CHAPTER 3

Daimones between Plato and Pythagoras

The focus of Chapters 1 and 2 has been on the textual restoration of the proem to Empedocles' *On Nature*; that is, on what fragments go where and the ways their topics intertwine. My proposal restores a long opening section, in which verses and themes dealing with fault, punishment, and, above all, rebirth are programmatically interwoven with more strictly physical fragments. To expand on this outcome, the next two chapters will focus on an exploration and clarification of pivotal concepts, mostly introduced by the proemial fragments, which are vehicles of important meanings both with reference to Empedocles' notion of godhood and, related to this, with his concept of rebirth. This investigation aims to provide the linguistic and conceptual instruments in order to work out a reconciliation between the details of Empedocles' belief in rebirth and the principles and theories of his physics, thereby demonstrating that the former is a positive doctrine within his wider, unified philosophical system. As an essential premise and at the same time a step towards assessing the significance of Empedocles' doctrinal unity, which will be explored in greater depth in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, the present chapter zooms in on the concept of δαίμων (*daimon*) introduced in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most).

The consideration of the notion of δαίμων offered here is made through a careful analysis of the demonological fragments, and thus focuses on the story of the guilty and exiled gods that work through rebirths and to whom Empedocles claims to belong. A major issue concerning the demonological fragments – and one of the central questions of the present chapter – is the role the story of the guilty δαίμων plays in Empedocles' doctrine of rebirth. Specifically, it is generally agreed that B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) and all other fragments related to it are somewhat of an aetiological myth that underpins Empedocles' doctrine of rebirth. On this reading, the doctrine of rebirth is thought just to concern the δαίμων as its proper agent, while the story of Empedocles is taken as exemplary of the fate of every human

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being: like Empedocles, we all are 'fallen' δαίμονες, working through rebirths. A direct implication of this interpretation is the view that δαίμων in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) is a term to describe the individual person or soul.

However, as the first two chapters have demonstrated, the story of Empedocles' fault, exile and rebirths is ultimately a declaration of his divine epiphany and therewith his claim to authorial legitimation on matters beyond ordinary human ken; in other words, Empedocles offers his own godhood as evidence of his superiority over ordinary humans. Against this background, this chapter will first discuss and challenge the standard reading that Empedocles' story is exemplary of the fate of all people or is in any other way foundational to his doctrine of rebirth. Second, it shall explore the concept of δαίμων in Greek narratives associated with the belief in rebirth, such as in Plato's myths about the soul's journeys to the afterlife and in Pythagoras' demonology. Before delving into the main subject of this chapter, however, in Section 3.1 an important background issue will be addressed, which must be clarified if we are to rehabilitate Empedocles' doctrine of rebirth as a positive doctrine within his philosophical system. The issue concerns the way in which the structural correspondences displayed by the demonic and the cosmic cycle are to be explained. In this regard, I will first look at previous scholarship on this issue, before arguing that the correspondences provide evidence of an analogical relationship between macrocosm and microcosm.

With this established, in Section 3.2 I will move on to discuss and reject the standard interpretation of B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most). First, I will consider and reject the reading that by calling himself a δαίμων Empedocles speaks on behalf of his soul as the true agent of exile and rebirths. Although this reading can be traced back to Plutarch, it will be demonstrated that in pre-Empedoclean literature the term δαίμων never occurs with the meaning of soul; in particular, in Empedocles' literary models, such as Homer and Hesiod, as well as in Parmenides, δαίμων is a synonymous term for θεός. Second, Plutarch demonstrably binds Empedocles' verses to his own purposes, while his interpretation of δαίμων in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) as the personal ψυχή (*psyche*) of every individual is heavily influenced by Plato's myths on the soul's wanderings in the afterlife.

Having rejected as anachronistic the standard reading according to which B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) founds Empedocles' doctrine of rebirth, in Section 3.3 I will examine the Platonic myths in order to gather

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elements for a more comprehensive definition of the traditional concept of δαίμων that Empedocles may have had in mind when composing the story narrated in the demonological fragments. On the one hand, the extended discussion on the Platonic dialogues will show that Plato works on a notion of δαίμονες (*daimones*) which is greatly indebted to tradition, depicting them as gods who are guides and protectors of the individual in this life and beyond. On the other hand, I will argue that the ancient Platonizing reading of Empedocles comparing, and even equating, δαίμων with ψυχή owes much to some fundamentally Platonic speculations on human personal responsibility in this life and beyond. My standpoint is, specifically, that such speculations underlie the development of the notion of δαίμων in terms of divine guidance *within* the person, which then led to assimilation with the notion of ψυχή.

After the discussion of Plato's texts, in Section 3.4 I will return to a relevant source for Empedocles' doctrine of rebirth, Pythagoras, and focus on the Pythagorean notion of δαίμων and its role within the doctrine of rebirth. Thereby, I will consider and reject the claim, first made by M. Detienne in 1963, that there is an allegedly ancient notion of demonic soul ('âme démonique') that resonates in the earliest Pythagorean sources.[1] *Pace* Detienne, a close analysis of those sources shows that Pythagoras has a general doctrine of rebirth, according to which a ψυχή, not a δαίμων, dwells in every living being and leaves the body at death to be reborn as other forms of mortals. On the other hand, the Pythagoreans also conceived what we may call a 'demonology', which gravitates around the idea of Pythagoras as a reincarnated δαίμων, linking it to their doctrine of general rebirth, but never overlapping with it. Given Pythagoras is one of the most important models of Empedocles' doctrine of rebirth, the investigation pursued in this section will bring us to a position where we can finally re-evaluate the notion and function of Empedocles' δαίμονες in the wider context of his concept of rebirth.

Thus, in Section 3.5, the argument will be set out that Empedocles' demonology (that is, his story of reincarnated deity) coexists (and implies) but does not overlap with his doctrine of rebirth. In fact, whereas Empedocles' doctrine of rebirth presupposes that every living being is *eo ipso* a reincarnated being, only a few extraordinary individuals are reincarnated gods. Moreover, it will be shown that by exploiting the Hesiodic specification of δαίμων as a protector and guiding god, while drawing on the Pythagorean belief in guiding δαίμονες that may enter the cycle of

[1] See e.g., p. 23.

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rebirths, Empedocles aims to portray himself as a δαίμων φύλαξ (*daimon phylax*) who watches over and guides individuals during their journey in this world and beyond.

In Section 3.6, given for the sake of completeness, I address the issue of what has been interpreted as an alternative use of δαίμων in fragment B 59 (= EMP D 149 Laks-Most). Despite some of the most notorious readings of this fragment, it will be argued that there is no tension between the meaning of δαίμων in the zoogonic context of B 59 (= EMP D 149 Laks-Most) and the occurrence in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most). Showing that the notion of δαίμων is a chiefly predicative notion, it will be argued that, in both occurrences, it is still intimately connected to the traditional, Homeric sense of 'god'.

The chapter then closes with a summary of my investigation into the notion of δαίμων in Greek authors attesting beliefs in rebirth. Here I conclude that those authors who came after Empedocles, from Plato through to Xenocrates and on to Plutarch, have offered a reading of his concept skewed to their own ends, a reading that has often uncritically been followed by most of Empedocles' modern interpreters. In turn, Empedocles offered his own version of Pythagoras' doctrine, using it for his own ends in the proem to *On Nature*, asserting his authorial weight as a δαίμων φύλαξ, but also employing it in a way that fitted his doctrine of rebirth.

3.1 The Cycle of the *daimon* within the Cosmic Cycle

As I have argued in Chapters 1 and 2, B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) and the other demonological fragments related to it recount the story of Empedocles as a god at fault for some crimes and, for this reason, banished from the divine community and compelled to wander for a very long time through the realm of the dead and in this world, where he works through rebirths. Evaluated on a more general level, the story of the guilty and exiled gods can be reconstructed as a cycle. From a blissful abode and condition, guilty gods 'fall' into this world and work for a certain time through rebirths until, being finally released by the chain of punishment, they return to their original, blissful abode.

Because of its structure, the cycle of the δαίμων (also called the demonic or daimonic cycle) has often been compared to the cosmic cycle, in which the elements, previously within the perfect unity of the Sphairos, are then separated to form the world until they are then restored again in the Sphairos. The comparison of the two cycles has ensured that scholars,

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since an influential contribution by F. M. Cornford in 1926, have highlighted striking correspondences between the 'fall', rebirths and release of the δαίμων and the way in which the elements work in the cosmic cycle. Moreover, the investigation of these correspondences has given rise to a series of conjectures about Empedocles' conception of the relationship between rebirth and physics, which ended up depriving the former of its status of positive doctrine in his physics.

Therefore, in order for Empedocles' doctrine of rebirth to be fully rehabilitated within his physical system, it is important to first address the question of the relationship between the cosmic cycle and the demonic cycle, as it affects the role that the concept of rebirth played in Empedocles' philosophy. For instance, Cornford saw the demonic and cosmic cycles as counterparts of one and the same doctrine, which according to his reading can be accounted for from a mythical and a physical perspective.[2] Although scholars have gradually abandoned Cornford's neat parallelism in favour of an interpretation of the analogies between the two cycles in a loose unity, their readings have nonetheless ensured, despite slight interpretative nuances, that Empedocles' story of the guilty gods and, more importantly, his concept of rebirth were not considered part of an effective theoretical teaching but were relegated to a level of mere mythical and metaphorical exposition.[3]

Looking more closely at Cornford's pioneering study, we see that, by attempting to interpret Empedocles' religious doctrines and physical theories into a unitary system of thought, he showed that the analogies between the two cycles regard not only their general structure of loss and restoration, but also many relevant details, most importantly the reciprocal exchange of powers between Love and Strife. While this exchange shapes the recurring oscillation of One and Many in the cosmic cycle, it also influences the destiny of the gods. In fact, since the gods' fall is at the hands of Strife, as B 115.14 (= EMP D 10.14 Laks-Most) tells us, it can be inferred that, in contrast, the release from punishment and rebirths, hence the gods' return to the divine abode, is due to the opposite principle of Love.

Following this line of thought, Cornford showed that both cycles present a state of perfect bliss linked to Love's power: for the gods this

[2] See e.g., the description of the Sphairos by Cornford (1926: 566): 'Now the condition of the universe before the evolution of our world [that is, the Sphairos] is the physical counterpart of the moral condition above described [namely the original condition of gods before their guilt and exile].' Similarly, at 567 it is said that the return of the gods (which Cornford interprets as 'souls') to their original divine state 'corresponds, in the physical system' to the return of the Sphairos.

[3] See e.g., Laks (2004 and 2005: 32–49) and Primavesi (2008b: 265–66, 2013: esp. 713–21) and Mansfeld-Primavesi (2021: 411–13).

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corresponds to a 'primeval state of innocence' when 'Aphrodite held an undivided reign'.[4] It consists, as Cornford argued, in 'a golden age' that 'knew nothing of war or bloodshed, animal sacrifice or flesh-eating'.[5] The 'physical counterpart'[6] of this state of bliss is represented by the Sphairos, which is 'a complete mixture of the bodily elements, penetrated throughout and united by Love. Strife was excluded from the mass.'[7] Second, the gods' loss of their primeval state of innocence (which Cornford interprets as the 'fall of man') and hence their exile from the reign of Aphrodite

> was caused by a violation of the universal law of loving kindness, by bloodshed, the killing of animals and eating flesh . . . Physically, the fall of the universe from the state of complete union animated by Love is caused by the incursion of Strife, which begins to pour into the Sphere and break it up by separating the elements.[8]

Third, the wanderings of the gods end when they are purified and return to the community of the Blessed, which, according to Cornford, is thought to be identical or very similar to the undivided reign of Aphrodite the guilty gods had to leave in the first place. This returning to, as it were, the original state 'corresponds, in the physical system'[9] to a period in which 'Love gains on Strife' and 'will end in the reign of Love and the perfect unity of the Sphere', at which point 'the cycle begins again'.[10]

However, Cornford did not restrict himself to merely highlighting points of correspondence between the two cycles; rather, he went so far as to infer that Empedocles modelled his physical cycle upon 'the fate of soul in the wheel of birth' as alternative versions of one and the same doctrine.[11] In such a reconstruction, the two cycles can be associated not merely on the basis of an analogical relationship, but because they are thought to correspond on different levels:[12] the more religious episode of the fall of the guilty gods from a previous state of bliss is taken as corresponding on the level of Empedocles' physics to the disruption of

[4] Cornford (1926: 566). [5] Ibid. [6] Ibid. [7] Ibid. [8] Ibid. 566–67. [9] Ibid. 567.

[10] Ibid. It is worth noting that the transition from the work of Love to the work of Strife is sealed, both in the case of the reincarnated gods and in the cosmic cycle, by broad oath(s). See B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) and B 30 (= EMP D 94 Laks-Most). Simplicius *Phys.* 1183.21–1184.18 connects the broad oaths of B 115 with the oath of B 30 (= EMP D 94 Laks-Most), on which see my discussion in Chapter 1.3.3.

[11] At p. 569, Cornford calls Empedocles' blend of portions of Love within the Sphairos as 'the *physical transcript* of the spiritual reunion of the soul within god' (my emphasis).

[12] It is worth noting that Cornford works under the assumption that demonic and cosmic cycles, albeit similar, belong to distinct areas of thought and poems. This assumption was so ingrained in the first half of the 20th century that it is never really challenged by Cornford, although he is relatively innovative in showing how the two areas of thought resemble each other in many ways.

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the blissful Sphairos, whereas the idea of gods expiating their guilt and purifying themselves in view of the final re-unification in the divine community is thought to correspond, on the level of Empedocles' physics, to an increase of unification that culminates in Love's One. Moreover, Love's Sphairos in Empedocles' physical system is taken to be the counterpart of the past reign of Aphrodite, which is attested in fragment B 128 (= EMP D 25 Laks-Most) and is generally reconstructed within the *Purifications*.

However, despite the undeniable analogies between the two cycles, a neat parallel is not found in the fragments and Cornford's interpretation gives rise to several difficulties. For instance, Kahn has pointed out that 'neither the common hearths and feasting of the daimons nor the possibility that they may be guilty of perjury and bloodshed is compatible with the view that they are to be fused into a single Deity, as the elements seem to be fused within the cosmic Sphere'.[13] Moreover, while the Sphairos regularly disappears within the cosmic alternation of One and Many, the community of the Blessed coexists with our world. As Primavesi explains, 'the communion of the blessed ones does not seem to disappear when some of its members are sent into exile: the exiled daimon, during his wanderings, is "far away from the blessed ones", which implies that the blessed ones are still "somewhere"'.[14] Furthermore, the fault of the gods is voluntarily committed. This means that, at least in principle, it could be avoided, whereas the disruption of the Sphairos by Strife is a necessary and inevitable event, which regularly recurs in due time.[15]

To solve these difficulties, scholars from Kahn onwards[16] have proposed to read the analogies between the two cycles in a loose unity, without imposing a systematic pattern. In this respect, one of the most recent interpretations of the echoes and structural correspondences between the two cycles has been offered by Primavesi, who restricts Empedocles' story of the guilty gods and his talk on rebirth more generally to a purely mythical level of expression. Primavesi argues that, if taken as a positive doctrine, the story of the guilty god and the account on rebirth imply a kind of personal continuity through several rebirths that 'cannot easily be

[13] Kahn (1960: 25–26). [14] Primavesi (2006a: 65).

[15] As Laks (2005: 272) pointed out, 'whereas the cosmic cycle is regulated by an absolute necessity, a necessity no matter what, the demonic cycle is regulated by a hypothetical necessity of the form: *whenever . . . then . . .*'. See also Ibid. 273 where Laks argues that for the story of the guilty gods, 'there is, at least in principle, a possibility of avoiding the punishment'.

[16] Kahn (1960: 25). See the last version of this reading in Primavesi (2013: 674 and esp. 717–21) and Mansfeld-Primavesi (2021: 411–13).

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accounted for in terms of Empedocles' physical theory, according to which living beings are just temporary compounds of the four elements', and thus, he argues, 'it seems more prudent not to press the concept of reincarnation into a physical system that is obviously not suited to accommodate it'.[17] In contrast to Primavesi's interpretation, however, Chapters 1 and 2 have already demonstrated that Empedocles' physical poem is a very suitable place for Empedocles' guilty gods and their rebirths, and, consequently, so too is his physical system, as I will show in the rest of this book.[18]

As for the structural correspondences between the demonic and cosmic cycles, the alternative explanation to Cornford's, Kahn's and Primavesi's hypotheses assumes the vicissitudes of the guilty and exiled gods are to be interpreted as occurring within the events of the universe and thus the cycle(s) of the gods take(s) part, as does everything else, within the cosmic cycle.[19] On this reading, B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) describes the 'fall' and rebirths of divine beings inhabiting our cosmos (and thus partaking in the regular turns of the cosmic cycle) who, at some point in their lives, trust in Strife, commit a crime and are therefore exiled from the blissful community of the gods. However, as B. Inwood has pointed out, we still need to decide whether B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) is a description of the original exile of a god – that is, the first incarnation of a δαίμων in the cosmic cycle – or whether it describes events within the 'life span' of the δαίμων. According to Inwood, if it is the former, 'then the blessed ones from whom the δαίμων is exiled will be the divine elements as blended perfectly in the sphere. If the latter, then they will be long-lived gods'[20] who rule in and inhabit a place far away from, and much happier than, our earth.[21]

According to the interpretation of the whole story of the guilty god's exile I offered in Chapters 1 and 2, whereby the demonological fragments depict the very personal experience of Empedocles, B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) can only describe events within the lifespan of gods and, therefore, their exile from a blissful condition and abode to a state and world more under the control of Strife. As we will see more thoroughly in later chapters,[22] this hypothesis agrees with Empedocles'

[17] Primavesi (2008b: 266).
[18] In particular, Chapter 5 will deal with the issue of personal continuity and proposes a reading according to which it can be accommodated with Empedocles' physical theory.
[19] See, e.g., Inwood (2001: 58), who argues that the exile of the δαίμονες is from the Sphairos.
[20] Ibid. [21] On the origin and place of long-lived gods within the cosmic cycle, see Chapter 7.2.
[22] Above all in Chapter 4.5 and Chapter 7.2.2.

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concept of long-lived gods being born as compounds of elements just like every other living being in the cosmos.[23] As integrated beings, they are subjected to the cosmic cycle and, even though they are equipped with a much longer life than any other living being, they will nonetheless succumb to the cosmic events and eventually die – in the Sphere at the latest – just like any other compounds of elements.

On this reading, the structural correspondences that the demonic and the cosmic cycle display can be taken as evidence of an analogical relationship between macrocosm and microcosm. In other words, they show that portions of the cosmos that vary in size (in this case, the elements and the gods made out of them), exhibit similarities in structures and processes, indicating that the cycle of the gods abides by the same rules and powers that govern the cosmic cycle. Thus, paraphrasing a concept expressed by J. Palmer, we can say that the cycle of the gods is just 'a manifestation of the cyclical and reciprocal changes Empedocles saw operating at both the microcosmic and macrocosmic levels'; indeed, 'these ideas function in Empedocles' system as fundamental principles of explanation for all manner of phenomena, from the lives of plants and animals right up to the life of the cosmos itself'.[24] Above all, both cycles are a manifestation of the fact that Love and Strife work in the same way in different realms of reality.

Following Palmer, in conclusion, I argue that the vicissitudes of the guilty δαίμονες should be interpreted by assuming they are integrated into the physical system, as gods are part of, and have a role in, the world we inhabit.[25] As living beings of this cosmos, moreover, they have their own cycle which, just like the more common cycles of any ordinary mortal, is embraced into the wider perspective and vicissitudes of the cycle of the universe. Their cycle, in fact, follows the same laws that govern the rest of the universe and is shaped by the same forces of Love and Strife that operate similarly in other regions of the physical system. According to my line of interpretation, therefore, the story of the guilty gods is not merely a mythical variant of a more relevant cosmological theory; rather, it has a proper function in the structure of Empedocles' physical poem, as we have seen in the previous chapters, and

[23] See PStrasb. a(1) 9–a(ii) 1–2 (= EMP D 73.270–72 Laks-Most); B 21.7–12 (= EMP D 77a.7–12 Laks-Most) and B 23.6–8 (= EMP D 60.6–8 Laks-Most): θεοὶ δολιχαίωνες are described as compounds of the four elements, as are all other living beings, see Chapter 4.5. Moreover, I agree with Sedley (2007: 50) that the long-lived gods include the δαίμονες with a share in long life depicted in B 115.5 (= EMP D 10.5 Laks-Most). See also Inwood (2001: 54) and Curd (2005: 143). *Contra* Primavesi (2013: 708–9).

[24] Palmer (2009: 261). Correctly in my view, Palmer speaks of the metempsychosis as a manifestation of the cyclical microcosmic/macrocosmic changes.

[25] On this, see Chapter 7.2 for further details.

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also in his physical system, as we will see in later chapters. In these terms it offers a standpoint from which the story of the guilty δαίμονες, closely connected to the doctrine of rebirth, can fully be rehabilitated as a positive doctrine within Empedocles' physics.

3.2 Plutarch's Reading of B 115 and Modern Interpretations

Having addressed the issue of the structural correspondences of the demonic and the cosmic cycle in a way that allows for a rehabilitated doctrine of rebirth, I will now turn to the central work of this chapter; that is, offering a fresh and detailed investigation of Empedocles' concept of δαίμων. In what follows I will therefore discuss and reject the standard interpretation of B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) as a kind of aetiological myth that accounts for the notion of rebirth. Despite the fact this reading dates to the most ancient interpretation of the demonological verses offered by Plutarch, I will demonstrate that Plutarch bends Empedocles' verses to his own purposes, while reading B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) with Plato in mind.

Let us start, then, by reconsidering Plutarch's exegesis of B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most). As we have seen in Chapter 1.3.1, this is offered in several of his works, where he quotes or alludes to lines of this fragment. For my analysis in this chapter, however, the most helpful interpretation of the Empedoclean verses is the one Plutarch gives in his *De exilio*, where he quotes five of the thirteen verses belonging to B 115,[26] and explains them as follows:

> [Empedocles] reveals that not just he himself but all of us, from himself on, are wanderers here, strangers and exiles . . . The profoundest truth is that the soul is in exile and wanders, being driven by divine decrees and laws. Then, as on an island pounded by a powerful swell, imprisoned within the body 'like an oyster', in Plato's word,[27] because it cannot remember or recall 'from what honour and how great a height of bliss'[28] it has departed; not exchanging Sardis for Athens nor Corinth for Lemnos or Scyros but exchanging heaven and the moon for earth and life on earth, if it moves a short distance here from one place to another, it finds it hard to bear and feels like a foreigner, withering away like an ignoble plant.[29]

Plutarch's initial claim that the story of Empedocles' exile reveals the destiny of us all as wanderers in this world, on the basis that our soul is

[26] Specifically, lines 1, 3, 5, 6 and 13: see Chapter 1.3.1.
[27] Plato, *Phaedrus* 250c 6.
[28] DK 31 B 119 (= EMP D 15 Laks-Most).
[29] Plut. *De ex.* 17.607c–d (transl. Inwood [2001], slightly modified).

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in exile and wanders, clearly indicates that he takes the word δαίμων as meaning 'soul' and B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) as the exemplary place accounting for the destiny of the reincarnated human soul. Yet Plutarch's reading also raises the general question of the genesis of his Empedoclean interpretation; in particular, it can be asked whether Empedocles himself intended δαίμων as soul or whether Plutarch is rather superimposing his own personal idea and interpretation on Empedocles' lines.

A first step towards answering this question is to look at Empedocles' literary models and see whether they attest to the concept of δαίμων with the meaning of soul. When we look at Homeric epics, we find that the concept of δαίμων is more or less employed as a synonym of θεός.[30] In fact, the preference accorded to either term seems often to be directed by the metrical scheme.[31] Alternatively, the word δαίμων seems to occur in situations where the poet refers to an unspecified deity or where the identity of the deity involved cannot be determined. Nevertheless, it is often used to refer to specific deities of the Greek pantheon. For example, in *Il.* 3.420 we read ἦρχε δὲ δαίμων and the reference is to Aphrodite, mentioned earlier. At *Od.* 6.172 Odysseus' way of accounting is intentionally vague when he says νῦν δ' ἐνθάδε κάββαλε δαίμων; yet as it emerges from the context, the δαίμων is Poseidon. Similarly, the word θεός can sometimes be used for unspecified deities, as at *Od.* 12.169: κοίμησε δὲ κύματα δαίμων. Here the δαίμων is the same god (θεός) announced by Circe at lines 37–38: μνήσει δέ σε καὶ θεὸς αὐτός.[32] Never in the Homeric verses is the term used to indicate the soul.

Analogous considerations can be made to the Hesiodic occurrences of the term δαίμων, although, in the *Works and Days*, Hesiod seems to use this concept with some specificity. In the famous myth of the five races, it is narrated that the first human beings, those of the golden race, had a very special, godlike life, without sorrows, toil, grief and the pain of old age, being in ease and peace for all the time. They had all sorts of good things, as the earth at that time produced fruit 'abundantly and without stint'. Moreover, their death was as extraordinary as their life: they were just overcome with sleep. Even more extraordinary was, third, their reward after death: they obtained from Zeus the gift of divinity, and became δαίμονες ἁγνοί and ἐσθλοί, who dwell on earth (ἐπιχθόνιοι), are free

[30] Bassett (1919: 134–36), Untersteiner (1939: 93–134), Patroni (1940: 104) Brunius Nilsson (1955: 133) and Rexine (1985: 29–51). See also Primavesi (2008b: 259–60).

[31] Patroni (1940: 99–104).

[32] Patroni (Ibid.), in response to Untersteiner (1939), has shown that there are many passages in which Homer employs the term δαίμων to refer to specific gods or goddesses of the Greek pantheon.

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from harm (ἀλεξίκακοι) and are guardians of mortal beings (φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων).[33] Thus, the people of the Hesiodic golden race who, while still alive already 'lived like gods' (l. 112), were made δαίμονες upon death with the particular task of being favourable guardians of mortals. It seems fair to conclude that, according to this myth, δαίμονες are gods, though ἐπιχθόνιοι, and thus in this sense Hesiod's use of the term is still intimately connected to the general, Homeric meaning. Yet in contrast to celestial or Olympian gods, the place and sphere of action of Hesiod's δαίμονες seem to be confined to the world of human beings.

One may suppose that the Hesiodic use created a precedent upon which the meaning of δαίμων gradually narrowed into the notion of a lessened deity and this then favoured its assimilation to the notion of soul which conversely has gradually been considered immortal and therefore nearly divine. Leaving aside the fact that Empedocles has a notion of the soul that is not immortal, as we shall see in more detail in Chapter 5.3, it is worth noting that a further model of Empedocles, Parmenides, employs the term δαίμων twice in his fragments and always to refer to gods: at DK 28 B 1.2–3 (= PARM D 4.2–3 Laks-Most) the ὁδός . . . δαίμονος is, very plausibly, the path of the Sun,[34] whereas in B 12.3 (= PARM D 14.3 Laks-Most) the female δαίμων who, from the centre of the universe, steers and governs everything, is a central goddess in his system and can probably be identified with Aphrodite.[35] In other words, Parmenides uses δαίμων in the traditional, Homeric sense and without particular specifications, by meaning 'god', indeed, celestial and very important gods such as Helios and Aphrodite.

Thus, the literary and philosophical models of Empedocles recommend we take the word δαίμων as 'god' rather than 'soul'. Admittedly, however, the use of the word δαίμων with reference to the soul may have arisen in Empedocles independently from his models or simply from their usage. Alternatively, as G. B. Kerferd has proposed, 'it may be due to [a] new Greek word from outside',[36] or it may simply entail Empedocles' conception of the divine character of the soul 'by the application to it of a word for something divine'.[37] These hypotheses deserve to be examined and evaluated carefully; however, before approaching such an investigation it is necessary to ask whether the notion of the δαίμων as soul could derive from a particular, later reading of Empedocles' verses by one of his interpreters. In fact, to fully understand the Empedoclean conception of

[33] *Erga* 109–25. [34] See my discussion in Chapter 2.4.2. [35] See Ferrari (2010: 81–114).
[36] Kerferd (1965: 77–78). [37] Ibid. 78–79.

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the soul and, consequently, its role in a doctrine of rebirth, it is necessary to premise any discussion of his verses with an investigation that discerns what is properly Empedoclean from what could instead be the legacy of ancient and modern readings.

For this reason, we need now to return to Plutarch's exegesis of B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most). From the passage of *De Exilio* I quoted above, what prominently stands out is that Plutarch reads Empedocles with Plato in mind. As we can appreciate, his comments on Empedocles' lines are embellished with Platonic quotations. Furthermore, the passage quoted above is the closing part of the final section of *De exilio*, which is highly Platonic in character, as it contains numerous hints at the *Phaedrus*, *Timaeus* and *Phaedo*.

If we take this further, it can be said that Plutarch's Platonic reminiscences in our passage serve to construct a rhetorically solid conclusion that aims to strengthen the main message of Plutarch's whole treatise: an exhortation to a rational attitude towards exile. By providing a refutation of common objections people usually have against exile (606b–607 f), Plutarch concludes that the evil of exile lies in opinion only (559d), since the original condition of us all, as Plato showed in his dialogues, consists in that we are all souls exiled to this world. Thus, Empedocles' B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) offers the basis for Plutarch's identification of the exiled δαίμων with the exiled soul of every living being, an identification that exploits Plato's image of the wandering ψυχή. However, the historically great influence exercised by Plato's myths on the soul and Plutarch's Platonizing interpretation whereby B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) serves his concluding claim about exile as the common destiny of humankind, raise the question whether Plutarch's identification of the δαίμων in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) with the individual ψυχή mirrored Empedocles' beliefs or rather was an overinterpretation of his text based on an anachronistic perspective that reads Empedocles through Plato.[38]

Clearly these are good reasons to take Plutarch's interpretation of B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) with caution, as he might intentionally be bending Empedocles to his own purposes by projecting onto him Plato's influential ideas on the soul. Nonetheless, all ancient interpreters after Plutarch follow him in reading Empedocles' wandering δαίμων as a pre-Platonic instance of

[38] Note that, as Trépanier (2014: 175 n.7) has shown, Plutarch's 'Platonist position appears to have been a minority view' in Plutarch's treatises. For instance, in *Def. or.* 420a, a Stoic doctrine of mortal gods is evoked to confirm the Empedoclean position on mortal δαίμονες. At 420d, moreover, 'Plutarch relates an Epicurean critique of Empedocles' δαίμονες, one which faults him for combining in them two incompatible attributes on Epicurean criteria, moral imperfection and (mortal) longevity.'

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Plato's wandering soul.[39] For instance, Proclus advocated this reading in his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* and *Parmenides*, and so did Hermias in his commentary on Plato's *Phaedrus* and Philoponus in his commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima*.[40]

Being aware of the overinterpretation that a Platonizing reading of Empedocles' text may cause, in 1929 U. v. Wilamowitz pointed out that the occurrences of δαίμων and ψυχή in Greek literature before Empedocles run against their assimilation to one single concept. Wilamowitz concluded that Empedocles never referred to the ψυχή in human beings,[41] but rather developed a doctrine of rebirth according to which a δαίμων, namely a god and not merely a soul, inhabits Empedocles as well as all living beings including plants. According to Wilamowitz, in other words, Empedocles' concept of δαίμων cannot be taken as identical to the traditional notion of ψυχή; nevertheless, even though he challenges the assimilation of δαίμων with ψυχή, Wilamowitz ultimately understood δαίμων as that essence of every individual which survives the death of the body and works through rebirths – essentially an *alter ego* of the ordinary ψυχή, perhaps only more divine.

Wilamowitz's conclusions have meant that, in the study of Empedocles, nearly every subsequent scholar indiscriminately assumed that Empedocles had no notion of soul other than δαίμων. Accordingly, E. Dodds maintained that 'the occult self which persisted through successive incarnations' – a rather lengthy periphrasis to designate what we might more simply term the soul – was called 'not "psyche", but "daemon"' by Empedocles.[42] Analogously, H. S. Long, in his study on Greek metempsychosis, argued that in Empedocles' doctrine of rebirth the soul is thought to be divine. Indeed, Empedocles 'presents his doctrine so vividly that he never refers to the soul as ψυχή, but always as δαίμων'.[43] Similarly, W. K. C. Guthrie argued that Empedocles' doctrine about the guilt and

[39] An extensive discussion of the Platonizing reading of B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) by ancient interpreters can be found in O'Brien (1981). Calcidius (*in Tim.* cap. 136 [= 177.1–2. ed. Waszink 1962]; see also 176.15–177.12) seems to be the only ancient reader of Empedocles who offers a different reading.

[40] See Proclus *in Tim.* 175c–d = II 116.24–25, *in Parm.* 723.22–724.13; Hermias, *in Phaedr.* 248B (= 160.16); Philoponus, *De An.* 73.32–33. See O'Brien (1981: 78) and *Index Fontium* at 113–14. The majority of ancient interpreters assume that the wandering δαίμων coincides more or less with the wandering soul that inhabits all of us. It is possible that Plutarch's great work on Empedocles (in ten books according to Lamprias' catalogue) influenced (either directly or indirectly) all later interpretations.

[41] According to Wilamowitz, in Empedocles' extant fragments the word ψυχή recurs just once (see DK 31 B 138 [not in Laks-Most]) with the Homeric sense of 'life force'.

[42] Dodds (1951: 153). [43] H. S. Long (1948: 54).

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punishment of the δαίμων derived from the religious and mysterious beliefs of the Orphic and Pythagorean doctrines. Empedocles, nevertheless, replaced the concept 'soul' with the word δαίμων which is, so argues Guthrie, 'the divine spark in us which is alien to the body'.[44] This translates as 'spirit', he argues, 'because that makes it easier to comprehend as something incarnated in mortal bodies, [that] could without confusion be rendered "god"'.[45] According to Wright, Empedocles talks here περὶ ψυχῆς, as also agreed by the main sources for B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most). 'The purport is – Wright argues – that the thinking soul [. . .] is spoken of in terms of a δαίμων who, because of the inevitable workings of necessity, is cut off from his origin.'[46] More recently, P. Curd, contends that '[w]hatever else is true about the δαίμονες, Empedocles treats them as the seat of personality for an individual', and thus, '[w]hen we speak of a doctrine of transmigration in Empedocles, it is the reappearance of a δαίμων in a different guise that we mean'.[47] It seems clear then that nearly all Empedoclean scholars agree that δαίμων in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) is that personal entity in us that outlasts the death of our body and is reborn as several other mortal beings; that is, essentially, what our soul is supposed to do according to doctrines of rebirth.

However, while most of the above-mentioned scholars express the idea that δαίμων is more or less equal to the soul in Empedocles, in 1963 Detienne went even further and argued that Empedocles drew on an entrenched concept of 'demonic soul',[48] which was already developed within the earliest Pythagorean doctrine of rebirth. Detienne defended his thesis on the basis of ancient sources; however, these all come from the end of Plato's lifetime or later and, therefore, require careful handling when reconstructing a much earlier notion.[49] An exception is constituted

[44] Guthrie (1965: 263).

[45] Ibid. 253. Furthermore, the diverse speculations about the nature of the δαίμων as a quantum of Love, or as manifestation of the φρὴν ἱερή 'Holy Mind' (B 134 [= EMP D 93 Laks-Most]) rest on the idea that δαίμων corresponds to the soul. The erroneous nature of these hypotheses shall be shown below.

[46] Wright (1995: 272).

[47] Curd (2005: 142). See also 156 n.17 where she explicitly equates δαίμων with ψυχή.

[48] 'L'âme démonique', e.g., at p. 23.

[49] For a synthetic but detailed criticism of Detienne's reconstruction of a Pythagorean notion of the soul as δαίμων see the review of Detienne's book by Kerferd (1965). Kerferd, at p. 78, criticized Detienne's use of ancient sources, emphasizing that, among all sources used by Detienne,

> the strongest piece of evidence, Aristotle fr. 192 Rose, certainly places Pythagoras himself in a special position between god and man, but it does not actually call him a δαίμων. If it does in fact suppose he is a δαίμων, as it well may, it does not support the view that the souls of all men are δαίμονες since it places Pythagoras in a unique position.

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by Empedocles' B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most),[50] which Detienne uncritically regarded as the most ancient item in which the term δαίμων is used where Plato would have had ψυχή. Moreover, in a previous study dedicated to Empedocles' notion of δαίμων, Detienne had already proposed that its occurrence in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) is self-explanatory and does not need to be extensively discussed:[51] it means nothing other than ψυχή.[52]

On a few occasions, however, scholars have shown caution when comparing δαίμων and ψυχή. For instance, Inwood admits that it is difficult to determine the meaning of this word in Empedocles, as its occurrences in earlier poetry indicate gods, both Olympian and otherwise, and divinities, which seem to modern readers more like personified powers and forces. Yet he concludes that 'because of its role here in a theory of reincarnation, it is hard not to connect the daimōn to what Plato and others called a "soul"' and thus he states that he will assume 'this is more or less right and that the daimōn is the bearer of the moral and intellectual continuity for each person'.[53] Analogously, S. Trépanier acknowledges that 'the identification of the transmigrating δαίμων with an immortal soul is not historically sound, but a later Platonizing distortion'. Nevertheless, he argues that 'Empedocles' account of the fall from the blessed gods of transmigrating souls is given in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most)'.[54] Moreover, while maintaining that the Empedoclean δαίμων-soul differs from the Platonic ψυχή, he argues that, as this δαίμων-soul commits perjury or bloodshed and can be punished through rebirths or rewarded after death, it anticipates the story of Plato's souls.[55]

[50] A further exception is Philolaus DK 44 B 11 (= PHILOL D 12 Laks-Most).

[51] Detienne (1959: 3).

[52] Ibid. In this paper, Detienne argued that the word δαίμων in Empedocles translates not only the notion of the transmigrating soul, but also those of a god ψυχοπομπός and an indeterminate, divine and occult power. He failed, however, to explore the meaning of this polysemy and the implication it has for Empedocles' notion of δαίμων and its occurrence in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most).

[53] Inwood (2001: 53). See, moreover, at 56: 'The mortal δαίμων is the bearer of personal identity; it is the "I" which speaks of birth and death and of experiences beyond this life'.

[54] Trépanier (2014: respectively at 175 with n.7 and 207).

[55] Trépanier (2004: 129):

> Empedocles' conception of the δαίμων is more an adumbration of Plato's account of the soul, at least in certain specific regards, than an unreflective acceptance of traditional lore. As does the soul for Plato, the δαίμων for Empedocles allows for the extension of reward and retribution beyond this life, and *mutatis mutandis* provides the basis for the possibility of super-human knowledge.

However, in his 2014 article, Trépanier revises his position, pointing out that the identification of the transmigrating δαίμων with an immortal soul is not historically sound, as we have seen. Nonetheless, he speaks of δαίμων-soul with reference to B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) e.g., at 201–6.

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In contrast to this mainstream view, Primavesi, by following an idea of K. Kerényi,[56] understands the δαίμων's vicissitudes in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) as the account of Empedocles' personal experience,[57] suggesting indirectly that Empedocles' self-claim to be a δαίμων stresses his exceptional nature. In particular, Primavesi maintains, correctly in my view, that Empedocles' claim to divine nature hardly conforms to the assumption that it is meant to be exemplary of the fate of the human soul.[58]

This interpretation may open up for an elitist reading of Empedocles' doctrine of rebirth as a destiny that pertains not to all living beings, but only to a few exceptional individuals who are reincarnations of deities. However, other Empedoclean fragments I discussed in Chapter 2 seem to counter this hypothesis. In particular, verses thematizing his rejection of ritual sacrifices (B 136 [= EMP D 28 Laks-Most] and B 137 [= EMP D 29 Laks-Most]), which is closely related to his belief in rebirth, show that he professed a doctrine of rebirth as concerning all ordinary mortals. In fact, whereas the reincarnation of a god must be regarded as something being 'statistically speaking, a highly improbable coincidence',[59] Empedocles' heartfelt plea to stop slaughtering and devouring one another (B 136 [= EMP D 28 Laks-Most]), as well as his warning not to sacrifice animals on the altar because of the risk of killing loved ones who have changed form (B 137 [= EMP D 29 Laks-Most]), most likely highlight that the destiny of rebirth involves anyone. To this it can be added that the idea expressed in B 15 (= EMP D 52 Laks-Most) of people called 'fool' as they do not consider the good and evil things befalling them during their disembodied existence – which in Chapter 2 has been connected to Empedocles' belief in rebirth – quite clearly indicates that Empedocles envisages rebirth as a common human destiny.

[56] Kerényi (1940: 16):

> It has rightly been emphasized that Empedocles never speaks of the transmigration of souls, but always of the fate of the daimon. The fundamental error of the ancient interpreters of Empedocles remained nonetheless unshaken even in the more recent interpreters. They still believe that the philosopher is basically presenting a doctrine of the migration of souls based on the principle of the equality of all souls; nevertheless, instead of the 'soul' they now speak of something divine, the daimon, which resides in all living beings without distinction. *As far as we know of his works, there is no mention of this in Empedocles himself* (my emphasis).

[57] See above all Primavesi (2013: 713–17).

[58] Primavesi (2013: 716) defines the reincarnation of a god 'statistically speaking, a highly improbable coincidence (ein statistich höchst unwahrscheinlicher Zufall)'.

[59] See the previous note.

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Therefore, since Empedocles' doctrine of rebirth concerns all of us, while, as I argued in the previous chapter, B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) and the other demonological fragments serve to legitimize Empedocles' extra-ordinary nature and authority on matters beyond ordinary human perceptions, I side with Primavesi and argue that Empedocles' story as the reincarnation of an exiled god places him in a unique position, portraying him as an extraordinary individual in contrast to the rest of humans. For the same reason, I tend to exclude Kerferd's hypothesis mentioned above, according to which the identification of the guilty δαίμων with the individual soul may be derived from the epic usage or may be due to a new Greek word from the outside. Similarly, I exclude that it may entail Empedocles' conception of the divine character of the soul by the application to it of a word for something divine.[60] Instead, my view is that, by virtue of his intention to distance himself from ordinary mortals, Empedocles' notion of δαίμων is essentially used to mark this distance by representing him as a god. This strongly suggests that his notion of δαίμων is basically different from his concept of the soul, to which I will return in Chapter 5.3.

In summary, the investigation of the pre-Empedoclean uses of the term δαίμων and the analysis of Plutarch's Platonizing interpretation of B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) I conducted here cast doubts on the traditional reading of this fragment. In particular, I have shown that the interpretation that in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) Empedocles speaks on behalf of his soul by calling it δαίμων, which then represents the soul of every living being, is fundamentally flawed. Consequently, the traditional and enduring idea that the story of the guilty gods is the basis for the Empedoclean doctrine of rebirth is also mistaken. On the one hand, the uses of δαίμων in Empedocles' literary models of Homer, Hesiod and Parmenides indicate that the term means 'god' and never 'soul'; on the other hand, Plutarch's interpretation of δαίμων as the individual soul in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) is not only heavily influenced by Plato's myths on the soul in the underworld but is also pursued in order to bend Empedocles to Plutarch's own purposes. Finally, the hypothesis following this conclusion that Plutarch's Empedoclean reading does not stand, gained force by the interpretation of the demonological fragments I provided in Chapter 2, according to which they serve as Empedocles' authorial legitimation and therefore mark the distance between Empedocles the god and the rest of

[60] Kerferd (1965: 77–78). As a matter of fact, Kerferd just mentioned them as possible options and did not embrace one or the other interpretation.

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ordinary humans. With all this considered, I shall argue in conclusion that the vicissitudes of the exiled god concern Empedocles not only *first of all*, but *exclusively*. It follows that *only* Empedocles is a reincarnated god,[61] and δαίμων is the term that in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) defines this unique nature.

3.3 Plato's *daimones*

Having refuted the standard interpretation of B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) that the story of the guilty god represents the place that founds Empedocles' doctrine of rebirth, showing instead that δαίμων is intended to define Empedocles' exceptional nature in contrast to the rest of ordinary humans, the groundwork has been laid for a re-evaluation of the concept of δαίμων. In what follows, I will raise the question of what Empedocles had in mind in terms of divine status when he called himself a δαίμων and how his use of this term may or may not have induced shifts in meaning and specifications of the traditional concept of δαίμων. To answer these questions, I will turn to those authors who spoke of δαίμονες in contexts in which beliefs in rebirth also played a role. Thus, I will first look at Plato's myths about the otherworld journeys of the soul and then at what we might call a Pythagorean demonology.

Beginning with an analysis of Plato's notions of δαίμων, I will offer a close reading of several Platonic texts in Sections 3.3.1, 3.3.2 and 3.3.3. Thereby it will be demonstrated that Plato depicted δαίμονες in a traditional way as guides of individuals and fulfillers of their destiny, but also played a significant role in the gradual downgrading of δαίμων to a minor deity and thus its assimilation with ψυχή. This investigation will provide a better understanding of the divine status of the δαίμονες and its relationship with other gods and human beings in the context of a doctrine of rebirth, identifying aspects that Empedocles may have had in mind while composing his demonological verses. This will therefore provide us with a more solid basis for rethinking the role of the δαίμονες and individual souls in Empedocles' concept of rebirth.

[61] The unique nature and experience of Empedocles is asserted in opposition to the rest of humanity (i.e., Empedocles is one god compared to the multitude of ordinary humans) and therefore does not intend to exclude the possibility that other reincarnated δαίμονες may exist – certainly, given the plural in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most). However, reincarnated δαίμονες are much more the exception than the rule, as opposed to the common fate of reincarnated ordinary human beings.

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3.3.1 *Guides of Souls: Plato's Myths on the Afterlife*

In the present section I am going to explore the role Plato assigns to δαίμονες in his myths on the afterlife journeys of the soul in the *Phaedo* and in the tenth book of the *Republic*. Their analysis will show that δαίμονες, in line with a consolidated Greek tradition, function as guides or companions of the individuals during their life on earth. However, from the *Phaedo* to the *Republic* there is an important shift in meaning regarding how they perform this role. Specifically, in the *Republic*, their role as tutelary deities who fulfil the person's lot is subordinated to the moral responsibility people carry for their own destiny of punishment or reward. As will be shown, this Platonic innovation concerning personal responsibility has crucial implications in the later developments of the notion of δαίμων.

Nevertheless, δαίμονες are presented in a more traditional guise in the myth of the *Phaedo* (107d–108c). Here Plato opens by depicting the personal δαίμων who, after having accompanied the individual during their whole lifetime, once they have passed away, brings their soul to a place where the dead are gathered together. From there, after judgement has been given, the souls pass into the world below, following their δαίμων-guide (ἡγεμών), 'who is appointed to conduct them from this world to the other'. After receiving their fate and staying in Hades for the appointed time, the souls are brought back to our world by another δαίμων-guide. Plato adds that the moderate and wise soul follows its guide and does not ignore its present fate. In contrast, the unrighteous soul, which is possessed by bodily passions and is at fault for evil deeds, is eschewed by all and finds no δαίμων willing to be its companion and guide. However, after a certain time, even the worst soul will get its δαίμων, who will guide it to its own abode.

A slightly different tale is narrated in the story of Er's journey to the afterlife, in the tenth book of the *Republic* (614b–621d). Here Plato recounts, through Er, that the souls of the dead, once in Hades, find themselves in a certain divine place (*daimonios topos*), a meadow with several openings (*chasmata*) from which numerous souls continuously arrive and depart. Judges sitting in the middle of these χάσματα indicate which pathway each soul has to follow in its journey.[62] Then, moving forwards from the meadow, the souls reach a place where, in the presence of Necessity and her

[62] Judgement of the souls is a recurrent topic in Plato's myths of the afterlife. As we have seen above, a version of this topic is in the *Phaedo*'s excursus (107d; 113d). See also *Ap.* 41a.2–5; *Gorgias* 524a: two judges called Minos and Radamanthys pass sentence 'in the meadow at the crossroads of the road, where are two ways leading, one to the Isle of the Blest and the other to Tartarus'.

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daughters, 'a certain prophet', the spokesperson of the god, on behalf of Lachesis, makes an announcement that roughly goes as follows: before beginning another cycle of mortal generation, 'where birth is the beacon of death', no δαίμων shall cast lots for the souls, but these should choose their own δαίμων. Then, after having made their choice – a choice based, as Plato says, 'on their experience of a previous life' – the souls go to Lachesis, who assigns to each 'the δαίμων the soul had chosen, as a guardian of the life and a fulfiller of its choice' (φύλακα συμπέμπειν τοῦ βίου καὶ ἀποπληρωτὴν τῶν αἱρεθέντων). Lastly, the δαίμων guides the soul through the underworld to the Plain of Oblivion, where it is ready to be reborn.

From both the *Phaedo*'s passage and the story of Er, the role that Plato assigns to δαίμονες is clear enough: being watchers, companions and guides of living beings, they accompany souls during their life on earth and beyond. Indeed, they preside over and guarantee that souls fulfil their destiny. Whereas in the *Phaedo* destinies and δαίμονες who govern over them are appointed to souls, in the *Republic* the δαίμονες are not responsible for the life and destiny allotted to a soul, as these are personally chosen by the individual soul.[63] Nevertheless, the δαίμων stays with the soul from the time in which it is given, or it chooses, its lot in Hades, during the whole period of its embodied life until the soul returns to Hades. Therefore, the soul is thought of as always having a δαίμων by its side, who guides it during the whole parabola of life from (re)birth to death. This is connected to the widespread traditional belief in a personal deity, genius or spirit, who can be tutelary or vengeful.[64]

Moreover, the detail in Plato's myths that a soul is assigned different δαίμονες from one rebirth to another – hence it is not the same δαίμων who always stays beside the same soul – is significant. It can be read as the

[63] See esp. *Rep*. 617e where it is said that the souls, rather than the gods are to be blamed when they choose a bad life.

[64] In the *Erga* 109–23, as we have seen above, Hesiod narrates that the very first human beings, the people of the golden age, became at death δαίμονες ἁγνοὶ ἐπιχθόνιοι τελέθουσιν / ἐσθλοί, ἀλεξίκακοι, φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων (at l.123). Analogously, in *Erga* 252–62 Hesiod speaks of immortal φύλακες who are guardians of mortal beings and watch over judgements and crimes. Given the analogies with the δαίμονες ἁγνοὶ ἐπιχθόνιοι of the golden race, these immortal φύλακες may well be taken as equivalent to personal δαίμονες. The belief in personal δαίμονες is also found in ancient lyrics, e.g., Phocyl. F 16: ἀλλ' ἄρα δαίμονές εἰσιν ἐπ' ἀνδράσιν ἄλλοτε ἄλλοι· οἳ μὲν ἐπερχομένου κακοῦ ἀνέρας ἐκλύσασθαι. According to Clement of Alexandria (*Strom*. 5.14.127 p. 4.5), Phocylides opposed to benevolent δαίμονες vengeful δαίμονες who Clement compared to the rebellious angels of the Judeo-Christian tradition. See also Theogn. 161–66: πολλοί τοι χρῶνται δειλαῖς φρεσί, δαίμονι δ' ἐσθλῶι, / οἷς τὸ κακὸν δοκέον γίνεται εἰς ἀγαθόν. / εἰσὶν δ' οἳ βουλῆι τ' ἀγαθῆι καὶ δαίμονι δειλῶι / μοχθίζουσι, τέλος δ' ἔργμασιν οὐχ ἕπεται. / Οὐδεὶς ἀνθρώπων οὔτ' ὄλβιος οὔτε πενιχρός / οὔτε κακὸς νόσφιν δαίμονος οὔτ' ἀγαθός. According to Pindar, the δαίμων γενέθλιος (*O*. 13.105), assigned to every person, is able to influence the course of human affairs. The

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Platonic reformulation of the traditional belief of a personal δαίμων who determines and brings to fulfilment the person's destined lot in life. As in Plato's doctrine souls can be re-born as different human beings and have, therefore, different lots and lives, Plato makes the soul that receives a new lot and a new life receive a new δαίμων as well.

The notion that a soul, once in Hades, can choose its δαίμων is Plato's innovation. It is developed from the idea that the fate of each person does not depend on the gods' whim but is one's own responsibility and Plato clearly states that 'the blame is on the one who chooses: god is blameless'.[65] This is related to Plato's ethical doctrines and to his belief in the role of virtue and wisdom, and ultimately of philosophy, in human moral agency and for the liberation of the soul from the body. In the *Phaedo*, for example, the account of souls' journeys to the afterlife is proposed to demonstrate that the immortal nature of the soul has considerable consequences for moral behaviour. Indeed, since our soul operates through rebirths, the judgement it receives in the afterlife and the consequent fate we are assigned follow the degree of wisdom and virtue we were able to achieve during our previous life on earth. Thus, in the afterlife, the soul of a person who did well in life will receive a reward in Hades. Conversely, the soul of one who lived unjustly will receive terrible punishment.[66]

It is worth noting that, in the story of Er, souls are still judged in Hades for their behaviour in their previous life on earth and upon judgement they are sent to opposite underworld pathways. However, for the souls that have

notion of *tutelary* δαίμονες, whom one needs to honour to obtain merit, is also pointed out in *P.* 3.107–9: σμικρὸς ἐν σμικροῖς, μέγας ἐν μεγάλοις / ἔσσομαι, τὸν δ' ἀμφέποντ' αἰεὶ φρασίν / δαίμον' ἀσκήσω κατ' ἐμὰν θεραπεύων μαχανάν. The notion of a personal δαίμων is clearly expressed by Men. FF. 550–1.1–3 Kock, ἅπαντι δαίμων ἀνδρὶ συμπαρίσταται εὐθὺς γενομένῳ, μυσταγωγὸς τοῦ βίου ἀγαθός. See moreover the idea of tutelary and vengeful δαίμονες in tragedy; e.g., Aesch. *Pers.* 158 attests to a δαίμων παλαιός who assigned one's lot. The notion of a tutelary or hostile deity who judges and intervenes in human affairs is implied in *Pers.* 515 and *Ag.* 1175. Moreover, see Soph. *OT* 1299ff. and 1311; see also *OT* 1478–79: ἀλλ' εὐτυχοίης, καί σε τῆσδε τῆς ὁδοῦ / δαίμων ἄμεινον ἢ 'μὲ φρουρήσας τύχοι; *Antig.* 1345ff. As for the vengeful deity or δαίμων ἀλάστωρ, see, e.g., Aesch. *Ag.* 1501, *Pers.* 354, *Suppl.* 415, Eurip. *Med.* 1059 and *Ipp.* 820. The δαίμων ἀλάστωρ often coincides with the Erinyes, also called δαίμονες: e.g., in Aesch. *Ag.* 1475ff, where the δαίμων γέννης τῆσδε is the Erinyes who looms over Agamemnon's house. It is worth noting that the first columns of the Derveni papyrus (dated at the end of the fourth century BCE) attest to δαίμονες who have some role in the afterlife punishment of souls (col. iii 4–5), are mentioned in connection to Justice (col. iv 10–12) and the Erinyes (col. iii 5–6) and are also seen as 'impeding δαίμονες' who hinder the souls from receiving sacrifices (col. vi 2–3). On the role of δαίμονες in the Derveni papyrus, see Piano (2016: 253–74).

[65] *Rep.* 617e.

[66] This is a belief Plato picked up from older doctrines professing faith in rebirth and, above all, from Orphic circles: see Casadio (1991: 130–32) and Bernabé (2002b: 416–18; 2004). Graf-Johnston (2013: 104) proposes that Plato adapted an older system of beliefs about the nature of the underworld, which is found in the gold tablets.

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reached the meadow it is explicitly said that 'no divinity shall cast lots for you';[67] instead they shall choose by themselves their new life and lot. Nevertheless, the way in which they behaved in their previous life helps or impedes their post-mortem choice. As Plato tells us, the souls' choice of a new life rests on what they have learned through their previous experience on earth. For instance, those souls who did not experience and learn what a truly good life is wrongly believe that this coincides with being a tyrant and are therefore inclined to make the wrong choice in Hades. On the contrary, those who learned wisdom and virtue in life know what a good life really is and may be able to choose a better life than the one they lost. For this reason, people need first to gain knowledge in this life of how to distinguish a good from a bad existence. In this way, they can everywhere and always choose, among those that are available, a better life than the one they had. Second, people must learn how to hold up their choice for the good life in Hades. Then, after that choice, they receive from Lachesis their personal δαίμων φύλαξ and ἡγεμών according to the nature of the life and lot they chose.

In conclusion, in his myths on the afterlife journeys of the soul Plato draws on the traditional idea of δαίμονες as tutelary divinities, which watch over and guide the person to the fulfilment of their destinies. However, while in the *Phaedo*, δαίμονες seem to be able to influence human destinies and lives, according to the myth of Er in the *Republic*, they just have the function of accompanying the soul on its journey. They can watch over the person and even guarantee they will fulfil their chosen life and lot, but they seem to have no influence upon the person's destiny, which is exclusively in the hands of a ψυχή's own choice in Hades. This remarkable detail brings the responsibility for one's own destiny back from an external cause, such as the gods, into the person's own hands. In the next section, we will see that this Platonic formulation of personal responsibility has crucial implications in the later developments of the notion of δαίμων, especially for its assimilation to the concept of ψυχή.

3.3.2 Personal daimon*: The* Timaeus

In order to complete our analysis of Plato's notions of δαίμων, I will now explore a famous Platonic passage in the *Timaeus*, where we can appreciate the notion of δαίμων developing from the more traditional idea of an *external* deity, watching over and guiding the person, towards the concept

[67] *Rep.* 617e.

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of an *internal* divine power coinciding with the most sovereign part of our soul.[68] The *Timaeus*' passage runs as follows:

> As concerning the most sovereign form of soul in us (τὸ δὲ δὴ περὶ τοῦ κυριωτάτου παρ' ἡμῖν ψυχῆς), we must conceive that god has given it to each person as a guiding δαίμων – that part which we say dwells in the summit of our body (ἡμῶν ἐπ' ἄκρῳ τῷ σώματι) and lifts us from earth towards our celestial affinity [. . . I]f a man is engrossed in appetites and ambitions and spends all his pains upon these, all his thoughts must be mortal and, so far as that is possible, he cannot fall short of becoming mortal altogether, since he has nourished the growth of mortality. But if his heart has been set on the love of learning and true wisdom and he has exercised that part of himself above all, he is surely bound to have immortal and divine thoughts, if he shall lay hold upon truth, nor can he fail to possess immortality in the fullest measure that human nature admits. And because he is always devoutly cherishing the divine part and maintaining the guardian δαίμων that dwells within him (τὸν δαίμονα σύνοικον ἑαυτῷ) in good estate, he must be happy (εὐδαίμων) above all.[69]

What is relevant for our analysis on δαίμων in this passage of the *Timaeus* is what Plato says at its outset and end. First, he compares the most sovereign form of soul in us (that is, our rational soul) with a gift god has given to us as a guiding δαίμων. Second, by working on the notion that the rational soul in us is our δαίμων, Plato concludes that we will be immortal, godlike and happy if we keep the guardian δαίμων that dwells within us in good estate. It is worth noting that this conclusion is grounded on a play-on-words Plato makes upon the term 'happy', which in Greek is said εὐδαίμων. By etymologizing it as εὐ+δαίμων, Plato can make his point that those who are happy are those who have the most sovereign part of their soul or δαίμων 'in good estate'.

Returning to the assimilation between the most sovereign part of the soul and the guiding δαίμων, we may argue that it results from Plato's conception of the divine character of the rational soul, which is consequently called by the word for something divine. Yet there seems to be more behind the use of the term δαίμων in reference to the rational soul. In particular, it seems to draw on the traditional conception of the δαίμονες as tutelary deities, and to result from the idea, explored in the myth of Er, that a soul is not appointed to a δαίμων but chooses one

[68] Plato develops a tripartite structure of the soul in the fourth book of the *Republic*: two mortal parts fulfilling mortal needs and ends, and one rational, immortal and divine part (see also *Timaeus* 69d–70d, 73d, 87a, 89e–90a).

[69] *Timaeus* 90a–c; transl. Cornford, slightly modified.

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itself.[70] More specifically, the idea that the rational soul is our δαίμων might be derived from a chain of ideas that is reconstructed as follows. Traditionally, the δαίμων sent by the gods to a given human being watches over them and guarantees they fulfil their appointed destiny. However, in the *Republic* Plato expresses the view that humans themselves – more correctly, their souls in Hades – are responsible for their own destiny, choosing their own δαίμων. In addition, since decision-making skills pertain to the rational part of the soul, it follows that the rational, divine part of our soul, as the one in charge of human destiny, can well be considered to be a δαίμων.

Thus, we can appreciate that Plato' s notion of δαίμων as the rational part of the soul can be elucidated on a coherent line of reasoning derived from Platonic speculations on the individual's destiny after death and human moral responsibility. Having drawn on a traditional idea of the δαίμονες in the *Phaedo*, where they are allotted to souls as guardian spirits and fulfillers of their destinies, in the *Republic* Plato already downgraded them to mere companions of humans, that accompany them watching over their decisions without any influence on what they choose. Finally, since the ability to make decisions concerning one's destiny is not in the hands of any divine power, but rather resides completely in people's hands and in the power of their rational soul, in the *Timaeus* we see the notion of δαίμων developing from an external guiding deity into what we may call 'the mind's eye', the very leader of one's own life. The conclusion is that the notion of a δαίμων-within and, therefore, of a δαίμων-(rational part of the)-soul seems to be the novel, Platonic implication of his speculations on the individual's post-mortem destiny and his moral doctrines on personal responsibility.

3.3.3 Cratylus*: Knowledge and Divinity*

Having seen how Platonic speculations on moral responsibility and the fate of the individual after death played a key role in the development of the concept of δαίμων, I will now analyze a passage from the *Cratylus* that has often been proposed to support the assumption of an ancient, Pythagorean belief in δαίμων as the individual's soul, on which Plato would later elaborate. On the contrary, it will be shown that even in this passage the

[70] This point has already been highlighted by Taylor (1928), who writes that Timaeus 'is expressing the view that a man's attendant δαίμων is his "rational self"', further noting that 'Socrates means the same thing when he says in the myth of Er that the souls about to be reborn are not "allotted" to a δαίμων but chose one for themselves.'

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concept of δαίμων is in line with both the popular-traditional conception as guiding deity and the Platonic developments we have seen so far. The *Cratylus*' passage runs as follows:

> [Socrates] What shall we consider next? [Hermogenes] δαίμονες obviously. [Socrates] Hermogenes, what does the name δαίμονες really mean? See if you think there is anything in what I am going to say. [Hermogenes] Go on and say it. [So] Do you remember who Hesiod says the δαίμονες are? [He] I do not recall it. [So] Nor that he says a golden race was the first race of men to be born? [He] Yes, I do know that. [So] Well, he says of it:
>
> > But since Fate has covered up this race,
> > they are called holy *daimones* who live on the earth,
> > noble, averters of evil, guardians of mortal people.
>
> [He] What of that? [So] Why, I think he means that the golden race was not made of gold, but was good and beautiful. And I regard it as a proof of this that he further says we are the iron race. [He] True. [So] Don't you suppose that if anyone of our day is good, Hesiod would say he was of that golden race? [He] Quite likely. [So] But the good are the wise, are they not? [He] Yes, they are the wise. [So] This, then, I think, is what he certainly means to say of the δαίμονες: because they were wise and knowing (δαήμονες) he called them δαίμονες and in our older Attic dialect the word itself occurs. Now he and all the other poets are right, who say that when a good man dies he has a great portion and honour among the dead, and becomes a δαίμων, a name which is in accordance with the other name of wisdom. And so I assert that every good man, whether living or dead, is more than human (δαιμόνιον), and is rightly called a δαίμων.[71]

This passage is part of a section in which Socrates, after having explained the meaning of the term θεός by rudimentary etymology, explains by the same standard the meaning of δαίμονες, ἥρωες and ἄνθρωποι. It is worth noting that the order in which these terms are explained follows a precise ranking of rational beings, from the more to the less rational.

When Socrates comes to the explanation of the term δαίμονες, he first recurs to Hesiod's account of the people of the golden race becoming δαίμονες after death. The element of the Hesiodic account that most interests Plato is the ancient belief that 'good and beautiful' people, under special circumstances, can become gods upon death. As we have seen in Section 3.2, according to the Hesiodic myth of the races, the human beings of the golden race, who are the most good and beautiful, become,

[71] 397d–398c.

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after death, δαίμονες. By this standard – Plato infers – every person who is good could be said to be a golden person.

Socrates continues to explain that being good really means being wise, and being wise justifies, on Plato's reading, the fact that the golden people become δαίμονες. In fact, the term δαίμονες is explained through a rudimentary etymological analysis as δαήμονες, meaning 'knowing' or 'being wise'.[72] From this, Socrates can draw his conclusion: as being good and 'golden' really means being wise, when a wise person dies, they are rightly called δαίμονες and receive divine honours. Indeed, wise persons, since they are more than humans in life and death, are rightly called δαίμονες whether living or dead. As we can appreciate, the rudimentary etymology of δαίμονες as δαήμονες intends to bring together the traditional Hesiodic belief that good and beautiful people will receive divine rewards after death and the novel Platonic view that a non-mythical golden race is composed of truly wise people; that is, of philosophers, who deserve therefore to be called divine.

In 1963, Detienne argued that implicit in Plato's exegesis of Hesiod's myth of the golden race, and especially in his conclusion that every good person is rightly called δαίμων, is the notion that the souls of the dead are δαίμονες. According to Detienne, Plato picked up this concept from certain Pythagorean beliefs in rebirth, attested in Empedocles' philosophy.[73] However, there are two elements in Plato's exegesis that challenge Detienne's conclusion. First, Plato's explanation of the divine terms shows that, in his classification of rational beings, δαίμονες are paired with gods, as heroes are paired with human beings. Just as in other dialogues, this shows that his notion of δαίμων is still intimately connected to the traditional notion of δαίμων as a divine being. Incidentally, in his clarification of the word ἄνθρωπος, Plato refers to body and soul as the most distinctive elements of human beings. By doing so, he does not make any hint at the possibility that ψυχαί could be linked with δαίμονες.

Secondly, Plato's explanation of δαίμονες deliberately focuses on the connection between wisdom and divine nature, a connection we have already touched upon in the analysis of the *Timaeus* above. There, Plato points out that those who devote themselves to the love of learning and true wisdom and exercise above all the most supreme part of their soul, will have immortal and divine thoughts and will be god-like to the fullest extent that human nature admits. In other words, Plato argues that wisdom is closely related to divine nature; indeed, it is the way to become divine.

[72] ὅτι φρόνιμοι καὶ δαήμονες ἦσαν, 'δαίμονας' αὐτοὺς ὠνόμασεν.
[73] On this, see my discussion below.

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Following the same standard, in the *Cratylus* Plato makes an analogous point, by meticulously selecting those who can rightly be called δαίμονες: wise human beings; that is, philosophers. This strongly indicates that Plato's exegesis is not drawing on a general notion of soul as δαίμων, but rather is strategically bending to his own target the traditional belief attested by Hesiod that exceptional human beings could obtain divine rewards after death. According to Plato, truly exceptional human beings are wise persons and truly wise persons are the philosophers, who are therefore truly divine, whether living or dead.[74]

In conclusion, we can fairly say that in the passage of the *Cratylus*, there is hardly any evidence to support Detienne's assumption of Plato's use of an alleged Pythagorean (and Empedoclean) notion of δαίμων-soul. Instead, the association between philosophers and δαίμονες has very likely a different genesis. The exegesis of the term δαίμονες in Plato's *Cratylus* rests, on the one hand, upon Hesiod's notion of divine rewards for extraordinary human beings; on the other hand, upon a rudimentary etymology that, as we have seen, connects godhood to wisdom. From Hesiod onwards, great and powerful individuals were more commonly honoured after death as gods. Plato then associated the concept of exceptional cases of divinization with his own personal belief that philosophy is a major pathway to divine rewards. In the wake of an already established tradition, in other words, Plato bent the promise of divine reward to his own target, the philosophers,[75] the

[74] Whereas Plato makes philosophers δαίμονες, in his time other prominent figures of exceptional human beings were known who, once dead, were honoured as δαίμονες. As Burkert (1985: 181) has shown, 'on the basis of Hesiod's myth . . . what did gain currency was for great and powerful figures to be honoured after death as a δαίμων. Thus, in Aeschylus' *Persians*, the dead king Darius is conjured up as a δαίμων, and in Euripides, the chorus consoles Admetus over the death of Alcestis with the words "now she is a blessed δαίμων"'. Moreover, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the gift of divine honours after death became the promise of mystery circles professing doctrines of rebirth. Within these circles, the divine reward of Hesiod's golden race became the post-mortem destiny assured to initiates, who were taught the way to become gods after death. It is worth noting that, as Zovko (2017: 313–28) highlights, some of these circles worked in South Italy and Sicily, not far from Pythagoras' Croton and Empedocles' Acragas, and it is possible that Plato was in contact with them when travelling through Sicily and Southern Italy.

[75] Elsewhere, Plato maintains that philosophers' lives are the highest form of birth and can therefore ensure the quickest release from the chain of rebirths: see, e.g., *Phaedrus* 248e–249a, where we are told that the soul of a genuine philosopher, who chooses to live as a philosopher three times in a row, obtains liberation from rebirths more quickly than ordinary souls; that is, after only three thousand years. A very similar idea is expressed by Empedocles, who maintains that exceptional people, such as poets, seers, physicians and political leaders (see B 146–47 [= EMP D 39 and D 40 Laks-Most]), find themselves in their last reincarnation and near, therefore, to becoming gods. Pindar too, in a fragment quoted by Plato, *Meno* 81b–c (fr. 133 Snell-Maehler) affirms that the souls of the righteous people are born 'proud kings' and as men 'who are swift in strength and greatest in wisdom'. These are called sacred heroes by mortals (ἥροες/ἁγνοὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπων καλέονται). For Empedocles' and Pindaric divine rewards at the end of the cycle of rebirths, see Chapter 2.2.4. It is worth noting that

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truly 'golden', wise and divine individuals and, therefore, worth of the name δαίμονες.[76]

3.4 Pythagoras on Rebirth and Demonology

Having investigated the concept of δαίμων as a guiding deity, especially in the narratives dealing with rebirth, and having expounded on the way this notion develops in the *Timaeus* from an external deity to the rational soul, whereas in the *Cratylus* we find the idea that divinity is connected with knowledge, I will now turn to the analysis of a major source for Empedocles' notion of rebirth: Pythagoras. As has been mentioned, Pythagoras is thought to develop a concept of rebirth in which the individual soul is in fact a δαίμων. In contrast, my claim in this section is that Pythagoras' doctrine seems to have exploited the notion of both δαίμων and ψυχή without assimilating them. This conclusion will finally offer us a basis from which to rethink the role of δαίμονες and individual souls in the Empedoclean doctrine of rebirth.

Let us first examine our evidence with regard to Pythagoras' notion of δαίμων. In a passage of Iamblichus' *On the Pythagorean Life*,[77] whose

the reason why Plato grants a quicker liberation from rebirths to philosophers has to do with knowledge of the Forms. Thus, knowledge is the way to become like gods, and philosophers are therefore wise because they know truly.

[76] Plato's ideas on δαίμων, soul and personal responsibility set the basis for later elaborations and expansions of the concept of δαίμων in relation to ψυχή and later speculations within the Academy began to question the full divine status of the δαίμονες, starting to represent their nature as composite and semi-divine. As per Schibli (1993: 147–48), Plato's disciple Xenocrates argued that the nature and role of the δαίμονες mirror their intermediary place between gods and souls, becoming beings with a composite nature: their divine part relates them to the gods, but they partake in the ψυχή's sensory affections and, consequently, in the experience of mortals. As Schibli further noted at pp. 154–55, moreover, Xenocrates' speculations on the composite nature of δαίμονες result from Plato's ideas on the personal δαίμων: 'what is important for us to note is the peculiar twist Xenocrates gives to the notion of the personal daemon, since the inner daemon was not usually identified with the soul. If then, according to Xenocrates, a man's soul is his daemon while he lives in a body, it would follow that when he is divested of his body his soul remains a daemon, only more starkly revealed as such.' Additionally, Schibli (Ibid. n.51) also points out that the identification of the personal δαίμων with the soul *in toto* is a step forward with respect to Plato's identification, in the *Timaeus*, of the δαίμων with the rational part of the soul. As a result, Xenocrates' 'peculiar twist' laid the groundwork for Plutarch's (and later authors') assumption that any soul is a δαίμων after death, and that there are δαίμονες that were once souls of human beings: see *Def. or.* 417b with Schibli (1993: 155). Plutarch's demonological theories have been strongly influenced by Xenocrates: see Schibli (1993). On Plutarch's demonology see, moreover, Soury (1942), Brenk (1973), Dillon (1977) and Santaniello (1996). However, it is noteworthy that Plutarch also knows traditional types of δαίμονες who are not souls, as Dillon (1977: 223–24) pointed out.

[77] Iambl. *VP* 6.30 = Fr. 192 Rose: καὶ μετὰ τῶν θεῶν τὸν Πυθαγόραν λοιπὸν κατηρίθμουν ὡς ἀγαθόν τινα δαίμονα καὶ φιλανθρωπότατον, οἱ μὲν τὸν Πύθιον, οἱ δὲ τὸν ἐξ Ὑπερβορέων Ἀπόλλωνα, οἱ δὲ τὸν Παιᾶνα, οἱ δὲ τῶν τὴν σελήνην κατοικούντων δαιμόνων ἕνα.

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source can be traced back to Aristotle's lost works on the Pythagoreans, Pythagoras is said to have been numbered among the gods as a good δαίμων and a great friend of human beings. Indeed, some disciples 'identified him with the Pythian, some with the Hyperborean, some with the Paean Apollo'. Analogously, in another passage of the same section, Iamblichus reports that Pythagoras was regarded as a δαίμων who dwells on the moon.[78] Iamblichus' passage can be compared to a similar report by Aelian, according to which Aristotle attested that the people of Croton called Pythagoras the Hyperborean Apollo.[79] This relates to another passage in Aelian reporting that Pythagoras used to tell people that he was born of a better nature than the mortal one.[80] Finally, Aristotle also attested that the Pythagoreans preserved as one of their greatest secrets a particular division of rational living beings into three categories: gods, human beings and those like Pythagoras.[81]

Iamblichus' attestation of Pythagoras as a δαίμων associates this notion with θεός. Not only is Pythagoras included among the gods, μετὰ τῶν θεῶν, he is also identified with Apollo, while the identification of Pythagoras with the Hyperborean Apollo is also attested in Aelian, who just like Iamblichus presumably had as his source Aristotle's lost works on Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans.[82] Moreover, the indication that Pythagoras was born of a better seed than an ordinary human being could be taken as a further hint at his divine nature. Finally, the Pythagorean classification of rational beings into three groups could be taken to support the idea that Pythagoras' extraordinary nature consisted of being a god in mortal form. The same idea could be referred to by the designation by the citizens of Croton of Pythagoras as a 'divine man'.[83]

Furthermore, the fame of Pythagoras as an extraordinary, divine being is confirmed by other Aristotelian fragments that connect Pythagoras to extravagant anecdotes, miraculous deeds and fanciful stories, such as his

[78] Iambl. *VP* 6.30 = Fr. 192 Rose: ἕνα τῶν δαιμόνων τὴν σελήνην κατοικούντων.

[79] Ael. *VH*. 2.26 = Fr. 191 Rose: Ἀριστοτέλης λέγει ὑπὸ τῶν Κροτωνιατῶν τὸν Πυθαγόραν Ἀπόλλωνα Ὑπερβόρειον προσαγορεύεσθαι.

[80] Ael. *VH* 4.17 = Fr. 191 Rose: Ἐδίδασκε Πυθαγόρας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ὅτι κρειττόνων γεγένηται σπερμάτων ἢ κατὰ τὴν φύσιν τὴν θνητήν.

[81] Iambl. *V.P.* 6. 31 = Arist. Fr. 192 Rose: ἱστορεῖ δὲ καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν τοῖς <περὶ τῆς> Πυθαγορικῆς φιλοσοφίας διαίρεσίν τινα τοιάνδε ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐν τοῖς πάνυ ἀπορρήτοις διαφυλάττεσθαι· τοῦ λογικοῦ ζῴου τὸ μέν ἐστι θεός, τὸ δ' ἄνθρωπος, τὸ δὲ οἷον Πυθαγόρας.

[82] See Kerényi (1940: 11–12), Burkert (1972: 141–44), Riedweg (2002: 97–99) and Primavesi (2013: 715). It is worth noting that Diogenes Laertius (8.5) reports Pythagoras' previous lives as Aethalides and Euphorbus. Whereas the former relates Pythagoras to Hermes, the latter connects him to Apollo. On Diogenes' passage, see Chapter 2.3.

[83] θεῖος ἀνήρ. See Detienne (1963: 133–34).

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gift of ubiquity and his ability to kill a poisonous snake with a bite as well as to talk to beasts and rivers.[84] Additionally, Aristotle knew the legend of Pythagoras' golden thigh,[85] a sign of him being more than an ordinary human. With all this considered, we can conclude that early Pythagoreans spread the belief in the exceptional nature of their master, who was considered as a divine being in human form.

Thus, we can appreciate that the concept of δαίμων is one of the ways used by our sources to emphasize the exceptional, divine nature of Pythagoras. Because the term serves to distinguish Pythagoras as a being superior to ordinary mortals, it seems unlikely that it also conveys the sense of soul working through rebirths. Unless we assume that Pythagoras envisaged rebirth as the exceptional fate of very few extraordinary beings.

However, if we consider the sources attesting to Pythagoras' doctrine of rebirth, the most likely inference is that the fate of death and rebirth is believed to be everyone's destiny. Moreover, our sources seem to indicate that Pythagoras believed that everyone's ψυχή, and not δαίμων, is reborn each time as a different form of a living being. In this respect, one of our earliest pieces of evidence, a fragment of Xenophanes (sixth century BCE), runs as follows:

> καί ποτέ μιν στυφελιζομένου σκύλακος παριόντα
> φασὶν ἐποικτῖραι καὶ τόδε φάσθαι ἔπος·
> 'παῦσαι μηδὲ ῥάπιζ', ἐπεὶ ἦ φίλου ἀνέρος ἐστίν
> ψυχή, τὴν ἔγνων φθεγξαμένης ἀίων
>
> (DK 21 B 7 [= XEN D 64 Laks-Most])

> They say that once when a puppy was being beaten
> as he was passing, he pitied it and spoke the following words:
> 'stop and do not keep hitting since it is certainly the soul of a friend,
> which I recognized when I heard it yelp'.

By illustrating Pythagoras[86] pitying a beaten puppy because he thought it was a friend reborn as a dog,[87] Xenophanes' lines are evidence of a Pythagorean doctrine of rebirth according to which the ψυχή of an ordinary human being – here an unspecified friend of Pythagoras – can be reborn as an animal. Besides attesting to rebirth as mortals' common fate, the

[84] Fr. 191 Rose. [85] Ibid.

[86] That the person who recognized the soul of a friend in a yelping puppy is to be identified with Pythagoras is attested by Diogenes Laertius 8.36, who is also the source of the quotation.

[87] There is a consensus that Xenophanes' lines contain a large element of mockery and ridicule, and the target of this mockery was specifically Pythagoras and his boasted ability, rather than the doctrine of metempsychosis *per se*. See Lesher (1992: 79–80).

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fragment also reveals that Pythagoras was able to recognize his friend – more correctly, the soul of his friend – through the puppy's voice. This detail highlights not only the preeminent role of ψυχή in Pythagoras' doctrine of rebirth, but also his conception of personal survival, having singled out the soul as the bearer of certain personal characteristics that enable the identification of a particular individual.[88]

If we look at additional sources attesting to Pythagoras' doctrine of rebirth, we find Ion of Chios (fifth century BCE), who, in a few lines of praise to Pherecydes of Syros (sixth century BCE), confirms that Pythagoras was considered the authority on such a doctrine:

> ὣς ὁ μὲν ἠνορέηι τε κεκασμένος ἠδὲ καὶ αἰδοῖ
> καὶ φθίμενος ψυχῆι τερπνὸν ἔχει βίοτον,
> εἴπερ Πυθαγόρης ἐτύμως ὁ σοφὸς περὶ πάντων
> ἀνθρώπων γνώμας εἶδε καὶ ἐξέμαθεν . . .
> (DK 36 B 4 [= PYTH a P 29 Laks-Most])

> Thus he, for his manhood and dignity
> his soul is enjoying a pleasant life even after his death
> if Pythagoras is truly a sage and more than any other
> human beings knew and understood the doctrines . . .

Ion of Chios connects the faith in Pherecydes' blissful life after death, a post-mortem reward for his extraordinary virtues, to Pythagoras' name and doctrine. What is relevant for the present investigation is that Ion specifies that it is Pherecydes' ψυχή which is enjoying a blissful life after death, thus connecting Pythagoras' doctrine with the concept of soul.

Similarly, a debated passage of Herodotus can be connected with Pythagoras' teaching on rebirth. In the second book of his *Histories*,[89] Herodotus argued that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and its reincarnations originated in Egypt, but was picked up by some Greeks too, whom Herodotus decided, for unspecified reasons,[90] to leave unnamed:

> Πρῶτοι δὲ καὶ τόνδε τὸν λόγον Αἰγύπτιοί εἰσι οἱ εἰπόντες, ὡς ἀνθρώπου ψυχὴ ἀθάνατός ἐστι, τοῦ σώματος δὲ καταφθίνοντος ἐς ἄλλο ζῷον αἰεὶ γινόμενον ἐσδύεται· ἐπεὰν δὲ πάντα περιέλθῃ τὰ χερσαῖα καὶ τὰ θαλάσσια καὶ τὰ πετεινά, αὖτις ἐς ἀνθρώπου σῶμα γινόμενον ἐσδύνειν· τὴν περιήλυσιν δὲ αὐτῇ γίνεσθαι ἐν τρισχιλίοισι ἔτεσι. Τούτῳ τῷ λόγῳ εἰσὶ

[88] On Empedocles' analogous concepts of individual identity and personal survival upon many deaths and lives, see Chapter 5.4.
[89] 2.123. [90] See Goedde (2007).

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> οἳ Ἑλλήνων ἐχρήσαντο, οἱ μὲν πρότερον, οἱ δὲ ὕστερον, ὡς ἰδίῳ ἑωυτῶν ἐόντι· τῶν ἐγὼ εἰδὼς τὰ οὐνόματα οὐ γράφω.
>
> The Egyptians were the first ones who profess this doctrine, that the soul of a human being is immortal and once the body has died always enters another living being: when it has passed through all living beings, the chthonic and aquatic animals as well as those living in the air, it enters again a human body. Its final liberation occurs after three thousand years. There were also some Greeks who follow this doctrine as if it were their own doctrine, some earlier, some later: although I know their names I do not write them down.

Several possible referents have been proposed for the anonymous Greeks who, 'some earlier and some later', believed in the soul's rebirths. Scholars have suggested identifying οἱ μὲν πρότερον with Pythagoras and οἱ δὲ ὕστερον with Empedocles,[91] or, respectively, with Orphic circles and the Pythagoreans.[92] Either way, we see that doctrines of rebirth in Greece, in addition to being commonly linked to the name of Pythagoras, employ the notion of ψυχή.

Further evidence from the fourth century BCE confirms this picture. For instance, in a passage of *De Anima* (407b 21), Aristotle complains that the Pythagoreans, in their theories on the soul, do not have an adequate explanation of the way ψυχή enters the body, but allege chance as the cause for that:

> ὥσπερ ἐνδεχόμενον κατὰ τοὺς Πυθαγορικοὺς μύθους τὴν τυχοῦσαν ψυχὴν εἰς τὸ τυχὸν ἐνδύεσθαι σῶμα.
>
> As it were possible, according to the Pythagorean myths, that each soul enters each body by chance.

Here again, we see the Pythagorean concept of rebirth exploiting the notion of ψυχή. There is, moreover, a Pythagorean *symbolon*,[93] attested by

[91] See H. S. Long (1948: 22), Timpanaro Cardini (1958: I, 21–22), Guthrie (1962: 160, 173 n.4), Kirk-Raven-Schofield (1983: 210f.) and West (1983: 8 n.11). More cautiously, Seaford (1986: 11–12) and Burkert (1972: 126 n.38). According to Bernabé (2004: 79), Herodotus refers to Pythagoras and Empedocles, but did not distinguish between Pythagoreans and Orphics.

[92] See Maddalena (1954: 346–47), Nilsson (1967: 701) and Casadio (1991: 128–29). According to Rathmann (1933: 55) the reference is to Orphics and Empedocles, but he does not exclude a reference to the Pythagoreans as well.

[93] With the term *symbola* various authors refer to collections of sayings or maxims that are part of a large body of traditional Pythagorean wisdom. They embrace a broad and diverse range of topics including cosmology, ethics, ritual and cult, dietary matters (probably related to ritual) and everyday behaviour. Most of the *symbola* are rules concerning what to do or not to do in particular situations or with reference to specific things. The Pythagoreans considered them the most important and most characteristic of the master's teachings. See Boehm (1905), Delatte (1915: 271–312), Burkert (1972: 188–90), Thom (1994; 2013), Hüffmeier (2001), Riedweg (2002: 61–62), Berra (2006), Huffman (2008: esp. 40–42) and Gemelli Marciano (2002; 2007b: 120–31; 2014). See also Vítek (2009).

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Iamblichus, *Protr.* 21, which prescribes that we should abstain from all that is *ensouled*: ἐμ-ψύχων ἀπέχεσθαι. This prescription, by warning about eating or using anything that has a ψυχή, could be connected to Pythagoras' doctrine of rebirth and thereby may be hinting at the individuals' ψυχή involved in it.

In conclusion, our earliest sources are a strong indication that Pythagoras professed a doctrine according to which ordinary mortals are reborn as different forms of living beings, including animals. Additionally, Pythagoras' doctrine of rebirth exploits the notion of ψυχή as the bearer of individual identity and personal survival upon several deaths and diverse forms of life. However, as we have seen at the beginning of this section, when looking at the tales on Pythagoras' own rebirths, it is a δαίμων that is said to have been reborn as diverse human beings. How can we interpret this apparent substitution of δαίμων for ψυχή?

My claim is that the Pythagorean circles, while professing a doctrine according to which the soul (ψυχή) of ordinary mortals undergoes processes of rebirth, also cared to spread the belief that their master was not an ordinary human. Nevertheless, the fact that he was of flesh and blood and looked like a normal human required the explanation that he also was a reincarnated individual. Thus, his nature being considered superior to that of ordinary people but his shape closely resembling that of a normal person were explained by resorting to the concept of divine reincarnation: Pythagoras' true nature is that of a reborn god, specifically, the reincarnation of Apollo. Related to this, the Pythagorean circles spread the belief that their master, as someone who was more than human, was in fact a favourable δαίμων and a divine friend of human beings. In virtue of his exceptional nature and also of his extraordinary wisdom regarding in a special way the souls and their destiny, as attested by our sources – a knowledge that he very likely acquired by going in and out of Hades[94] – Pythagoras was regarded as a δαίμων φύλαξ who watches over and guides human beings to their destiny in this life and beyond.[95] In this sense, the Pythagorean demonology reflects the notion of δαίμων in Plato's myths. As we have seen above, Plato made extensive use of the idea of δαίμονες φύλακες (and also of δαίμονες ψυχοπομποί) that watch over and guide the individuals through the

[94] See Chapter 2.3 on this.

[95] In Chapter 2.2.2 I argued that, in his *katabasis* to the underworld, Empedocles has Pythagoras as a guide.

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whole parabola of their lives. However, we could also appreciate that an analogous concept was already attested in Hesiod.

In conclusion, the early Pythagorean circles developed a special demonology, with the aim of explaining their master's exceptional personality as coming from the gods. Moreover, they closely linked such demonology to the doctrine of rebirth they professed.[96] As the example of Pythagoras shows, a god could enter the cycle of rebirths designed primarily for the ψυχαί of ordinary mortals and be reborn as an extraordinary individual, who guides people to a better destiny. My final claim, moreover, is that this particular bond between δαίμονες and ψυχαί within the concept of rebirth is an innovation of Pythagoras (or early Pythagorean circles) and his special legacy to Empedocles.

3.5 Empedocles, *daimon phylax*

As we have seen, by returning to the texts themselves, the assumptions that scholars have offered around the meaning and role of δαίμων as soul, which has implications for our reading of Empedocles' own notion, have fallen short. Specifically in the section above, I have shown that Pythagoras, Empedocles' doctrinal model, did not develop a concept of rebirth in which the individual soul is a δαίμων, but rather exploits the notion of ψυχή as the agent of ordinary humans' reincarnations. In addition, we have seen that Pythagorean circles professed the belief in gods who can be reborn as (very few) exceptional individuals like Pythagoras himself. This indicates that Pythagoras developed a demonology that was bound to his doctrine of general rebirth, but never overlapped with it. Given Pythagoras' role as a doctrinal model for Empedocles' belief in rebirth, as we have seen in Chapters 2.2.3 and 2.3, I will now argue that B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) and the other demonological fragments are also intended to develop Empedocles' own 'demonology'; that is, his portrayal not merely as a god, but more specifically as a δαίμων φύλαξ, a divine protector and guide for human beings.

As we have seen in Chapter 2.2, the demonological fragments account for Empedocles' extraordinary nature as a god who experienced an exceptional *katabasis*-journey to the reign of the dead. As I have repeatedly argued, this

[96] Admittedly, it is not at all certain whether this particular portrayal of Pythagoras as a divine being is the result of an attempt, within the first Pythagorean circles, to praise the figure of the founder or whether Pythagoras himself had already shown the intention to create his own legend, just like Empedocles.

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places him in a unique position compared to the rest of human beings. This conclusion is perfectly in line with an interpretation of his concept of δαίμων that accords with that found in epic poetry,[97] in Plato's myths of the underworldly journeys of the soul and, above all, in our sources for Pythagoras' demonology. However, the idea that a god could be reborn as different forms of living beings and finally as an individual of exceptional ability and knowledge, who teaches people their place in this world and beyond, is Pythagoras' special legacy to Empedocles. As we have just seen, the Pythagoreans construct their claim to the superior nature and wisdom of his master around the concept of δαίμων. Moreover, Pythagoras is the reincarnation of Apollo and, as such, the δαίμων φύλαξ *par excellence*. Further, by tying their demonology to their doctrine of rebirth, the early Pythagoreans paved the way for the notion that a god could enter the cycle of reincarnations designed primarily for ordinary mortals.

The accumulation of elements just provided suggests that, following the example of his doctrinal model, Empedocles developed his own demonology. The story of his being a δαίμων going in and out of Hades, understood primarily as authorial validation, provides him with wisdom and, therefore, a role vis-à-vis his fellow humans: through his philosophy he will guide people in this world and beyond. In other words, just like Pythagoras, Empedocles depicts himself as a δαίμων φύλαξ. In Chapter 6.2.1, we will see that Empedocles' didactic attitude towards Pausanias highlights the special role Empedocles ascribes to himself as a δαίμων φύλαξ who, through his philosophy, guides his disciple along the way to godhood. Yet, while only Empedocles – or, more precisely, only very few exceptional individuals like Pythagoras and Empedocles – are reincarnated δαίμονες, born of a better seed than humans, the rest of ordinary mortals are *eo ipso* reincarnated beings.

3.6 'Physical' *daimones*

For the sake of completeness, there is a last issue that needs to be addressed before bringing this chapter to a close. It concerns a further occurrence of the term δαίμων within the chiefly physical context of Empedocles' zoogony.[98] For this reason, it is generally considered a 'physical' use of the term δαίμων (in contrast to the more 'religious' occurrence in

[97] See my analysis in Section 3.2 above. See already Primavesi (2006a: 55): 'since Empedocles is using the epic poetry, it seems *prima facie* far more likely that his use of "daimōn" is guided either by Hesiod . . . or by Homer'.

[98] Simpl. *De caelo*, 587.18–20 (DK 31 B 59 [= EMP D 149 Laks-Most]).

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B 115 [= EMP D 10 Laks-Most]) and, as such, it has been given a different referent and meaning than the occurrence in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most); indeed, a meaning that is thought to be more pertinent to zoogonic speculations and, more generally, to *On Nature*.

Simplicius' passage runs as follows:

> ἐν ταύτῃ οὖν τῇ καταστάσει 'μουνομελῆ' ἔτι τὰ γυῖα ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ Νείκους διακρίσεως ὄντα ἐπλανᾶτο τῆς πρὸς ἄλληλα μίξεως ἐφιέμενα.
>
> 'αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ, φησί, κατὰ μεῖζον ἐμίσγετο δαίμονι δαίμων',
>
> ὅτε τοῦ Νείκους ἐπεκράτει λοιπὸν ἡ Φιλότης,
>
> 'ταῦτά τε συμπίπτεσκον, ὅπῃ συνέκυρσεν ἕκαστα,
> ἄλλα τε πρὸς τοῖς πολλὰ διηνεκῆ ἐξεγένοντο'.
>
> ἐπὶ τῆς Φιλότητος οὖν ὁ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ἐκεῖνα εἶπεν, οὐχ ὡς ἐπικρατούσης ἤδη τῆς Φιλότητος, ἀλλ' ὡς μελλούσης ἐπικρατεῖν, ἔτι δὲ τὰ ἄμικτα καὶ μονόγυια δηλούσης.
>
> (DK 31 B 59 [= EMP D 149 Laks-Most])

> So in this state (of the world), the limbs which were still isolated members because of the separation of Strife wandered about desiring mixture with each other.
>
> 'But when δαίμων mixed more with δαίμων',
>
> when Love was then achieving predominance over Strife,
>
> 'these things were falling together, as each happened to meet
> and many other things in addition to these were continually arising'.
>
> So Empedocles said these things happened in the period of Love, not in the sense that she was about to predominate, but in the period when Love has been revealing things still unmixed and single-limbed.

Simplicius quotes and comments upon some Empedoclean verses whose topic deals with the generation of living beings by mixtures of single limbs (or single-limbed organisms); that is, the second zoogonic stage. Empedocles' ideas on zoogony are known to us thanks to a concise report by Aëtius attesting to four stages in the generations of living beings: first, the birth of single limbs or single-limbed organisms; second, the casual aggregations of single limbs in imperfectly integrated beings and monsters; third, the formation of well-integrated beings; and fourth, the birth of sexed animals.[99]

The passage quoted above is part of a section[100] in which Simplicius dealt with the beginning of zoogony by Love. Because of Strife's overwhelming contrast, Love initially succeeded just in the formation of single-limbed

[99] Aëtius 5.19.5 = DK 31 A 72 (= EMP D 151 Laks-Most). On this passage and, more generally, on Empedocles' zoogony, see Ferella (2021) and here Chapters 7.1.3 and 7.1.4.

[100] *De Caelo* 586.29–587.20.

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organisms (that is, single limbs without a whole animal body).[101] Then, when she gained more and more power over Strife and gradually achieved predominance, as Simplicius tells us, the single-limbed organisms began to come together as they happened to meet. The mention in Simplicius' passage of separated limbs that desire mixture with each other suggests a reference to the transition from the first to the second zoogonic stage, namely from single limbs to imperfectly integrated beings and monsters arisen from casual mixtures of these single limbs.

On first reading, the 'physical' occurrence of the term δαίμων seems to have nothing in common with the exiled god punished through rebirths of B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most). On second thought, however, we will see that there is an underlying conceptual unity among the diverse uses of this term. Be that as it may, scholars have observed that, considering the context provided by Simplicius, the referent of δαίμων in B 59 (= EMP D 149 Laks-Most) can be narrowed down to three things: (1) the four elements, (2) limbs or (3) Love and Strife.

Primavesi excludes that δαίμων means 'limbs', since 'if the *daimones* were the isolated limbs, the process described in the first line of B 59 would be the same as the process described in the second line' and '[t]hus, there would be no material difference between the protasis and the first part of the apodosis, which seems quite unlikely'.[102] Primavesi therefore argues that δαίμων here means the four elements[103] referred to as 'blurred' gods – that is, downgraded or lessened deities.[104] Primavesi's argument is that the elements are generally regarded as divine in Empedocles, but are called by the names of significant θεοί.[105] So if here they are referred to as δαίμονες rather than θεοί it must be because – so argues Primavesi – Empedocles wanted to highlight their lessened and deficient (to use Primavesi's word) status as a result of them being involved in mixtures.[106] Be that as it may, on this interpretation, Empedocles' fragment explains that a growing mixture of δαίμονες-elements produces an increase in encounters among single limbs (or single-limbed organisms).

[101] See B 57 (= EMP D 154 Laks-Most): ἦ πολλαὶ μὲν κόρσαι ἀναύχενες ἐβλάστησαν, / γυμνοὶ δ' ἐπλάζοντο βραχίονες εὔνιδες ὤμων, / ὄμματά τ' οἴ' ἐπλανᾶτο πενητεύοντα μετώπων.

[102] Primavesi (2008b: 260). [103] Ibid. So also Wright (1995: 212).

[104] Primavesi seems to draw on the widely accepted notion of δαίμων as a downgraded deity.

[105] See, e.g., B 6 (= EMP D 57 Laks-Most), quoted and translated in Chapter 2.7.

[106] Specifically, Primavesi (2008b: 260) argues that the elements 'seem to be addressed as daimones as long as their divinity is blurred'; that is, when they are mixed. Instead, when they are no longer involved in mixtures their divine status is fully regained and in fact 'they form *long lived gods*' (Primavesi's emphasis).

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To this, Trépanier replies that, if δαίμονες are the elements, the change of subject between protasis and apodosis, though possible, is slightly bizarre. In particular,

> [w]hy do we need to be told that the elements were mixing more, if the real point of the passage, given in line 3, is not to describe the emergence of mixture or compounds from non mixture, as for example in B 35, but the true novelty of the situation, the emergence of the monsters from previously separated compound limbs?[107]

On account of this issue, Trépanier resolves to read δαίμων as 'limb'. In fact, in his reading, an identity between protasis and apodosis is not only possible, it even

> allows him [that is, Empedocles] to underline the dual agency of Love *and* Strife in zoogony. In line 1, κατὰ μεῖζον ἐμίσγετο denotes the increased relative power of Love over Strife . . . But in line 2, to avert any expectations of complete control by Love in this environment, Empedocles uses συμπίπτεσκον to denote frequent and violent collisions. Both it and διηνεκῆ are his way of insisting that though Love was on the rise, Strife was still very much in play.[108]

In other words, Trépanier argues that δαίμων in Empedocles' line ought to mean 'limb' to emphasize the dual agency of Love and Strife in zoogony, namely the fact that, in the generation of living beings, both forces are 'very much in play'.[109]

However, if the Empedoclean lines are to emphasize the dual agency of Love and Strife in zoogony, hence their dual influence over the single limbs, then the expression δαίμονι δαίμων is better translated as referring to Love and Strife. It is worth noting that this is precisely the way in which Simplicius – who could read these lines within their original context[110] – interpreted the Empedoclean quotation. Nevertheless, that δαίμονι δαίμων refers to Love and Strife has been excluded by both Primavesi and Trépanier. Both scholars contend that if δαίμονι δαίμων means Love and Strife, then the whole line would indicate that the two forces 'mix more' (κατὰ μεῖζον ἐμίσγετο). But this is unlikely – so they argue – since there is never mixture between Love and Strife, but only conflict. Admittedly, Primavesi acknowledges that the Greek verb μείγνυμι or μίγνυμι can have both a positive and a hostile sense, meaning

[107] Trépanier (2014: 179–80). [108] Ibid. 180. The emphasis is by the author. [109] Ibid.
[110] Simplicius was followed by Diels (1901: 129) and Diels-Kranz at p. 333 ('die Liebe mit dem Streite').

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both 'to bring into connection with' or 'make acquainted with', and 'to mix in battle'. The positive and hostile sense are both well attested in Homer, where the passive form of the verb can mean both 'to be brought into contact', hence 'to be mixed', and 'to be mixed in fight'. However, Primavesi excludes that Empedocles employed μείγνυμι and its derivatives in the hostile sense as their occurrences in the extant fragments indicate a mixture that produces union and not struggle.[111]

However, the occurrences of μείγνυμι in Empedocles' poetry are admittedly too scanty to be regarded as representative of an Empedoclean *usus*. Therefore, any analysis aiming at establishing the meaning of terms whose occurrences in a single author are *per se* insufficient, as in the case we are analyzing here, must take into account their occurrences in the author's literary models; that is, for Empedocles, first and foremost Homer's epic language. As the Homeric occurrences show, the positive and the hostile sense are fused in the epic use of μείγνυμι. Thus, in the absence of any genuine reason to assume the contrary, we are obliged on balance to accept the fact that the positive and hostile sense are fused in Empedocles' occurrences of μείγνυμι too. This means that there is an ambiguity in Empedocles' use of μείγνυμι as there is in the process of mixing when it involves Love and Strife. In other words, we cannot exclude in principle that they may mix in love within the metaphor domain of a sexual relationship,[112] as Ares and Aphrodite do in a famous Homeric passage.[113] Surely, they may mix in conflict, as Empedocles' use of the military metaphor domain in his cosmological representation[114] invites us to think. Thus, κατὰ μεῖζον ἐμίσγετο δαίμονι δαίμων in Simplicius' passage may well mean a hostile relation between the two δαίμονες; that is, between Love and Strife.

Yet Primavesi (at 260) and Trépanier (at 179) argue further that, even though we retain the hostile sense in the Empedoclean occurrences of μείγνυμι and its derivatives, it is nevertheless odd (Trépanier) and even implausible (Primavesi), to deduce from a growing conflict between Love and Strife an increase in unification. However, as we have seen above, Simplicius tells us that the two Empedoclean zoogonic stages he is dealing

[111] Primavesi (2008b: 260).
[112] As Sedley (1989), for instance, implies in his reconstruction of the proem to Empedocles' *On Nature*.
[113] *Od.* 8. 266–366.
[114] That Empedocles uses a military metaphor in his cosmological representation is acknowledged by the majority of scholars. On Empedocles' use of this metaphor, see Graham (2005), Ferella (2020) and Chapter 7.3.

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with occur in a phase of the world in which Strife is still very powerful, whereas Love has just begun regaining power over her rival. This ensures that Love's increase of power over Strife entails in parallel an increase in conflict between the two forces, for Love must intensify its unifying power to counter the separating force of Strife. It follows that, *pace* Primavesi and Trépanier, processes of mixtures and generations, which can bring about increasing unification, do derive from an increasing conflict between the two forces.

In conclusion, Simplicius' interpretation of this Empedoclean passage stands. The expression δαίμονι δαίμων refers here to Love and Strife, whereas κατὰ μεῖζον ἐμίσγετο indicates their battle, which increases as Love intensifies her power over her enemy. It is this increase of conflict that brings about encounters and unions of single limbs as well as further zoogonic generations.

With all this given, let us return to the question of whether δαίμων in B 59 (= EMP D 149 Laks-Most) could be in any way related to the occurrence of δαίμων in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most). It is worth observing that although, over the years, scholars have shown diverse methodological approaches to explore this issue, all take the term δαίμων in Empedocles as a vehicle of equivalences in different contexts. One approach, for instance, assumes that the two δαίμονες, the 'religious' one of B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) and the 'physical' one of B 59 (= EMP D 149 Laks-Most), relate by virtue of the fact that their physical composition ultimately shares some elements. In this respect, Cornford hypothesized that δαίμων in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) and δαίμων in B 59 (= EMP D 149 Laks-Most), though indicating different things, relate because both have a share in Love. Cornford argues that, in the case of δαίμων in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most), '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'.[115] On the other hand, Cornford assumes that the δαίμων mixing more with δαίμων in B 59 (= EMP D 149 Laks-Most) indicates increasing mixtures of (*quanta* of)

[115] Cornford (1926: 59). Cornford's hypothesis gained some followers, such as Kahn (1960), O'Brien (1969: 325–36) and Martin-Primavesi (1999). An analogous approach is taken by Darcus (1977), who assumes that δαίμων is a manifestation of the φρὴν ἱερή, 'Holy Mind' (B 134 [= EMP D 93 Laks-Most]), which can both love and hate: 'Empedocles refers to the movement of daimōnes. They wander . . . and mingle with one another (B 59.1). . . . In B 59 then Empedocles describes the result of one daimōn, able to love and hate, meeting with another, which also loves and hates' (at 189). Although B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) shows that δαίμων does love and hate (by being able to trust both Love and Strife), Darcus' hypothesis that δαίμων is a manifestation of the φρὴν ἱερή, just like Cornford's hypothesis, has no textual basis.

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Love. In this respect, by describing Love's increasing power over Strife, Cornford's reading also partially makes sense of Simplicius' explanation of the Empedoclean line. However, as scholars have not failed to point out, Cornford's hypothesis that δαίμων is (a quantum of) Love has no textual evidence, either in Empedocles' own words or in their sources. Moreover, from the perspective of Empedocles' antinomy of forces,[116] saying that Love could be 'stained' with Strife (as is the δαίμων in B 115 [= EMP D 10 Laks-Most]) seems quite unconvincing.

A different approach to the issue has been put forward by Primavesi from 2001 onwards. According to his reading, Empedocles did not mean to underline elements the two δαίμονες have in common; rather, δαίμων in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) and δαίμων in B 59 (= EMP D 149 Laks-Most) mean utterly different things. However, by using the same word, Empedocles aims at emphasizing a strong connection between the religious and physical δαίμονες and, therefore, between the religious and physical poems.[117] Specifically, Primavesi interprets the story of the transmigrating god (the religious δαίμων) of B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) as a mythological counterpart (or mirror, to use a metaphor employed by Primavesi) of Empedocles' physics. On this basis, he suggests that Empedocles' poems reflect complementary perspectives on the cosmic cycle. On the one hand, δαίμων in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) conveys the internal perspective of guilty individual beings (Primavesi calls this perspective *theologia fabulosa*). On the other hand, in *On Nature*, we have a proto-scientific external perspective (labelled by Primavesi as *theologia naturalis*), in which δαίμων in B 59.1 (= EMP D 149.1 Laks-Most]) is taken as shifting the perspective from the level of the isolated individual beings (that is, the perspective expressed by δαίμονες in B 115 [= EMP D 10 Laks-Most]) to that of the four elements, roots of all things. As a result, according to Primavesi, the process of becoming a transmigrating δαίμων on the mythical level corresponds, in the physics, to the process involving the four elements in mixtures within the cosmic cycle.[118]

[116] See Chapter 4.2.

[117] Either by allegory, as in 2006a – 'this myth [i.e., of the wandering gods in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most)] is an allegorical mirror . . . of the physical system' (e.g., p. 74). Or by analogy, as in 2008b – e.g., p. 252, 'mythological mirror . . . of Empedocles' physical theory' – and in 2013, e.g., p. 674 ('strukturell analog') und 717 ('Analogieverhältnis').

[118] According to Primavesi (2008b), the elements 'fall' as δαίμονες when they are impure; that is, mixed with each other to form compounds in the world. For this reason, they can be called by the same name as the impure gods of B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most): δαίμονες. However, they regain divine rewards and become *gods* (see B 6 [= EMP D 57 Laks-Most]) when they are pure and homogeneous masses of elements due to Strife's action.

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In his interpretation Trépanier applies what seems to be a mixed approach, situated somewhere between Primavesi's and Cornford's. Specifically, in line with Primavesi's hypothesis, Trépanier argues that δαίμων in B 59 (= EMP D 149 Laks-Most) and δαίμων in B 115 (= EMP D 149 Laks-Most) mean different things, precisely, limbs and souls respectively. However, in line with Cornford, Trépanier maintains that the two occurrences have some elements in common; that is, they relate by virtue of their being 'material compounds, naturally occurring and enduring entities'.[119] However, their differences are responsible for different positions in Empedocles' ranking of life forms.[120] Whereas the δαίμονες-souls of B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) occupy a middle position in this ranking, 'inferior to gods in duration, but more long-lasting than [animal] organs', the δαίμονες-limbs of B 59 (= EMP D 149 Laks-Most) are to be placed at the bottom of this scale.[121]

Although different from one another, all these approaches encounter the same major objection. They rest upon the erroneous assumption that Empedocles' terminology has semantic and referential stability. In fact, only by assuming semantic and referential stability are we legitimated to describe a certain term in each context in which it occurs (in our case the term δαίμων) as referring to the same thing or as being a vehicle of equivalences among the respective contexts; that is, essentially, to take that term as something like a technical notion in Empedocles' thought. However, in a seminal 2001 contribution, M. L. Gemelli Marciano emphasized that, as it is profoundly reminiscent of the epic language and metre, Empedocles' poetry displays a vocabulary of a highly polysemous nature, which lacks semantic stability. This means that 'different names can have the same referent and, vice versa, identical words or expressions can have, in diverse contexts, different characteristics and denotations'.[122] Consequently, when dealing with languages of this kind, 'we cannot always establish automatic and generalising correlations

[119] Trépanier (2014: 191).

[120] Ibid. esp. 194: 'This ranking is important, I think, because it offers us an obvious way of thinking together all Empedoclean substances, from limbs to gods, into a single unified scheme: they are all to be ranked within an Empedoclean *scala naturae* based on mixture or degrees of integration under Love.'

[121] As I am going to explain below, my approach to the question of the relation of the two δαίμονες (in B 115 [= EMP D 10 Laks-Most] and B 59 [= EMP D 149 Laks-Most]) is essentially different from that of Trépanier. However, I agree with his idea of δαίμονες as integrated beings, on which see Chapter 4.5. Moreover, I am extremely sympathetic to the main claim of his proposal which is, in his words, 'to insist that the entire furniture of the world, from trees, birds, men and women, to gods, are all of them, elemental products or, to be exactingly correct, products of all 6 first principles' (2014: 194–95).

[122] At 109: 'Una caratteristica dei poemi e della lingua empedoclea . . . è infatti una grossa instabilità semantica: denominazioni diverse possono avere lo stesso referente e viceversa, parole o espressioni uguali possono assumere in contesti diversi connotazioni e denotazioni diverse' (p. 209).

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on the basis of lexical coincidences without taking into account, each time, each specific context' in which a given term occurs.[123]

Semantic instability in Empedocles' language is prominent concerning terms that indicate the divine sphere. This has to do with the nature of such terms, which are traditionally predicative notions, according to the definition of G. M. A. Grube (not 'God is love', but 'Love *is god*'). In fact, 'any power, any force that we see in the world, which is not born with us and will continue after we are gone, could thus be called a god, and most of them were'.[124] By this standard, we find that, in Empedocles' verses, the term θεός is a chiefly predicative concept. As such, it is used to indicate different beings, specifically: Empedocles himself;[125] (traditional) gods, either as a group[126] or individually mentioned by the names of Ares, Zeus, Kronos, Poseidon and Kypris;[127] the long-lived gods;[128] the Muse;[129] the elements;[130] the Sphairos and the Holy Mind;[131] Love and Strife;[132] and those who escape rebirths.[133]

Given that, as we have seen in Section 3.5 above, the term δαίμων seems to be used by Empedocles interchangeably as a synonym for θεός, the inference is that δαίμων too is a predicative notion. Indeed, it is used to indicate very different beings: guilty and exiled gods,[134] and hence Empedocles himself;[135] a deity who guides the souls in the underworld;[136]

[123] At 212: 'Risulta chiaro che, essendo l'oscillazione semantica e referenziale un tratto costante del lessico empedocleo, non si possono stabilire correlazioni automatiche e generalizzanti sulla base di coincidenze lessicali senza tener conto ogni volta del contesto specifico.'

[124] Grube (1935: 50).

[125] B 112.4 (= EMP D 4.4 Laks-Most) and B 23.11 (= EMP D 60.11 Laks-Most), with my discussion in Chapter 1.4.

[126] B 3.1 (= EMP D 44.1 Laks-Most), B 115.1 (= EMP D 10.1 Laks-Most), B 131.4 (= EMP D 7.4 Laks-Most) and B 132 (= EMP D 8 Laks-Most).

[127] B 128 (= EMP D 25 Laks-Most) and B 3.1 (= EMP D 44.1 Laks-Most).

[128] B 21.12 (= EMP D 77a.12 Laks-Most), B 23.8 (= EMP D 60.8 Laks-Most), PStrasb. a(ii) 2 (= EMP D 73. 273 Laks-Most). On the identification of the long-lived gods, see Chapter 4.5.

[129] In B 131 (= EMP D 7 Laks-Most), the Muse is called 'immortal', an epithet that in epic poetry defines deities. In B 3 (= EMP D 44 Laks-Most), the Muse can be considered one of the θεοί that Empedocles invokes immediately before.

[130] Called by the name of gods: Zeus, Hera, Aidonaeus and Nestis, in B 6 (= EMP D 57 Laks-Most).

[131] B 29 (= EMP D 92 Laks-Most), B 31 (= EMP D 95 Laks-Most) and B 134 (= EMP D 93 Laks-Most).

[132] Called by the name of deities, such as Aphrodite or Kypris (B 17.24 [= EMP D 73.254 Laks-Most], B 66 [= EMP D 159 Laks-Most]; B 71.4 [= EMP D 61.4 Laks-Most], B 73.1 [= EMP D 199.1 Laks-Most]) and Kotos or Eris (B 21.7 [= EMP D 77a.7 Laks-Most]; B 20.4 [= EMP D 73.4 Laks-Most]).

[133] B 146–47 (= EMP D 39 and D 40 Laks-Most). [134] B 115.5 (= EMP D 10.5 Laks-Most).

[135] B 115.13 (= EMP D 10.13 Laks-Most).

[136] Porphyry's commentary upon B 120 (= EMP D 16 Laks-Most). For the identification with Pythagoras, see Chapter 2.2.3.

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a goddess in the underworld who dresses souls with a body;[137] and Love and Strife.[138] It is methodologically unsound mechanically to try to correlate all the occurrences of this term in Empedocles' poems. It follows that, just like θεός, δαίμων can be used in different contexts to indicate different divine entities, without being vehicles of any equivalences.

By way of concluding, my reading of the 'physical' δαίμων as Love and Strife and, more generally, of δαίμων as a predicative notion, is very much in line with the interpretation of the notion of δαίμων given thus far, namely as a concept for god or deity more broadly, while respecting the polysemous and instable nature of Empedocles' language. On my interpretation, therefore, there is no tension between the meaning of δαίμων in the zoogonic context of B 59 (= EMP D 149 Laks-Most) and the occurrence in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most). As Love and Strife can be called δαίμονες because they are gods, δαίμων in B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) analogously indicates a divine being, whose qualities of being guilty, exiled and reborn as many mortal forms are idiosyncratic to the specific context of Empedocles' vicissitude and of his own presentation. Yet, despite all possible specifications, occurrences of the term δαίμων within Empedocles' texts, just like in Hesiod's, Pythagoras' and Plato's, are still intimately connected to the traditional, Homeric sense of 'god'.

3.7 Conclusions

The present chapter has focused on an exploration and clarification of one of the most pivotal concepts introduced by the proemial fragments, that of δαίμων. As it occurs in the context of Empedocles' story of exile and rebirths, the main goal of this exploration has been to provide the linguistic and conceptual equipment for a more comprehensive understanding of Empedocles' concept of rebirth and, consequently, to work out a way to reconcile it with the principles and theories of his natural philosophy. An analogous analysis will be pursued in the next chapter, where the linguistic and conceptual notions under discussion are those associated with the Empedoclean conception of godhood. This and the following chapter are then to be considered as an essential premise to the consideration of Empedocles' intertwining of religion and physics, which will then be pursued more extensively in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

[137] B 126 (= EMP D 19 Laks-Most). [138] B 59 (= EMP D 149 Laks-Most).

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The deepening of Empedocles' key-concept of δαίμων has also concerned the role the story of the guilty god plays in his doctrine of rebirth and has resulted in the rejection of the standard reading that B 115 (= EMP D 10 Laks-Most) is meant to ground Empedocles' concept of rebirth. In contrast, I have shown that the account presented in the demonological fragment is meant to give prominence to Empedocles' almost unique condition of a reincarnated god in opposition to all other ordinary mortals.

Thus, in order to investigate which notion of godhood Empedocles may have had in mind when depicting himself as a δαίμων, I have embarked on a detailed investigation of the concept of δαίμων in Greek authors attesting beliefs in rebirth, especially Plato and Pythagoras, besides Empedocles. Above all, the extended treatment of Plato in the central part of this chapter has revealed that Plato keeps δαίμονες and ψυχαί distinct in nature and role, conceiving of the former in very traditional terms as gods guiding and protecting souls in this life and beyond.

This picture of the concept of δαίμων has then been confirmed and expanded by the investigation of Pythagoras' own notion and its role in rebirth. By looking at our earliest and most reliable sources for early Pythagorenism, it has been shown that the Pythagoreans developed the innovative idea that a god could exceptionally enter the cycle of rebirths, which is primarily reserved for ordinary ψυχαί. As Pythagoras' own story attests, he is truly a god, indeed Hyperborean Apollo, reborn in human form. As has been argued, this original notion that few extraordinary individuals are truly the reincarnation of gods was picked up by Empedocles who, by following Pythagoras' 'demonology', depicts himself as a god in human form, a δαίμων φύλαξ who guides people in this life and beyond. Yet, while only a very few exceptional individuals like Pythagoras and Empedocles are reincarnated δαίμονες, the rest of ordinary mortals are *eo ipso* reincarnated beings. It is to them that Empedocles' doctrine of rebirth is addressed.

In conclusion, having examined in great detail the notion of δαίμων in B 115 and the other demonological fragments related to it, as well as having considered its use by those authors before and after Empedocles, who also profess their belief in rebirth, we can assert that in the proem to *On Nature*, Empedocles does not construct a story that is aimed to represent, in mythical terms, the post-mortem destiny of our own soul. Rather, these verses are meant to construct Empedocles' own demonology which, just like that of his master Pythagoras, is bound to, but does not overlap, with

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his doctrine of rebirth. In establishing this intention, and correcting previous misinterpretations, the necessary groundwork has been laid for the reconstruction of Empedocles' doctrine of rebirth, taking another step towards demonstrating the ways in which his physical system can accommodate his concept of rebirth as a positive doctrine within his wider and unified philosophical programme.

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