

Reality. By Peter Kingsley. The Golden Sufi Center, Inverness, California, 2003. Pp. 591. \$35.95.

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Kingsley's new book has two parts. The first half, titled 'The Final Journey', is on Parmenides; the second half, 'Sowers of Eternity', is on Empedocles; and both parts can be read as more or less independent units. The book is based on, but goes beyond, Kingsley's previous work on these two authors: *In the Dark Places of Wisdom* (1999), *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition* (1995), and the monograph-article, 'Empedocles for the New Millennium', published recently in this journal (2002). The scholarly reader of *Reality* will do well to have these earlier writings at hand, since the notes of the present book refer frequently to them.

This is not an easy book, however, to review in a scholarly journal. The writing style that Kingsley adopts, though impeccable, is colloquial rather than formal, the tone is highly personal and protreptic, and the format of the book is non-scholarly (short, easy-to-read chapters, with notes, in non-footnote but lemmata fashion, collected at the end; no indices, no bibliography). All of these elements are undoubtedly conformable to the purposes of the publisher, whose target audience in the main does not appear to be academics and scholars but educated readers of 'esoterica'. This is not to say that the book is deficient in scholarship. On the contrary, as we are used to from Kingsley, it is informed by scrupulous and exhaustive research and thus rests on a solid scholarly foundation. The translations from the Greek are excellent and accurate, the notes contain all the references, citations, parallels and authorities you could wish for, and text-critical matters are squarely faced. Nonetheless, given that the main text consists largely of Kingsley's reflections, meditations, and exhortations, all delivered in a prophetic and authoritative voice that would seem to brook no contradiction, it is somewhat difficult to isolate his precise claims for Parmenides and Empedocles and to present these here for assessment and review.

Part 1

In the first 48 pages Kingsley quickly traverses Parmenides' proem, summarizing in effect his findings from *In the Dark Places of Wisdom*: the proem describes a journey of initiation and is to be understood in the context of incubatory rites, Parmenides is introduced as an *ἰατρόμαντις* (a healer-prophet like Epimenides) and, as confirmed by the Velian inscriptions, a priest of Apollo Oulios and a *φώλαρχος* ('lord of the lair').¹ This latter aspect of his person as

¹ For his understanding of the terms found in the Velian inscriptions Kingsley relies in part on Burkert 1969. Therein Burkert writes: 'Der Titel des Vorstehers aber lautet *φώλαρχος*—ein bisher unbekanntes Wort, das "Herr der Höhle" heißt. Was dem in Wirklichkeit entsprach, steht dahin; *man*

well as the ἡσυχία, the 'stillness' to which he was led by the Pythagorean Ameinias (A1), tie in with the practice of incubation.

In fact, this stillness, according to Kingsley, is the 'fundamental characteristic of reality' (46) in the main part of the poem, with which he begins at page 55, generally following the traditional ordering of the fragments. Here now comes the remaining story of Parmenides, of which *In the Dark Places of Wisdom* was but 'the first chapter'.

From fragment B2 Kingsley evinces Parmenides' role as a messenger-prophet. The message is the teaching of the goddess that Parmenides is to bring back from the world of the dead to the world of the living (56). For the 'Mansions of Night', in the proem, represent the underworld and Parmenides' journey there, as 'the man who knows', is an initiation. And further, since 'the language of initiation was, above all, the language of riddles' (62), the goddess' message of the two routes is put in the form of a riddle. Kingsley finds an important clue to the meaning of the second route, the way of 'is not' (οὐκ ἔστιν), in its description as a 'path from which no news returns' (his translation of παναπευθής, B2.6). It refers to death, and thus Parmenides' road of 'is not' is a dead-end, 'the road leading to the silence of non-existence and death' (65).

This leaves only the first route, that of 'is' (ἔστιν), about which the goddess pronounces in the notoriously difficult B3: τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν τε καὶ εἶναι. Kingsley rejects the oft-found translation, 'For thinking and being are one and the same' (cf. 'denn dasselbe ist Denken und Sein' in DK), because, as he stresses repeatedly, thought and existence are not identical (69, cf. 181). He translates instead: 'For what exists for thinking, and being, are one and the same',² which is in line with the goddess' earlier words in B2 about the only two paths that 'exist for thinking'. Kingsley's interpretation is apparently simple: 'Whatever you think exists' (74; cf. 77: 'whatever we are aware of is, whatever we perceive or notice is, whatever we think of is'). At first impulse, I understand this to mean that the thought is real and exists, but not necessarily the object of thought, for, to take Kingsley's own example (71), unicorns do not really exist, but, given that Parmenides' aim on Kingsley's showing is to tear down the wall between thinking and reality (73), I am not sure I understand rightly. Yet Kingsley would say to me that I cannot understand it by thinking anyway. He argues that by accepting every single thought as equally true, thinking ultimately becomes unimportant, that the 'irony' here is that Parmenides wishes to take us 'beyond thought', so that 'there is no understanding this by trying to think it through or work it out, because anything whatsoever that you happen to think about it will be true' (75). The great irony, it rather seems to me, is that Kingsley has thought long and hard about Parmenides to arrive at this conclusion. But I speak precipitately about conclusions, because Kingsley's actual conclusion

wird sich nicht wohl Parmenides als Apollon-Priester in einer Kulthöhle zelebrierend denken' (22, my emphasis). But that is precisely what Kingsley suggests we are to think of Parmenides.

² Similarly Gallop 1984, 57: 'because the same thing is there for thinking and for being'.

from Parmenides' formal identification of existence with what exists for perception or thought leads in the direction of a mystical unity: 'There is nothing but fullness, utter fullness. The whole of existence is one complete, unbroken whole' (78).

Support is found in B4 in which the goddess avers that 'things far away are firmly present to your mind' and that 'there is no way you will manage to cut being off from clinging fast to being'. The goddess' concern is 'the abolition of separation' (79), in both the spatial and temporal sphere. Everything that happens occurs in our consciousness, and what we call our thoughts 'are simply reality thinking itself' (80). This includes pain, which is 'intense sensation—and sensation is nothing but reality perceiving itself' (81). It is apparently the matter of pain in particular, since this is a real problem, that causes Kingsley here to emphasize that Parmenides' words are not about theory or clever speculation, but about practice and experience. He aptly refers to the ancient traditions about a 'Parmenidean way of life' and to the example of Parmenides' pupil, Zeno, who under torture 'tested Parmenides' words in fire like gold that's pure and true' (82; cf. Kingsley 1999, 223-226).

In B6 the goddess presents what appears a third path, the one fabricated by know-nothing mortals who mingle being and non-being. Kingsley gives a fine exegesis of the fragment. He, however, also introduces a term that may need to be accompanied by a word of caution. His springboard is the goddess' account of the 'helplessness...[that] steers their wandering minds' (B6.5-6). For Kingsley one word sums up the 'essence' of this vocabulary and of Parmenides' images of paths and traveling in general: *μητις* (cunning, skillfulness, practical intelligence, trickery). Now there is nothing wrong with taking *μητις* as the antonym of 'helplessness' (*ἀμηχανίη*) nor is it objectionable to see in the presence or lack of *μητις* a key for the success or failure in understanding Parmenides; Kingsley reverts to it repeatedly as an interpretative tool throughout the book (it figures in his interpretation of Empedocles as well), making plausible cases for allusions to *μητις*. Yet to say that 'Parmenides happens to use this language of *metis*...to define the human condition' (92, sim. 93) or that the goddess claims Parmenides 'would be able to outdistance anybody in *metis*' (230, when the word actually used in 8.61 is *γνώμη*) may give the Greekless reader the misleading impression that the text refers *expressis verbis* to *μητις*.³ Hence my cautionary note.

Since *μητις* entails a sharp awareness of the world of the senses, Kingsley rejects the commonly made assumption that Parmenides means to deny the changing, moving sensory world. It is rather that the goddess teaches us how to 'navigate' through it without being deceived ourselves (93-94). Her description of the deaf, blind, and dazed people as 'indistinguishable, undistinguishing crowds' (Kingsley's translation of *ἄκριτα φῶλα* in B6.7) Kingsley not only links ingeniously—via *Il.* ii 868—to the Homeric simile of mortals with leaves (*Il.* vi

³ *μητις* only occurs in B13, and that in verbal form: 'she devised (*μητίσατο*) Love first of all the gods'.

146, xxi 464) but also, and above all, to her earlier characterization of them as ‘two-headed mortals’ (or ‘twin-heads’ in Kingsley’s rendition). To help illuminate this term Kingsley digs up a definition from Hesychius’ dictionary in which δίκρανοι is defined as ‘forks in the road’ (τριόδοι), that is, a single road splitting off into two. Kingsley next evinces the associations that τριόδοι carried in antiquity: with people confronted with choices, especially with fateful decisions to be made in the underworld. This leads to a discussion of which paths the goddess confronts us with. Of the three alternatives that seem to be outlined two fall away, since the route of non-existence is not a viable way, and the path that mingles being and non-being is but a fabrication, a path that ‘turns back on itself’ (παλιντροπός). This would seem to leave only the route of being, but that turns out not to be a real path either, because in being there is no movement or change. It is ‘a path that finishes where it begins’ and reality is ‘trackless and pathless’ (109). If all this sounds paradoxical, not to say confusing, it is deliberate, Kingsley hints, in order to bring us to a standstill and open us to an experience of an altogether different kind (109-110).

To the third path, the one that mixes up being and non-being by saying that things that are not are, the goddess attaches a warning, in B7, not to let ‘much-experienced habit force you to guide your sightless eye and echoing ear and tongue along this way...’ (Kingsley’s translation). Again, instead of taking this warning as directed against sense experience, Kingsley understands it as an exhortation to more sensory alertness and a fuller consciousness (120-122). The phrase ‘much-experienced habit’ (ἔθος πολύπειρον) is self-contradictory, for experience *per se* is not the culprit but rather habit, our habitual actions that force us into a rut. Kingsley’s aim is to remove the dichotomy that has been traditionally seen here, as though Parmenides were ‘offering a clear, rational choice between a world of the senses and a world of pure thought’ (125). Accordingly, Kingsley launches a massive attack against the standard translation by which the further advice of the goddess, κρῖναι δὲ λόγῳ..., is rendered as ‘but judge by reason...’ (B7.5). First he shows that λόγος in Parmenides’ time did not yet mean ‘reason’ or ‘reasoning’, a sense it would not develop until Plato, nor yet carry any connotation with our modern ideas of ‘logic’. Kingsley reverts to its original meaning, ‘talk, discussion, words said’ (130) and finds support in other passages of the poem in which λόγος simply means ‘word’ (B1.15, B8.50). But since ‘judge by words’ in a variety of applications (words with oneself, with others, with the goddess) cannot be made to yield an acceptable sense, Kingsley argues next that the Greek text must be wrong in the first place. He makes a plausible case that the original reading was λόγῳ, which was deliberately altered to λόγῳ by Poseidonius (the source for Sextus in B7). The Greek text for B7.5-6, with Kingsley’s restoration, reads: κρῖναι δὲ λόγου πολύδηριν ἔλεγχον / ἐξ ἐμέθεν ῥηθέντα. He translates: ‘but judge in favor of the / highly contentious demonstration of the truth contained in these words as spoken by me’ (140). In the notes he supplies parallels for κρῖναι sometimes meaning ‘judge in favor of’, for the genitive (λόγου) preceding the accusative, and for a certain redundancy of expres-

sion ('standard early-epic style', 569).

Starting from the ancient depictions of the underworld as a place of judgment and source of law, Kingsley next discusses the 'legal dimension' of Parmenides' poem. Since this is an area that has been somewhat neglected in Parmenidean studies, Kingsley's discussion is all the more welcome. The legal aspects do add up: the tradition of Parmenides as lawgiver, the role of 'Rightness and Justice' in his poem, the goddess' 'demonstration of the truth'—the *ἐλεγχος* (145-150; more judicial matters will be picked up later in the book). In speaking of the latter term Kingsley makes a number of rather fascinating comparisons between Parmenides and another practitioner of the *ἐλεγχος*, who also acted under divine guidance, namely, Socrates (151-156). Although Kingsley's thrust is polemical and accusatory, to wit, that these two founding fathers of philosophy have been mostly misunderstood and that philosophy has become a travesty of what it once was, the similarities he establishes are valid and, to my knowledge, not sufficiently appreciated before.

The sequential treatment of the fragments continues with B8. Kingsley's method appears to be to leave aside for the moment the question of what the subject of *ἔστιν* (B8.2) is and to concentrate on the 'many signs' given by the goddess. He particularly focuses on the denial of generation and destruction (B8.3 and 21), which does away with past and future time and leaves only the eternal present: 'The cosmic order is being established at the only possible moment it ever can be: right now' (168). To determine what is and what is not to be involves a 'legal process' that neither Parmenides nor we can evade (169). Kingsley interprets and translates the 'true *pistis*' (*πίστις ἀληθής*) that drives out (*ἄπωσε*) creation and destruction (B8.28) as 'true and persuasive evidence' such as presented to a court of law and leading to a final judgement (*κρίσις* / *κέκριται*, B8.15-16). Its abolishing of creation and destruction is 'a formal act of banishment' (173), specifically the act of *ἀποκήρυξις*, the disowning and banishing children in Greek law, which was tantamount to undoing their birth ceremony and rendering them nameless (176-178; Kingsley compares *ἄνώνυμον* in B8.17). The banishment of all notions of coming-to-be and passing-away is part of what makes being perfect, a perfection expressed by the goddess throughout the fragment in language of limits, bonds, and fetters, and in her final comparison of being to 'the bulk of a well-rounded sphere' (B8.43). Thinking, too, is somehow bound to or within being, but to define the precise relationship between thinking and being has been a notoriously difficult problem in Parmenidean studies. The relevant lines (B8.34-36) Kingsley renders: 'And what exists for thinking is the same / as the cause of thought. For you won't find thinking / without the being in which it has been uttered' (180). Relying on internal evidence (B2.2; B3; B6.1) Kingsley justifies taking *ἔστι νοεῖν* as 'exists for thinking' (instead of 'thinking is' and the like), and with parallels drawn from elsewhere he is able philologically to defend the causal sense of *οὐνεκεν* which underlies his translation 'as the cause of thought' (572). Causation is further to be understood in the prepositional phrase *ἐν ᾧ*, so that for thinking to be uttered 'in' being means

thinking depends on being (182, 573). Thus the relationship between being and thinking is not one of absolute identity but rather 'that whatever exists for thinking—the object of all our thoughts and perceptions—is being' (182; cf. 181: 'being is the indispensable, inescapable medium of consciousness'). The equation of the cause (being) and object of being points to 'the utter completeness of thought' (183). The circular nature of the argument is precisely the point of the goddess' image of the perfect sphere. And yet, because of our 'wandering minds' we are not aware that the cause and object of perception are the same. Hence Kingsley recommends that in the process of perceiving we should simultaneously be aware of our acts of perception (e.g., when we hear sounds 'we can listen to them all but at the same time be aware of listening to them', 185). This kind of intense mental alertness I might term meta-consciousness; Kingsley, characteristically, calls it *μητις* (186-187).

Parmenides' final sign pointing to the completeness of being is found in line 38 of B8: *τῶι πάντ' ὄνομ' ἔσται*. These four words, so Kingsley, represent 'the core of his whole teaching' (188; in the notes, 573-576, Kingsley defends this reading as opposed to the variant *ὀνόμασται*). They are to be translated according to the standard way of giving names in Greek literature: 'its name shall be everything' (190, with parallels at 573 where Kingsley also rejects the translation 'therefore all things will be a mere name'). Thereby Kingsley comes close to those scholars who render an interpretation like D. Gallop's: 'all names established by mortals in the belief that they are true have been given with reference to the unique reality that she herself affirms' (1984, 10 and n27). But Kingsley would not be Kingsley if he left it at that or if he could be that easily affiliated with any one camp. What he sees here is the goddess' completion of the circle, her 'naming ceremony for reality' by which she gives back to reality all the names she had initially banished, such as creation and destruction, thus establishing 'a perfect symmetry...between the two acts of taking names away [from unreality / non-existence] and then reassigning them [to reality / existence]' (193). Yet things are not simply as they were before, because to follow the goddess' words effects a transforming experience to bring us to the realization: 'everything is divine' and 'reality is everything', including the 'it', the subject of *ἔσται* (195-198).

There remains of course the second part of the poem, traditionally called 'the way of seeming', which the goddess heralds as 'the deceptive ordering of my words' (B8.52). Generations of scholars have been vexed by the question what the goddess', i.e., Parmenides', intention was in these remaining and more scantily preserved fragments. The answer usually taken is along the lines that the goddess is making a concession to the 'opinions of mortals' (B8.51), but nonetheless presenting a plausible cosmology to rival other Ionian accounts of the world. All in all, the second part of the poem has been treated rather dismissively, if not resignedly ('The status and motive of this account are obscure', Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983, 242), an attitude seemingly warranted by the goddess' own words.

Kingsley will have none of this. To him the deception practiced by the goddess

in the second half of the poem is an integral part of the whole of reality. The account is laden with deliberate ambiguity (as in the κόσμος describing her words, a term referring both to a pretty ornament and to the cosmic order, 209). Even the first part of the poem, the trustworthy story, is deceptive. The upshot is: 'every single idea we have about what truth is, is itself a deception' (211). This would seem to be a quite enervating admission, discouraging from the outset any further investigation of Parmenides' poem. But it has to be said too that Kingsley's stance of helplessness is to some extent a pose, for in point of fact he goes on to give a brilliant analysis of the second part of the poem and to elicit certain truths that, even though, contrary to Kingsley's belief, they may not be *the* truth about the way our world really is, are validly applicable to the interpretation of Parmenides' work.

The beauty of the world Parmenides describes Kingsley traces to Aphrodite (214-216). She is the goddess not only of love and beauty but also of deception and illusion, responsible for the dazed and helpless state of mortals that Parmenides had depicted earlier. Mortals lack μῆτις, a quality that Aphrodite, on the other hand, possesses to the full. The fact that she 'steers all things' (B12.3), which connotes the skills of helmsmanship and navigation, and that she 'devised (μητίσαστο) Love first of all the gods' (B13), are all indications of her expertise in μῆτις. Aphrodite, presiding over our illusory world in the second half of the poem, forms then in Kingsley's view the natural counterpart to Persephone, the 'goddess' and queen of the underworld in the first half (217-218). For this 'perfect polarity' (signifying life and death) Kingsley draws examples from Greek religion and myth, particularly from those originating in southern Italy where the worship of Persephone and Aphrodite was closely connected (218, 578).

This still leaves the question of what the point of the second half of the poem is at all. The goddess states her motive for setting forth the beliefs of mortals at the end of B8: 'so that nobody among mortals will ever manage, / in practical judgement, to ride on past you' (Kingsley's translation, 221, 578-579, reading γνώμη rather than γνώμη). Some commentators have already noticed that the expression 'ride on past' (παρελάσση) fits the terminology of chariot-racing and have referred to a famous chariot race in the *Iliad* (xxiii 262-652). Kingsley dwells on the passage as not merely a passing reference but one laden with significance: the Homeric story is a perfect illustration of μῆτις, and it is to this context of victory achieved through μῆτις that Parmenides makes knowing reference (221-224). Remaining with Homer, Kingsley sees in the goddess' words, 'so that nobody...ever' (ὥς οὐ μὴ ποτέ τίς) another reference to a telling instance of μῆτις in the Homeric poems, Odysseus' deception of Polyphemus (*Od.* ix 364-535). Not only does οὐ...τίς allude to Odysseus' naming himself οὐτίς to outwit the Cyclops, an allusion pointed out by other scholars as well (cf. Gallop 1984, 24-26), but also the negative particle μή with the pronoun τίς is here, according to Kingsley, a word-play on the μῆτις that underlies Odysseus' ruse (225-227). Of course, whether this was a deliberate 'hint' on the part of Parmenides, as Kingsley supposes, remains conjectural. On the other hand, that deception often

goes hand-in-hand with μήτις is certain. Kingsley points to Odysseus' utterance in which he congratulates himself on having deceived (ἐξαπάτησεν) Polyphemus by μήτις (*Od.* ix 413-414), a statement that reminds Kingsley of the goddess' 'deceptive (ἀπατηλόν) ordering of my words' (B8.52).

As an illustration of the goddess' making Parmenides unrivalled in μήτις Kingsley takes an example from her teaching. He marshals the evidence that Parmenides was the first to state the sphericity of the earth and, concomitantly, the first to divide the globe into five terrestrial/climatic zones (231-237, 579-580). For this information Parmenides was indebted to Phocaeen explorers, notably Euthymenes and Pytheas, whose discoveries were unfairly discredited by later authors (238-251, 580-581).⁴ So Parmenides stands in the forefront of scientific knowledge, yet at the same time that knowledge belongs to the goddess' deceptive account of the world. For Kingsley this is not a contradiction to be reconciled, because, yes, 'the knowledge is all deception', 'an illusion' (252-253). The need to separate fact from fiction, science from myth, is a modern misconception; after all, Plato in the *Phaedo* presented the spherical earth in the form of a myth (254). And the reason the goddess presents her deceptive account in the second, and not in the first part of the poem, is that we need to understand reality first before we can understand illusion, though, ultimately, illusion and deception are also part of perfect reality (255-258).

Kingsley next describes, in some geographical detail, the itinerary of Pytheas' travels (265-272, 582-583). His purpose is to show that Pytheas' physical journey to the ends of the earth is the model for Parmenides' inner, spiritual journey with the Daughters of the Sun to the Mansions of Night, to the final limits of existence represented by Tartarus (274-275). It is there, at his destination, that the goddess tells Parmenides that the opinions of mortals are untrustworthy, yet even so, 'this too you will learn—how beliefs based on / appearance ought to be believable as they travel all through all there is' (B1.31-32, Kingsley's translation, 277; see 584 on the reading περῶντα rather than περ' ὄντα). Kingsley emphasizes that the key to this text is the verb 'travel through' (περῶν), which has connotations with 'bonds' or 'limits' (πείρατα), so that what the goddess is saying 'is that human opinions can possess a certain validity provided they reach all the way through this world of appearances to its furthest limit; as long as they touch its *peirata*, the ultimate boundaries of existence' (279). And, ironically (Kingsley prefers to speak of the goddess' 'fondness for jokes', 280), this is exactly where Parmenides finds himself at the beginning of the poem. But to travel to the furthest limits of human opinions is not, Kingsley warns, a matter of 'pushing back the boundaries of knowledge'; it rather implies the opposite, 'that knowledge does have its ultimate limits' (283). The goddess' frequent references to 'fetters' and 'bonds' are evidence that reality is held fast in bonds and that we, helpless humans, are entrapped within, bewitched and enchanted, for the same

⁴ To the literature on Pytheas' travels cited by Kingsley add now also the fascinating account by Cunliffe 2001.

words are seen by Kingsley as also applicable to the binding by deceptions, spells and charms, i.e., magic (285-294).⁵

To round off the picture of Parmenides Kingsley includes a brief portrait of Zeno, his disciple and adopted son. Zeno's paradoxes denying movement are wholly congruent with Parmenides' motionless reality. Zeno used logic 'in its truest sense' to destroy our commonsense view of the world and to reveal that our beliefs are an illusion (295-298). The story of his death by torture after being caught smuggling arms from Velia to Lipara is not a fiction but appears confirmed by archaeological evidence (the *Cebes tablet*) (299-302). The enemies of the Liparans were the Athenians, which brings Kingsley at last to Athens and Plato. As Kingsley has intimated in his previous book on Parmenides, Plato is the culprit (1999, 39-45, 158-160). Parmenides, Zeno, and also Socrates challenged the mind only to 'silence it, bring it face to face with stillness' (304), but Plato, with his 'parricide' of Parmenides in the *Sophist*, allowed non-being to exist 'in one sense' (*Soph.* 241d) and thus made possible the whole edifice of the western intellect which with all its 'thinking and debating and rational argument' has ultimately got us 'absolutely nowhere' and kept reality hidden (305-306).

Part 2

Kingsley introduces Empedocles as a magician and sorcerer (318-321), a presentation we are familiar with from his earlier book on Empedocles (1995). The problem with understanding Empedocles, in Kingsley's assessment, is not the fragmentary nature of the surviving evidence but our flawed approach to the material that we do have. Even the recently discovered fragments (the Strasbourg Papyrus) do not add anything substantially new to our knowledge of Empedocles, but they serve to confirm what should have been obvious all along: that 'his entire account of the universe was bound up with the fate of the soul' (323), as in the Gnostic tradition (324), which are points Kingsley already made in his helpful and more extensive treatment of P. Strasb. in this journal (2002, 341-342).

Kingsley begins his examination proper with fragment B2. Empedocles here states the 'preconditions' for knowledge, but the fragment, Kingsley chides, has been misunderstood, neglected, or sloppily handled, even to the point of wrongly editing the text. Thus the words to Pausanias in lines 9-10 should read, 'But as for you: because you have come aside here, you will learn. / Mortal resourcefulness can manage no more', with a stop after 'you will learn' (πεύσεαι), but the lines have been altered to read, 'because you have come aside here, you will learn no more than mortal resourcefulness can accomplish' (326-329).⁶ The dif-

⁵ On Parmenides' poem generally as a 'magical text', cf. 168. For those who reject the magical dimension in Parmenides, or for that matter in Empedocles, Kingsley has an all too convenient answer: their denial simply shows the potency of the magic to deceive (293).

⁶ I do not know the source of Kingsley's negative example (Kingsley 2002, 366n78, points to Karsten's emendation of the Greek text) but cf. the following translations: 'But you now, since you have come aside to this place, will learn within the reach of human understanding' (Wright 1981, 155). 'You then, since you have turned aside to this place, shall learn: no further can mortal wit reach.

ference is important to Kingsley because it underscores the utter helplessness of mortal resourcefulness (μῆτις), even though ‘palms...have been poured over people’s limbs’ (B2.1). These ‘palms’ (παλάμαι), according to Kingsley, are cunning devices, closely associated with μῆτις, and, though restricted in scope (hence στείνωποί), given to mortals as a gift by the gods (330-333; cf. Kingsley 2002, 362-364). Yet although human μῆτις by itself is severely limited—Kingsley speaks repeatedly of its futility—it does not apply to Empedocles himself, and it is the person of Empedocles who offers mortals some hope if we only, like Pausanias, ‘come aside’ to seek him out as a divine teacher (334-341; cf. Kingsley 2002, 365-369).

Kingsley sets out Empedocles’ teaching of the cosmic cycle at first along standard lines: the uniting of the four elements is the work of Love, their separation is achieved by Strife, and both Love and Strife as well as the elements are divine (347-348). But as for the sequence of the cycle Kingsley diverges from the more traditional interpretations and argues that it begins with Strife, passes through the domination of Love (the rule of Aphrodite), and ends again in total Strife (349-357; cf. Kingsley 2002, 386-387). Interwoven in the cosmic cycle is the story of the soul. The human soul is a daemon, involved in a series of incarnations including non-human forms; hence Empedocles’ prohibition of killing and eating animals (358-360). Kingsley explains the soul’s fate by a schema of two falls. The first takes place when the immortal daemon, through blood pollution, is exiled from its heavenly life to mortal life here on earth, this ‘unfamiliar place’ and ‘covered-over cave’ (361-363; B115, B118, B120), though Kingsley does not sufficiently explain how a heavenly daemon is able to incur blood guilt. The second fall is the fall of incarnate human beings, brought on by the violence they practice under the reign of Aphrodite. Kingsley reverses the usual picture we have of Empedocles by making Love, not Strife, the cause of the soul’s banishment and the Strife the restorer (364-379). It is through Love that what had been immortal ‘all of a sudden became mortal’ (B35.14). Aphrodite is a goddess of deception and of sex and sexuality,⁷ which are the forces that draw the soul into incarnation (380-383). Empedocles clearly warns of Aphrodite’s power of deception and cunning (μῆτις) in B23 and already in B17, while the aim of his own teaching, ‘the undeceptive arrangement of my words’ (B17.26) is, in Kingsley’s view, ‘to awaken an entirely different form of cognition’ (387). Empedocles’ warning to Pausanias not to sit there ‘in a daze’ (τεθιπῶς, B17.21), which reminds Kingsley of the ‘dazed’ (τεθιπότες) hordes in Parmenides (B6.5), are words uttered by a magician to protect his disciple (388-391).

As small examples of Aphrodite’s deceptiveness Kingsley points to two frag-

(After Guthrie)’ (Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983, 285). ‘But you, then, since you have stepped aside here, you will learn. Mortal cunning has certainly gone no further’ (Inwood 2001, 215).

⁷ Kingsley points to B17 in which Empedocles describes Aphrodite ‘spinning around in the mid-parts’ (line 25). Kingsley emends the corruption μετ’ ὄσσοισιν to μέσσοισιν (μετὰ τοῖσιν, Brandis, Diels *et al.*) and interprets the word, plausibly, as ‘genitals’. The textual discussion is found in Kingsley 2002, 388-389.

ments that have been mistranslated by most scholars in their wish to see Empedocles' Love in a positive light. Thus B22.4-5 should be translated, 'Those that are *resistant to mixture* / have become affectionate towards each other, made / alike by Aphrodite', instead of 'ready for mixture' (393, my emphasis; for the philosophical discussion of ἐπαρκής, see Kingsley 2002, 393n147), and B35.5-6, describing the waning of Strife and increasing influence of Love towards the union of things, should read, 'everything comes together to be one alone—/ assembling from all different directions / not at once, but *reluctantly*' instead of 'but willingly' or 'voluntarily' (394-395; Kingsley reads ἄλλ' ἄθελημά instead of ἄλλὰ θελημά; cf. Kingsley 2002, 396-397). These corrections thus yield the sense that Love forces the union of elements, against their will.

Human consciousness too is sullied by Aphrodite; it is carnal and mortal, which is the meaning that Kingsley elicits from B105.1-3, where Empedocles identifies consciousness with 'the blood around the heart' (396-399). Kingsley credits F.W. Sturz as the sole scholar in the history of Empedoclean studies to have recognized that the sphere of Love is characterized by impurity and chaos, from which the soul is liberated, and restored to immortality, by Strife (400-401). The soul is aetherial in substance and its restoration is a return to the pure aether, the heavens (401-402).

How Strife accomplishes its saving role is Kingsley's main subject matter in the subsequent pages. He first picks up B15, a 'prophetic riddle' whose purport is 'that we not only exist while we are incarnated as mortals by Love. We also go on existing and living when we have been released from our bodies by Strife' (405-406). Empedocles' contrary forces of Love and Strife are analogous to the polarity between Aphrodite and Persephone in Parmenides (407-409). Kingsley deliberately opposes the point of view stated by Aristotle, that in Empedocles 'Love is the cause of good while Strife is the cause of evil' (*Meta.* 985a6-7), and the similar sentiments expressed by Plutarch (*Is. et Os.* 370e). Both Aristotle and Plutarch failed to see that what obtains in Empedocles' poem is the 'principle of inversion', the idea 'that truth must never be stated directly but always through its opposite' (416-417). Kingsley sees Empedocles' method revealed in B8.1-4 and in B9, in which Empedocles denies that birth and death really exist; these are mere human names, and in speaking of them Empedocles allows that he is following convention (νόμος) (418-425). But if, in spite of Empedocles' warnings, we fail to discern the illusory nature of the customary conceptions he uses, it is because he holds up a mirror to his readers whereby they see only reflections of what is familiar to them. Kingsley calls this 'the mystery of reflection' (426-429). As a salient example of this principle operative in Empedocles' poetry he chooses B115.9-14. Here Empedocles narrates the wanderings of the fallen daemon-soul as it is tossed from element to element, and he includes himself, 'an exile from the gods and a wanderer, placing my / trust in mad Strife'. Kingsley charges that the last phrase (νεῖκεϊ μαινομένῳ πίσυνος) has been repeatedly mistranslated to yield the expected meaning that Empedocles is an exile and a wanderer *because* he trusted in Strife, whereas in actuality he 'is saying the exact

reverse, that he trusts in Strife because he is in exile', 'he is placing his trust in strife...to get him out of this appalling situation...' (432). Kingsley's argument is based on taking πίσυνοϋς as a word implying trust in something for deliverance from a current difficulty (see 588 for parallels). Since Empedocles also describes strife as 'mad', Kingsley offers a short but interesting discussion of two types of madness in Greek thought, spoken of by Plato and even apparently by Empedocles himself. In a testimonium (A98) the medical writer Caelius Aurelianus (*morb. chron.* i 5) reports that the followers of Empedocles posited one kind of madness (*furor*) that is a purification of the soul (*animi purgamentum*), and another that is a mental disturbance by reason of a bodily cause or imbalance. Thus Kingsley suggests that Empedocles, when he puts his trust in mad Strife, speaks of madness in the former sense, of its potential to release the soul from pollution (439-441). Kingsley finds this assessment corroborated by the comment of an Arabic translator who portrays Empedocles as an inspired madman: 'he came as a help to those souls whose minds have become contaminated and mixed. And he became like a madman—calling out to people...to reject this world...and go back to their own original, sublime and noble realm' (443, 589; the quotation is from the *Theology of Aristotle* i 31; cf. Kingsley 1995, 380). Mortal souls become contaminated and mixed by Aphrodite, whose deceptive works were understood by Empedocles, as a sorcerer himself, and also by Parmenides. At heart there is no disagreement between Empedocles' 'undeceptive arrangement of my words' and the Parmenidean goddess' 'deceptive ordering of my words'; both accounts, each in its own way, aim at the truth, and the truth, if I read Kingsley correctly, is that this world of ours, Aphrodite's world, is an illusion (444-461).

Kingsley goes on to argue that, if each cosmic cycle in Empedocles inevitably comes to an end, then our notions of choice and free will too are an illusion. Freedom merely means acquiring the awareness, itself a predetermined process, that this is so: 'Then we are free: free from the illusion of having to choose, free simply to be ourselves' (467-469). The reality underlying our apparent choices and changes is motionlessness. Kingsley adduces B17.6-13 in which Empedocles, after depicting how all things are caught up in the alternating cycles of Love and Strife, yet states: 'to the extent that / they keep on interchanging and exchanging places / without break or end, to this extent they always are / motionless (αἰὲν...ἄκίνητοι) throughout the cycle' (12-13, Kingsley's trans. 471). Someone who understood the illusory nature of change and motion was the sophist Gorgias, whom Kingsley places firmly in the tradition of Parmenides and Empedocles (477-487). Gorgias' famous argument was that nothing exists; that even if something existed, it would be incomprehensible to man; and even if man could comprehend it, he would not be able to communicate it (B3). According to Kingsley, although Gorgias' argument destroys Parmenides' teaching, it nonetheless paradoxically arrives at the same radical conclusion—that the world of existence and non-existence, of change and movement, is unreal (489-490). Further fragments of Gorgias (B23, B11 § 18) indicate to Kingsley that Gorgias,

in speaking of this world as ruled by deception (ᾠπάτη), is fully in accord with Parmenides and Empedocles in their understanding of the deceptive nature of things (481, 492-498, 590).

In the final pages of the book Kingsley returns to Empedocles' initial words to Pausanias. In B3.9-13 Empedocles calls on his pupil to accept the assurance provided by his senses. Kingsley dwells on the meaning of πίστις as signifying a pact or a pledge, in this case offered by Empedocles' Muse on the trustworthiness of Pausanias' sense perceptions (507-509; Kingsley refers to Empedocles' invocations to the Muse but does not collectively cite the specific fragments; these are B3.3, B4.2, B131). But, Kingsley stresses, Empedocles does not advise Pausanias merely to use his senses but to be aware of using them. This intense awareness of the present moment is made possible by μῆτις—Kingsley cites B106, 'For humans, μῆτις grows in relation to what is present'—and ultimately enables us to transcend human existence altogether (509-513). Kingsley calls the awareness taught by Empedocles 'common sense', though he quickly refutes Aristotle's notion that it is a faculty possessed by all, because it happens only most rarely that anyone is ever aware 'of the act of thinking or perceiving'.⁸ Kingsley rather sees in the Empedoclean awareness of a common sense a kind of mystical phenomenon, for he speaks of it as 'part of an esoteric transmission from teacher to disciple', 'an extraordinary meditation technique', a 'divine awareness' (514-516).

As to the question how this practice of awareness relates to Empedocles' teaching on the whole, Kingsley singles out B110 as a passage that 'offers specific instruction to Pausanias on how to receive Empedocles' words' (519). The fragment allows Empedocles' words to be understood as seeds that with the right cultivation have the potential to grow (cf. φύσις, line 5) and bear fruit. Pausanias is instructed to press them down underneath his 'dense-packed diaphragm' (line 1; on ὑπὸ πραπίδεσσιν referring to the abdominal region, cf. Kingsley 2002, 400-401), which Kingsley likens to the planting of seeds, and to 'oversee' (ἐποπτεύσεις) them with 'pure attention' (καθαρῇσιν μελέτησιν, line 2). Kingsley shows by examples from Hesiod that these terms correspond to the language of farming and agriculture, so that Empedocles' poem encourages us to become 'the farmers of our immortality' (520-529). Scholars may have overlooked this symbolism of farming, but they have not failed to notice, as Kingsley readily allows, that Empedocles' terms are also those used for initiation into the mysteries (κάθαρσις, ἐποπτεία), and Kingsley's aim is to combine both aspects. Pausa-

⁸ Kingsley quotes only one passage from Aristotle, *NE* 1170a29-32, apparently as an illustration of common sense. Here Aristotle speaks of the perception (αἰσθάνεσθαι) that accompanies our various senses. Although this reflexive awareness is on one interpretation a function of the common sense, on the grounds that it is not assigned to any one special sense, on another interpretation it can only belong to the noetic faculty since it is a reflexive awareness of *thinking* (see Modrak 1987, 146-147). For a clearer statement on the common sense in Aristotle, see *De Somn.* 455a13-21. But in either case Kingsley's point—that Aristotle assumed 'this awareness is something we humans already have'—is not invalidated.

nias holds inside himself the invisible germs of Empedocles' teaching which should endow him, like an initiate into the mysteries, with an extraordinary awareness, 'with all his senses simultaneously, constantly, consciously' (530-533). On the other hand, the failure to be alert with all one's sense perceptions is described as 'lacking in wood', or at least that is how Kingsley appears to interpret the curious word λιπόξυλος that surfaces in a couple of Empedocles' fragments. In B21.1-2 Empedocles addresses Pausanias: 'Come now: if these words I spoke / a moment ago appear at all lacking in wood, then look clearly at the witnesses to what / I have just been saying' (Kingsley's trans., 539).⁹ Similarly in B71.1: 'If assurance about these things is, for you, / at all lacking in wood...'. The 'assurance' (πίστις) is once again the Muse's pledge on the reliability of the senses (542-543, cf. 507-509). Here Kingsley also brings in B4: 'Perverse people make a habit of / disobeying their superiors. You, though: / perceive just as the pledges from our Muse / command after splitting what I am saying in your entrails' (Kingsley's trans., 551). Pausanias is not to act like the perverse people who break faith with the Muse, but he is to trust her pledges, the sense perceptions, or, as Kingsley puts it succinctly: 'as a pledge from our Muse take the world' (549). The requirement to split Empedocles' words in his entrails (διατμηθέντος ἐνὶ σπλάγχνοισι λόγοιο) Kingsley, taking a cue from Clement of Alexandria (the source of the fragment), explains as an agricultural image: the splitting of wood for the insertion of a graft. The meaning that thus results is that Pausanias is to implant Empedocles' teaching inside himself and to cultivate its growth by the conscious use of his sense perceptions (552-556). At the very last Kingsley ties in this schema of planting and growth with Empedocles' 'roots' of all existence that lie in Tartarus. Although Tartarus lies beyond everything that exists, it is not non-existent. It is the transcendent reality in which the sensory world is rooted (557-559).

The message in this book is that the poems of Parmenides and Empedocles offer a guide to the experience of reality. The emphasis is on experience. Thus with Parmenides we should not adapt his poem to our conceptions but rather we need to conform ourselves to it (57-59). Parmenides did not write 'an exercise for intellectuals, but a guide to transformation' (300). Likewise Empedocles' teachings have 'the power to change one's life' if one is prepared 'to live them out' (445). Scholars will find these repeated exhortations to personal experience off-putting, but then it is Kingsley's position that Parmenides and Empedocles did not write for academics and scholars (cf. 28). Nor is his own book, as I indicated at the outset, intended primarily for a scholarly audience. Kingsley's premiss, which he states clearly on his website (www.peterkingsley.org), is that western civilization is starved for a sense of meaning and purpose that can be regained by making contact with ancient writers such as Parmenides and Empedocles. Other-

⁹ Line 2 reads, εἴ τε καὶ ἐν προτέροισι λιπόξυλον ἔπλετο μορφή, but Kingsley's translation seems to omit μορφή, which either refers to the 'form of the argument' (Wright 1981, 178) or, possibly, the form of the elements that Empedocles goes on to mention (sun, sky, water, earth).

wise 'our lives will be meaningless' and 'we can have no future'. Although I may balk at having my life called meaningless (personally, I find meaning in the Christian tradition), it is not my intention here to debate Kingsley's analysis of the malaise of western culture and its possible cure. With all due respect for Kingsley's missionary endeavor, I wish that he would not slight the scholarly community. For all his disparagement of rational thought and argument (cf. 306), Kingsley is himself a powerful thinker and first-rate scholar. As he has proven above all in his previous book on Empedocles (1995), he is quite able to write for scholars and students of ancient philosophy. The present book, with its many gems of insight, incites in me a longing to see from Kingsley's pen a comprehensive, systematic, and footnoted treatise on Parmenides and Empedocles that takes account of every single fragment. Conceivably, if Kingsley can live with the dichotomy, he could write such works in the requisite scholarly format while maintaining his more missionary enterprises in other forums.

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This is a most impressive achievement, the first edition in English of the fragments of the Athenian sophist Antiphon—there have been the older German edi-