic," 87, 103.

[47] Nilsson, "Early Orphism," 184–85.

[48] I would like to thank Prof. J. Barnes of Balliol College, Oxford, for some useful comments.