

## Divine Materialism: Understanding Empedocles' Roots Analogically

Empedocles rejects, or at least precedes, the dichotomy between material and immaterial. He describes the four roots as divine (B6, B59, B109) and simultaneously insists that they are the components of all material things (B9, B17). Thus, for Empedocles, divine and material are not incompatible categories. The four roots are described as the deities Zeus, Hera, Aidoneus, and Nestis in fragment B6, whereas they are typically associated with the elements fire, air, earth and water. I argue that Empedocles distinguishes not between material and immaterial, but between perceptible and imperceptible. Divinity, for Empedocles, cannot be perceived via the senses (B133). The divine, unseen roots can, however, be approached through analogy (B109). Empedocles employs analogy both when he personifies the roots as deities and when he compares them to physical manifestations of the roots as elements. In this paper, I elaborate on Empedocles' analogical epistemology and its implications for the four roots. I argue that for Empedocles, divinity can only be understood via analogy and that consequently all descriptions of the four roots in his poetry should be taken analogically. In this paper, I explore his analogical techniques broadly, their application to the roots, and a key alternative to the analogical reading—which I term the volitive reading—which can, in the end, be synthesized with it.