

CHAPTER THREE

SOUL

Background

4 In the previous chapter we discussed how the early Greeks viewed psychological activity. We saw that they considered several psychic entities responsible for it. Predominant among these were *noos*, *phrên*, and *thumos*. Although often sharing many activities, these each display individual traits, matching facets of the psychological range that humans enjoy. With respect to intellectual activities, *noos* accounts for insight, *phrenes* for deliberation, *thumos* for energetic thinking that leads to action. All take part in emotion but particularly *thumos*. All are connected with volitional activities such as desiring, daring, wishing, or ordering. We saw too the way in which *kradiê*, *êtor*, and *kêr* functioned as 'heart'.

If we can imagine how early Greeks saw their inner nature, we would see them observing these different psychic entities functioning within. Each is distinct, similar to the others but possessing particular traits. These entities exist to be relied upon and to be used but they are not in any way simply submissive. On the contrary, they have their own independent activity and sometimes need to be checked or controlled. Nor do the early Greeks see a closed setting within. Instead, all the entities are open to the influence of outside forces. The gods can easily affect them in positive or negative ways. What would be apparent then to our observers would be a rich capacity for psychological activity deriving from sources with distinctive natures.

As we watch these early Greeks looking within, we note something pointed out frequently in chapter 2: they have an identity distinct from these psychic entities. In their entirety these entities do not simply compose what we would call someone's 'personality' or 'self'. It is true that individuals may find in each a seat of many of their deepest qualities but none adequately expresses the full person. Nor could any, since each proves vulnerable to many outside forces and itself frequently changes. As we mentioned also in chapter 2, this way of viewing psychological activities does not mean that the

early Greeks did not have a sense of 'self'.¹ They clearly did. Achilles knows very well who he is. His whole future has been determined by a choice he himself has made, the choice of an early death. Agamemnon and Odysseus are also quite aware of who they are. But what these heroes do is to take a sense of self for granted. There is no examination or analysis of this concept and there is no one term to express it fully.

This situation, however, does not persist. What we can see in Greek literature is that by the late fifth century a particular term has come to designate the seat of personality or self. This term is *psychê*.² Some degree of unification too has taken place with reference to psychological functions. *Psychê* becomes the seat of emotion, intellect, and will.³ Yet in Homer and much of early Greek literature it does not function at all in the living person as a psychic entity. A significant change has taken place in the meaning of this term. In this chapter we will trace some stages in its transformation.

Homer

In Homer *psychê* is mentioned over eighty-five times. In Hesiod it appears only once at *W. & D.* 686 but what is said of it here and in three fragments proves to be of interest. We shall focus mainly on Homer. In his poems *psychê* is mentioned in the living person only when death approaches or when a death-like condition, fainting, occurs. In the living person at these times *psychê* is not connected

¹ See chapter 2, note 2 for bibliography on this question.

² On *psychê* in Homer and Hesiod see Böhme, Bremmer, Burnet, Claus, Dihle, 'Totenglaube', Dodds, Fränkel, Furley, Garland, 'Causation', *Death*, Gelzer (ch. 2, note 2), Harrison, H.G. Ingenkamp, 'Inneres Selbst und Lebensträger', *Rh. M.*, 1975, vol. 118, pp. 48-61, Jaeger, *Theology*, Jahn, Krafft, M. McDonald, 'Terms for "Life" in Homer: An Examination of Early Concepts in Psychology', *Trans. and Stud., Coll. of Physicians of Philadelphia*, 1982, vol. 4, pp. 26-58, Nehring, Onians, Otto, Redfield, O. Regenbogen, 'Daimonion Psychês Phôs' in *Kleine Schriften*, Munich, 1961, pp. 1-28, Rohde, Rüsche, Schauffer, Snell, *Discovery*, S.D. Sullivan, 'A Multi-Faceted Term: *Psychê* in Homer, the *Homeris Hymns*, and Hesiod', *SIFC*, 1988, vol. 6, pp. 151-180, Vivante, J. Warden, '*Psychê* in Homeric Death-Descriptions', *Phoenix*, 1971, vol. 25, pp. 95-103.

³ This role of *psychê* has been frequently noted. See in particular Adkins, *From the Many*, pp. 62-4, Burnet, Claus, pp. 1-7, Furley, *BICS*, 1956, p. 1, W.K.C. Guthrie, vol. 3, pp. 467-9, Havelock, *History*, pp. 197-200 (1963 ed.), F. Solmsen, 'Plato and the Concept of the Soul (*Psychê*): Some Historical Perspectives', *JHI*, 1983, vol. 44, pp. 355-67, and Snell, *Discovery*, p. 14.

with any psychological activity nor with a state of consciousness. Nor do we find it located in some specific part of the body. It does not, therefore, think, feel, or will. But its presence within is none the less critical for life. If it departs or is lost, the individual dies. It consequently becomes an object of concern in situations of danger or approaching death.

When someone does die, there is a portion that survives: *psychē*. All else is lost with the body including the psychic entities responsible for psychological activities. *Noos*, *phrēn*, *thumos*, *kradiē*, *ētor*, *kēr*: all fade.⁴ *Psychē* itself flies off to Hades where it has an unenviable existence as a pale shade, lacking all the energy and vitality that the living person possesses. But however limited its range of activity in the underworld, it is recognisably the person and alone preserves the individuality that had been present in the living body.

If we examine the passages where *psychē* is mentioned in Homer, three meanings of the term emerge. First, it is connected with breath. The word *psychē* itself is likely derived from *psychō*, meaning 'to blow'.⁵ This root suggests an association with air, in particular that which someone breathes. *Psychē* in fact appears to be the breath that endows the body with life. The necessity of such breath would have been universally recognised with its permanent loss evident as a sign of death. In their form as shades in the underworld, *psychai* are perhaps conceived of as 'portions' of air.

Second, *psychē* signifies the part of the individual that survives death. This *psychē* in the underworld is called an 'image' or 'likeness' (*eidōlon*) of the person. Its motion is like that of a 'shadow' (*skia*). It may be that the shadow which a living person cast was the image the early Greeks had of *psychē* in the underworld. This shadow would have been thought to be made of dark air. It also perfectly resembled the individual. It would not be that this shadow during life was thought to be *psychē*, but when the latter left at the moment of death, its nature outside the body would match this shadow.

Psychē as the 'shade' of the dead person varies in nature to some extent depending on whether the body has been buried or not. The 'unburied' shade appears to be capable of more activities than the 'buried' one. If 'buried' shades drink blood, as Odysseus allows them to do, they likewise acquire an extended range of activities not usu-

⁴ Teiresias is the exception who keeps *noos* and *phrenes* (Od. 10.493-5).

⁵ On the etymology see bibliography in Bremmer, pp. 21-2, and Claus, p. 93 n. 3.

ally possible for them. But even the 'buried' *psychē*, weak and fragile, enjoys some range of activity, however limited it may be.

The third meaning of *psychē* is that of 'life', apparently without specific reference to air or to the shade in Hades. It acts as an 'energy' or 'force' that makes a person live. Usually it is taken for granted but, when threatened, its importance and value receive mention.

Of these three meanings, none appears to be primary in Homer. As pointed out in chapter 1, the rich reservoir of formulaic oral poetry upon which Homer drew had a very long history. Over the centuries varying ideas, sometimes associated with the same term, appeared. An old meaning may have lingered as new ones were added. These ideas need not necessarily have been consistent with one another; they may even have been in conflict. As Homer repeated the formulas he had inherited, he would probably make no effort to offer a consistent or limited use of any terms in the language itself.

Such a variety in range of meaning seems to have been present for *psychē*.⁶ In early times, when some formulaic expressions were being fashioned, it may have signified a specific physical entity, such as air or breath. As time passed, it came, in addition, perhaps to signify the sole surviving portion of the human being and also the vital, life-giving energy in the living person. In different passages, different aspects of *psychē* may be present, sometimes one more obvious than another.

With regard to *psychē*, as we mentioned above, one question is crucial: how did it become in later authors so prominent a psychological agent within the living person? A valuable suggestion has been made that *psychē* became such in imitation of *thumos*.⁷ As we have seen in chapter 2, *thumos* functions in Homer and Hesiod as a seat of energy within the person and a psychic entity with a wide range of function. It is associated with many intellectual, emotional, and volitional activities. Already in certain passages of Homer *psychē* is linked with *thumos* where both appear to have the meaning of 'life'. Someone is 'deprived' of *thumos* and *psychē* at the same time (Il. 11.334, Od. 21.154, 171). Being thus associated with *thumos*, *psychē* gradually,

⁶ Once again we point out that in the spoken language of the time *psychē* may have had a more extended range of meaning.

⁷ See Harrison, p. 77, Jaeger, *Theology*, pp. 81-3, and Warden, *Phoenix*, 1971, pp. 95-103.

it may be, took on activities connected with it. This suggestion postulates some degree of identification of *psychē* with *thumos*. Such an identification could perhaps lead to the psychological activities later ascribed to *psychē*.

This suggestion explains one possible source of the range of activities that *psychē* came to enjoy. It does not explain, however, why *psychē* ever became a psychological agent in the living person at all. What seems to be of crucial importance in this regard is the role it had as shade of the dead. This *psychē*, it is true, was seen as a frail, feeble image of the living person, one having few powers or activities. But it was all that survived someone at death. Unlike psychic entities like *noos*, *phrenes*, and *thumos*, which perished with the body, it had a form of permanent existence, however unenviable in nature. In special circumstances its powers could be extended. The picture Homer gives of *psychai* in the underworld, each a recognisable person, speaking and acting as the individual might have done during life, probably proved a very strong influence on how *psychē* came to be seen in the living person. As a shade, if enhanced by blood, it could perform various functions. A transfer of this picture to its nature while in the body is one that could easily have been made. The rich and varied picture of *psychē* in the underworld that Homer gives, therefore, contains clues for understanding why *psychē* changed the way it did. Let us look in more detail at what he shows us about *psychē*.

Psychē in the Living Person

As we said above, *psychē* is referred to in the living individual only when death impends or a death-like state occurs. *Psychē* is not specifically placed in any region of the body. What we hear is that the 'throat' is the location for the 'swiftest destruction of *psychē*' (*Il.* 22.325). This placement suggests the association of *psychē* with the 'breath of life'. When it is mentioned in the living person, usually all three meanings of *psychē* are present. It is 'breath', 'life', and also the shade that will depart.

Within the living, *psychē* has a very high value. Achilles, refusing in Book 9 to return to fight, says that all the wealth of Troy and Pytho 'are not worth' his *psychē*. It is the case, he says, that once *psychē* 'has passed the barrier of teeth', it cannot be regained (*Il.* 9.401–9). It is by Achilles' *psychē*, knees, and parents' that Hector requests

the return of his body: these three are clearly judged most dear (*Il.* 22.338). When Odysseus meets him in the underworld, Achilles presents a very different picture of *psychē* outside the living body: 'better to be a 'hired labourer' in the world of the living than the 'king of the dead' (*Od.* 11.488–92).

Odysseus' whole long journey home with all its wanderings and hardships is described as a quest in which he sought 'to win his *psychē*' (*Od.* 1.5). When he tried to escape from Polyphemus, Odysseus 'wove all wiles and counsel, as in a situation concerning *psychē*' (*Od.* 9.423). When Achilles pursued Hector around the walls of Troy, it was not simply for prizes awarded to runners but 'for the *psychē* of Hector' (*Il.* 22.161). Elsewhere Achilles describes himself as ever 'staking' his *psychē* in fighting (*Il.* 9.322).⁸ These passages show that people strive to keep *psychē*, being most precious, within the body.

In each person a single *psychē* is to be found. Of Achilles it is said: 'in him is one *psychē* and people say that he is mortal' (*Il.* 21.569). Even though Achilles may be a warrior terribly to be feared, he still has but one 'vital energy', one 'life' and only 'one' shade to fly to Hades. *Psychē* very much wishes to stay in the body. When Hector died, 'his *psychē*, flying from his limbs, went to Hades, bemoaning her fate, leaving manliness and youth' (*Il.* 22.362).⁹ *Psychē* laments its fate if it must leave. In some way it perceives its loss, when it departs, and its own feeble nature. One reason that Achilles may have prized his *psychē* so greatly, while it was in his body (*Il.* 9.401), is that there it enjoyed in his case too 'manliness and youth'. These had to be forfeited at death. *Psychē*, it appears, perceives in some degree the fragile and helpless state it will have in the underworld. It knows what it is losing and will never have again.

Sometimes *psychē* can leave for a short time and return. This happens in fainting.¹⁰ At *Il.* 5.696–8 Sarpedon faints: '*psychē* left him and a mist was poured over his eyes. He breathed again and the North Wind . . . revived him, having breathed forth his *thumos* in an evil fashion.' Here Sarpedon's swoon is described in terms of the loss

⁸ See too the description of the suitors 'who were fighting for their *psychē*' (*Od.* 22.245) and pirates who 'hazard' theirs (*Od.* 3.74). Hesiod says that for people who foolishly sail in the spring, 'money' has become *psychē* (*W. & D.* 686); usually *psychē* would be the treasure.

⁹ The same description is given of Patroclus at *Il.* 16.856.

¹⁰ On fainting see especially H. Nehring, 'Homer's Description of Syncope', *CP*, vol. 42, pp. 106–21 and Schnaufer, pp. 191–201.

of both *psychē* and *thumos*. It illustrates the close association of the two. Recovery comes from 'breathing again': *psychē* is drawn back into the body. Andromache also 'breathes forth *psychē*' when she faints at the news of Hector's death (*Il.* 22.467). Her recovery takes place when '*thumos* is gathered into *phrēn*' (475).

At the moment of death, *psychē* leaves in different ways. It can 'speed away', 'hastening' through a 'stricken wound' (*Il.* 14.518). It can 'pass' through the 'barrier of the teeth' (*Il.* 9.409). It can 'fly' from the limbs (*Il.* 16.856). Or it can simply 'leave' (*Od.* 18.91) and 'go down' to Hades (*Il.* 7.330). All references are to *psychē* in a human being except for one where its departure results in the death of a boar (*Od.* 14.426). Animals too can have *psychē*, 'life', but the continued existence of this *psychē* after death seems unlikely.¹¹

Within the living person *psychē* is vulnerable in different ways. At *Il.* 1.3 the 'anger' of Achilles 'cast many strong (*ipthimos*) *psychai* of heroes into Hades'. These *psychai*, present in the living, are clearly destined to become shades of the dead. In this passage Homer proceeds to contrast these *psychai* with the 'heroes themselves' whom Achilles left on the battlefield as prey for dogs and birds (1.4–5). This passage shows us that in Homer the body and various psychic entities are the location of someone's psychological activities, strength, and vigour; these stay with the hero on the battlefield.¹² *Psychē*, as we have heard, leaves behind 'manliness and youth'. While in the body, however, these *psychai* are 'strong' or 'powerful'.

It is unusual in Homer for *psychē* to be described by an adjective. We hear of 'one' *psychē* (*Il.* 21.569), or *psychē* alone (*Od.* 11.543), or 'other' *psychai* (*Od.* 11.541, 564) and, as we shall see below, several activities ascribed to *psychē* with participles ('grieving', e.g., or 'lamenting'). The adjective 'strong' (*ipthimos*), therefore, appearing with *psychē* at 1.3 is unique. Its meaning has been much discussed.¹³ Another passage sheds light on its usage with *psychē*. At *Il.* 11.55 Zeus 'is about to cast many strong heads (*ipthimoi kephalai*) to Hades'. In contrast, in Hades, the dead are described as 'heads', but 'powerless' ones (*Od.* 10.521, e.g., or 11.29). Within the body, then, both '*psychai*'

¹¹ As we noted in chapter 2, *noos* is rarely found in animals but *phrenes* and *thumos* are. See in chapter 2 notes 20, 54, 86, and 94.

¹² On the nature of the body in Homer see especially R. Renchan, 'The Meaning of *Sōma* in Homer: A Study of Methodology', *CSCA*, 1979, vol. 12, pp. 269–82.

¹³ See in particular Claus, pp. 61–2, and J. Warden 'Ipthimos: A Semantic Analysis', *Phoenix*, 1969, vol. 23, pp. 143–58.

and 'heads' may have vitality and vigour, perhaps given by the body. This unique description of *psychē* suggests strength present in it; this description also points to the future when *psychē* within the body will have its own powers.

Finally, within the living, *psychē* is vulnerable to the actions of others. Hector hoped to 'take away' the *psychē* of Achilles (*Il.* 22.257) but Achilles instead 'took away' his 'with the long-edged bronze' (*Il.* 24.754). The bow of Odysseus can 'rob princes of *thumos* and *psychē*' (*Od.* 21.154, 171). *Psychē* is the one element that must be present for life. With its removal, death is inevitable. Thus, Odysseus says to Polyphemus: 'would that I, making you bereft of *psychē* and life (*aiōn*), could send you to the house of Hades' (*Od.* 9.523). Once a person is 'bereft' of *psychē*, existence is possible only as a shade in the underworld. It is as *psychē* that Polyphemus would go to Hades. In these lines we see an apparent identification of the pronoun 'you' and the form in which Polyphemus would appear among the dead. This identification seems quite natural and occurs frequently in passages describing the shades in Hades. Its significance lies in equating the person and the *psychē* that has been separated from the body. Later the two will become closely associated within the living person. This early identification may have been a crucial factor in the new role *psychē* was to have in the living. We shall discuss other instances of this phenomenon below.

Psychē After Death

How were the inhabitants of the underworld spoken of by Homer? We shall look in some detail at their nature as *psychai*. But other descriptions are given of them as well. In addition to being *psychai*, these inhabitants are also called 'shades', *skiai*, that 'flit about' (*Od.* 10.495). They are described too as an 'image' or 'likeness' (*eidōlon*) of the person (e.g., *Od.* 11.83). Individuals are thus recognizably themselves in their life apart from the body. These dwellers in Hades, as mentioned above, are also called 'powerless heads of the dead' (e.g., *Od.* 10.521). They are frequently referred to as 'dead bodies' (e.g., *Od.* 11.49) or 'senseless corpses' (*Od.* 11.475). Odysseus tries to embrace Anticleia, his mother, but she flies from his arms 'like a shadow or a dream' (*Od.* 11.206–8). What the dead lack is any 'firm strength or might' (*Od.* 11.393). Their powers are very limited and their condition, a negative one.

Turning now to *psychē*, we find more detail about its existence in Hades. Very important for this information will be Books 11 and 24 of the *Odyssey*, the First and Second Nekyia, in which a picture of the underworld is given. Serious problems exist concerning the composition of these portions of the *Odyssey*.¹⁴ For our purposes, however, it will suffice to present an overview of the evidence as found in our texts.

Certain passages give a general description of the *psychai* of the dead.¹⁵ *Psychai* are huge in number, including all categories of people (*Od.* 11.36–43). They are called the images (*eidōla*) of the dead (*Il.* 23.72, *Od.* 24.14). They are too insubstantial to be embraced (*Il.* 23.100). As it leaves for the underworld, *psychē* 'utters a shrill cry' (*Il.* 23.101). It moves 'like smoke' (*Il.* 23.100) or 'like a dream' (*Od.* 11.222).

These descriptions of the sound *psychē* makes and the way it moves very much point to its nature as breath or air. The verb expressing 'to utter a shrill cry' (*trizō*) is used as well in Homer to describe the sound of bats (*Od.* 24.6–8). What may be indicated is the shrill squeaking of air being forced out. We might hear this sound, for instance, from a balloon as it is gradually emptied. Motion 'like smoke' or 'a dream' suggests a composition of dark air, insubstantial, ethereal, and swift.

Of shades in general Achilles says: 'in the house of Hades in some way *psychē* and *eidōlon* are present, but *phrenes* are not there at all' (*Il.* 23.104). Here *psychē* and *eidōlon* are mentioned as parallel terms: 'breath' and the 'image' or 'likeness' of the individual remain after death. But *phrenes* are absent: the psychological activities a person enjoyed, namely, thought, emotion, will, are lost with the body. These *psychai* appear to be weak, fragile entities. They can be summoned; they can be led (*Od.* 24.100); they can be 'scattered' (*Od.* 11.385). But, however insubstantial they are, they are still individually recognisable as the person who once was alive. This feature will be significant in their later role as the seat of personality in the person.

Concerning these shades of the dead, we can speak of three categories; those 'unburied', those 'buried' but not having drunk blood,

¹⁴ On the First and Second Nekyia see especially *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, Oxford, 1988–92, vol. 2 (eds A. Heubeck and A. Hoekstra), pp. 73–7, and vol. 3 (eds J. Russo, M. Fernández-Galiano, and H. Heubeck), pp. 53–8, 356–9.

¹⁵ On this topic see in particular Bremmer, pp. 70–124, Dihle, 'Totenglaube', pp. 14–20, Garland, *BICS*, 1981, p. 43, *Way of Death*, pp. 1–2, 68–9, and Schnaufer, pp. 58–124.

and those having drunk blood. In a category by themselves are the shades described in the opening of Book 24 of the *Odyssey* (the Second Nekyia). First, then, 'unburied' shades. These include Patroclus, Elpenor, and the suitors. At *Il.* 23.65–101, Patroclus appears to Achilles: 'there came the *psychē* of wretched Patroclus, like to himself in all things, size, fair eyes, and voice, and in such clothes about its skin was it clothed. It stood above his head and spoke a word to him'. The *psychē* of Patroclus resembles him as he was in body, shape, and dress. It sounds like him and can speak. When it does, it reveals more about its condition. Patroclus believes that Achilles has forgotten him (69–70). He apparently has no knowledge of the elaborate games being held in his honour. He tells how he has to wander outside Hades because his body is unburied (71–4). He retains his affection for Achilles and expresses sorrow and pity for their plight as mortals (75–9). He refers also to Achilles' death (80–1). He gives orders about how he himself is to be buried, recalling precisely details of his own life (82–92).

This *psychē* of Patroclus, however, lacks any substance that would allow Achilles to embrace him. When Achilles tries, *psychē* 'flies beneath the earth, uttering a shrill cry' (100–1). In its departure *psychē* no longer sounds like the person, but instead like the dark air that it is. Achilles sums up the behaviour of this shade of Patroclus: 'all night long the *psychē* of wretched Patroclus stood over me, lamenting and grieving, and he gave me orders on each thing and was wondrously like himself' (106–7).

Patroclus as *psychē* has a distinct range of activities missing in most other shades. Because his body is unburied, he can apparently draw upon it for some abilities. Other shades can move and express emotion. Patroclus can do more. He comes specifically to Achilles, recognising him. He speaks with a voice like his living voice. He knows that Achilles too is going to die. He expresses emotions of affection and sorrow with some intensity. He gives orders emphatically and clearly. He recalls details of his life exactly. Yet he has no knowledge of what Achilles has been doing to honour him after his death nor does he perceive why his body has not been buried. He has no substance that could make an embrace possible. His time with Achilles is short and, in his departure, he resembles other shades in movement and sound.

This picture of Patroclus is of great significance. His *psychē* possesses special characteristics because it is unburied. But these charac-

teristics will come to be present in *psychê* as a psychological agent in the living person. It knows; it feels; it expresses its will. We have a clear foreshadowing of its later involvement in intellectual, emotional, and volitional activities.

Another unburied shade is that of Elpenor, who met his death falling from a roof in the house of Circe (*Od.* 10.552). Unlike Patroclus, he is not kept out of Hades by the other shades even though he too is unburied (*Od.* 11.51). This *psychê* of Elpenor is the first to meet Odysseus in the underworld and this may be so because he is still unburied. His *psychê* has a range of capacities. He recognises Odysseus (51) and is able to address him (59, 83). He feels sorrow (59). He wants burial, not in order to enter Hades, but to prevent any need to return to plague Odysseus (72–3). He makes requests of Odysseus (66) and asks him to remember him (71). He also gives Odysseus orders (73–8). He knows where Odysseus is going (69). This range of activities closely resembles that possessed by Patroclus. Once again, such capacities associated with *psychê* foreshadow how it will itself be described one day in the living person.

The suitors too, as they are led by Hermes down to Hades, retain certain abilities (*Od.* 24.1 f.) before their burial (417). Like Elpenor, they are allowed to enter the underworld. They 'follow' and 'go' with Hermes, 'uttering a shrill cry' (5, 9). They 'find' the shade of Achilles, apparently recognising him. One of their number, Amphimedon, is able to address Agamemnon's shade. Amphimedon vividly recalls details of the death of the suitors and knows that his body is still unburied. Once again we see capacities that *psychê* in the living person will come to exhibit.

In our treatment of *psychê* as shade of the dead, our second category includes buried *psychai* before they have drunk blood. In *Il.* 23.72 we hear of such shades that they keep the *psychê* of Patroclus away from the house of Hades and 'do not allow him to mingle across the river'. They apparently can recognise the unburied nature of Patroclus' *psychê* and exert some force in keeping it apart.

In *Od.* 11 (the First Nekyia), we see various characteristics of these shades. They can move about. They can gather together, sometimes around an individual *psychê* (36, 388). At 388 we find a picture of shades attending Agamemnon: 'other *psychai* were gathered around Agamemnon, however many died with him in the house of Aegisthus and met their fate'. Just as in life these shades attend their king whom they are still able to recognise. One inconsistency we find in the picture of shades given in Homer is that for some recognition is

possible, for others the drinking of blood proves to be necessary first. In this description of Agamemnon such a capacity is present. Anticleia, the mother of Odysseus, gives a vivid description of these shades of the dead: 'for the sinews no longer hold flesh and bones, but the strong might of blazing fire overpowers them when first *thumos* leaves the white bones, and *psychê*, like a dream, flying away, flutters about' (219–22).

These *psychai* are capable of some emotion. Agamemnon's shade 'comes, grieving' (387). The *psychê* of Ajax stands apart by itself, 'angry' because Odysseus won the arms of Achilles (543). Odysseus too says of him that 'not even in death was he to forget his anger' (554) and calls on him 'to subdue his rage (*menos*) and proud *thumos*' (562). Without drinking blood, Ajax is able, it appears, to recognise Odysseus. He also nurtures his anger, so great that Odysseus applies terms used for the living person in referring to it, namely *menos* and *thumos*. Ajax, as a helpless shade, can harm Odysseus in no way but he can still remember just cause for anger and experience this emotion.

Another shade Odysseus meets is that of his mother: 'she sits in silence near the blood, nor does she dare to look at her son face to face nor to address him' (141–2). In this description we have the essence of the 'unburied' shade before drinking blood. It cannot speak. It does not recognise Odysseus.¹⁶ It is frail and weak.

Our next category will be shades who have drunk blood. This blood gives back to *psychê* a portion of the body and the capacities the body was thought to have. What we see is the acquisition in particular of psychological activities usually connected with *noos*, *phrên*, *thumos*, *kradiê*, *êtor*, and *kêr*. This blood gives the power of understanding and communication. It allows Teiresias to utter his prophecies (150). Even though Teiresias is a special case because, alone among the dead, he has 'steadfast *phrenes*' and '*noos*' (*Od.* 10.491–5), he still needs blood to share his knowledge of the future. This blood allows Achilles to recognise Odysseus and, with lament, to speak 'winged words' (471). In his speech he shows concern for his father and son (492–503). At Odysseus' praise of Neoptolemus, Achilles reacts with joy and departs 'with long strides over the fields of asphodel' (538–40). Other *psychai* likewise gain the power of speech from blood. They stand 'grieving' and 'ask' about those dear to them (541).

¹⁶ We have noted, however, that some shades do have powers of recognition, as, for example, Ajax. Homer is not consistent about this capacity in the shades.

When they have drunk blood, *psychai* recall relationships on earth. They are filled with sorrow. They do not know what has happened to their relatives but they remember them and enquire about them. Once again we see *psychē* enhanced with powers that it will later have in the living person.

Our last category is made up of the *psychai* described in *Od.* 24 (the Second Nekyia). These are able to carry on some functions made possible only by blood in *Od.* 11 (the First Nekyia). Thus we hear that these *psychai* can 'address' each other (23, 35). In the speeches Agamemnon gives in the opening lines, he recalls with clarity Achilles' funeral (35–94), his own friendship with Amphimedon (114–19), and the evil deeds of Clytemnestra (199–202). These shades can also 'recognise' each other. Achilles and Agamemnon know who each other is and quickly perceive who the dead suitors are (101). These *psychai*, without reference to blood, have a somewhat extended range of activity. If the lines of the Second Nekyia come from the same rich reserve of formulaic epic tradition as the rest of Homer, we see *psychē* already capable of some breadth of activity, at least among the dead.

As mentioned above, Teiresias is a special case in the underworld since he still has *noos* and *phrenes* (*Od.* 10.492). Without drinking blood, he is able to recognise Odysseus and to speak to him (11.90–1). Once he has drunk blood, he prophesies. This picture of *psychē* with *noos* and *phrenes* may have influenced its later absorption of functions associated with these two psychic entities.

We have suggested above that the nature of each shade as recognisably the person probably had great importance in the emergence of *psychē* as the bearer of personality in living individuals. *Psychē* was the only part of the human being that continued to exist after death.¹⁷ Even though its life in the underworld was one of deprivation of all the vitality, energy, and psychological range that presence in the body made possible, *psychē* lived on. Its very nature was 'life', 'breath', or 'air' and this did not cease to be. As the sole surviving portion of the person, *psychē* would later become in the living the principal bearer of traits of character.

Another important factor, as we suggested also above, in the emergence of *psychē* with psychological functions in the living person

¹⁷ Certain fortunate individuals escape the fate of death. Menelaus is not to die but to go alive to the Elysian Fields where Rhadamanthus is also present (*Od.* 4.562–8). Heracles' *eidōlon* is in Hades but 'he himself' is among the gods (*Od.* 11.601).

is the identification Homer makes of *psychē* and person. He transfers easily from noun to personal pronoun or to proper name. A few examples will suffice. First, Anticleia. Once she has drunk blood, she changes from the helpless *psychē* with no powers described above (*Od.* 11.141). Then it is 'she' who recognises her son Odysseus and speaks to him, in grief (153–4). It is 'she' who knows of Penelope's loyalty and sorrow, of Telemachus and his behaviour, and of Laertes and his condition (180–96). Second, Agamemnon. It is 'he', having drunk blood, who recognises Odysseus, who weeps, stretches forth his hands, desiring to reach Odysseus, who answers, recalls his own death, and asks about Orestes (11.390–456).

So too in Book 11 we encounter 'Minos' administering justice among the dead who ask for judgements (11.569–70). 'Tityus', 'Tantalus', and 'Sisyphus' all pay in Hades for their crimes against the gods (11.576–600). In each case it is the person himself who is described as carrying on these activities. The *eidōlon* of Heracles appears too in the underworld. But it is 'he' who 'glares terribly', speaks, and goes back into Hades (11.606–8, 615–27). All these passages show ways in which *psychē* and person could be identified in Hades, adumbrating the role *psychē* came to have in the person when alive.

Summary of *Psychē* in Homer

We have looked at *psychē* in the living person and as a shade of the dead. In the case of the latter, not surprisingly, we found some inconsistencies in portrayal. The rich tradition of oral poetry, which acts as a source for Homer, provided, it seems, varying ideas about this entity that enlivens the human being and survives death.

Psychē has a wide range of activities in its different forms. Even in the living person, where its importance is not emphasized except when death threatens, it has different ways of leaving the person. As a shade, its activities vary. Without blood it can move and experience emotion. In the Second Nekyia (opening of Book 24), likewise, without blood, it can recognise other shades and speak. After drinking blood, it can move, recognise others, speak, feel emotions, and prophesy. When its body has not been buried, *psychē* can show emotion, speak, know, remember, express desires, and give orders. The body and blood give *psychē* several powers. They may make it suitably called 'strong' (*ipthimos*).

No one would deny that *psychē*, as shade of the dead, was generally regarded as a frail, feeble image of the living person, having few powers or activities. But only it survived death. Unlike *noos*, *phrenes*, *thumos*, *kradiē*, *ētor*, and *kēr*, that perished with the body, it had a form of permanent existence, however unenviable in nature. Its activities were not totally limited and, in special circumstances, its powers could be extended. When this happened, shades proved capable of intellectual, emotional, and volitional activities. A special individual like Teiresias, even as a shade, had *noos* and *phrenes* that made such activities possible for him.

Especially important in the Homeric picture of *psychē* are the indications it gives of how this entity could later become a psychological agent within the individual. When person and *psychē* are easily identified with regard to activities in Hades, we can see how *psychē* itself, when present within the living person, could also come to have a range of functions. Homer handed on to his listeners a general impression of what *psychē* was like. It was something insubstantial, dream-like, frail, and weak but able to become 'strong' in some circumstances. In later years *psychē* became 'strong' in yet a more vivid fashion, as a psychological agent in the living person.

Lyric and Elegiac Poets

In the lyric and elegiac poets we begin to see changes in the way in which *psychē* was viewed. In some passages, naturally enough, the Homeric sense of *psychē* is present. But an extended use of *psychē* appears in other instances and its role as psychological agent within the person starts to emerge. No longer is *psychē* mentioned only when death threatens or a death-like condition occurs. Instead a person relates in a more expanded way to *psychē* during life. What may be happening, as suggested above, is that *psychē*, capable of certain activities in the underworld and easily identified there with the person, begins to exhibit a similar range in the living. Perhaps in imitation of *thumos* and other psychic entities, it takes on functions long associated with them. In due course these come to include emotional, intellectual, and volitional activities. Such activities, of course, may have been long associated with *psychē* in the spoken language of early Greece. The evidence we examine is of a particular, restricted kind. But however old the wider sense of *psychē*, it becomes noticeable in the poetry of the lyric and elegiac poets.

There are only eighteen occurrences of *psychē* in these poets (apart from Pindar and Bacchylides, see below).¹⁸ Several echo the Homeric usage with a particular emphasis on the meaning of 'life'. Archilochus in the seventh century, probably referring to sea-farers, describes those who 'hold their *psychai* in the arms of the waves' (213). These individuals choose to place their 'lives' in danger. Solon in the early sixth century also describes the sea-farer: he is one who 'places no sparing of his *psychē*' (13). The image here is of a person treating his *psychē*, his 'breath' or 'life', like an enemy. He shows no mercy to it as he takes bold chances.

Tyrtæus in the seventh century urges soldiers to fight in his elegies. He twice mentions *psychē* as the 'life' to be expended, if necessary, in battle. He too uses the image of 'not sparing *psychē*' (10.14). Soldiers are not to 'love their lives' (*philopsychēō*) as they fight the enemy. 'Not to spare *psychē*' is to treat it within as the foe. 'Loving *psychē*' is to 'spare it', to protect life and play perhaps the coward. In 11.5 Tyrtæus specifically calls on soldiers 'to treat *psychē* as the foe (*echthros*) and the black spirits of death as dear as the rays of the sun'. *Psychē* is to become 'hated' or 'hateful' and treated as the enemy. Tyrtæus calls for a generous expenditure of 'life'. A reputation for courage and daring is to be considered of higher value than *psychē*.¹⁹

Theognis in the late sixth century likewise refers to *psychē* as 'life'. He speaks of 'cares that take hold of people, cares having variegated wings and weeping for *psychē* and *biotos*' (730). The two terms are close in meaning, *psychē* probably indicating the 'life-principle', *biotos*, 'physical sustenance' or 'livelihood'. People are harassed with different concerns, basically those related with helping them stay alive. Simonides in the early fifth century also too refers to *psychē* as 'life'. He speaks of a child 'breathing forth her sweet *psychē*' (553). Precious while in her body, this 'life' is sadly lost.

Only twice does *psychē* signify the 'shade of the dead' in the lyric and elegiac poets. At 710 Theognis describes 'the dark gates that restrain the *psychai* of the dead, even though they say no'. These shades do not wish to stay in Hades. They have some awareness, it seems, of their condition and long to leave. They 'say no' or 'refuse'

¹⁸ On *psychē* in the lyric and elegiac poets see Adkins, *From the Many*, Claus, Dihle, 'Totenglaube', Furley, Jarcho, Onians, S.D. Sullivan, 'The Extended Use of *Psychē* in the Greek Lyric and Elegiac Poets (excluding Pindar and Bacchylides)', *Parola del Passato*, 1989, vol. 44, pp. 241-62, 'The Wider Meaning of *Psychē* in Pindar and Bacchylides', *SIFC*, 1991, vol. 4, pp. 163-83, Treu.

¹⁹ At 12.15-18 Tyrtæus again praises one who 'puts forth' *psychē* in fighting.

but no exit is available to them. Simonides in Epigram 70 P also refers to *psychai* as shades destined to dwell in Hades: 'alas, grievous disease, why do you begrudge *psychai* to abide in lovely youth?' *Psychai* prove vulnerable to disease which hastens their departure.

In other passages of the lyric and elegiac poets we encounter an extended meaning of *psychē*. In a humorous poem, 39, Hipponax, writing in the late sixth century, relates directly to his *psychē*: 'I will give my much-enduring *psychē* to evils'. He will do this, if he fails to receive ingredients to make up a potion that is a 'medicine for a miserable condition'. *Psychē* appears to be a seat of Hipponax's 'suffering'. In addition, it could also mean 'life'. Only rarely do adjectives appear with *psychē* in the lyric and elegiac poets. This one suggests an important role for *psychē* in the body. Either it is his 'life' marked with 'hardship' or it is an entity within acting as psychological agent that 'endures much'.

This poem is one of exaggerated humour but it reveals a new way of referring to *psychē* in the living person. *Psychē* can be a seat of awareness and endurance, one that can be given over to such 'evils'. Hipponax's mood will depend on whether he surrenders *psychē* to 'evils' or not. Either he will be in a bad state or, if he keeps *psychē* from 'evils', he will be in a better condition, helped by the potion he drinks. Alcaeus, writing earlier in the sixth century, in poem 335 speaks of 'not surrendering *thumos* to evil'. We see then a parallel usage. *Psychē* is beginning to be referred to like *thumos*. Its role in the living person is becoming apparent. When Homer speaks of someone 'giving *psychē*' (as at *Il.* 5.654 or 16.625), he refers to the moment of death. The living person now exerts control over *psychē* which abides within as a seat of emotion.

Anacreon in the sixth century likewise suggests an important role for *psychē* in the living person. In 360 he says: 'boy with virgin glance, you I seek but you do not heed, not realising that you are the charioteer of my *psychē*'. In this passage *psychē* may have the traditional Homeric meaning of 'life'. But it may be more, namely a seat of Anacreon's feelings of love and desire. The metaphor is a vivid one: the boy is a charioteer, *psychē*, the object of his control. In Homer a person could exert influence over the *psychē* of another but the effect was to inflict death. Here the boy exerts power over how Anacreon feels. His power is so great that *psychē*, the seat of 'life', becomes painfully involved.

Theognis relates *psychē* to inner qualities. At 529-30 he describes

himself: 'never have I betrayed any friend or faithful comrade nor is there anything slavish in my *psychē*'. Theognis' moral nature is concerned. 'Nothing slavish' may imply intellectual, emotional, and volitional aspects. These are now thought to be found in *psychē*. No longer does *psychē* simply endow life; it has characteristics that can lead to admirable behaviour.

In another passage Theognis ponders a dilemma facing human beings. Since we do not know how long we shall live, should we spend much money or little? At 910-11 he describes his reaction to the problem: 'this situation has aroused great grief in me and I am bitten in my *psychē* and I hold my *thumos* in two directions'. *Psychē* serves as an entity within Theognis that acts as a location of pain. In this it resembles other psychic entities that were often affected by distress. Homer specifically speaks of *phrenes* 'bitten' by a word of Sarpedon (*Il.* 5.493). *Psychē* may, of course, retain too in this passage its association with 'life', appropriate in a context where the hidden nature of the human life-span is the topic discussed.

In this passage Theognis also 'holds his *thumos* in two directions'. In the lines that follow, he proceeds to say that he cannot decide whether to save or to spend his money; he decides at line 924 that living within one's means is best. *Thumos* here acts as a location of thought or deliberation and it is a 'divided' one. *Psychē* and *thumos* do not appear to be synonymous in this passage. The first is a seat of pain, the second, of thought. But, as happens elsewhere, the two are mentioned together.²⁰ Such linking may suggest that *psychē* gradually took on functions that *thumos* also could perform and thus came to act as a psychological agent in the living person.

Simonides too presents a picture of *psychē* that suggests that its role in the living person has become greater than in Homer or Hesiod. In poem 8 (discussed in chapter 2 under *thumos*), he speaks of the foolishness of young people who never imagine that death or old age will come. Instead, these people live on false hope, planning things that will not take place. He ends the passage by saying: 'nor do they know how short is the time of youth and life for mortals. But you, learning these things, endure to the end of your life (*biotos*), delighting your *psychē* with good things' (8.12-13).

In this passage *psychē* may have the traditional Homeric sense of

²⁰ See *Il.* 11.334, *Od.* 21.154, 171; *Tyr.* 10, 12.

'life'. Since the years human beings have are few, they should bring delight into 'life', if they can, because these years often prove also to be something to be endured. *Psychē*, however, may be more. It may indicate an entity that functions as a seat of pleasure in the person. It can affect how a person feels and reacts. In stark contrast to Tyrtaeus who consistently urges a generous expenditure of *psychē*, Simonides calls for an indulgence of it, one that will make the span of life, all too short, more enjoyable.

In these passages from the lyric and elegiac poets, we see *psychē* with traditional Homeric meanings. But we see too a change: *psychē* has become important not only when death approaches but during life. It is now associated with certain emotions: joy, love, pain. It is related to qualities in a person. It resembles in these agents some activities that we heard the shades of the dead carried on in Homer. It thus begins to have functions like those of other psychic entities, perhaps *thumos* in particular, with which it is mentioned three times.

One feature, however, of *psychē* seems especially prominent in these poets, one that may also set it apart from other psychic entities: its association with 'life'. Even as it comes slowly to express a full range of psychological activities, it strongly retains the sense of being that which endows a person with life. This was its role in the living person in Homer and Hesiod and may have been the same, perhaps, in the long epic tradition that preceded them. A person's natural instinct is to preserve *psychē*, to treat it well, since it is all too soon lost. When individuals must fight, they must also be encouraged to give up generously that which they might cherish and hold too dear. For them *psychē* must become 'hateful' and not to be 'spared'. In other circumstances the call is for *psychē* to be indulged since this will make days sweeter. *Psychē* thus appears to take on greater significance within the living person and to have a new capacity of affecting a person's nature and moods.

Pindar and Bacchylides

In these two epinician poets, we see the same pattern as in the other lyric and elegiac poets.²¹ But even more does *psychē* emerge as a psychological agent within the individual. In particular we see an

²¹ On *psychē* in Pindar and Bacchylides see above note 18.

association of it with moral behaviour. We have moved now into the fifth century and *psychē* within is a vibrant presence influencing strongly who a person is.

Among the twenty-four instances of *psychē* in these two poets several indicate the shade of the dead. This is particularly true in Bacchylides Ode 5 which treats Heracles' trip to the underworld. There he encounters Meleager who 'knows him well' (77) and can speak to him. He warns Heracles 'not to send in vain a cruel arrow against the *psychē* of the dead' (81). These *psychai* can do no harm nor threaten Heracles in any way. Meleager describes a battle in the upper world where 'blind weapons go from hands against the *psychai* of the enemy and bring death to whomever fate wishes' (133). Only in the living are *psychai* vulnerable.

Meleager tells also of his own death, caused by his mother's cruel burning of the log designating his life-span. 'My sweet *psychē* grew less and I knew, alas, that my strength was failing; wretched I wept as I breathed my last, leaving behind glorious youth'. We see here the association of *psychē* with 'life' and 'breath'. Meleager describes *psychē* as 'sweet'.²² He views *psychē* as a precious entity in his youthful body. He mourns its loss as we heard in Homer the *psychē* of Patroclus and Hector doing as it bewailed its fate in losing 'manliness and youth' (*Il.* 16.856, 22.362). Its nature in the underworld differs greatly, being now weak and frail.

Pindar too speaks of *psychē* as the 'life' lost in death. He describes Achilles: 'by arrows losing his *psychē* in battle he, burning in fire, made lamentation arise from the Greeks' (*Pyth.* 3.102). He tells Megas that once *psychē* has left the body, 'it is not possible for one to bring it back again' (*Nem.* 8.44). In *Is.* 1.68 he gives a negative description of the person who nurtures a 'hidden wealth' while he is alive: 'he does not realise that he is paying tribute of his *psychē* to Hades without glory'. Each person must surrender *psychē*, 'life-soul', to Hades as 'tribute', but apparently has the choice of doing this with 'glory' or not. Because of a lack of generosity in using wealth, which should serve as a means of facilitating high achievement, this individual fails to achieve 'glory'.²³ He differs greatly from Achilles who always 'risked

²² Simonides also calls *psychē* 'sweet' (553). Pindar describes *phrēn* as 'sweet to mingle among fellow-drinkers' (*Pyth.* 2.26). *Psychē* is thus spoken of in a way in which *phrēn* also is. This may likewise suggest an extended role for *psychē* in the living person.

²³ See too on *Nem.* 9.32 discussed below.

his *psychē* in battle for the sake of a noble reputation (*Il.* 9.322). A person can control the way in which *psychē* can depart: with or without honour.²⁴ We hear in this instance the traditional Greek view that glory and high achievement are of great value since death and the unenviable existence of Hades await everyone (see further, chapter 4 below).

Another traditional sense of *psychē* we find in Pindar is his description of that in animals. As mentioned above, Homer refers to the *psychē* of a boar (*Od.* 14.426). References to the *psychē* of animals are not common in early Greek literature but the absence of these is probably due to the fact that few contexts treat them rather than to any assumption that *psychē*, 'life', was not to be found in them. No assumption of any continued existence, however, of the animal after death seems likely. Pindar refers twice to the death of snakes in terms of loss of *psychē* (*Ol.* 8.39, *Nem.* 1.47).

In other passages of Pindar and Bacchylides we find an extended role for *psychē* in the living person. At *Pyth.* 4.122 Pindar says of Aeson, father of Jason: 'he rejoiced about his *psychē*, seeing his exceptional son'. *Psychē* here functions as a seat of joy in the glad father. At *Nem.* 9.39 Pindar speaks in general of soldiers: 'few are powerful in hands and *psychē* to turn the cloud of carnage at their feet towards the ranks of the enemy'. *Psychē* serves as a centre of courage that allows daring in fighting. It is associated too with 'planning' that apparently permits some form of calm behaviour during battle. 'Powerful in *psychē*' suggests inner qualities, ones that serve well in a crisis.

At *Is.* 4.53 b Pindar describes Heracles as 'short in stature, unflinching in *psychē*'. Here again *psychē* serves as a seat of courage. 'Unflinching' suggests the presence of emotional, intellectual, and volitional aspects in *psychē*, ones that contribute to Heracles' brave actions. In this passage we find a contrast between Heracles' physical stature and the spirit within that drives him on, the latter apparently considered superior. In this case his relation to *psychē* proves to be the crucial factor in his behaviour.

At *Pyth.* 1.48 Pindar asks whether Hieron, king of Sicily, would

²⁴ Cf. fr. 123 where a possible reading of *psychē* would give a description of someone 'nurturing' it 'with womanly courage'. This person, interested chiefly in making money, guards *psychē*, never risking it. Pindar probably believes that this person too will give up this *psychē* to Hades 'without glory'.

recall 'in what battles, during wars, he stood his ground with steadfast *psychē*'. Elsewhere we hear of a 'steadfast *thumos*' (*Hom., Il.* 5.670, *Tyr.* 12.18). *Psychē* here functions like *thumos* in these earlier passages, acting as a seat of daring or courage. Hieron does not flinch; the spirit within remains firm.

In another passage we hear of the *psychē* of Apollo (*Pyth.* 3.41). As he rescues Asclepius from the funeral pyre of his mother Coronis, he says: 'no longer will I endure in my *psychē* to kill my child'. *Psychē* here may function as the seat of Apollo's deliberation concerning what to do. For a time it was the location of his determination to allow the death of his child. This changes and he saves his son. Here, within the god, *psychē* acts as the centre of resolve. It seems closely related to Apollo's character.

We heard above that failure to spend generously can cause a person to give *psychē* to Hades without honour (*Is.* 1.68). At *Nem.* 9.32 Pindar approves of a generous use of wealth. He describes the men of the house of Chromius as 'having *psychai* stronger than their possessions'. The love of gain does not hinder them from making sacrifices in order to win 'glory' (33-4). Again *psychē* appears to be a seat of inner qualities. This *psychē* is not overcome by greed but leads individuals to act with open hands. They vividly contrast those for whom Hesiod had said 'money is *psychē*' (*W. & D.* 686). In the living, *psychē* has become a centre of positive features of character.

Bacchylides too relates *psychē* to character. At 11.48 he describes the daughters of Proteus: 'with still girlish *psychē*, they went into the temenos' of Hera. There they boasted excessively about the wealth of their father. The adjective 'girlish' tells us of the ages of the young women and gives an explanation, or perhaps an excuse, for their foolish behaviour. This *psychē* is apparently one that can change. If the girls had been older, they might have acted more prudently. As a 'girlish' *psychē* matures, it evidently gains wisdom. *Psychē* functions prominently here in the girls in their youth. It strongly affects how they behave.

In one passage, Pindar addresses *psychē* in the vocative (*Pyth.* 3.61-2). He says: 'do not, dear *psychē*, hasten after immortal life but exhaust the means that can be done'. These lines follow other advice that Pindar gives: 'we must seek what is fitting from the gods with our mortal *phrenes*, knowing what is before our feet' (59-60).²⁵ In the

²⁵ See the discussion of this passage above in chapter 2.

same ode, he says of himself: 'I will be small among the small, great among the great. I will honour the divine spirit (*daimōn*) that follows my *phrenes*, and keep it according to my means.' In this ode Coronis and Asclepius both desired what they could not have. They failed to recall their human limitations or to show regard for the 'means' at their disposal. Asclepius, in particular, in returning to life a person already destined for death stepped outside the bounds of appropriate human behaviour.

Pindar tells his 'dear *psychē*' not to 'hasten after immortal life (*bios*)'.²⁶ Instead, it should turn its energies to what can be accomplished. What Pindar says is rich in meaning because *psychē* was traditionally associated with life. In some ways it might even be thought to have a form of 'immortal life' since it alone survived a person after death and never ceased to exist. But the 'immortal life' Pindar refers to here lies outside the range of *psychē*, even if it mistakenly should pursue it. This is a 'life', with its attendant powers, that only the gods have. *Psychē* then acts as an entity that can express desire, even excessive desires. It can apparently aim at what would be out of reach. In doing so, Pindar suggests, it could prove harmful to him.

In this passage, Pindar addresses *psychē* much in the same way as the lyric and elegiac poets address *thumos* and as he himself does in four passages.²⁷ Pindar also addresses *phrēn* directly (*Pae.* 4.50). Like these psychic entities *psychē* has come to occupy an important position in the living person. Individual and *psychē* remain distinct but *psychē* can exert considerable influence upon what someone does. It seems capable of independent action within. Opposition between person and *psychē* is apparently possible. In this passage it needs to be cautioned concerning the goals it may have.

In an unusual passage, Pindar mentions *psychē* in the context of the transmigration of souls.²⁸ We will discuss this topic more fully with the Presocratics in this chapter. *Olympians* 2, written for Theron of Acragas in Sicily, may indicate by its emphasis a great interest in

²⁶ Note that in earlier poets it is often *thumos* that is called 'dear' (see chapter 2). In this regard too *psychē* has come to resemble *thumos*, the most active of the psychic entities. It resembles *ētor* and *kēr*, likewise called 'dear'. Pindar also addresses *ētor* as 'dear' (*Ol.* 1.4, *Pae.* 6.12).

²⁷ See chapter 2, notes 56 and 88 and see *Ol.* 2.89, *Nem.* 3.26, frs 123.1, 127.4.

²⁸ On this passage see N. Demand, 'Pindar's *Olympian* 2, Theron's Faith, and Empedocles' *Katharmoi*', *GRBS*, 1975, vol. 16, pp. 347–57, W. Fitzgerald, 'Pindar's Second *Olympian*', *Helios*, 1983, vol. 10, pp. 49–70, G.F. Gianotti, 'Sull' *Olympica*

this particular topic in Sicily. As we heard in chapter 2, Empedocles, likewise from Sicily, expressed views on this subject. Pindar says: 'those who, remaining on the other side, have endured three times to keep their *psychē* entirely from unjust deeds travel the road of Zeus to the tower of Kronos' (70). The meaning of 'three times' is obscure but Pindar probably refers to three periods of existence on earth and three in Hades, 'the other side'. If people keep *psychē* from injustice during three lives on earth, they escape the cycle of rebirth and can travel to the 'tower of Kronos'. This 'tower' implies a location where *psychai* will have a favourable existence, very unlike the usual picture of the underworld.

Here we have elements of the traditional picture of *psychē*. It alone survives death and travels to Hades. But it has acquired new characteristics. It acts as the seat of someone's moral qualities. It comes under the control of the living person. Someone can help or harm *psychē* in the journey it must make depending on a choice or avoidance of 'unjust deeds'. If a person fails to keep *psychē* from such deeds, it must apparently return again and again to another earthly existence. The minimum this earthly existence appears to be is three lives, all marked by justice.

For someone alive, therefore, *psychē* acts as a seat of moral qualities, remaining distinct from the person. At death, this same *psychē* survives, alone preserving the person's individuality and identity. It retains too, it seems, a 'record' of the moral behaviour it has engaged in while in the living person. It goes through periods of existence and escapes transmigration only after three just periods of existence on earth.

In the living individual, person and *psychē* appear to be distinct. Yet in the picture of the final destiny awaiting humans, Pindar identifies person and *psychē*. He uses the pronoun 'they' in speaking of those destined to travel to the 'tower of Kronos'. 'They' achieve this destiny by the way in which they control *psychē* during life. Yet surely it must be *psychē* that makes this journey, since it alone survives death. As Homer did earlier, Pindar easily identifies individual and *psychē*. This identification may have influenced the range of activity that *psychē* came to have in the living person. This picture of the shade of the dead, of course, differs greatly from that of Homer. It has become the part of the human which eventually achieves, because of its moral condition, some ideal state, free from a body.

In another passage too Pindar mentions the transmigration of *psychai*.

Fr. 133.1–3 reads: 'from whom Persephone will receive a penalty of ancient grief and, into the upper sunlight, in the ninth year she gives back their *psychai* again'. The fragment proceeds to say that from these *psychai* arise 'holy kings, people powerful in strength, and those greatest in wisdom. For all time these individuals are called holy heroes by humans' (3–5). These *psychai* appear to have undergone some form of purification in the underworld. In their reincarnation, 'in the ninth year' (perhaps to be taken literally as a period of time, perhaps not), they return to earth as people particularly endowed with authority, power, and wisdom. As such, they are apparently in the final stages of reincarnation. What happens in the next stage is not indicated but their actions as human beings give them the permanent status of hero.

The exact role that these *psychai* have in the living person remains obscure. They have evidently become the bearers of moral excellence or lack thereof. They atone for the latter in the underworld and in time are reincarnated. Perhaps intellectual, emotional, and volitional aspects are present in these *psychai* while they are in those who are alive. They are likely responsible, after their return 'in the ninth year', for the actions that win individuals the status of hero for all time.

In Hades these *psychai* are subject to Persephone's control. She can return them to life on earth again. In Homer too Persephone affects *psychai*: she 'scatters' the shades of women (*Od.* 11.385). In Pindar's picture of *psychai* in fr. 133, the time in the underworld has a specific purpose, namely to allow some form of purification. No longer, it seems, are *psychai* to remain there forever. Hades has become simply a stage on a journey.

These passages from Pindar and Bacchylides show us *psychē* sometimes in the traditional Homeric sense but at other times with an extended meaning. *Psychē* now is an important factor in the living person, no longer attracting attention only when death approaches. It functions as a seat of emotion, endurance, and joy. It is associated with inner qualities. Someone can be 'powerful' in *psychē* or 'unflinching' in it. *Psychē* can prove generous or just.

In terms of relationship to person, three features of *psychē* appear. Addressed in the vocative, it shows itself capable of independent activity in the person that may need opposition. When Hieron fights with 'steadfast *psychē*', we see person and *psychē* acting in co-operation. When people 'pay tribute of *psychē* to Hades', 'care' for it, 'keep it

from unjust deeds' or maintain it 'stronger than possessions', *psychē* appears to be subordinate to them and under their control. In the two passages referring to transmigration of *psychai*, it has become in the living person a seat of moral behaviour. As such, it may be associated with a wide range of psychological activities. In order to achieve a desirable and purified state, it may face several incarnations.

One feature of *psychē* remains prominent in these two poets as it did in the other lyric and elegiac poets: its connection with 'life'. This feature may set *psychē* apart from other psychic entities that it has come to imitate. *Psychē* has become a significant psychological agent within the living person. Its emergence as the chief psychological agent has been clearly adumbrated in these poets.

The Presocratics

The Presocratic philosophers also provide us with important information about how the early Greeks viewed *psychē* and why it gradually became the chief psychological agent within the person. Traditional aspects of *psychē* persist, it is true, but new ones also appear. *Psychē* is of central importance in the teachings of Anaximenes (followed later by Diogenes of Apollonia), the Pythagoreans, and Heraclitus. We shall focus upon their fragments. Other Presocratics refer to *psychē* only rarely. Empedocles mentions it once in the traditional sense of the 'life' removed by a weapon (B 138). Anaxagoras likewise refers to *psychē* as the 'life' (B 4) of living beings and says that *noos* governs those having it (B 12). There are several references to *psychē* in Democritus but the fragments involved are of questionable authenticity.²⁹ By his time (late fifth century), *psychē* had become a

seconda di Pindaro', *RFIC*, 1971, vol. 99, pp. 26–52. H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Pindar and the After-Life', in *Pindare* (Geneva 1985), pp. 245–83 (also in *Greek Epic with Addendum*, pp. 80–109), H.S. Long, *Metempsychosis*, D. McGibbon, 'Metempsychosis in Pindar', *Phronesis*, 1964, vol. 9, pp. 5–11, F. Solmsen, 'Two Pindaric Passages on the Hereafter', *Hermes*, 1968, vol. 96, pp. 503–6, Sullivan (note 18), pp. 172–4, L. Woodbury, 'Equinox at Acragas: Pindar, *Ol.* 2.61–62', *TAPA*, 1966, vol. 97, pp. 597–616.

²⁹ See, e.g., B 37, 72, 159, 247, 264. Scholars differ in accepting or rejecting these fragments. See W.K.C. Guthrie, vol. 2, pp. 489–97, C.H. Kahn, 'Democritus and the Origins of Moral Psychology', *AJP*, 1985, vol. 106, pp. 1–31, esp. 3–5, Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, pp. 431–3, and G. Vlastos, 'Ethics and Physics in Democritus', *PR*, 1945, vol. 54, pp. 578–92 and 1946, vol. 55, pp. 53–64.

prominent psychic entity in the person and this role is present in these fragments. Suffice to say that he illustrates a stage not yet entirely evident in the earlier philosophers.

Anaximenes

Let us turn then to Anaximenes.³⁰ One of the earliest Milesian thinkers (late sixth century), Anaximenes suggested that 'all things' (the universe) were in essence air (A 5). This air was in constant motion (A 5-7). He explained differences among 'all things' as deriving from air's capacity for compression and dilation (A 5-7, B 1). Close-packed air appeared as earth and water; dilated air, as air itself and fire. This air was also the divine principle in the universe, encompassing all things, which it formed (A 4-7, 10).

We have just one fragment of Anaximenes which reads: 'Just as our *psychē*, which is air, controls us, so breath and air encompass the whole world-order' (B 2).³¹ How much of the fragment contains authentic wording of Anaximenes is debated but for our purposes the fragment gives us important information about *psychē*. Its role is prominent. First, its nature is specified: it is made of air. Here we see again, as was the case in Homer, an association of *psychē* with the substance humans breathe and find crucial for life. We recall that the etymology of *psychē* may point to an origin related to 'breath'.

Second, in this fragment, the function of *psychē* is specified. The verb in the Greek (*sugkrateō*) has a broad meaning that includes 'holding together' and 'controlling'. These two activities are what Anaximenes sees air, *psychē*, as doing. It unites and 'holds together' the human body, giving life and movement. It also 'controls' that body. Anaximenes has apparently observed the effects of different forms of

³⁰ On Anaximenes see the Appendix and K. Alt, 'Zum Satz des Anaximenes über die Seele', *Hermes*, 1973, vol. 101, pp. 129-64, Barnes, vol. 1, pp. 38-56, C.J. Classen, 'Anaximander and Anaximenes: The Earliest Greek Theories of Change', *Phronesis*, 1977, vol. 22, pp. 89-102, Dumont, pp. 41-50, W.K.C. Guthrie, vol. 1, pp. 115-40, Hussey, pp. 11-31, Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, pp. 143-62, McKirahan, pp. 48-58, Mansfeld, pp. 82-97, A. Papanikolaou, 'Aer: Anaximenes and Corpus Hippocraticum' in Boudouris, pp. 319-26, J.M. Robinson, pp. 41-8, J. Wubnig, 'Anaximander and the Opposites' in Boudouris, pp. 441-4, Wright, *Presocratics*, pp. xi-v. The treatments of Alt, Guthrie, and Kirk, Raven, and Schofield are especially helpful.

³¹ On this fragment see W.K.C. Guthrie, vol. 1, pp. 131-2, and Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, pp. 158-62.

breathing. Heavy breathing alters movement and emotions. Light breathing brings less energy and sluggishness. Breathing, that is, air, determines to a large degree how a person behaves.

This wording in B 2 shows us how Anaximenes viewed *psychē* as air. First, a look backward. We have seen in Homer and the lyric and elegiac poets that *psychē* has two principal meanings. It is an entity that keeps a person alive, departing at death. It is also a shade preserving the identity of the person and having a continued existence in the underworld. Gradually it begins to act as a psychological agent within the living person. In this picture we see that *psychē* has a nature distinct and separate from the living person. It is identified with that person only after death and then simply as a pale, colourless image of the individual. Blood is usually needed for this shade to exhibit more of what the person was in the world above.

When Anaximenes speaks of *psychē* as 'holding us together and controlling us', he too regards it as something distinct from the person. In examining *psychē* he probably focused upon the nature of breathing. In doing so, he reveals that the early Greeks did not regard it as we might. It is not human beings who breathe, drawing in and expelling air. Rather, it is air, *psychē*, that moves in and departs, controlling in this fashion the person and bestowing life. As long as *psychē* continued its pattern of moving into the person and leaving the person, that individual remained alive. If it ceased to enter and leave in a constant rhythm, the person died.

This fragment of Anaximenes thus gives us evidence about the importance of air for the human being. Breathing demonstrated the presence of an entity, *psychē*, moving in its accustomed manner and vital for life. As long as this *psychē* continued its motion, 'holding together' and 'controlling', all was well. Battle brought the danger of the loss of *psychē* and during it care had to be taken to keep *psychē* safely within the body. In some degree this *psychē* was master of the individual. Anaximenes' wording helps us to see the crucial role he assigned to *psychē* in the living person.

Observing apparently that the one essential for life was air, Anaximenes considered it also the key for understanding the nature of the entire universe. The remainder of fragment B 2 concerns the 'whole world-order'. 'Breath and air encompass' this in the same way that *psychē* does the human body. In our discussion of *noos* above in chapter 2, we referred, in our treatment of Anaxagoras, to the theory of microcosm/macrocism. This theory, common in the Presocratics,

assumes that the microcosm, usually the human person, mirrors the macrocosm, the universe and the divine principle governing it. Anaximenes presents us with the first explicit statement of this view. On the level of the microcosm, air moves in and out of human beings, giving life and forming their substance. On the level of the macrocosm, the world-order (all things) is surrounded by air. This air, in constant motion, compresses, appearing then as earth and water, and dilates, appearing then as itself and fire. All things are essentially air, capable of manifesting itself in a variety of ways. We see a parallel between the two levels. As we have suggested, Anaximenes focused upon the phenomenon of breathing. Human beings breathe. So, he surmises, does the universe.³² This breathing is the motion of air as it exhibits its own nature both in the living creature and in the universe as a whole.

Can we say more of the nature of air in Anaximenes? Is there within it the presence of intelligence? If so, this would be a feature as well of *psychê*. Anaximenes may have ascribed the function of 'governing' (*kubernao*) to air, as Anaximander does to his divine principle (12 A 5). If he does, this might suggest some degree of intelligence within it. But our evidence is very slight and caution is needed in making any such assumption. *Psychê*, we can see, does not emerge in any obvious way as a psychological agent in the living person in Anaximenes' fragment, B 2.

Some years after Anaximenes another philosopher, Diogenes of Apollonia (mid-fifth century), very much echoed his views.³³ He too assumes that the primary substance of the universe is air (B 5). 'All things' are essentially air (B 2) and this element, ever moving, is the divine principle that governs them (B 5, 8). Diogenes explicitly ascribes intelligence to this air. 'Human beings and other living creatures live by means of air, by breathing it. And this is for them both *psychê* and intelligence (*noêsis*) . . . if this is removed, then they die and intelligence fails' (B 4). 'For it would not be possible without

³² See Jaeger, *Theology*, p. 80. Indirect evidence comes for this view when we hear that Xenophanes later (A 1) denies that his divinity 'breathed'. He may be rejecting Pythagorean views but perhaps also those of Anaximenes. See on this question W.K.C. Guthrie, vol. 1, p. 374, n. 2 and Kahn, *Anaximander*, p. 98, n. 2.

³³ On Diogenes see the Appendix and see Barnes, vol. 2, pp. 265–81, A.J. Cappelletti, *Los Fragmentos de Diógenes de Apolonia*, Caracas, 1975, Dumont, pp. 699–721, W.K.C. Guthrie, vol. 2, pp. 363–81, Hussey, p. 141, Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, pp. 434–52, A. Laks, *Diogène d'Apollonie*, Lille, 1983, McKirahan, pp. 344–52, J.M. Robinson, pp. 49–50. Guthrie's treatment presents his views well.

intelligence (*noêsis*) for it [air] so to be divided up that it has measures of all things—of winter summer, night day, rains, winds and fair weather' (B 3).

Air expresses itself in the rational ordering of the universe. This same air manifests itself as 'all things' and exists in a special way in living creatures. In human beings, it gives both life and intelligence and forms the soul (*psychê*). Diogenes does not locate intelligence within *psychê* but *psychê* itself, being identical to air, must exhibit this capacity. *Psychê* then has come to have a close association with thought. Its presence in the human person allows the ordering of an individual life and the understanding of how the universe works.

The views of Anaximenes and Diogenes are very similar but are somewhat different in focus. The earlier thinker, Anaximenes, concentrates on the mobility of air, its capacity for compression and dilation, and the consequences of this capacity. Diogenes, coming later, speaks of the role of air in the rational ordering of the universe. In relation to *psychê* we see in him a more explicit emphasis on its intellectual activity.

The picture we find of *psychê* in Anaximenes is of central importance because it probably had considerable influence later. He relates *psychê* in a fundamental way to his explanation of reality. He assumes that this *psychê* shares in the divine nature. Even though everything is essentially air, human beings in particular imitate and manifest the divine nature. We heard above (chapter 2) that *noos* could be considered the element that linked human and divine. Anaximenes makes it *psychê*. In so doing he ascribes *psychê* a role it would consistently have in later philosophers (the Pythagoreans, e.g., and Heraclitus). In Homer and the lyric and elegiac poets, *psychê* was a positive presence in the living person. Anaximenes continues that view but adds to the importance of *psychê* by defining it as a portion of divinity.

We do not know what Anaximenes considered the destiny of *psychê* after death. Since it was air, it may have become part of the divine air. No longer, it seems, does a negative existence as a shade in a dark, dreary underworld await individuals. Instead, a person would continue to exist simply as air, divine air. Homer had suggested that individuals survive as portions of dark air, the shades, in the underworld, all recognisably themselves. In Anaximenes this idea of individual survival seems to be missing. It is apparently replaced by a destiny for human beings of union with the divine air governing the

universe. Just as in Homer and other early poets, air never ceases to exist. In Anaximenes it seems that *psychē* simply survives in its state as air.

The Pythagoreans

A group of thinkers who had an enormous influence on how *psychē* came to be regarded were the Pythagoreans. We know that Pythagoras himself probably lived in the late sixth century and was associated in particular with South Italy.³⁴ We know too that followers of his views formed societies of some form that survived long after his death. With the Pythagoreans, however, we face a major difficulty. Their teachings were of a secret nature and were kept thus for a long period. Our evidence about these teachings consequently comes from a time long after Pythagoras and it is very hard to determine what exactly he himself may have taught. But one view he seems to have held is that the soul is immortal. It dwells for a time in living creatures, endowing them with life. It experiences transmigration. Pythagoras probably adopted the second idea from traditions in the East, where he is said to have travelled.³⁵ For our purposes one point is crucial: the term Pythagoras used for this migrating soul was *psychē*.

We have a piece of early evidence that associates this theory of migration of souls with Pythagoras. Xenophanes is said to have written the following lines to ridicule this idea (B 7). Coming upon someone beating a dog, he says: 'stop, do not beat the dog, it is clearly the *psychē* of a dear friend, which I recognised as I heard it cry out.' These lines show us features of *psychē*. It can migrate from human being to animal. It can make sounds and feel pain. In some way its 'voice' is recognisable. Xenophanes is being humorous in this poem

³⁴ On Pythagoras see the Appendix and Barnes, vol. 1, pp. 100–20, Burkert, Dumont, pp. 53–68, 217–28, 443–544, 556–612, K. Guthrie and T. Taylor (eds), *The Pythagorean Writings*, London, 1986, R.S. Guthrie, W.K.C. Guthrie, vol. 1, pp. 146–340, Huffman, Hussey, pp. 60–77, C.H. Kahn, 'Pythagorean Philosophy before Plato' in A.P.D. Mourelatos, ed., *The Presocratics*, pp. 161–85, Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, pp. 214–38, H.S. Long, McKirahan, pp. 79–115, Mansfeld, pp. 98–203, Philip, R. Purtell, 'The Unity of Pythagorean Philosophy' in Boudouris, pp. 337–43, Raven, J.M. Robinson, pp. 57–84, B.L. van der Waerden, *Die Pythagoreer, Religiöse Bruderschaft und Schule der Wissenschaft*, Zurich and Munich, 1979. See also further bibliography in L.E. Navia, *Pythagoras, An Annotated Bibliography*, New York and London, 1990. The works of Burkert, Kahn, and Philip are particularly helpful.

³⁵ See evidence in Diels-Kranz 14 A 8–8a, 58 B 39–40. See too Herodotus 2.123 who suggests that the theory of transmigration of souls was originally Egyptian.

and not presenting these features in any serious way. But none the less in being stated, they show us some assumptions that can accompany the notion of a migrating *psychē*.

In looking at this *psychē* we can note some parallels to and differences from Homeric usage. The mention of a *psychē* in an animal is not unusual since Homer speaks of one in a boar (*Od.* 14.426). The *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* also refers to a *psychē* dwelling outside a human being, namely in a tree (272). Pindar similarly refers to the *psychai* of snakes (*Ol.* 8.39, *Nem.* 1.47). But in Xenophanes' poem *psychē* is a human one that has not gone to Hades but to a different living creature.

Present in the dog, this *psychē* 'cries out' in barking. The idea of *psychē* making sounds is not new. We heard above that the shades in the underworld utter shrill cries like bats (*Il.* 23.100, *Od.* 24.5,9). 'Unburied' *psychai* can speak; so can those that have drunk blood. That the *psychē* can utter sounds in a living creature is something different. Even though Xenophanes is joking, we may see in this capacity of *psychē* one similar to that possessed by *thumos* and *phrēn*. Both these psychological entities are said to speak or to sing.³⁶

As the dog howls, Xenophanes says that he recognises the *psychē* it has. Being recognisable is again not a new association for *psychē*. Just as this *psychē* here in the dog, so in the underworld *psychai* prove to be recognisable to other shades and to Odysseus. They possess certain distinctive traits.

This *psychē* too in the dog experiences pain. Homer portrays the shades in Hades as entities feeling grief (*Od.* 11.387, e.g. and 11.542). In the underworld, therefore, *psychē* has a capacity for suffering. This now apparently accompanies it on its journey through other life-forms.

The poem of Xenophanes does not say why the *psychē* of this friend is currently in a dog. Xenophanes is making fun of the whole notion of the human *psychē* travelling in this way. If he had a specific friend in mind, he obviously did not have a high opinion of this person's *psychē* and its destiny. From the Pythagorean point of view this descent to a lower level of life is a serious issue. It must result from the need for purification, in *psychē*.³⁷

³⁶ See for *thumos* Alc. 308, Theog. 826, and Pin., *Pyth.* 3.64 and for *phrēn*, Terp. 697, *Adesp.* 955.1. Pin., *Pyth.* 6.36 and *Pae.* 4.50.

³⁷ For this view of the reason for reincarnation see especially Burkert, pp. 98–142, W.K.C. Guthrie, vol. 1, pp. 186, 306, Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, pp. 235–8, H.S. Long, pp. 2–27, and Philip, pp. 156–71.

The impurity in *psychē* can apparently be removed by a series of incarnations. The Pythagoreans, therefore, present the picture of *psychē* as an entity that undergoes change. This change ideally is from impure to pure, if *psychē* moves upward through creatures. If, during some incarnation, *psychē* becomes worse, it may face reincarnation in a lower form. Such has happened to Xenophanes' friend. When *psychē* is in human beings, we may suppose that impurity in it was probably manifested in negative moral behaviour. We saw in our treatment of *Ol.* 2.70 of Pindar above that *psychē* needed to learn to be just. Our evidence about the exact nature of impurity in *psychē* is slight but it may involve some form of immorality.

What then is the final destiny of *psychē* once it is purified? Again our evidence for the Pythagoreans poses difficulties of knowing how early some views may have been. But we may perhaps assume that *psychē* very early on became associated with some notion of a divine or world soul. A similar notion emerged in the sixth century in what are called the 'Orphic' cults.³⁸ These cults too, like the Pythagoreans, were secret in nature. Both groups appear to have postulated that human beings possess a portion of divinity that is immortal in nature. This was akin to a divine being governing the universe. The term they chose to describe this portion was *psychē*. We can see in this view a parallel with Anaximenes' association of *psychē* with the divine air 'encompassing the universe'.

A possible early picture of the world-order of the Pythagoreans is in fact very similar to that of Anaximenes.³⁹ The universe appears as a living organism that 'draws breath from the infinite' (58 B 30). This cosmic breath may parallel the breath humans draw in. The source, the infinite, is likely the divine principle as it is in other early philosophers. We must, it is true, be cautious in these speculations on what the early Pythagoreans thought about the universe as a whole.

³⁸ On the Orphics in general and their relation to Pythagoras see W. Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, Cambridge, Mass., 1987, 'Craft versus Sect: The Problem of Orphics and Pythagoreanism' in Meyer, pp. 1-22, *Greek Religion*, trans. J. Raffan, Cambridge, Mass., 1985, pp. 296-304, A. Finkelberg, 'On the Unity of Orphic and Milesian Thought', *HTHR*, 1986, vol. 79, pp. 321-5, W.K.C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion*, London, 1952, Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, pp. 21-33, J.M. Linforth, *The Arts of Orpheus*, Berkeley, 1941, Philip, pp. 137, 166-8, Zuntz.

³⁹ See evidence in Diels-Kranz 58 B 8, 22, 26-8, 30, 36-37a and 44 A 16-17, 19-21. See also Burkert, pp. 278-347 (German), W.K.C. Guthrie, vol. 1, pp. 272, 276-301, Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, pp. 339-45, and Philip, pp. 60-76. See further bibliography in Navia (note 34), pp. 215-77.

But if they conceived of it like Anaximenes, we can postulate that the destiny of the purified *psychē* was some kind of union with the divine principle.

Purification, however, takes a long time of travel through different life-forms. How the *psychē* becomes impure is not clear. But when it becomes such, it must experience rebirth. We find in the Pythagoreans the idea that life in the body is a punishment, the body being a 'tomb' for *psychē* (44 B 14). Why rebirth purifies is not clear but the presence of an immortal *psychē* in a mortal form is considered to be a negative condition. The suffering that *psychē* necessarily experiences from rebirth apparently acts to purify it. Only when *psychē* escapes the body and the process of migration does it truly begin to live. We see in this view a great difference from what Homer tells us of *psychē*.

For Homer, to have *psychē* within the body was the ideal. If there was danger of its loss, care had to be taken to preserve it. In the lyric and elegiac poets arguments had to be given to urge soldiers to risk their *psychai*. The state of *psychai* after death was lamentable, according to the traditional view. Pale squeaking shades having an existence that none would envy, they dwelt ever in darkness and sorrow. The Pythagoreans paint a different picture. *Psychē* in the body suffers. It has a destiny of joining the divine once it has escaped the body. Better by far its final condition than could ever be the case in a living creature. Thus, in their view, the time after death offers a positive goal for human endeavour.

But, just as with Anaximenes, one feature of the Homeric picture is lost, that of individual survival. Although the impure *psychē* may retain features of the person, as we saw with Xenophanes' poem, eventually the *psychē* appears to lose these as it joins the divine nature. This final union with divinity is seen as something totally positive.

The process of purification takes place while *psychē* is in living creatures. Our Pythagorean sources suggest that, when *psychai* have reached the stage of human beings, they become pure if people adhere rigorously to certain prescribed prohibitions (abstinence, e.g., from meat and beans) and to other external practices.⁴⁰ It is apparently a ritual purity that proves effective. Human beings can, therefore, actively affect what happens to *psychē*. This *psychē* is a portion of the

⁴⁰ For a list of these rules see evidence in Diels-Kranz 58 C. See too a discussion of them in W.K.C. Guthrie, vol. 1, pp. 183-91, Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, pp. 230-32, and Philip, pp. 134-50.

divine imprisoned in a person and desiring release. The individual can hinder or hasten its journey by chosen behaviour. The importance of *psychē* is that it is immortal, divine, and alone survives death. Somehow human actions affect its purity and individuals thus control the destiny of this portion of the divine. Although *psychai* in their migration may exhibit specific traits, it appears that in the purified state they are all the same.

From this necessarily tentative reconstruction of early Pythagorean ideas we can grasp the strong impact they had (along too with the appearance of Orphism) upon how *psychē* came to be viewed. Most important was the emphasis they placed upon *psychē* as a person's one valuable possession. It had distinctive features. As a portion of the divine, it demanded attention as it dwelt within the person. By its presence it gave life. It could be favourable or adversely affected by what someone did. It left at death, either travelling to another life-form or escaping the burden of migration and joining instead the divine principle, with which it was akin. From these features we can see how this *psychē*, with the passage of time, could gradually take on an expanded role in the living person. It could come to be associated with psychological activities. It could become too a bearer of someone's inner qualities.

Of equal importance is that the Pythagoreans emphasized the immortality of *psychē* and made it into something very positive. They taught that it was an entity to be guarded and treasured not merely at the moment of death but all through life. At the same time they presented a new perspective on the time after death. No longer did a dreary shadow-like existence await the human person. Instead, the options were two. On the one hand, *psychē* might face another existence in a living creature. This could be more or less positive depending on the state of its purity. Even if its next existence might be rather frightening (a dog?), there was always the knowledge that the journey of *psychē* would go on. Each particular life-form was only a stage in this journey. On the other hand, a state as 'purified *psychē*' could impend after death. This would involve union with the divine.

With their philosophy the Pythagoreans shifted the focus on this life as the source of happiness to another future one. Ironically, in so doing, they also encouraged people to concentrate on *psychē* during this life and to make its nature a chief concern. They took what had traditionally been the only part of the human to survive and altered its nature from undesirable to wonderful. Like Anaximenes they treated

psychē as a positive entity. They thus greatly influenced its emergence as a crucial element within the living human person.

Heraclitus

The third philosopher in whose thought *psychē* has an important role is Heraclitus.⁴¹ We have discussed some of his views above in chapter 2 while treating *noos* and *thumos*. We shall see in him the influence of earlier philosophical views of *psychē*, especially those of Anaximenes and the Pythagoreans. But we shall see too that he introduces new ideas about it that would prove very influential.

The interpretation of the nature of the universe that Heraclitus gives is of central importance to what he says about *psychē*. As mentioned in our treatment of B 114 in chapter 2, he postulates a divine principle which he terms *logos*.⁴² What is immediately apparent from Heraclitus' choice of *logos* for the divine is an occurrence once again of the microcosm/macrocosm principle. Greeks knew that all human beings possessed *logos* and they would assume that this common term meant 'speech'. But for Heraclitus it meant much more. One reason then that he may have written his views in the obscure riddles he did was his wish to make his listeners perceive a deeper meaning in *logos*.⁴³ If he could encourage those who heard him to examine the very 'speech' both he and they used, he could share his views on the

⁴¹ For bibliography on Heraclitus in general see above chapter 2, note 35. On *psychē* in Heraclitus see especially S.M. Darcus 'Logos of *Psychē* in Heraclitus', *RSI*, 1979, vol. 9, pp. 89–93, 'Thumos and *Psychē* in Heraclitus B 85', *RSC*, 1977, vol. 25, pp. 353–9, 'What Death Brings in Heraclitus', *Gymnasium*, 1978, vol. 85, pp. 501–10 (each of these articles with earlier bibliography), Kahn, *Art and Thought*, pp. 126–30, 238–63, Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, pp. 203–8, J. Mansfeld, 'Heraclitus Fr. B 85 DK', *Mnemosyne*, 1992, vol. 45, pp. 9–18, M.C. Nussbaum, 'Psychē in Heraclitus, I and II', *Phronesis*, 1972, vol. 17, pp. 1–16, 153–70, T.M. Robinson, 'Heraclitus on Soul', *The Monist*, 1968, vol. 69, pp. 305–14, M. Schofield, 'Heraclitus' Theory of Soul and its Antecedents' in S. Everson, ed., *Psychology*, Cambridge, 1991, pp. 13–34, T. Suzuki, 'Psychē and Logos in Heraclitus' in Boudouris, pp. 375–83, W.J. Verdenius, 'A Psychological Statement of Heraclitus', *Mnemosyne*, 1943, vol. 11, pp. 115–21, 'Some Aspects of Heraclitus' Anthropology' in Bossier, pp. 29–35. See also bibliography in de Martinó (chap. 2, note 35), p. 173. The article of Nussbaum is particularly valuable.

⁴² See especially frs B 1, 2, 50, 72, 87 and 108. For bibliography on the nature of *logos* see above chapter 2, note 38, and in particular the work of Verdenius.

⁴³ See especially B 92 and 93. On Heraclitus' use of riddles see S.M. Darcus, 'Heraclitus the Riddler: B 101', *AS&A*, 1978, vol. 24, pp. 40–2, D. Gallop, 'The Riddles of Heraclitus' in Boudouris, pp. 123–35, U. Hölscher, 'Orakelstil' in *Anfängliches Fragen*, Göttingen, 1968, and Kahn, *Art and Thought*, pp. 3–9.

role that this capacity, shared by all human beings, had in the universe. Thus he tells them in B 50 'not to listen' to him 'but to *logos*'.

Heraclitus saw that speech (reflecting thought) enabled humans to organise their world. He postulates that a divine principle exists that carries out on a cosmic level a similar activity. The divinity, by thinking and 'speaking' things, forms them. Humans, sharing in the same capacity, name these same objects, acting thereby in a manner similar to the divine. Heraclitus laments frequently that human beings fail to understand how their thought and speech works.⁴⁴ But even though they do not understand, they still in practice reflect what the divine *logos* does.⁴⁵

The divine *logos* expresses itself always in opposites.⁴⁶ These opposites (cold/hot, e.g., dry/wet) exist as the bounds of a continuum of being. Though absolutely different, they none the less possess a unity.⁴⁷ In B 51 he illustrates this truth. He says that people fail to understand 'how being at variance it [the universe?] agrees with itself: there is a back-stretched connection (*harmonie*) as in the bow and the lyre'. In the case of the bow, its components are a straight stick and a flexible cord, each quite opposite in form and shape. Apart they form distinct units. Together their opposition provides a tension making a unit filled with potential energy.

The microcosm/macrocosm theory in Heraclitus presents us with human beings expressing in language their thoughts about 'all things'. The divine *logos* does the same on a larger scale. It actually forms 'all things' by expressing them. Just as was the case with Anaximenes' principle of air, what this divine *logos* does is simply to display its own nature. In being itself, it speaks, makes, and sustains the universe. The nature of its thoughts becomes evident in the universe which is revealed as a unified series of opposites.

As mentioned above, human beings fail to grasp the significance

⁴⁴ Thus he says in B 1: 'although all things happen according to this *logos*, people are like those of no experience, even when they do encounter such words and deeds as I explain, as I distinguish each thing according to its constitution and declare how it is'. See frs B 1, 19, 34, 51, 72, and 108. Heraclitus criticises human beings in order to lead them to grasp the truth within themselves.

⁴⁵ Thus in B 72 Heraclitus describes humans as being 'in continuous contact with *logos*'.

⁴⁶ See fr. B 67: 'god is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, satiety and famine...'. See also frs B 60-1, 88, and 111.

⁴⁷ See fr. B 10: 'out of all things there comes a unity and out of a unity, all things'. See too frs B 54 and 123.

of their *logos*, even, as Heraclitus says, after they have heard him explain its importance (B 1). Instead of perceiving what happens when they think and speak, they fail to pay attention to *logos* at all. Thus he says of them: 'even though *logos* is common, the many live as though they had an individual way of thinking' (B 2). *Logos* is 'common', a capacity shared by all people.⁴⁸ But they imagine that their thoughts are their own, of a distinctive and private nature. Furthermore when they consider the nature of the things they commonly name, they see them too as separate entities without relationship to one another and without any unity (B 51). This, of course, is natural enough. It is easy to observe things as opposites and difficult to grasp that they have some underlying unity.

Heraclitus must then meet the challenge of 'waking' human beings from their lack of perception (B 1). If with his riddles he can encourage his listeners to examine what they do when they speak, help them perceive how their minds function in their use of speech, and guide them to understand how the world they name has a rational order underlying it, he will be able to present to them what he regards as the truth. He will thus make the value of *logos* clear and gradually lead people to realise that, in this capacity for thought and speech, a portion of the divine is also present. If people come to understand how they think and speak, they will perceive as well the divine principle.

Logos and its nature therefore are central to Heraclitus' thought. *Logos* is responsible for the amazing complexity that 'all things' manifest but also for their basic simplicity. All exist as manifestations of one organising principle that expresses itself in opposites while holding them in unity. Heraclitus adds also another explicit feature of *logos*: in physical nature it is fiery. Thus he says of the universe (B 30): 'this cosmos, the same for all, no god or human being made, but it always was, is, and shall be, an everliving fire, kindling in measure and going out in measure'. At any instant, if a fire is observed, it is a bright, sparkling presence in constant motion. Heraclitus penetrates

⁴⁸ In B 114 Heraclitus probably refers to *logos* again as the common element on which people 'should base their strength'. (We discussed this fragment above in chapter 2 under *noos*.) He uses the same term 'common' for 'war' in B 80. Tension exists between the opposites, keeping them in existence. (See further on B 80 in chapter 5 on justice.) In B 103 he also uses this term 'common' of the beginning and end of a circle. In B 113 Heraclitus again uses the term: 'thinking' is 'common for all'.

its nature further to observe within it a perfect balance of life and death. In the 'measure' that it is extinguished, it is also kindled. The balance of these opposites makes the existence of fire possible.

Heraclitus says that in essence the universe is this fire. Like Anaximenes he assumes that the nature of the whole is a manifestation of one element, fire, ever displaying its own nature and able to appear as all other objects, especially the basic elements, earth, air, and water (B 30-1, 64). Thus in B 90 he says: 'all things are an exchange for fire and fire for all things, just as goods [are an exchange] for gold and gold for goods'. The divine principle then and the universe are a fire. This fire appears as a variety of opposites.

Within human beings, according to Heraclitus, there is an entity that is associated with the capacity for *logos* that they possess. This is *psychē*. Let us look at what he says about it.⁴⁹ B 36 reads: 'for *psychai* it is death to become water, and for water death to become earth. Water comes to be from earth and from water, *psychē*'. Speaking elsewhere of the world-picture, Heraclitus supposes that, although all things are essentially fire, this element undergoes a cycle of change. B 31 describes this cycle: 'the turnings (*tropai*) of fire: first sea but of sea half is earth, half lightning storm. Sea is poured forth from earth and is measured in the same proportion as existed before it became earth'. What has happened in B 36 is that *psychē* has taken the place of fire as described in B 31. This substitution suggests that the essential nature of *psychē* is fiery, like that of *logos* itself.

But Heraclitus intends in this fragment, B 36, as in so many others, to startle his listener. He speaks of the 'death' of *psychē*. Surely, it would seem, this is a contradiction in terms. Can *psychē*, normally assumed both to be 'life' and to be the portion of the human that never dies, experience 'death'? Heraclitus clearly does not refer to a total extinction of *psychē* but to a change in form that it can undergo. This change may seem a negative one but it may also be a necessary one if the universe is to continue as the balance of opposites that Heraclitus assumes it to be. At any moment Heraclitus believes that the universe is essentially a process of change in which fire 'turns', manifesting itself in measured form as the other elements (B 31, quoted above). As it becomes water, water becomes earth; earth becomes water and water, fire, all in equal proportions. This

⁴⁹ *Psychē* appears in frs B 36, 45, 77, 85, 98, 107, 115, and 117-18.

perfectly controlled cycle of change gives the illusion that the opposites are each separate and distinct. But in reality each one is actually one becoming another in balanced proportions.

Such too is the case with *psychē*. As it exists within the person, it also manifests itself as fire or water. But each of these elements is not static. Fire is water becoming fire in the same proportion as fire becomes water. So too water is fire becoming water in the same measure that water becomes fire. This process is the essence of *psychē*.

But in the case of *psychē* Heraclitus places a higher value on its manifestation as fire. He suggests that human beings have some control over the way *psychē* can appear within them. They should try to keep *psychē* as fiery as possible. He vividly illustrates the negative consequences of failing to do this in B 117. 'Whenever a person is drunk, he is led stumbling along by a beardless boy; he does not know where he is going because he has a wet *psychē*'. When *psychē* is wet, the person becomes foolish, gives up control of movement to another, and is led to an unknown destination. Wine, it appears, brings a partial death of *psychē*; it turns to water. What is lost is rationality and understanding. In contrast to this *psychē* Heraclitus asserts: 'a gleam of light is a dry *psychē*, wisest and best' (B 118). Heraclitus therefore appears to urge sobriety because it allows someone to keep *psychē* fiery. This condition is the preferable one for it to be in.

In these two fragments on *psychē* Heraclitus has assigned to it a significant new role: it is the seat of intellectual activity in the person. As such, it resembles *phrenes* and *thumos*. Like them it acts as a psychological agent within the person, a vital one connected with intelligence.

We see too in these fragments a range within which *psychē* moves. It varies from wise to foolish depending on its degree of dryness. At the same time it becomes more 'alive' or closer to extinction according to whether it is dry or moist. As in the traditional view, *psychē* is that which keeps human beings alive. When it is watery, it apparently fulfils this task less well than when it is fiery.

Within the living person, therefore, *psychē* is not something static. Thus far in other authors we have encountered *psychē* in the living as essentially 'breath' or 'air', having a single nature. This was true of its existence in Homer and the lyric and elegiac poets. As it emerged, however, as a psychological agent, its nature could vary. The Pythagoreans had introduced another new idea: *psychē* could

become more or less pure. Like these Pythagoreans, Heraclitus too assumes change in *psychē* during the existence of the individual: it varies from fiery to watery.

Heraclitus urges that *psychē* be kept in its optimum state, like fire. But it is not easy for people to maintain it in this favourable condition. There are elements in the human being that act against its staying fiery. We heard above in chapter 2 on *thumos* that this psychic entity has an adverse effect upon *psychē*.⁵⁰ In B 85 Heraclitus says: 'it is difficult to fight *thumos*, for what it wishes it buys at the expense of *psychē*'. We suggested in chapter 2 that *thumos* functions in this fragment as a psychological agent that opposes *psychē*. What it wants, it acquires by decreasing *psychē*. It is *psychē* that provides the 'money' for *thumos* and this 'money' is a portion of itself.⁵¹ *Thumos* functions, it appears, primarily as a seat of desire. *Psychē* as we have seen in B 117 and 118 acts as a seat of intelligence. B 85 says that, once *thumos* gets the upper hand and *psychē* has been lessened, it is hard for the person to resist this *thumos*. *Psychē*, then, when it has not been diminished, could apparently help the person resist *thumos*. But once *thumos* predominates, an individual faces problems in resisting its force.⁵² When *thumos* is active, *psychē* may still be fiery but its presence within the person does not seem to be very powerful.

Another fragment, though possibly not authentic,⁵³ may suggest too why *psychē* does not abide as a strong fiery presence in the individual or why a person may encounter resistance in keeping it thus. B 77 says: 'it is joy or death for *psychai* to become wet'. If *psychē* takes delight in becoming moist, it becomes clear why the person in whom it is found may find it difficult to keep it fiery. Yet 'delight' for *psychē* is also again termed 'death'. In its watery state *psychē* may gain enjoyment at the cost of both its rationality and its vitalizing influence.

Two other fragments of Heraclitus give us further information about *psychē*. They are especially important in that they specifically men-

⁵⁰ See also the discussion of this fragment above in chapter 2.

⁵¹ Cf. Bacch. 5.151 (mentioned above) where Meleager describes the gradual lessening of his *psychē*. In Eur., *Andromache* 541, Menelaus says he lost a 'large portion of his *psychē*'.

⁵² No wonder that Heraclitus says in B 110, as we noted in chapter 2, that 'it is not better for human beings to acquire whatever they desire'.

⁵³ B 77 is rejected by Kahn, *Art and Thought*, p. 245, Marcovich, pp. 354, 360, and T.M. Robinson, p. 130. It is accepted by Conche, *Héraclite*, pp. 330-2 and W.K.C. Guthrie, vol. 1, p. 433 n. 4.

tion the term *logos*. B 45 says: 'you would never discover the limits of *psychē*, even though you travelled along every road: so deep a *logos* does it have'.⁵⁴ B 115 says: 'the *logos* of *psychē* is one increasing itself'. In these passages *logos* is often interpreted as having a meaning different from that discussed above.⁵⁵ It is interpreted as 'measure'.⁵⁶ The reference then is to the 'measure' that *psychē* possesses, one that is boundless and ever increasing. These statements are significant in that they suggest that *psychē* has a capacity without limit. In the context of Heraclitus' philosophy we may assume that he defines this capacity in particular as one for wisdom, for understanding how the universe functions. This would be particularly true of *psychē* as a 'gleam of light' (B 118).

Heraclitus used language in a rich and varied way, appropriately so for the interpretation of reality that he presented. Since this is the case, it is possible that the references to *logos* in B 45 and B 115 relate also to it as 'speech reflecting thought', that is, to the capacity in humans that he considered a share in the divine principle.

We have heard in earlier authors that *psychē* as shade in the underworld could utter sounds. Xenophanes jokingly gives it this function in a living animal (B 7). Heraclitus too might be assigning the function of speech within the human being to *psychē*. The way he then refers to it is significant: the human capacity for thought and speech 'grows' and is 'deep'.⁵⁷ Always human beings can understand more, name more, speak more. They experience no limit in the ability of learning new words and expressions. Even foreign languages are accessible to them and consequently the experience that these languages embody.

The 'deep' *logos* that *psychē* possesses, then, may be a share in the divine nature. It too appears to be 'deep'. One description Heraclitus gives of the divine law governing the universe is that 'it has as much power as it wishes and suffices for all and is still left over' (B 114).

⁵⁴ This translation is based on that of T.M. Robinson, p. 32. 'Travelled every road' can also be translated as 'travelled the whole way'. Both translations suggest the extensive nature of *psychē*.

⁵⁵ See, e.g., Kahn, *Art and Thought*, pp. 129-30, 237, Marcovich, p. 367, T.M. Robinson, pp. 110, 157. See also Darcus (note 41) *RS4*, 1979, vol. 9, notes 8 and 17.

⁵⁶ This same meaning of *logos* occurs also in B 31.

⁵⁷ Cf. the reference to B 17 of Empedocles to 'learning (*mathē*) increasing *phrenes*' (discussed above in chapter 2). *Psychē* too may be 'expanded' by its capacity for *logos*.

If Heraclitus locates the capacity for *logos* in *psychē*, we can see how important *psychē* has become. With this speech/thought, human beings organise their world just as the divine principle forms the universe as a whole.

Another fragment may suggest that Heraclitus did associate *logos* in this meaning with *psychē*. B 107 says: 'poor witnesses for people are eyes and ears if they possess barbarian *psychai*'. Heraclitus uses an adjective for *psychai* clearly related to language. 'Barbarians' were those who did not understand the Greek language, even though they experienced the words that were uttered. 'Barbarian' *psychai* would, then, it appears, be those which do not grasp the meaning of the information that eyes and ears provide. The universe with its varied yet unified phenomena remains a foreign language to them. We may suggest that such *psychai* are perhaps 'moist', not 'fiery' in nature. What Heraclitus approves of are *psychai* that are not 'barbarian'. These would understand the 'language' of the universe. They would come to see that the universe itself is a language, *logos*, a divine expression varied and unified in nature.

Our picture of *psychē* in Heraclitus thus far is that of an entity which has emerged as an important psychological agent within the living person. Ideally, it will be fiery in nature, thus matching the divine principle that organises all things. In such a state it will be wise. Functioning as a seat of intelligence, it may act too as the location of *logos*, the capacity human beings have for thought and speech. But this *psychē* can unfortunately change in state and may even delight to do so. If it does and if it becomes watery, it loses its strength of rationality. It can also prove vulnerable to *thumos* when the latter becomes overly active in the person. *Psychē* thus ranges from positive to negative. Those in whom it is in a positive state, the fiery one, will be able, it seems, to respond best to Heraclitus' teachings about the universe and how it functions.

What happens to this *psychē* after death? Heraclitus provides us with little evidence. He has one fragment that states: '*psychai* have a sense of smell in Hades' (B 98). Heraclitus is obscure here as usual.⁵⁸ He may be referring to a traditional picture of *psychē* and suggesting that in the 'invisible' and dark land (the literal meaning of 'Hades'), it might be able to smell since it cannot see.

⁵⁸ See on this Conche, *Heraclite*, pp. 348–9, Darcus (note 41), Kahn, *Art and Thought*, pp. 256–9, and T.M. Robinson, pp. 145–6.

Heraclitus himself probably did not postulate a *psychē* surviving in Hades. Instead his views may be akin to what Anaximenes and the Pythagoreans taught. As mentioned above, Homer and the lyric and elegiac poets see the fate of *psychē* after death as essentially something negative. Anaximenes and the Pythagoreans make it positive, apparently postulating some form of union with the divine principle. Such seems to be the case too with Heraclitus. *Psychē*, capable of sharing the divine nature when it is fiery, may have an eventual destiny of joining the divine *logos*. But since *psychē* can also be watery, it may be that, if it is in this state at death, it will simply flow away as water. Such a range of possibility for *psychē* may be what Heraclitus refers to in B 25 when he says that 'greater deaths win greater destinies'.

Once again as with Anaximenes and the Pythagoreans the possibility of individual survival seems missing. Watery *psychai* would become water; fiery *psychai* would join the divine fire. Clearly this second destiny would be judged superior by Heraclitus.

Our evidence for what happens to *psychē* after death is slight. But whatever Heraclitus thinks happens to it at this stage, his interpretation of its role in the living person is of great importance. We see *psychē* functioning as a valuable psychological agent in the individual. It can provide the key for understanding reality and itself shares in the divine nature. It has become the seat of intellectual activity. Other authors of the fifth century will proceed to speak of the enhanced role of *psychē* in the living person, assigning to it a vital function in the person while alive, just as Heraclitus has done. It has emerged as a seat of intelligence in those who are alive.

Summary

In this chapter we have examined the Greek word *psychē* in Homer, the lyric and elegiac poets, and the Presocratics. This term, so vitally important in later philosophers, underwent a significant change in meaning during the Archaic Age. The authors we treated revealed important stages in its transformation. Gradually it was to designate in the living person the seat of personality. It was to function as the chief psychological agent within the individual, the centre of intellect, emotion, and will. But it did not appear to have these roles at all in our earliest evidence, early epic poetry.

In Homer, *psychē* proves important only when death impends or a death-like state, fainting, occurs. In the living person it signifies 'breath' and 'life'. The person places high value upon *psychē*. It proves vulnerable to various outside forces. In death it can leave through a wound or the teeth. When it does, it continues to exist in Hades as a pale shade, still a recognisable image of the person in whom it once lived.

The shades of the dead are utterly insubstantial. They make sounds like moving air. Their activities are severely limited. Until the body is buried, *psychē* retains some functions associated with it, but once it is buried, *psychē* becomes quite helpless. None the less, Homer's picture *psychē*, enhanced by the body's powers, foreshadows what it will later become in the living person.

Before they have drunk blood, *psychai* can move about and express a limited range of emotion. Agamemnon grieves (*Od.* 11.387); Ajax is angry (11.543). Some shades can recognise Odysseus, other do not. After blood, *psychai* can understand and communicate. They can remember and anticipate. They have received powers usually connected with psychological entities such as *noos*, *phrēn*, and *thumos*. This enhancement of *psychē* allowed it to be represented in ways that would probably influence a similar portrayal later in the living.

One significant feature of Homer's treatment of the shades of the dead is his casual shift from reference to *psychē* to that of person. Thus he easily mentions the *psychē* of Odysseus' mother, Anticleia, acting in some fashion, and then refers to Anticleia herself as the one who acts. Here we have an identification of person with *psychē* that foreshadows again the way in which *psychē* in those who are alive will function as a psychological agent.

With the lyric and elegiac poets, changes in *psychē* appear. *Psychē*, capable of a range of activities in Hades, now begins to demonstrate this same range in the living person. Perhaps too, in imitation of *thumos* and *phrēn*, it absorbs some of their functions. It has become an object of interest, not just at the time of death, but during life.

Psychē in these poets has in particular the meaning of 'life'. Situations have appeared in which individuals need encouragement to be willing to risk *psychē*. Tyrtaeus especially suggests that honour and glory exceed the value of *psychē* present within the body and therefore it should not be spared. Pindar likewise says that *psychē* should strive to enter Hades with 'glory'.

Several times *psychē* functions as a psychological agent in the per-

son. It can be a seat of pain, love, desire, and courage. It can function as a location of inner qualities. We hear of someone 'unflinching in *psychē*' or having a 'steadfast *psychē*'. *Psychē* acts too as a seat of deliberation or resolve. Pindar addresses his own *psychē* directly, urging it not to pursue certain goals. He also in one passage refers to *psychē* in the context of the transmigration of souls and associates it with the justice of someone's deeds.

In the Presocratics we see new aspects of *psychē*. For Anaximenes it is air that 'holds together' and 'controls' the body. It gives life and movement. This same air is the divine principle that forms the universe and governs it. *Psychē* in human beings thus shares in the divine principle. Anaximenes does not make clear the destiny of this *psychē* after death but it probably is a positive one, consisting of union with the divine. The degree to which Anaximenes ascribed intelligence to air, *psychē*, in the person is likewise not clear. Later, Diogenes of Apollonia, very much repeating Anaximenes' ideas, makes *psychē*, being air, the seat of intelligence and thought. Anaximenes and Diogenes both present *psychē* as a positive entity, not only during life but after death as well.

The Pythagoreans viewed *psychē* as endowing the person with life. They saw it as an entity, divine in nature, that migrates from one life-form to another, gradually becoming more pure. When *psychai* enter human beings, they are apparently on the final stages of their journey. Humans have control over their destiny and, by ritual observances, can help to make *psychē* pure. They can fail to do so and may consequently face reincarnation into a lower life-form. But if *psychē* reaches a pure condition, it evidently needs to travel no farther and may experience union with the divine principle. Like Anaximenes, the Pythagoreans present a very positive picture of *psychē*. Its relationship to intellectual activity in the living person is still obscure but its role as sharer in the divine and its ultimate destiny as joining that divine being make it a possession to be highly valued.

Heraclitus thinks of *psychē* as an important psychological agent within the person. It is fiery in nature like the divine principle, *logos*. It is a seat of intelligence. It may be the location in human beings of *logos*, which is identical to the divine nature. This divinity speaks, forms, and organises the universe. With their *logos* humans can understand how this universe functions, speak about it, and also perceive the divine nature.

Within the living person Heraclitus assumes a variable state for

psychē. It can be fiery, a positive condition in which it displays wisdom and rationality. It can, however, also become watery. When this happens, *psychē* functions badly, losing its intelligence. The destiny of *psychē* after death seems two-fold. Either it is a positive one in which a *psychē*, fiery at death, joins the divine fire. Or it is a negative one in which *psychē*, watery at death, simply flows away as this element. Like Anaximenes and the Pythagoreans, Heraclitus presents *psychē* as potentially a very positive entity. Its role within the living person is now prominent.

In this chapter we have traced some steps by which *psychē* gradually became a psychological agent in living human beings. Its first appearance is simply as the breath endowing life. After the individual dies, however, this breath continues to exist as a pale image of the person in Hades. Its very essence is 'life' that cannot be destroyed. In the underworld this *psychē* normally has a very limited range of activity. But under special circumstances, when it is given a portion of body again, it can display various functions. Gradually we see *psychē* taking on activities within the living person, activities connected with other psychological entities. We observe also that its destiny after death ceases to be negative. *Psychē* becomes associated with the divine principle, sharing its nature and destined to join it after death. In later authors *psychē* will become more and more important in the living person. Already its role has been clearly adumbrated in these early authors.

IN PSYCHOLOGICAL AND
ETHICAL IDEAS