

SPHERE AND CHAOS - LOVE AND STRIFE

It was Empedocles who established four ultimate elements which make all the structures in the world - fire, air, water, earth. Empedocles called these four elements "roots".According to the different proportions in which these four indestructible and unchangeable elements are combined with each other the difference of the structure is produced. It is in the aggregation and segregation of elements thus arising, that Empedocles found the real process which corresponds to what is popularly termed growth, increase or decrease. Nothing new comes or can come into being; the only change that can occur is a change in the juxtaposition of element with element. The roots are simple, eternal, and unalterable, and as change is the consequence of their mixture and separation, it was also necessary to suppose the existence of moving powers - to bring about mixture and separation. The four elements are eternally brought into union and eternally parted from each other, by two divine powers, Love and Strife. Love explains the attraction of different forms of matter, and Strife accounts for their separation. If the elements are the content of the universe, then Love and Strife explain their variation and harmony. Love and Strife are attractive and repulsive forces which the ordinary eye can see working amongst people, but which really pervade the universe. They alternately hold empire over things, - neither, however, being ever quite absent.As the best and original state, there was a time when the pure elements and the two powers co-existed in a condition of rest and inertness in the form of a sphere. The elements existed together in their purity, without mixture and separation, and the uniting power of Love predominated in

the sphere: the separating power of Strife guarded the extreme edges of the sphere. Since that time, strife gained more sway and the bond which kept the pure elementary substances together in the sphere was dissolved. The elements became the world of phaenomena we see today, full of contrasts and oppositions, operated on by both Love and Strife. Empedocles assumed a cyclical universe whereby the elements return and prepare the formation of the sphere for the next period of the universe.