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Soul, Body and Person in Ancient India

I.

Ever since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, when Western scholars turned to the study of ancient India and made accessible an increasing number of aspects of its rich cultural tradition, the Western intellectual world has been fascinated foremost by the religious and philosophical traditions of South Asia. Not that the strange beliefs and customs of the "heathens" of the East Indies had not attracted the attention of European travellers and especially missionaries before, who described back home what – through the lense of their specific pre-conceptions and hermeneutic presuppositions – they had seen and learnt in these foreign lands, thus contributing to the creation of an image of India as a remote land of wonders and miracles and as the intriguing Other of their own religious and cultural tradition. However, it was only when institutionalized academic scholarship in so-called Oriental Studies in Europe began towards the end of the eighteenth century that Indian culture was systematically explored and interpreted on the basis of the original sources and with a claim to scholarly method, soundness and objectivity, and the results made known by the Orientalists to a wider intellectually curious and receptive audience. Continuing the primary interest of their predecessors, the travellers and missionaries, and following the historical approach generally taken in academia at that time, many Orientalists of this formative period focussed on Sanskrit sources which they perceived to be of relevance to the history of religion in ancient India. As the close connection between religion and philosophy in Indian culture was realized early on, there was also increasing concern with sources pertinent to the history of Indian philosophy. Already Sir William Jones, appointed in 1783 as puisne judge of the Supreme Court at Fort Williams, Calcutta, and renowned founder of the Asiatic Society there in 1784, voiced his great appreciation of Indian philosophy in his famous discourses delivered at Calcutta, stating in one of them that the six philosophical schools known at the time "comprise all the metaphysics of the old Academy, the Stoa, the Lyceum; nor is it possible to read the Vedanta ... without believing that Pythagoras and Plato derived their sublime theories from the same fountain with the Sages of India."[1] The first translation from the Sanskrit into English of a cardinal religio-philosophical treatise, the *Bhagavadgītā*, claimed to be the first book ever directly translated from Sanskrit into English, was prepared by one of James' close associates in the Asiatic Society, Sir Charles Wilkins, who came to Bengal as a clerk of the East India Company and then estab-

[1] Cf. Ramaswami Sastri 1922: 10.

lished himself in the trading town of Hooghly as a printer, publisher and versatile scholar.[2]

When Wilkins' translation was published in 1785 from London by the East India Company at the recommendation of the Governor–General Warren Hastings, the treatise – actually a didactical religio-philosophical epic poem – was highly praised by leading European minds and soon translated into other European languages, first into Latin by August Wilhelm von Schlegel (1823),[3] instigating a long sequence of translations and interpretations which continues even today. This immensely popular and influential treatise presents itself as a battlefield dialogue between God Kṛṣṇa and the despondent prince Arjuna, written in the devotional spirit of a poetic pantheism with monistic elements and at the same time testifying to the dualistic ontology of matter and consciousness of the Sāṅkhya philosophy which must have been well established at the time. Against this religio-philosophical background, the *Bhagavadgītā* combines ethical teachings of practical, everyday relevance with theological and soteriological teachings, laying out the various paths to salvation and ultimate liberation from repeated rebirth for the individual soul, variously called the Self *(ātman)*, the person *(puruṣa)*, "the knower of the field" *(kṣetrajña)*, and the embodied one *(dehin)*, literally: "the one characterized by a body."

An impact comparable to that of the publication of Wilkins' translation of the *Bhagavadgītā*, which forms part of the Indian epic *Mahābhārata*, was achieved by the publication of a collection of ancient Indian religio-philosophical treatises called Upaniṣads which were made available at the very beginning of the nineteenth century in a Latin translation by the French scholar and traveller Abraham Anquetil Duperron under the title *Oupnek'hat*. Although being only a secondary translation because it was based on a Persian translation from the original Sanskrit by Dara Shukoh, the unfortunate brother of the Moghul emperor Aurangzeb, the *Oupnek'hat* caught the attention of many influential philosophers and historians of philosophy in the first half of the nineteenth century. Anquetil Duperron appealed to the philosophers of his time, especially the Continental Idealist philosophers, to look upon the Upaniṣads and Indian philosophy not only as the relics of some remote and foreign Eastern past, but to study them as philosophy and within the history of philosophy, with the same respect as one studies the Classical Greek philosophers, and with a comparative approach.[4]

Owing to this appeal, especially the philosophers of German Romanticism and in their wake philosophers such as Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling and – most conspicuously – Arthur Schopenhauer brought the teachings of the Upaniṣads into the scope of European intellectual history. Schopenhauer, who – as is well known – called his reading of the Upaniṣads the "solace" of his life, predicting it to be also the solace of his death, was deeply intrigued by the monistic teachings of the Upaniṣads and their search for the one single principle that brings forth, essentially underlies and in this way unites all diverse phenomena of this world. These phenomena include foremost the individual Self *(ātman)*, the person *(puruṣa)* and the soul *(jīva)*. Among these, the Self *(ātman)* is identified according to some Upaniṣadic teachings with a unitary and foundational absolute principle called *brahman*, a conception which greatly impressed thinkers like Schopenhauer who took *brahman* to be something like a "world-soul" with which the individual soul reunites once recognition of the ultimate identity of *ātman* and *brahman* has been achieved; for Schopenhauer specifically, *brahman* approximated his concept of cosmic volition which is the basis and source of all spatial and temporal diversification including the individual soul, although the resulting diversity exists merely as a representation of this omnipotent volition.

II.

This brief introduction with emphasis on the early reception of Indian religio-philosophical works and their ideas in the West should have made clear that the notion of the soul played an important role in this context, together with related notions like that of the Self and the person, and that a number of different Sanskrit terms were relevant in this context. At the same time, it will have become obvious that especially in this context Indian religion and philosophy meet and intermingle. The concept of the soul became an important philosophical issue in the various philosophical traditions of the Indian classical period that developed or were systematized in the first centuries of the common era; nevertheless, the origin of this notion is in the religious sphere of human thinking and culture, meaning that it should be found in all cultures in which religion finds expression. According to a decidedly anti-ethnocentric and extremely open definition of "soul" by Hans-Peter Hasenfratz, we should understand by the term "soul" "anything which reveals itself to the religious human being (in him/herself and in others) as the power or might of physical and hyper-physical (...) life."[5] As Hasenfratz adds immediately after this (slightly abbreviated) definition, the obvious fact that this "power of life" may manifest itself in manifold form leads to the consequence that a variety of "souls" may be conceived of for an individual being, jointly constituting his/her life, and be distinguished according to function, form and relation to the individual, even though functions and "souls" are

[2] Cf. Callewaert and Hemraj 1983: 237–240.
[3] Cf. Callewaert and Hemraj 1983: 289–290.
[4] Cf. Halbfass 1988: 64–67.
[5] Cf. Hasenfratz 1999: 734 (my translation), quoted also in Eichner 2002: 134.

not necessarily in a one-to-one relationship.[6] A variety of notions of "souls" in different cultures and at different stages of cultural development necessarily follows from such a broad definition of "soul," dependent on diverging perceptions of these functions, forms and relations, or, in other words, dependent on the respective anthropologies or conceptions of (wo)man.

Furthermore, it is necessary to point out that the word "soul" belongs to those words which are employed in everyday usage as a matter of fact and in a number of contexts, even though the speaker may normally not have a clear notion about the precise referents of these words. It seems that such clear notions are not required by the speaker him/herself in this case; moreover, precise definitions of the respective referents of "soul" do not appear to be necessary here for the successful functioning of verbal communication. As Antony Flew in dependence on Gilbert Ryle, has stated this further means that we obviously presuppose that we possess something called "soul" and only then, maybe, ask ourselves of what nature this "soul" might be, instead of first determining a precise referent and meaning for the word "soul" and then asking ourselves to which things or events in our world it may be applied in this very sense.[7] This observation made by contemporary philosophers may be partially explained against the background of the variety in which Hasenfratz's "power of life" may reveal itself to the individual, not only as determined and codified within a given culture at a certain historical stage, but also as perceived by the individual him/herself.

III.

The ancient period of Indian thought, which forms the immediate and mediate background not only of the religio-philosophical works mentioned above (cf. I.), but also of the later religious traditions and the classical philosophical traditions, presents itself as especially rich in concepts to be subsumed under and relating to "soul" in the broad sense adopted here. This richness has more than one cause.

(1) First, there is the historical depth and sheer volume of predominantly religious literature in ancient India which may reach back to approximately 1200 BCE, starting with the religious poetry of the hymns collected in the *Ṛgveda* and other subsequent literary collections *(saṃhitā)* called the Vedas. These collections are followed, in some cases paralleled, by the Brāhmaṇas, extensive treatises which document a highly developed speculative-proto-philosophical ritual science. The Brāhmaṇas are succeeded, from the point of view of literary history,

[6] On the "psychology" of multiple souls with a focus on multiple "psyche-souls" (cf. below p. 125) cf. Arbman 1926: 126–147, 150–151, in critical response to Lévy-Bruhl's "law of participation"; on the multiplicity of "psyche-soul(s)" and "body-souls" cf. Arbman 1926: 166ff.

[7] Cf. Flew 1967: 141.

by the teachings of the Upaniṣads (cf. I.); the earliest among the relevant group of old, early or "Vedic" Upaniṣads date approximately from the sixth century BCE, whereas the latest works in this group go back to about the beginning of the common era.[8] The teachings of most of these old Upaniṣads are still part of the intellectual world of ritualistic thinking and have been transmitted, in a form anonymously compiled and edited, as appendices to the ritualistic treatises; however, in their pronounced metaphysical–soteriological, sometimes mystical, orientation the highly inquisitive individual thinkers who stand behind these teachings went beyond that to the exploration of the true nature of the world and of (wo)man, and of their relation, becoming therefore the first Indian philosophers in the broader sense of the word, "broader" because a sufficiently systematic and argumentative as well as self-reflective approach cannot yet be discerned here. The rough chronology as sketched above for the Vedic literature results in a time span of about a thousand years between the earliest and the latest works to be included in this large body of ancient Indian literature.

(2) Second, we have to consider the variety within the social background against which the several ancient Indian concepts of "soul" may have arisen. The authors of the oral corpus of the ancient Vedic tradition, as well as its compilers and editors, were Brahmins, that is, members of the priestly estate, the highest and most prestigious class of the pronouncedly hierarchical social order of Vedic India. Moreover, from the evidence of the Vedic literature itself we know that the ancient Indo-Aryans who migrated to South Asia around 1400 BCE were originally distinguished in various tribal groups with different dialects and probably also slightly diverging religious ideas and practices. Further, especially in the context of the notions of "soul" and the closely related ideas about the fate of (wo)man after death there is sufficient contextual evidence, also from a comparative point of view, that next to the "elitist" ideas of the Brahmins more popular beliefs grounded in the respective ideas of other strata of society were transmitted in a Brahminical garb, again maybe peculiar to a specific tribal background. Even elements of beliefs of Others, i.e., of social groups beyond the pale of Indo-Aryan society in Vedic times which must have been only in theory ethnically all-exclusive, may have come down to us in this form in the Vedic tradition.

(3) Third, the large geographical expansion of settlement and ensuing internal diversification of the people who created, transmitted and cherished this ancient literary heritage – priests, elitist thinkers and commoners in the Indo-Aryan Vedic society – provide a further cause for a diversity of notions of "soul." During the period of the roughly thousand years which has already been identified as cause for diversity of beliefs, Vedic people gradually moved from the far North-West of the subcontinent to the Punjab, then onward to the Doab, that is, the

[8] Cf. the survey in Olivelle 1998: 1–13.

flat country between the rivers Gaṅgā (Ganges) and Yamunā, and from there advanced to the eastern part of the broad basin formed by the Gaṅgā. In the North, the area of expansion was delimited by the Himalayan foothills, in the South by the range of the Vindhyā mountains which roughly divides the subcontinent into a northern and a southern part.

In view of this background, it would indeed be astonishing if we would *not* be confronted with a variety or at least several variations of notions of "soul" and of terms referring to these "souls," or, conversely, if only a single notion and its development – connected with a single term – would be discernible in the ancient texts. Furthermore, it is a matter of fact that in the history of Indian religion and philosophy old concepts can often be observed to live on parallel to more developed ideas.[9] It is to the multiple distinguishable notions of "soul" and the respective terms in the ancient period, preceding the period of the classical philosophies, that I would like to turn now, as the central topic of this contribution. In this connection the body, inasmuch as it is the visible and tangible, material point of reference for the "soul" or "souls" of an individual, will also have to be addressed in passing. Considering the aforementioned observations by Hasenfratz and Flew to be of considerable programmatic and methodological value, I do not intend to define in the following *one* specific meaning of "soul" only and then look for its applicability in the Indian context, with the possible result that this concept of "soul," no matter under which designation, cannot be found there in the relevant historical period. Rather, I would like to refer to some of the basic notions of "soul" known from other cultural traditions, including the Western traditions, and, following in many fundamental respects the pioneering studies by Ernst Arbman,[10] present materials generally connected with such notions in Vedic literature, in order to discuss those aspects of them which may have stimulated the formation of the idea of a "soul" in a similar specific sense. From there it becomes possible to turn to additional notions connected with the respective Sanskrit term that refers to this specific idea of a "soul"; in this endeavour, it will become necessary to address some philological details.[11] Henceforth, I will also refrain from the use of the simple unqualified word "soul" and

[9] Cf. Arbman 1927a: 104–105 on ideas about metempsychosis and Bodewitz 1991: 39 with specific reference to concepts of "soul."

[10] Cf. Arbman 1926 and 1927a as well as 1927b and 1928.

[11] On the various terms referring to notions of "soul" in general in earliest Vedic poetry cf. especially the learned exposition by Hermann Oldenberg in his *Die Religion des Veda* (four editions, first edition Stuttgart/Berlin 1894), section 4 ("Seelenglaube und Totenkultus") which also illuminates the larger cultural context and is still worthwhile reading.

will employ it only in a modified way to indicate the specific notion under discussion,[12] or simply use the Sanskrit term.

IV.

To begin with, I would like to take up the notion of the so-called "vital soul" known from different cultures which relates to that "power of life" which is thought to be responsible for the body's being alive as manifested foremost in the vital physical functions. In distinction to the *psychē* or "free soul," also imagined as an "excursion-soul," "image-soul," "dream-soul," or "shadow-soul," that represents the individual personality unbound by the body and may – foremost (but not exclusively) under special circumstances such as dreaming and deep sleep, swooning or states of ecstasy – temporarily leave the living body and only *then* become active,[13] this "functional soul" or "vital soul" is also called "body-soul."[14] Foremost among the vital functions is, naturally, breathing; other important vital functions guaranteed by the presence of the "vital soul" include the regulation and maintenance of the right body temperature, the involuntary opening and closing of the eyes, and the healing of wounds and broken bones. If the capacity of the "vital soul" to perform its functions is impeded, the person faints; in the case of more serious impediment, there follows disease, and eventually death may occur as the most dire consequence on account of this special "power

[12] Cf. also Bodewitz's decision to use the term "soul" "as a collective term denoting a variety of conceptions concerning personality and life in opposition to the body which without this so-called soul does not function" (Bodewitz 1991: 36).

[13] Its presence thus means consciousness in the sense that only then mental activity takes place. On the concept of the "free soul" *(psychē)* cf. Arbman 1926, especially 92–107 and 121–162, on that of a "free soul" in Vedic literature cf. Arbman 1927a: 20–29 and passim, especially 105ff. and 1927b: 354–357.

[14] On the "body-soul(s)" cf. Arbman 1926: 166–172, 180–183 and 185–190; based on his ideas cf. the distinction in Bremmer 1983: 9f. and 21f., especially in connection with Homer. This concept of a basic "dualism" of the soul was proposed first by Wilhelm Wundt and adopted by Arbman, according to Bodewitz 1991: 32, although the latter does not refer prominently to the former. Cf. also the (very abbreviated) critical exposition of Arbman's theses in Bodewitz 1991: 32–35 and 38. Concerning this criticism, Bodewitz does not seem to have realized that Arbman indeed assumed a function of *asu* (cf. below) as a "free soul," next to that of a "vital soul" in the sense of the basic vital force, in Arbman 1927a. Bodewitz's own position, which is not formulated in a very pregnant manner (cf. also n. 39 below), thus does not seem to be essentially different from Arbman's more decided position, at least as long as the former does not explain the relationship, also from a historical point of view, between the two referents of this term suggested by himself. Does the disagreement lie in the choice of (or emphasis on?) either of the two in the interpretation of specific passages, or does it rather concern the *combination* of these two aspects in the notion of *asu* at a specific historical period, as clearly postulated by Arbman (cf. also below, pp. 144–145)?

of life" leaving the body altogether.[15] The connection between life and breathing can be observed most immediately; this may have been responsible for the frequent more specific conceptualization of the "vital soul" as a "breath-soul," i.e., an entity which is identical with breath or imagined as being based on it and which is itself of a subtle, breath-like material nature. For the archaic religious traditions e.g., of ancient Israel and Rome, we can assume such a conceptualization behind the original notions of *nefeš* and *anima* because both words are derived from verbal roots meaning "to blow, to breathe."[16]

In the earliest Indian religious poetry, in the collections of the *Ṛgveda* as well as of the *Atharvaveda*, we hear of an entity called *asu*, sometimes modified as *jīvaḥ asuḥ*, literally: the "living *asu*,"[17] which may refer to such a "vital soul" or "body-soul." The context is generally that of disease and the loss or restoration of life ("de-animation" and re-animation), and of the events and situation after death.[18] In the latter context, the rather graphic term *asunīti*, literally: "the leading away of *asu*," relates to the fate after death when *asu* is taken away to some other place by the personified funeral fire.[19] In the same context, two frightening canine messengers of Death (Yama) that appear when a person dies are mentioned; they are characterized as "robbers of *asu*" and at the same time implored to return *asu*, "for viewing, for the sun."[20] According to the indigenous understanding and the etymology suggested for the term in traditional scholarship in and on India, similar to the word *anima* the word *asu* has to be derived from a

15 Cf. Bremmer 1983: 22–24.

16 Cf. Eichner 2002: 141. The Latin word *spiritus* – and with it the English "spirit" – obviously also goes back to such a verbal meaning. For some non-Indo-European examples cf., e.g., Arbman 1926: 180–182. On the etymology of *psychē* and the meaning of this term in Homer cf. Arbman 1926: 194–198 and Bremmer 1983: passim (pp. 21–24 on etymology); cf. also the contribution by Hans Schwabl in the present volume.

17 On *jīva* cf. also below, p. 167–168.

18 Cf. similarly Schlerath 1968: 147 and 150.

19 Cf., e.g., *Ṛgveda (ṚV)* 10.16.2; cf. also Arbman 1927a: 52–53 and Bodewitz 1991: 45. More on *asunīti* cf. below, pp. 139–140, with n. 92.

20 Cf. *ṚV* 10.14.12; cf. Arbman 1927a: 16, with n. 2, and 58, Arbman 1928: 216, with n. 2, and Dange 1996–1996: 24. Cf. also *Atharvaveda (AV)* 18.2.13 (according to the Roth–Whitney edition of 1855). The death of a relative or friend may have effected "loss" of "soul" for those left behind; alternatively, there may have been the notion that they were "already marked for death" (cf. Maurer 1986: 252). In any case, the "restoration" has to be understood as a metaphorical expression here unless one assumes that the passages provide evidence for the fact that also in ancient India there was the belief that the "free soul" can leave the body during life independent of the special circumstances and without the consequences mentioned above (p. 125); cf., e.g., Arbman 1926: 110, 136, 156–157, 159 and 177 and Arbman 1927a: 170–171, with reference to *manas* understood as the "free soul." Cf. also Krick (1982: 80) who rightly assumes that the *manas*-s of those who participate in ancestral rites actually enter the world of Death owing to the close contact with the ancestors established during the ritual (cf. also n. 96 below). More on *asutṛp* cf. below, p. 139, and n. 90.

verbal root meaning "to breathe,"[21] which would suggest that the term originally refers to a breath-like "vital soul."[22] However, two more recent linguistic explanations suggest different derivations resulting in quite different interpretations which have not yet been commonly accepted. In the following, I would like to present and briefly discuss them.

The first explanation, by the Indo-Europeanist Bernfried Schlerath, goes back to an early etymology which was suggested by the Iranianist Bartholomae, but generally disregarded in Indian studies, and assumes a derivation from the very common verbal root meaning "to exist";[23] Schlerath postulates that *asu* should therefore mean "(unspecified) life" and "(individual) existence" (also after death and in the other world).[24] However, from the point of view of a scholar of the history of religion and philosophy, such a meaning, or rather, such meanings, if applied to the relevant passages, are problematic because in most occurrences asu obviously denotes something very concrete, and not at all abstract, be it an abstract potency or a state.[25] Admittedly, the transition from a postulated original notion of abstract "(unspecified) life"[26] to that of a concrete, individualized "vital force" and thus to the notion of a "vital soul," although not intended by Schlerath himself, would be conceivable,[27] just as when we say "There was no more life in him," or when we speak metaphorically of "much life" being in some object of artistic expression, such as a painting. However, no matter whether the term *asu* would refer to abstract "life" or a concrete, individualized "vital force," the modification of the noun *asu*, with the adjective *jīva*, undoubtedly meaning "living" or "alive," would not make much sense; in the first case, it is hard to imagine how an abstract notion such as (unspecified) life could be specified as "living," in the second case the specification would be redundant without the simultaneous assumption of some "life," that is, "vital force," which is not living or alive, for which there is no evidence in the sources. Furthermore, an even

21 *√an*; cf. Mayrhofer 1956, s.v. *asuraḥ*, relying mainly on studies by Güntert and Dandekar. This common opinion is rejected on linguistic grounds in Schlerath 1968: 145.

22 Cf. especially Oldenberg 1916: 526 who understands *asu*, especially the "living" *asu*, as "breath in the function of the support of life" ("Lebensträger") and Arbman 1927a: 14ff. ("Lebenshauch," "Lebensprinzip," "Leben(sessenz)," "Lebenskraft," "Lebensgeist"). Cf. the passages adduced in Arbman 1927a: 14 and, e.g., the passage *Jaiminīya-Upaniṣad-Brāhmaṇa* 1.41.2 (cf. Oertel 1894: 118), pointed out in Oberlies 1998: 504, n. 215, where the *asu* – according to 1.41.1 clearly a "vital soul"– of ritual chants *(sāman)* is identified with *prāṇa*.

23 *√as*; cf. Schlerath 1968: 146 and 150.

24 Cf. Schlerath 1968: 146–148 and 150; cf. also Mayrhofer 1987: 147, referring to Schlerath 1968, and Burrow 1973: 180.

25 Cf. also Arbman 1927a: 16, with n. 1.

26 Cf. Tuxen's interpretation of *asu* according to Arbman 1927a: 17–18 and 35.

27 Schlerath concedes that in later Vedic works the abstract meaning "life" was reinterpreted as "breath"; cf. Schlerath 1968: 148.

more crucial problem involved in Schlerath's derivation and interpretation is posed by the fact that the underlying noun derived from "to exist," such as "existence," which has to be presupposed and also specifically figures in this etymological interpretation, cannot simply be equated with "(unspecified) life" as claimed in the present context. We rather refer to the specific mode or circumstances of an individual human existence or to an individual course of life when we use the word "existence" interchangeably with "life," as in phrases like "Hers was a miserable existence," meaning "She led a miserable life," or "He believes in existence after death" (cf. Schlerath's specification of "existence") meaning "He believes in life after death." Moreover, such a specified "life" or "existence" can certainly not be led away or robbed after the death of an individual, to point out just one incoherence resulting from the equation of "existence" with "life," not to mention the problems arising from the – unjustified – equation of "existence" with "unspecified life."[28] Similar insurmountable problems would arise in many of the relevant contexts if one assumed an alternative meaning of "existence" in the sense of "continuance of being or life," "livelihood," "subsistence," as in sentences like "The existence of many farmers was at stake."

A further, very recent and challenging hypothesis on *asu* by another Indo-Europeanist, Heiner Eichner, postulates a connection with a verbal root meaning "to produce/procreate/beget,"[29] which has otherwise been lost in the Vedic language. According to Eichner's historical reconstruction based on ancient Hittite source materials, the term *asu* should refer in an active, transitive sense to "the one who procreates," that is, the head of a family clan, and at the same time in a passive sense to "that which is procreated," namely, life, specifically in the form of descendants. From the passive meaning of "procreated" in the sense of "procreated [life]" Eichner moves on to derive the meaning of "procreative power which has been transmitted through the process of procreation," and postulates the concept of what he calls a "sexual soul" expressed with the word *asu*. This "sexual soul," which he assumes to be a notion common not only among the ancient Indians, but also among other ancient Indo-European people such as the Romans, is passed on from father to son, guarantees the continued existence of a family clan, and after death unites with the ancestors in the other world,[30] thus

[28] Cf. also the criticism of Schlerath's hypothesis by Bodewitz, even though it is based on different considerations and a different interpretation of *asu* than the one given by me below (cf. Bodewitz 1991: 43–45).

[29] The root is reconstructed as $\sqrt{}^{*}h_2ens$.

[30] Although this is not explicated as such by Eichner, he seems to presuppose that the procreative power of a man is constantly being renewed so that it can be "passed on" repeatedly to his several sons; this would imply a multitude of *asu*-s for a single male individual, all belonging to the same kind, but created at different times and passed on to different receptacles. Or does Eichner imagine the "passing on" of procreative power in an abstract, non-physical way which would imply that it is possible without diminution or loss, just as, e.g., knowledge or a skill can be passed on to another person without any diminution or loss for the one who gives? However, at the end of life, *asu* is claimed by Eichner to pass on to the other world to unite with the forefathers, which seems to point at a more concrete physical concept. Further, does the first type of "passing on" mean that the son(s) will not have to create his/their own "sexual soul(s)" for further transmission to his/their own son(s), but pass on the procreative power received from his/their father, now being conceived of as his/theirs in the same way as before? One wishes that Eichner would have gone into more details in presenting his hypothesis.

forming a thread of life while it is living or alive (*jīva*).[31] Some aspects of Eichner's interesting hypothesis would undeniably fit with certain components of the ancient Indian cult of the dead, inasmuch as the assumed "sexual soul" would be found as a manifestation of the "power of life," to again use Hasenfratz's brief characterization of "soul," only in males who alone are entitled and required to perform funeral rites and other rituals concerning the ancestors. At the same time, however, this would imply that the references to *asu*, more of which will be presented below, would have to be understood as applying only to such contexts in which male persons are involved, which would result in a surprisingly strong manifestation – amounting to almost absurd exclusiveness – of the generally patriarchal character of ancient Indian society even in contexts of human life and daily experience, such as disease, imminent death and death itself, which one would expect to be addressed without gender specification. Apart from this problematic consequence relating to the early history of Indian culture or its proto-history,[32] it is difficult to understand how a passive word-formation with the basic meaning "procreated, engendered" could assume the active meaning of "procreative power."[33] Such a development of meaning could only be explained by the assumption that the word "procreated" was metaphorically applied to one or even the foremost object of procreation, namely, life, to be understood in the already addressed extended sense of concrete vital force; as a next step, this usage would have had to have been restricted conventionally to this single special meaning and the latter further narrowed down to refer to the specifically male vital force only.

In view of the problems involved with these two etymological understandings of the term *asu* which have been suggested in recent historical linguistics as alternatives to the conservative connection of this "power of life" with breathing, I would like to disregard etymology here[34] and rather concentrate on the refer-

[31] Cf. Eichner 2002: 136–139.

[32] It may be assumed that the supposedly original concept of *asu* as "procreated (life)" in the sense of a "sexual soul" in Indo-Iranian culture was not current any longer in the Vedic period and that the term as documented in the Indian sources had obtained a different meaning.

[33] This would be especially problematic if according to Eichner's hypothesis this reproductive power is not really engendered or produced, but passed on from father to son(s) in the process of procreation just like an abstract potency (cf. n. 30 above).

[34] Cf. also the critical remarks on the main or exclusive reliance on etymology in determining the meaning of terms in the context of religious beliefs, specifically that of the term *psychē*, in Arbman 1926: 194.

ences themselves in their contexts which point towards the notion of a "vital soul"; because the "vital soul" is *inter alia* and most manifestly responsible for breathing, it could have been conceived as a subtle wind-like entity, regardless of any supporting etymology, and equated with "breath" in later works of the Vedic period. This understanding of *asu* as originally a "vital soul" has been propounded foremost by Arbman who at the same time assumes that this notion was merged with the notion of a "free soul" in the course of the development of a unitary concept of "soul" during the Vedic period.[35] Indeed, some passages suggest that the term *asu* (also) refers to the "free soul" or "psyche-soul" because of the close connection with personal individuality. Although he rejects a dualism of "vital soul" and "psyche-soul," "even if it resulted in monism,"[36] H.W. Bodewitz also argues that *asu* was conceived to function as a "free soul" according to some of these passages,[37] whereas relating to other passages he states, following Schlerath, that the term *asu* refers unspecifically to "life,"[38] or "some sort of body-soul."[39]

To illustrate the ambiguity and hopefully provide some clarification, I would like to take a look especially at some important passages involving *asu* in the *Atharvaveda*. This work , which may postdate the collection of hymns in the *Ṛgveda* by a few hundred years, is a collection of hymns, invocations and prayers addressed to various gods and godlike powers in this world, of conjurations and supplications, maledictions and benedictions, healing "spells" and formulae of

35 Cf. below, p. 144–145.

36 Cf. Bodewitz 1991: 34–36 and 45.

37 Cf. Bodewitz 1991: 40–45.

38 Cf. also Lommel's and Renou's translation of the word *asu* in the compound *asutṛp* in *ṚV* 10.14.12, already addressed above, p. 126 (Lommel 1955: 107; Renou 1956: 60, contrary to Renou 1942: 76, cf. n. 103 below); cf. also O'Flaherty 1981: 44 and Maurer 1986: 250. Oberlies (1998: 505) has "Lebenskraft" (cf. also n. 39 below). On *asutṛp* cf. further n. 90 below.

39 Cf. Bodewitz 1991: 43 and 45–46; I must admit that I could not detect a clear statement of Bodewitz's own position on *asu* in Bodewitz 1991. It may be that he assumes various concepts connected with the term, e.g., *asu* as "life," "vital soul" and "free soul," which existed simultaneously in separate cultural milieus (cf. Bodewitz 1991: 40) or in different historical periods; however, in view of his rejection of the concept of a multitude of "souls" it is equally possible that he considers these concepts to have jointly formed some original synthetical notion, which should be distinguished from the consideration of a development of these concepts (especially of *asu* as "vital soul" and "free soul") towards a unitary concept of a "soul" (cf. Bodewitz 1991: 42). Oberlies' brief exposition on (Ṛg)Vedic concepts of the "soul" which relies *inter alia* on Bodewitz 1991, especially as regards the interpretation of the term *asu*, suggests that he understood Bodewitz in the sense of the latter position (cf. Oberlies 1998: 504–505, notably 505: "Diese Lebenskraft [scil. *asu*] bildet also das Kontinuum zwischen diesseitigem und jenseitigem Leben und zeigt somit deutlich Charakteristika einer "Freiseele")," even though – contrary to Bodewitz (cf. especially 1991: 33–36) and following Arbman – he confirms the concept of a plural number of "souls" (Oberlies, loc. cit.).

atonement, and prominently displays a magical character based on patterns of analogical thinking. Especially the latter contents – the conjurations, supplications, and so on – reflect this magical component of ancient South Asian culture and in this way preserve a precious amount of archaic popular beliefs and attitudes, even though transmitted in the form given to the collection by priestly authors, editors and compilers.[40] *asu* is mentioned, e.g., in a prayer concerned with the healing of a person *(puruṣa)* who has fallen sick or with the rescue of such a person in the face of death:

(1) "This person should remain here with his/her *asu*, in the share of the sun, in the open space of That which is without death."[41]

The word *puruṣa*, literally: "man," is also used in a gender-neutral sense for a human being and therefore can safely be translated here as "person," relating obviously to the individual complex bundle of changing physical and psychical components which nevertheless remains identifiable through time and by means of a name. This person's association with *asu* is instrumental for his/her dwelling here in this world, conceived as an open, free space filled with light where human life becomes possible and can flourish. "That which is without death" thus does not refer to personal immortality here, but rather to the specific early Vedic notion of immortality as the full living out on this earth of the human life-span *(āyus)* of one hundred years.[42] The juxtaposition of life ("here," "the share of the sun," "the open space of That which is without death") and death ("there," "darkness," "the closed space where there is death")[43] implied in this passage suggests a function of *asu* as "vital soul" or "body-soul": if the *asu* is not "here" any longer, i.e., the body is abandoned by the "vital soul," the person *(puruṣa)* will also not be "here" any longer, i.e., his/her body will be without life and consciousness and will decay.[44] On the other hand, the close connection (expressed as a possessive relation) to the person could also indicate that here functions of a "psyche-soul" or "free soul," which I would also like to call "individuating soul"

40 For a rather outdated, but complete translation of the collection (published posthumously) cf. Whitney 1905, reprinted together with the text edited by Roth–Whitney in Whitney 1987.

41 Cf. *AV* 8.1.1; cf. also Oldenberg 1916: 528. Corresponding to Oldenberg's understanding of *asu* as the "vital soul" Arbman (1927b: 351) translates the word *asu* here as "Leben(shauch)." On the other hand, he assumes that the "free soul" *(psychē)* is addressed here as the sick person him/herself (cf. Arbman 1927a: 55 and 84). These – at first sight contradictory – statements may reflect his understanding of the term *asu* as referring in the course of its development ultimately to a unitary concept of "soul" (cf. below, pp. 144–145), as documented in this and similar passages.

42 Cf. Bodewitz 1996: 30 (with references to secondary literature).

43 All these counter-positive implications would refer to the general "other world" or realm of the dead in Vedic belief; cf. below p. 156.

44 Cf. also Arbman 1927a: 15.

to describe the function of this "power of life" more precisely,[45] are involved in the concept of *asu*; this would imply that the person could leave "here," i.e., this life and world, together with his/her *asu*, and continue to exist elsewhere, i.e., in the realm of the dead, together with it. Here (if not already under the previous alternative interpretation), however, the question poses itself as to whether it would at all have been considered that the *person* in the precise sense outlined above departs this world and continues to exist elsewhere. In view of what we know about the concept of the other world in Vedic thought, it is much more likely that the person *as* his/her *asu* (in the sense of the "free," "individuating soul" identical with the spiritual person)[46] is the entity which – should it not "remain here" – "passes away," i.e., passes on,[47] unless one would assume a further unnamed "power of life" here which could take over this role. The terminology of this piece of evidence may thus be presented as follows:

(1)' *asu* : *puruṣa* (person, associated with *asu* "here," maybe also "there").

Another Atharvavedic passage related to extending the life of a seriously ill person says:

(2) "Stay here! Do not go! Do not follow the forefathers; I firmly fasten your *asu*."[48]

Here, different from the previous passage (1) where the sick person is addressed indirectly as "this person," the diseased is addressed directly and his/her relation to *asu* expressed by the genitive form (in the singular number) of the personal pronoun used for the second person (literally: "of yours"). This direct address (without explicitly naming the addressee) is paralleled in a slightly reworked version of a verse contained in an important Ṛgvedic cremation hymn (*ṚV* 10.16.3, cf. analysis [8] below) which, together with other verses of this

[45] This implies a modification of Arbman's extreme statement relating to the "free soul" that it plays no role at all in a conscious and alive human being (cf. Arbman 1926: 96 and 137), although he repeatedly stresses the close connection or even identity of the "free soul" and the individual human personality (cf. Arbman 1926 passim, especially 131–141 and 174). It seems, though, that he had a more concrete and active notion of "role" in mind, namely, a role in vital functions and processes (cf., e.g., Arbman 1926: 121 and 135, and 1927a: 174 and 182). "Individuating" should also not be confused with "performing the function of self-consciousness" (cf. also Arbman 1926: 178); according to Arbman both functions would pertain to *manas* understood by him as the conscious "ego-soul" that is at the same time the human "free soul" (cf. p. 134 below and n. 60).

[46] Cf. especially Arbman 1927a: 76–85 and 92–100, with reference also to further Vedic and later materials and to other terms used to refer to the "free soul," such as *puruṣa* and *ātman*, in these sources.

[47] This would also hold good in the case of the Vedic conception of a reconstitution of the "original" body after its decomposition or cremation, to make possible the pleasant life in the heavenly realm of the gods imagined for especially pious persons, eager sacrificers and brave warriors after death. Cf. p. 155 below.

[48] Cf. *AV* 5.30.1 (cf. also Oldenberg 1916: 528; Arbman 1927b: 352). On *AV* 5.30 cf. also below p. 135.

hymn, has been utilized in a cremation hymn of the *Atharvaveda* (*AV* 18.2.7) (most of the other adjacent hymns related to the ritual of the dead in the *Ṛgveda* have been incorporated in the eighteenth book of the *Atharvaveda*).[49] The person who has already passed away is thus addressed.[50] The wording may indicate that the second alternative suggested for the interpretation of passage (1) just discussed should be preferred here. According to such an interpretation, the addressed ailing person is implored not to leave the world of the living for that of the forefathers in the form of his/her *asu*, i.e., his/her "free" or "individuating soul," which the magic healer attempts to fasten here in this world. However, in view of the similar image used in *AV* 11.4.26, namely, "I fasten you, o breath *(prāṇa)*, in me, for life," an understanding of the term *asu* as referring to the "vital soul" (taking here the formulaic place of the breath-like "vital soul" called *prāṇa*, cf. below) and thus an interpretation of passage (2) following the first alternative above cannot be ruled out either: as long as the "vital soul" *(asu)* is fastened here in this body, the person is supposed to be unable to follow the forefathers – in whatever form or sense this may have been conceived.[51] The terminology and essential information which may be derived from this passage can thus be summarized as follows:

(2)' *asu* : (person) associated with *asu* is kept from going "there" as long as *asu* is "here."

In another healing "spell" of the *Atharvaveda*, found in the same prayer as passage (1), the sick person is addressed with the following words:

(3) "Here [let there be] [i] your *asu*, here [ii] [your] *prāṇa*, here [iii] [your full] life-span, here [iv] your mind."[52]

In this passage we can clearly see that [i] *asu* is distinguished from [ii] *prāṇa* ("breath"). The term *prāṇa* foremost refers to concrete physical breath;[53] however, the context of enumeration of vital forces suggests that it here refers to more than mere physical breath or a vital faculty (respiration),[54] i.e., to the notion of a " vital soul" conceived as a "breath-soul." Such a notion is implied elsewhere in the *Atharvaveda*, e.g., in *AV* 7.31.1 where God Indra is implored to aid in the removal of enemies: whoever hates those who utter the prayer should fall

[49] Cf. already Weber 1895: 814 and 846.

[50] On addressing the dead person = *psychē* ("free soul") with "you" cf. Arbman 1927a: 75–78, 82, 89 and 92.

[51] For this interpretation cf. Arbman 1927a: 15 and 85; the implied contradiction has to be viewed in the light of what has been suggested in n. 41 above.

[52] Cf. *AV* 8.1.3. Cf. also Schlerath 1968: 148 and the translations in Oldenberg 1916: 528 and Arbman 1927b: 351. Cf. also Arbman 1927a: 55 where Arbman presumably equates the "free soul" with the referent of "you."

[53] As a collective term, *prāṇa* denotes inhaled breath / inhalation and exhaled breath / exhalation; cf. Bodewitz 1986: 333.

[54] Cf. also Arbman 1928: 200, n. 1; more on *prāṇa* cf. below V.

down into the realm of death; who is hated by them should be abandoned by "breath" *(prāṇa)*. The appearance of this notion of a "vital soul" next to that of *asu* in the above passage would imply that *asu* was not imagined as a vital force, that is, the "vital soul," in this context, but as a "free soul" heading the vital forces present in and bound to the body in the enumeration; alternatively, a differentiation of the concept of "vital soul" is conceivable, involving a specialized "vital soul" of breath-like nature and function ("breathing-soul") called *prāṇa*, and a "vital soul" of a more general nature called *asu* responsible for the maintenance of the body temperature, involuntary bodily movements (such as the opening and closing of the eye), the healing of wounds and breaks, etc.[55] In the above passage, *asu* is also distinguished from a further vital force called [iii] *āyus*, the already mentioned full life-span of an individual (cf. above p. 131), which here is obviously understood as some subtle material potency that can be located in the body.[56] *āyus* could thus be interpreted as a further "power of life," namely, a specialized "vital soul of longevity" whose function lies in providing longevity inasmuch as in its presence the potential for enjoyment of the full human life-span can be realized. The fourth vital force addressed in the passage is [iv] *manas*, translated by me as "mind," a term which is etymologically derived from a verbal root meaning "to think"[57] and used throughout the later periods of Indian religion and philosophy in multiple senses and under different ontological presuppositions specific to the respective traditions. Here and elsewhere, especially in the *Ṛgveda* where the notion of *manas* plays a much more prominent role than the notion of *asu* and where additional information about it is provided, the potency of thinking is normally referred to with the term.[58] This potency is again conceived as a subtle material entity; it resides in the heart or in its vicinity and is responsible for the cognitive and other psychical functions, such as emotional, volitional–affective and intentional acts.[59] As it resides in the body and expresses the "power of life" in a very distinctive way, *manas* would be still another specialized "body-soul": no other entity in the conceptual world of the Vedic people at that time could have contended with the *manas* for this special vital function

55 On the distinction between a general "vital soul" and "specialized" "body-souls" (i.e., vital qualities, functions and processes conceived as entities on their own), cf. Arbman 1926: 170. Concerning passage (3), however, Arbman assumes that *asu* and *prāṇa* have the same function as "vital souls" (cf. Arbman 1927a: 15, n. 2) which is doubtful without further explanation. The assumption as such can be explained by Arbman's position that the term *manas* in this prayer refers to the "free" soul (cf. also below, p. 137) and the resulting necessity to avoid the inadmissible duplication of the "free soul" in the present context.

56 Cf. also Arbman 1926: 192 on *aión* leaving the body with the *psychē*.

57 √*man*.

58 On the understanding of *manas* as the "soul" in general cf. below, pp. 137–138.

59 Cf. Oldenberg 1916: 526.

in the body of a living human being. I suggest to term this last-mentioned specialized "body-" or "vital soul" "mental soul."[60]

The distinction between *asu* and *prāṇa* in the above passage (3) as well as the differentiation from *manas* could be responsible for Bodewitz's assumption that the term *asu* in passages concerned with ill and dying persons in general refers to a "free soul."[61] This would affirm the interpretation of the juxtaposition of *asu* and *prāṇa* following the first alternative suggested above; thus, passage (3) would first refer to the individuating "free soul" *(asu)*, then to three specialized "vital souls." However, Bodewitz's brief argumentation for this position is problematic because not only the "free soul," as pointed out by him, but also the "vital soul" will leave the body at the time of death. As indicated under the second alternative suggested above, both terms may therefore refer to "vital souls" differentiated according to their functions. Under this interpretation four different "vital souls" are enumerated in this passage, starting with a general, basic or central "vital soul" *(asu)* and continuing with three specialized "vital souls."

One further aspect has to be considered in the attempt to solve the problem of passage (3). At least in the present context of the rescue of a person from imminent death, *manas* seems to be especially closely related to the person and individuation because further on in the prayer *manas* is especially invoked not to go "there," not to vanish (i.e., from "this world"),[62] while the person *(puruṣa)* who "has" this *manas* is at the same time exhorted not to turn his/her attention from the living and follow the forefathers – the gods are called upon to protect him/her "here."[63] Also in the prayer from which passage (2) has been taken (*AV* 5.30) the "complete *manas*" is singled out and brought in close connection with the person *(puruṣa)* in a later verse:[64]

(4) "Stay here, O person, with the complete mind; do not follow the two messengers of Yama, [rather] go to the strongholds of the living."

60 Arbman's designation as "ego-soul" for this type of "body-soul" which he elevates to the "mental subject" itself and in his historical reconstruction promotes to the role of a conscious "free soul" is not felicitous as it may imply the prominent function of self-consciousness which is not evident in connection with the usage of the term *manas*; cf. Arbman 1926: 170–172 on the "ego-soul" and more extensively Arbman 1927a: 158–175. In Arbman 1927a: 180, n. 1, however, he seems to distance himself from this implication as he states more carefully that the (developed) idea of *manas*, as a *reflex* of self-consciousness, comes close to the Upaniṣadic notion of the *ātman* as the "I" in the sense of the subject and centre of all psychical experience and activity. In a similar vein Hasenfratz (1999: 734), who categorically distinguishes between the "body-soul" (= "vital soul") and the "ego-soul," specifies that the "ego-soul" (i.e., its various functions) *constitutes* human self-consciousness in the waking state.

61 Cf. Bodewitz 1991: 40.

62 On addressing the dead person = the *manas* (just like the dead person = the *psychē*, cf. above, n. 50) with "you" cf. Arbman 1927a: 169 and 171–172 (with n. 2).

63 Cf. *AV* 8.1.7; cf. also Oldenberg 1916: 528 and Arbman 1927a: 55 (equating "free soul" and "person") and 169 (equating *manas* and "free soul").

64 Cf. *AV* 5.30.6; cf. also Arbman 1927b: 352 and 381.

A summarized formulation of this passage would look similar to that of passage (1) discussed above in connection with *asu*:

(4)' *manas : puruṣa* (person, associated with *manas* "here," maybe also "there").

Passages (3) and (4) may be interpreted as evidence for a special concept of *manas* emerging in the two prayers concerned, i.e., it was not considered as a specialized "body-soul" responsible for the vital function of thinking, etc., which functions when the "free soul" is present in the body, but as a "free soul" itself which in this case would also support this function, i.e., always be what is conscious in (wo)man, not only after but also before death.[65] Thus, *asu* in the two prayers should be understood to refer to the "vital soul,"[66] in the case of the second prayer (*AV* 8.1) (passages [1] and [3] above) to a general "vital soul" next to the two specialized "body-souls" responsible for breathing and longevity *(prāṇa, āyus)*. In this second prayer a later verse would consequently address a further group of three vital forces, namely, the "breathing-soul," an "energy-soul," and the general "vital soul":

(5) "Breath *(prāṇa)* [and] strength *(bala)* should not leave you; we call after your *asu*."[67]

Here, however, the problem arises that this would imply that the general "vital soul," being called after, could leave the body for a while and return to it from a considerable distance, which would go against the concept of a "body-soul" in the strict sense. Different from energy and even breathing which may seem to have stopped completely in a very sick person but can be observed to return or be restored to the still living body, the vital force as such should always remain inside the body or leave it only very briefly, staying right next to it (cf. also below); once it has really left and could thus be "called after," it probably cannot be restored to the dead body.[68] Even though it could be assumed that the verse in

[65] For this position cf. especially Oldenberg 1916: 527–530 and Arbman 1927a: 166–175; cf. also n. 108 below on Renou's translation of the word *manas* as "âme." The passage *AV* 18.2.23 taken by itself may demand such an interpretation, i.e., the *manas* of the addressed person and the person him/herself may be one and the same, even though the passage is not entirely clear to me: "Your *manas* should go to those who/which are its (i.e., actually your??) own *(sva)* (?); now, run towards the Fathers!" (cf. Weber 1895: 852, Oldenberg 1916: 528, n. 1, and Arbman 1927a: 170, n. 1); on the plural expression *svāḥ* referring to "own [men]," that is, related members of high nobility in Vedic society, cf. Rau 1957: 72–73). Cf. further n. 108 below.

[66] On Arbman's different attempt at a solution of passage (3) cf. n. 55 above.

[67] Cf. *AV* 8.1.15; cf. also Oldenberg 1916: 528 and Schlerath 1968: 148 who understands that "unspecified life" is called after, whatever that may mean.

[68] Cf. also Arbman 1927a: 25–26. Of course, there are exceptions to this. In cultures where preservation of the body after death (mummification) is the common practice, further activity of the "vital soul" and interaction with the body may be believed to be possible, e.g., as was the case in ancient Egypt (cf. Hasenfratz 1999: 735). Cf. also n. 87 below.

question (passage [5]) does not form a unit of meaning with the two previously addressed verses of the same prayer (passages [1] and [3]), this passage thus weakens the evidence of passage (3) for a concept of *asu* as "vital soul" in this very prayer.[69] To solve the problematic situation presented by this prayer when considered as a coherent composite whole, it may be assumed , following the first alternative offered above (cf. p. 133), that *asu* is indeed the "free soul" here, but specifically associated with or accompanied by *manas* as its satellite, not as a "body-soul." Such a "free soul" would then be able to think and feel as before, making the "shadow person" in this respect functional in the other world just like the living person is functional in this world.[70]

Such a situation may also be imagined when *manas* is implored to stay here and not depart to various other locations in a hymn of the *Ṛgveda* concerned with re-animation,[71] unless one would consider that its author accorded the above-mentioned extraordinary role of a regularly/always conscious "free soul" to the *manas*.[72] This latter position is decidedly taken by Arbman in his exposition of the relevant Ṛgvedic hymn.[73] Next to the passages treated here,[74] there are further passages that support his view that *manas* is nothing but a (always) conscious "free soul" *(psychē)*,[75] some of them very clearly so.[76] This special(ly developed?) concept of *manas* would thus indeed present a significant, albeit not yet completed step towards the unitary notion of a "soul," even if it was not yet clearly formed and conceptually/consciously realized.[77] A consequence, which is not really problematic from the comparative point of view, of assuming such a (or such an additional) notion of the/a "free soul" in Vedic times is the implication that a departure of this "free soul" from the body must have been conceived as possible in special situations even without (wo)man falling asleep or swooning.[78]

[69] *Pace* Arbman 1927a: 15.

[70] Cf. (possibly) already Oldenberg 1916: 529–530, although based on an understanding of *asu* which would correspond to that of a "vital soul." Cf. in general also Arbman 1926: 120.

[71] Cf. *ṚV* 10.58, part of the group of hymns connected with the Subandhu-story (cf. n. 96 below).

[72] Cf. also Oldenberg 1916: 527 and Maurer 1986: 265. Oberlies (1998: 503, n. 211) sees the situation differently; without discussing the relevant passages in more detail he states that references to *manas* leaving the body are metaphorical only.

[73] Cf. Arbman 1927a: 148–151 (presentation of Tuxen's interpretation) and 152–165 (critical response with exposition of his own interpretation of *manas* in *ṚV* 10.58).

[74] That is, passage (1) *(AV* 8.1.1), passage (3) *(AV* 8.1.3), *AV* 8.1.7 (cf. p. 135 above), passage (4) *(AV* 5.30.6), and *AV* 18.2.23 (cf. n. 65 above).

[75] Cf. Arbman 1927a: 166–175.

[76] Cf. also *ṚV* 10.57.4ff. (cf. also n. 96 below), *AV* 12.2.52 and 18.4.66, and Arbman 1927a: 170–173.

[77] Cf. Arbman 1927a: 165, 174, 176–177 and 179.

[78] Cf. Arbman 1927a: 170–171 and n. 20 above.

Arbman furthermore seems to consider the notion of *manas* in the early Vedic sources *in general* as that of the "mental subject" itself. However, this decidedly categorical distinction from especially the "eye" *(cakṣus)* appears to be a definite over-interpretation in the case of a large number of passages adduced by Arbman himself. The frequent usage of the instrumental case of the word *manas* would be difficult to reconcile with the implied primary notion of a "subject."[79] Arbman's determination of *manas* as the "conscious principle"[80] (with "principle" to be taken in a concrete, substantial sense) is more appropriate in this light. One can also agree with his interpretation of the term *manas* as referring to the "mental part" of (wo)man; however, this being the "mental part" does not in *all* contexts amount to being the person or the Self, as claimed by Arbman.[81] In some contexts, the distinction of *manas* from the strongly evidenced "free soul" *asu*[82] would be blurred under such an interpretation unless one would restrict or modify the meaning of "person" or "Self" to the personality or Self during those periods in life in which one is conscious and the "free soul" inactive. Similarly, one would have to specify that *manas* in these contexts represents (or is) the *conscious* personality (not "person"!) during life,[83] together with its emotional, volitional–affective, inclinational, facultative and ethical–moral aspects.[84]

In the case of the first prayer (*AV* 5.30) (passage [4]), problems comparable to the ones addressed above do not arise, but it, too, should be examined as a whole, under the presupposition that the various notions expressed in it are part of a meaningful composition. Elsewhere in this prayer, breath *(prāṇa)*, the mind *(manas)*, the "eye" *(cakṣus)* and strength *(bala)* are called to the body of the patient,[85] and God Agni invoked to join "him" (i.e., the "person") with three of these vital forces, *manas* not being mentioned in this connection.[86] They all could disappear from the body of a sick person in the clutches of death, but return to it; as mentioned above, even breathing could seemingly stop in such a situation when *prāṇa* in the sense of a specialized "breathing-soul" or even of the

79 Cf. also n. 60 above on *manas* as the "ego-soul."

80 Cf., e.g., Arbman 1927a: 158, 162 and 175.

81 Cf. Arbman 1927a: 162–163.

82 Or possibly from the "free soul" termed *puruṣa*, cf. below, p. 167.

83 Cf. Arbman 1927a: 165 where Arbman himself specifies his position in this sense.

84 Cf. the adjectives qualifying *manas* collected by Arbman in Arbman 1927a: 162 and the passages referred to by him on p. 161.

85 Cf. *AV* 5.30.13. Cf. also *AV* 8.2.3 (cf. Oldenberg 1916: 528, who understands *manas* here as the mental potency in the function of the *psychē*, i.e., "free soul"). The "eye" *(cakṣus)*, although it could be understood as a mere vital faculty here, may represent another "body-soul," namely, the one responsible for acts of visual perception (and possibly also for other less prominent types of perception, such as auditory perception, etc.), as opposed to the various acts of thinking which are the realm of the "mental soul." On the conflation of vital functions with their seats or organs in the case of the conception of (specialized) "body-soul(s)" cf. Arbman 1926: 167–169.

86 Cf. *AV* 5.30.14.

"vital soul" as such, conceived as a "breath-soul," has left the body – however, for very brief periods only and remaining close by;[87] this may be why in an earlier verse of the prayer two special protectors of *prāṇa*, obviously counterparts of the two well-known canine "robbers of *asu*," are entreated to stay with the patient day and night.[88] The grouping of *manas* among other vital forces and faculties here seems to indicate that it should count as one of them and therefore be a "body-soul"; thus, there would be no question of the "person" going to the other world with or as his/her *manas* in the sense of a conscious "free soul," as may be suggested, e.g., by passage (4) above if read independently. This latter passage may rather stress that the living "person" should stay here, and be in full possession of his/her cognitive powers. For the interpretation of *asu* in the first verse of the prayer (cf. passage [2] above), the additional references to "powers of life" in the prayer are thus not decisive; however, the fact that *asu* is mentioned in the very beginning as that which has to be bound, namely, to the "person" "here," and does not appear in the later context of the vital forces and faculties such as breath, etc., suggests that it occupies a prominent and decisive position which may indeed be that of the "free soul."

Even though he does not offer in-depth analyses of the relevant passages, Bodewitz's thesis that *asu* is basically to be considered as a "free soul"[89] can thus also be supported. The main evidence adduced by him are the already addressed terms *asutṛp* and *asunīti* (cf. p. 126 above). It would be more meaningful indeed if it were the "free soul" of a human being, and not his/her "vital soul," that is robbed by the two canine messengers of Yama, the king of the dead, or by the evil sorcerers mentioned in a Ṛgvedic prayer.[90] The event of the "leading away of

87 Cf. also Arbman 1926: 186–187 and 190 for special situations in which the "vital soul" leaves the body.

88 Cf. *AV* 5.30.10. The mention of these special protectors indicates some distinction and suggests that *prāṇa* may indeed be the "vital soul" conceived as a "breath-soul" here, i.e., the "vital soul" as such, not just a specialized "breathing-soul."

89 Cf. Bodewitz 1991: 40–43.

90 Cf. *ṚV* 10.87.14 (cf. Bodewitz 1991: 43–44). Arbman, presupposing the verbal root √*tṛp*[84] in the compound *asutṛp* (cf. below in this note), assumes that the term *asu* in this context refers to the concrete, perceptible "life" (force) in the body (Arbman 1927a: 59); cf. also below on his interpretation of *asutṛp* in *ṚV* 10.14.12. Lommel interprets *asu* in this context as "life" (*asutṛp* = "Lebensdieb"; cf. Lommel 1955: 79), although in the related context of *asunīti* ("leading away of *asu*") he switches to "soul" (cf. also n. 92 below). In *ṚV* 10.82.7, a cosmogonic hymn about Viśvakarman, the cosmic architect, ignorant reciters of hymns are denigrated – in my opinion metaphorically – as "robbers of *asu*." The expression has been understood variously; Lommel takes it also as a metaphor and an exaggeratedly strong rejection of rival poets (cf. Lommel 1955: 132, n. 164). Renou, however, takes the expression literally ("ravisseurs de vie"), as referring to bloody sacrifices (cf. Renou 1956: 80, with n. 8; cf. also Geldner's note ad loc.). Brown's translation "addicted to creature comforts" (Brown 1965: 25 and 31) is difficult to follow without explanation; such an explanation is provided, with two alternatives, by O'Flaherty who understands similarly "glutted with the pleasures of life" (O'Flaherty 1981: 36, with n. 15). Both her alternatives presuppose the

the *asu*" *(asunīti)* after death would also assume a much more dramatic, personally dooming character for the person who has passed away if his/her "free soul" would be meant in these passages,[91] rather than the "vital soul" which does not possess individualized personal features.[92][93] Furthermore, the request that the

verbal root √*tṛp*[84] with the meaning "to refresh/comfort oneself with, enjoy, be satisfied" (cf. also Weber 1895: 850 on *asutṛp* in *AV* 18.2.13) (cf. Werba 1997: 192), as opposed to √**tṛp*,[550] "to steal, rob," which may result from an early semantic specification of √*tṛp*[84] (cf. Werba 1997: 427; on the lack of evidence for a verb √**tṛp*[550] apart from the compounds *asutṛp* and *paśutṛp* ["stealing cattle"], cf. Arbman 1927a: 59–60, n. 2). O'Flaherty's second alternative involves a problematic understanding of *asu* as "life" in the sense of a specific life-style ("high life of luxury ... bought with their undeserved fees"). Her first alternative amounts to Renou's interpretation of the occurrence of the expression in this cosmogonic hymn ("glutted with the life ... stolen from the sacrificial beast"); similarly Arbman 1927a: 58 on *asutṛp* in *ṚV* 10.14.12: the canine servants of Yama fill themselves up with "concrete 'life,'" are greedy for "life" in the sense of concrete vital strength, or "satisfy their desire for life" "in a more general sense" (Arbman 1927a: 59). Alternatively, Arbman suggests that the two dogs are greedy for the (free) "souls" of the dead, grabbing them and tearing them apart; this would be the ancient belief that is at the basis of later beliefs in hellish monsters (cf. Arbman 1927a: 58–59); the improbability of both suggestions in view of other Vedic passages on the two dogs and later materials is demonstrated by Bodewitz (cf. Bodewitz 1991: 44) who refers to Schlerath's similar interpretation of *asutṛp* said of the canine messengers of Yama: there are no indications that the two dogs were imagined to kill or destroy (i.e., by devouring them) the *asu*-s of the dead. However, how else could they "satisfy their desire for life"? According to Arbman, the two alternatives (i.e., *asu* as equated with concrete or general life in [wo]man or understood as the/a "free soul" in the expression *asutṛp*) may also be applied to an interpretation of the expression *asutṛp* under the assumption of a meaning "to steal" for √*tṛp* (i.e., √*tṛp*[84], as opposed to a different verbal root with this meaning), this assumption being possible if one takes √*tṛp* to mean "to satisfy one's desire for something" (cf. Arbman 1927a: 59–60) – which latter point I consider rather doubtful. Both alternatives as to the understanding of the term *asu* in the expression *asutṛp* are in a way found or implied in Maurer 1986: Maurer translates the compound *asutṛp* in *ṚV* 10.14.12 as "life-stealing," which he explains "because they [i.e., the two dogs of Yama] seek out the souls of the deceased" (cf. Maurer 1986: 250 with note 12 on p. 252). – On "robbing" someone's *psychē* cf. Arbman 1926: 193.

91 Cf. also Arbman 1927a: 33f.

92 Similarly Arbman 1927a: 56. For a rejection of the position that the word *asu* in the compound *asunīti* refers to life as a state (as later on assumed, e.g., by Schlerath, cf. n. 104) cf. Arbman 1927a: 29–33, for Arbman's rejection of an understanding of *asu* as "vital force" in this context (see, e.g., Horsch 1971: 112) cf. 1927a: 33. – It is interesting to note that although elsewhere the word *asu* is translated by Lommel as "life" or "vital force" ("Leben," "Lebenskraft"), in the context of *asunīti* he assumes a general meaning of "soul" (cf. Lommel 1955: 107). – Further passages in *Ṛgveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Atharvaveda* which contain the expression *asunīti* are discussed in Arbman 1927a: 36–54.

93 The request that the *asu*-s of men should not go to Yama (*AV* 18.3.62; cf. also Weber 1896: 274; Oldenberg 1916: 528; Arbman 1927a: 15, n. 3; Schlerath 1968: 148; Oberlies 1998: 505, n. 220, who translates the term *asu* as "Lebenskraft" although he adduces the passage, together with the following one, to argue for *asu* as a "free soul") also points at a concept of individualized entities, as does the statement that Yama's messenger (the personified funeral fire?) has made the *asu*-*s* go to the Fathers (*AV* 18.2.27; cf. Weber 1895: 854, Olden-

two dogs of Yama "should return to us, here and now, the blessed *asu*" makes better sense if it refers to the "free soul" which may leave the body for certain periods of time, e.g., during deep sleep or death-like swooning, and be caught by the two canine creatures at this dangerous time; the "vital soul" as an entity which is responsible for all or the most essential vital functions can probably not be restored again to the body once it has really left it.[94]

Similar to the case of the multitude of "vital souls" in *AV* 8.1.3 (cf. above, passage [3]), we find reference to the mind *(manas)*, the full life-span *(āyus)*, the "eye" *(cakṣus)* and "breath" *(prāṇa)* in the context of supplications to the personified Asunīti:[95] the "eye" and "breath," i.e., the "breath(ing) soul," should be returned, the mind sustained, the full life-span prolonged.[96] In the same context,

berg, loc. cit., Arbman 1927a: 51 and 56–57, and Schlerath, loc. cit., who abandons his interpretation of the term *asu* as referring to "unspecified life" in this rather pregnant context and instead speaks here – much more meaningfully – of representations of the individual; Oberlies 1998: 505). In the latter passage, reference is made to the remote past, not to the present situation of a funeral in which the plural number would not make sense (for another plural occurrence of the word *asu* cf. below p. 144 on *AV* 8.2.26); Renou (1942: 78), who presupposes the notion of "vital breath" or a "vital soul" here ("souffle de vie"), has disregarded the plural number. In view of the mentioned passages, the expression "one whose *asu* has gone" *(gatāsu)* as well may be understood as an abbreviation for "one whose individuating 'free soul' has gone to the Fathers" (cf. *ṚV* 10.18.8). Renou (1956: 64) paraphrases as "le défunt," whereas in Renou 1942: 76 he clarifies his interpretation of the word *asu* as referring to breath: "dont le souffle est parti" (cf. also n. 103 below), similar to O'Flaherty's "whose life's breath has gone" (1981: 52); in Lommel's free translation (1955: 109) "Sein Leben ist dahin," an abstract notion of "life" may again be involved (cf. also Dange 1995–1996: 22).

94 *Pace* Arbman 1927a: 16, 58 and 63.

95 "The One to whom the leading away of the 'free souls' (i.e., dead) pertains"; cf. Arbman 1927a: 33–34, with n. 2 on p. 34. Cf. also Arbman 1927a: 47 and 52.

96 Cf. *ṚV* 10.59.5–6 (cf. also Tuxen according to Arbman 1927a: 151 and 157; Arbman 1927a: 157; Bodewitz 1991: 45). The supplication is supposed to have taken place after *asu* has been restored to Subandhu. Cf. the story about Subandhu in the *Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa* (3.167–169) referred to by Bodewitz (1991: 44) which forms the background of *ṚV* 10.57–60, the Gaupāyana-hymns (cf. Oertel 1897: 41–45; cf. also Maurer 1986: 263 on "The Spirit"). Subandhu's *asu* is taken away by sorcerers and later restored to him, something which is difficult to imagine if *asu* would be the "vital soul" here *(pace* Horsch 1971: 130 who takes *asu* to be the vital breath here) – the victim is not lifeless while he is without his *asu* but rather "out of his mind" or unconscious, as in deep sleep. Cf. also Arbman 1927a: 20–29 on *asu* in the Subandhu-story according to the Gaupāyana-hymns of the *Ṛgveda*; cf. however Arbman's subsequent addition of the meaning of (concrete) life(-force) (i.e., "vital soul") to this meaning of the term *asu* in the present context (Arbman 1927a: 63). On Tuxen's interpretation of these hymns and his understanding of the term *manas* as (abstract) "consciousness" in this context, cf. Arbman 1927a: 148–151. Cf. also pp. 137–138 above on Arbman's own interpretation of the term *manas*. The employment of the term *manas*, next to *asu*, to refer to the/a "free soul" seems indeed demonstrable in *ṚV* 10.57–60 (cf. Arbman 1927a: 166–169 and 170–171; cf. also Maurer 1986: 265 on *ṚV* 10.58) although for the reasons given above I hesitate to transfer this concept to all other usages of the

in the immediately following verse, Earth and God Soma are requested to return *asu* and the (bodily?) Self *(tanu)* respectively.[97] This suggests that here too *asu* is to be understood as the individuating "free soul," rather than the "vital soul"[98] which is referred to with its specializations in the preceding where *prāṇa* is listed together with the other three major vital forces.[99]

The notion of *asu* – so closely connected with "de-" *and* "re-animation" and the afterlife – can thus be shown to have most probably been basically that of a "free soul,"[100] and as such a "soul" it could indeed have been imagined as wind- or air-

term in Vedic literature (as obviously intended by Arbman). On the use of some verses of *ṚV* 10.57, in which *manas* is called back from the other world *(ṚV* 10.57.3–5), in a modified form to relate to the *manas*-s of the persons involved in a ritual addressing the Fathers (within the *upavasatha*-rituals preceding the establishment of the sacrificial fire according to the *Baudhāyana-Śrautasūtra)* cf. Krick 1982: 80.

97 Cf. *ṚV* 10.59.7. On *tanu* cf. Arbman 1927a: 43–49, 52, with n. 2, and 73 (referring to Tuxen).

98 The latter alternative is adopted by Arbman (1927a: 15).

99 As explained above (p. 136), the short-term departure of the "breath(ing) soul" *prāṇa* from within the body to a place nearby was obviously considered possible during life, i.e., it was not fatal, although certainly dangerous. Thus, the request that it may be returned is not necessarily meaningless.

100 Further evidence for the interpretation of *asu* as a/the "free soul" is provided by *AV* 5.1.7 (adduced also in Schlerath 1968: 148): it is difficult to imagine that the expression "*asu* which is without death *(amṛtāsu)*" in the otherwise very obscure verse refers to the impersonal "vital soul" as manifest in this body *(pace* Arbman 1927a: 15, n. 1), and not to the "free soul." Cf. also *ṚV* 1.113.16 (adduced in Schlerath 1968: 147) where the living *asu* is said to have come to those awakened by Dawn; this could refer to the return of the "free soul" after deep sleep. Because the "free soul" is imagined to be "alive" (cf. e.g., Arbman 1926: 135 and 172) the qualification *jīva* is certainly meaningful for it, too. Alternatively, however, Dawn herself could be metaphorically imagined as the living *asu* inasmuch as she fulfills the same vitalizing function for all creatures who have been wakened by her as the individual "vital soul" fulfills for a living being (cf., e.g., Oldenberg 1916: 526; Arbman 1927a: 16 and Krick 1982: 292, n. 740 ["Lebenskraft"]; in a more abstract sense Lommel 1955: 32: "neue Lebensfrische" for *jīvaḥ asuḥ*; Renou 1942: 29 ["l'esprit de vie"] may point at the notion of a conscious soul also responsible for vital functions; cf. also Oberlies 1998: 504, n. 216, who takes *jīva* to mean "vitalizing," not "living," on account of the immediate context). – For the sake of completeness, some remaining passages of the *Ṛgveda* have to be addressed in which Schlerath takes the term *asu* to refer to the "localization" of "existence," especially of existence in the other world; he thus postulates a "local re-interpretation" of the term meaning "the other world," similar to the Old Iranian (Avestan) evidence (cf. Schlerath 1968: 148–149; cf. also earlier interpretations, reported in Arbman 1927a: 65, of the term *asu* as referring to "Geisterleben" = "Geisterreich," "Geisterwelt" in this context, and Maurer 1986: 254: "spirit-world"). However, regardless whether the equation of "existence" and "unspecified life" is legitimate (cf. above pp. 127–128), the development of the term to refer to a very specific location of existence of beings which is *not* the primary one, namely, the other world, seems rather problematic; cf. also Lommel's translation of the word *asu* with "(anderes) Leben" in one of the relevant verses, namely, *ṚV* 10.15.1 (Lommel 1955: 111). In this difficult verse (cf. also Arbman 1927a: 65–

like,[101] regardless of the etymology of the word. However, in a Ṛgvedic passage we find *asu* and the primordial life-giving waters juxtaposed or paralleled,[102] and in a famous cosmogonic hymn of the *Ṛgveda* there is reference to the one single *(eka)* primordial *asu* of the Gods; here the context demands that the term refers to a "vital soul" in the sense of concrete vital force, not an individuating "free soul."[103] Some of the passages where *asu* is qualified as "living" *(jīva)*[104] and ap-

71 and 1928: 232, and Dange 1995–1996: 24) the Fathers who are requested to ascend (from the realm of the dead in the underworld) are qualified as "having gone to *asu*" without having fallen prey to danger; this could be understood as referring to the "going to [one's own] *asu*" in the sense of (re-)gaining one's individual personality, of becoming oneself (again) after a dangerous passage or a period of dormancy (cf. *ṚV* 10.12.1 on the re-animation of the sacrificial fire where the noun *asu* is qualified by "own" [*sva*-]). Oldenberg (1916: 529) offers a different interpretation for the passage *ṚV* 10.15.1 (cf. also the presentation in Arbman 1927a: 65–66): he assumes that here *asu*, as the vital potency in the function of the *psychē*, is imagined to precede *manas*, as the mental potency in the function of the *psychē*, on the way to the other world and that the two, which otherwise stick to each other, re-unite there. (It has to be pointed out that Oldenberg's notion of the *psychē* ["free soul"] is *not* the one brought out in such strong relief by Arbman and applied in the present contribution, but rather a unitary concept of "soul.") Oberlies (1998: 505, n. 221) seems to follow this interpretation by explaining (not translating!) the idiom "to go to/in [one's] *asu*" as "come to new life" (similarly Arbman 1927a: 16, with n. 2, on the expression in *ṚV* 10.12.1). This has to be distinguished from Tuxen's understanding of the term *asu* as "eternal life" in this context, referring to *asu* in the sense of "the universal, all-comprehensive aspect of life" and as having a "collective character" (cf. Arbman 1927a: 18 and 65); Krick's translation "zum Leben gelangt" (Krick 1982: 75) may point at a similar interpretation. Inspired by the commentators on this idiom who understand it (in *ṚV* 10.15.1 and in similar contexts) in the concrete sense of "attaining a wind-like subtle body" (cf. also Geldner and Caland as referred to by Arbman) endowed with organs and capabilities similar to that of the material body, Arbman (Arbman 1927a: 67–71) renders the idiom as "becoming spirit" ("die, welche Geist geworden sind") although he seems to be aware of the problem that this does not fit all too well with the literal meaning. *asu* would thus be a neutral term for "spirit" ("Geist"), a notion which, Arbman claims, is at the basis of the two notions of the (personal) *psychē* and the (impersonal) life-breath (?) ("Geist" in German can refer to a ghost, but not to breath). Finally, also Oldenberg's rendering of the relevant phrase in *ṚV* 10.12.1 ("zu seinem Geistesdasein gehend") is difficult to understand in context (cf. Oldenberg 1917: 44).

101 On the wind-like nature of the "free soul," imagined as a wisp of air, in general, cf. Arbman 1926: 179 and 195–198; on its smoke-like nature cf. p. 195. On the wind-like nature of *asu* and other "free souls" in Vedic and later popular belief cf. Arbman 1927a: 68–70, 77, 80–81, 90, 96, 110 with n. 1, 126 and 128.

102 Cf. *ṚV* 2.22.4 (cf. also Tuxen according to Arbman 1927a: 17 and Schlerath 1968: 147).

103 Cf. *ṚV* 10.121.7. This hymn, called the hymn on or about the golden germ, has been treated many times. Most interpreters assign a vitalizing function to *asu* in this context; cf., e.g., the annotated translations in Brown 1965: 32–33 (*asu* = "life spirit," possibly implying consciousness, as in Strauss', Lüders' and Krick's rendering "Lebensgeist" [cf. Strauss 1925: 27, Lüders 1951: 122 and Krick 1982: 293]) and Maurer 1986: 267–270 ("life-essence"). Cf. also Lommel 1955: 119 ("Lebenskraft") and Renou 1942: 120 (more abstract: "principe de vie"). Thieme may presuppose the above-mentioned etymological connection of the word

pears in sequence together with the full life-span *(āyus)*[105] also point in this direction,[106] as does the mention of a plurality of *asu*-s connected with the body of an individual.[107] This second notion of *asu*, although much less dominant,[108] must

asu with "to breathe" because he translated it in this hymn with "Lebenshauch" (cf. Thieme 1964: 70; cf. also Renou 1956: 120: "souffle," just as in Renou 1942: 77 for the occurrence of *asu* in *ṚV* 10.14.12, there clarified as "souffle vital," similar to Oldenberg's "Lebensatem" [Oldenberg 1916: 575, as opposed to "Seele" in the compound *asutṛp* in this very verse] and O'Flaherty's "breath of life" [O'Flaherty 1981: 44] and "life's breath" for the occurrence in *ṚV* 10.121.7 [O'Flaherty 1981: 28]). According to Arbman 1927a: 17, Tuxen claims that also in *ṚV* 10.121.7 the term *asu* refers to abstract "life."

104 Cf. possibly *ṚV* 1.113.16 (cf. n. 100 above). For *ṚV* 1.140.8, Schlerath (1968: 149 and 151) assumes a meaning of "existence" in the sense of "mode or form of existence" for the word *asu*. However, the use of the qualifying adjective *jīva* would be difficult to account for in this case. It seems much more meaningful to assume that plants which have been devoured by fire, just as a corpse by the funeral fire, are subsequently granted another, higher and invincible "living" or "vitalizing" "vital soul" in some restored body (cf. also Oldenberg 1916: 526 and Arbman 1927a: 16: "Lebensgeist"). Renou syntactically separates the relevant phrase in two components and takes *jīva* as a noun, and not an adjective, referring to life as a state: "l'âme [= *asu*] haute" and "la vie [= *jīva*] insurmontable" (cf. Renou 1942: 48). Oberlies finds it remarkable that *asu* is called "vitalizing" *(jīva)* here (cf. Oberlies 1998: 504, n. 216); however, his translation of *ṚV* 1.140.8, which follows Renou's from the structural point of view (p. 504: "treffliche Lebenskraft" ... "unüberwindliches Leben"), indicates that this statement relates only to *ṚV* 1.113.16.

105 Cf. again *ṚV* 1.113.16; *AV* 8.2.1 (here, the "body-soul" may already have left). Cf. also Arbman 1927a: 15 and Schlerath 1968: 149 and 151. On a passage from later Vedic literature cf. *Baudhāyana-Śrautasūtra* 13.6 and *Taittirīya-Saṃhitā* 2.2.4.2–4 referred to in Krick 1982: 453, n. 1235.

106 In *AV* 12.2.55, however, the term *asu* refers to "free souls" in such a combination: the *asu-s* of the deceased are sent off whereas those of the living are supplied with a long life-span *(āyus)* (cf. also Arbman 1927a: 27, 35 and 56).

107 Cf. *AV* 8.2.26; cf. also Oldenberg 1916: 528 and Arbman 1927a: 15 and 56. The designation of all "body-souls" or "vital souls" in accordance with their most prominent one, i.e., in this case *asu*, would be parallel to the designation of all vital faculties as *prāṇa* (cf. below p. 148). Just as in the case of *prāṇa*, the plural expression in non-scholarly usage in later literature refers to "life" in the sense of the concrete vital force; cf. Arbman 1927a: 15–16 and 29.

108 This second notion may also be assumed for *AV* 18.2.24 (cf. Schlerath 1968: 148), which is part of a cremation hymn already addressed above (cf. nn. 20, 65 and 93). To make sure that the deceased does not haunt the world of those left behind, his mind *(manas)*, limbs *(aṅga)*, "sap" *(rasa)*, and bodily Self *(tanu)*, all referring to the body and its vital forces, are urged not to remain here; not even a fraction of them should stay. This suggests that *asu* which is mentioned right after *manas* refers to the "vital soul" (cf. also Weber 1895: 853: "Lebenskraft") because otherwise this essential aspect of "life" of which traces could remain in this world would be missing in the present context (suggested also in Renou 1942: 78 by the translation "souffle"; Renou's understanding of *manas* as the "soul" in general, as evident from his translation "âme," seems to follow Oldenberg [cf. above, n. 65] who treats this passage in Oldenberg 1916: 530, n. 2, although from a different angle, cf. also Oberlies 1998: 500, with n. 197). If this interpretation is correct, a unitary interpretation of *asu* in this long hymn is no longer possible; earlier on, in verse 13, and later, in verse 27, the

have existed parallel to the first and may even have been combined with it by some Vedic poets and magical healers. Arbman hypothesizes a development in which *asu*, originally *only* a "vital soul," was conceived in the wider sense of a "free soul" already in Ṛgvedic times;[109] according to this hypothesis *asu* would be *both*, concrete life in (wo)man *and* her/his *psychē*,[110] i.e., the concrete vital essence / vital force and thus the physical principle during life, and the "free soul," which becomes active during sleep and after death.[111] However, as long as passages are not available in which these distinct functions of such an entity named *asu* are unambiguously expressed or implied *jointly*, this intellectual approximation to a unitary notion of "soul,"[112] or overcoming of the "dualism" of "soul," which is assigned to the tenth book of the *Ṛgveda* by Arbman,[113] must remain hypothetical, especially because the distinction between *prāna* and *asu* as well as *ātman* (cf. below, p. 160) would be difficult to explain and because both notions of *asu* as "vital soul" and "free soul" are also found separately in later Vedic literature.[114] A reference to *asu*, e.g., in the *Kauṣītaki-Upaniṣad*,[115] clearly points at the concept of a "free soul" inasmuch as the absence of *asu* results in "confusion," i.e., swooning,[116] not death. However, the parallel passage in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*[117] would rather suggest that *asu* was conceived as a "vital soul," i.e., "body-soul," because of the closely related reference to the full life-span *(āyus)*.

term *asu* is obviously referring to the "free soul" (cf. n. 20 and n. 93 above), whereas in verse 23 *manas* seems to be the relevant term. Alternatively, specific mention of the "vital soul" may indeed be missing here, but part of its function referred to with the mention of the sap or vital juices *(rasa)*. This would imply that *asu* refers to the "free soul," associated especially with the mind, i.e., the "mental soul" *(manas)* (cf. above p. 136); thus a consistent understanding of this term in the hymn would be possible if another meaning for the term manas in verse 23 could be determined. – Among the passages adduced by Arbman for the usage of the term *asu* as referring to the "vital soul" *AV* 10.41 can be considered as unambiguously in favour of such an interpretation (cf. Arbman 1927a: 15, n. 1).

109 Cf. Arbman 1927a: 29ff. and 178, n. 2.

110 Cf. Arbman 1927a: 60–65 (with reference to other cultures), 89 and 133–134 on this unitary notion of a "soul."

111 Cf. Arbman 1927a: 177–179.

112 Cf. Arbman 1927a: 178.

113 Cf. Arbman 1927a: 182.

114 For a passage which clearly shows the notion of *asu* as "vital soul" cf., e.g., *Jaiminīya-Upaniṣad-Brāhmaṇa* 1.41.1 adduced by Oberlies 1998: 504, n. 215; accordingly Oertel translates *asu* as "vital air" (cf. Oertel 1894: 118). For the closely related notion of concrete vital force cf., e.g., the passage in the *Mānava-Śrautasūtra* adduced in Krick 1982: 292.

115 Cf. *Kauṣītaki-Upaniṣad (KauUp)* (ed. V.P. Limaye and R.D. Vadekar, Pune 1958) 4.12 (sound which follows *puruṣa*); according to the recension of the text used by Bodewitz (1991: 41) the reference to *asu* occurs in 4.11 (*puruṣa* in the echo), according to Frenz 1968–1969 in 4.13 (*puruṣa* in thunder).

116 Cf. Bodewitz 1991: 42–43.

117 Cf. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad (BṛĀUp)* (ed. V.P. Limaye and R.D. Vadekar, Pune 1958) 2.1.10.

V.

Following this discussion of *asu*, I would again like to take up and continue with the term *prāṇa* and some passages in which the word does not refer to mere concrete physical breath,[118] but rather to a "vital soul" based on or identical with breath.[119] An early important occurrence may be found within the context of the macrocosmic–microcosmic correlations stated in a well-known cosmogonic hymn of the *Ṛgveda*, the hymn about Puruṣa, the primordial cosmic man. In an act of creative self-sacrifice, the various physical and psychical constituent elements of this gigantic Puruṣa turn into the basic components – physical, cultural and social – of this world. In describing this cosmogony the poet connects *inter alia* the mind *(manas)* of Puruṣa with the moon and his *prāṇa* with the macrocosmic element of wind: the latter arises from the former, respectively.[120] The mind or thinking, the most comprehensive among the psychical vital faculties, and the breath-like "vital soul" *prāṇa* would thus be mentioned here as a pair of fundamental importance.[121] *prāṇa* in this crucial role of the "vital soul" is impressively praised in an Atharvavedic hymn which extols it as an all-powerful generative and vitalizing macrocosmic entity, (metaphorically?) connected with wind, storm and rain, while microcosmically it is the breath-like "vital soul" manifested as breath.[122] Alternatively, the hymn about Puruṣa may present us with the slightly different notion of *prāṇa* as the "breathing-soul," i.e., as one among the several variously grouped specialized vital forces, as addressed already above with

[118] Cf. Zysk 1993: 200–203.

[119] Cf. also Horsch 1971: 113, who – speaking in a very general manner about this pneumatic soul ("Hauchseele") – considers this notion to be of comparatively late date. Bodewitz (1991: 40) assigns the notion of *prāṇa* to the priestly circles whose concepts prepared the way for the philosophical speculations of the Upaniṣads, in cultural contradistinction to the notion of *asu* (as a "free soul," not in the sense of "life" also considered by him) which Bodewitz associates with shamanistic practices as documented in the *Atharvaveda*. Admittedly, the speculations on different *prāṇa*-s are of a priestly flavour; however, the simple notion of a "vital soul" identified with breath is certainly also part of popular, non-learned culture (cf. also Arbman 1927a: 7). – In the case of *prāṇa*, the etymological derivation from the verbal root √*an*, meaning "to breathe," is not disputed.

[120] Cf. *ṚV* 10.90.13.

[121] This interpretation is implied in the translations of Renou 1956: 99 ("souffle," to be understood as "souffle de vie," cf. n. 103) and O'Flaherty (1981: 31, "vital breath"); cf. also Arbman 1927a: 14 ("Lebenshauch"). Lommel's rendering as "Geist" reflects the understanding of *prāṇa* as a "unitary" "soul" (Lommel 1955: 115).

[122] Cf. *AV* 11.4 (translated in Renou 1956: 175–180; although not identified, verses 5–6 are rendered in Oldenberg 1915: 53; cf. also Bodewitz 1992: 51 and Zysk 1993: 200); cf. also *AV* 5.30.10 and 7.3.11 where *prāṇa* possibly fulfils the function of the "vital soul" as such, conceived as a "breath-soul."

special reference to the *Atharvaveda*.[123] The term could even refer to the vital faculty of respiration[124] if one considers that in later Vedic literature the fluctuating group of specialized vital forces develops into a rather standard group of five essential vital faculties comprising respiration *(prāṇa)* – the most vital among them –, thinking *(manas)*, speech *(vāc)*, sight *(cakṣus)* and hearing *(śrotra)* (literally: "ear").[125] The two latter faculties are correlated with the sun and the directional quarters in microcosmic–macrocosmic correspondence: they arise out of Puruṣa's sight and hearing, respectively.[126] The poet's description thus results in the following relationships:

(6) *manas* (thinking / "mental soul" / thinking) > moon
prāṇa ("vital soul" / "breathing-soul" / respiration) > wind
cakṣus (sight / "perceptive soul"[127] / sight) > sun
śrotra (hearing) > directional quarters

Already in the ritualistic treatises, the Brāhmaṇas, and especially in the subsequent Upaniṣads, the four vital faculties *prāṇa*, *manas*, *cakṣus* and *śrotra*, sometimes supplemented by speech and other additional faculties, become an important issue because (wo)man with her/his psycho-physical organism is moving more and more into the focus of interest of the priestly thinkers and early philosophers.[128] For example, in the *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa*, in an extensive and broadly conceived list of thirteen constituent elements of (wo)man which also includes some bodily limbs and numerous other physical components, we find *prāṇa* as an indwelling vital faculty[129] next to the faculties of speech, sight, thinking and hearing in the following correlations:

[123] Cf. *AV* 8.1.3 (passage [3]), 8.1.15 (passage [5]), 5.30.13–14 (cf. p. 138 above) and *ṚV* 10.59.5–6 (cf. p. 141 above). Cf. also *AV* 8.2.3 where *prāṇa*, *cakṣus* and *manas* are listed as vital forces, followed by the limbs.

[124] Cf. Strauss 1925: 37–38 ("Atmen") and, e.g., Oberlies 1998: 503 who translates *prāṇa* with "Atemkraft" (cf., however, Oberlies 1998: 382 where "Atem" indicates an interpretation as physical breath). Maurer's rendition as "breath" shows that he understood the term to refer to concrete breath (cf. Maurer 1986: 272); cf. also Mus 1962: 167, Brown 1965: 32, Lincoln 1975: 127 and Zysk 1993: 200.

[125] Bodewitz uses the term "vital powers" with respect to the five entities mentioned in *ṚV* 10.90.13 (cf. Bodewitz 1992: 51) with the intention to refer to the vital faculties, as becomes clear later on in Bodewitz 1992.

[126] Cf. the corresponding fourfold (exclusive of speech) quarter of *brahman* in *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad (ChUp)* (ed. V.P. Limaye and R.D. Vadekar, Pune 1958) 4.8.3. The correlation of *prāṇa* with the wind and *cakṣus* with the sun occurs also in *AV* 8.2.3 (cf. nn. 85 and 123 above; cf. also Zysk 1993: 200).

[127] Cf. n. 85 above.

[128] Cf. Strauss 1925: 38.

[129] Cf. *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa* (ed. V.G. Apte, Pune 1938) 3.10.8.4–5 (= 16–17): "Wind rests in my 'breath.' [My] 'breath' [rests] in [my] heart. [My] heart rests in myself (cf. also *Śāṅkhāyana-Āraṇyaka* [ed. Bhim Dev, Hoshiarpur 1980] 11.6). I [rest] in That which is without death. That which is without death [rests] in *brahman*." Because of the context of vital

(7)	fire	–	speech
	wind	–	respiration *(prāṇa)*
	sun	–	sight *(cakṣus)*
	moon	–	thinking *(manas)*
	directional quarters	–	hearing *(śrotra)*.

As a group, the vital faculties are frequently called *prāṇa*-s, evidently after the chief, most essentially "vital" and maybe also most physically manifest member of the group.[130] In some teachings of the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads which possibly reach back to the older concept of *prāṇa* as "breath-soul" (cf. above), *prāṇa* – owing to its essential importance for life – acquires the function of a "vital soul" that constitutes the essence of (wo)man, in continuation of the ancient individuating function of the "free soul,"[131] and of the universe at the same time.[132] Generally, in the course of reflections on the plural *prāṇa*-s, the notion of subtle sense faculties was developed that superseded the just-mentioned development of the notion of *prāṇa*, and finally, in the philosophical traditions of the classical period, the notion of *prāṇa* was excluded from the context of metaphysics and psychology, and relegated to the realm of speculations on the functions of various bodily winds; this more physiological notion of *prāṇa* was part of the medical tradition from early on.[133] In non-scholarly works and idioms, however, the plural expression "*prāṇa*-s" remains to be used in the sense of concrete "life."[134]

faculties I disagree with Bodewitz who interprets *prāṇa* in this context as the (breath-like) "life-soul [i.e., "vital soul"] or soul in general"; cf. Bodewitz 1986: 343 (cf. also his implicit reference in Bodewitz 1991: 47). This disagreement extends also to the related passage *Śāṅkhāyana-Āraṇyaka* 11.6 adduced by Bodewitz as evidence for the notion of such a "life-soul"; there *prāṇa*, together with *apāna* and *udāna*, two additional types of respiratory faculty ("backward" and "upward" "breathing," cf. on these Bodewitz 1986: 333–334 and 337–341), figures between speech (i.e., the faculty of speech) *(vāc)* on the one hand, and sight, thinking and hearing on the other which clearly points at the context of vital faculties.

130 On the preeminence of *prāṇa* in general cf. Bodewitz 1992 and Zysk 1993: 205, on the groups of four, five, six, seven, nine and ten *prāṇa*-s in the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads cf. Arbman 1927a: 4–7 and Bodewitz 1986. – Arbman assumes a different historical development and reason for the plural designation *prāṇa*-s here, namely, a differentiation of the "vital soul" *prāṇa* into several entities according to its various functions in different body-parts (1927a: 7–9).

131 Cf. also Bodewitz 1992: 52 on *prāṇa* as "representative of the Ātman concept," and p. 55 on *prāṇa* as the "soul" of the deceased.

132 Cf., e.g., *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa (ŚPB)* (ed. Chinnaswami Shastri and Pattabhirama Shastri, 3rd ed., Varanasi 1998) 6.6.2.6 (cf. Oldenberg 1917: 526, n. 1, and Arbman 1927a: 14) and *KauUp* 2.1–2. Cf. also Strauss 1925: 38, Frauwallner 1953: 55–60 and Zysk 1993: 204.

133 For references to the different types of breath and the bodily winds, which include *prāṇa*, in Vedic sources cf. Bodewitz 1986 and Zysk 1993: 199–206.

134 Cf., e.g., Arbman 1927a: 4 and 8. Cf. the similar usage of the plural expression "*asu*-s" mentioned in n. 107 above.

VI.

The two terms *asu* and *prāṇa*, although of great significance in the psychology of the ancient period, did not persist in the context of the subsequent development of the concept of "soul" in classical Indian philosophy where the term *ātman* (to which I have already referred in the introduction cf. pp. 120–121) became most prominent. It is this term that has been connected in the West with the Indian religio-philosophical notion of a "soul" ever since the middle of the eighteenth century and became a household word for Western philosophers and historians of religion at the very latest with the publication of Paul Deussen's famous *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie* (General History of Philosophy) – with its substantial volumes on Indian philosophy – and his translation into German of sixty Upaniṣads in 1897, dedicated to the "manes / spiritual ancestors of Arthur Schopenhauer."[135] In his translations, Deussen left the word *ātman* untranslated, and otherwise referred to *ātman* as "das Selbst," just like Friedrich Max Müller in his earlier, equally well-known English translation of the oldest Upaniṣads,[136] chose "the Self" as translation equivalent. In this, both translators, and other translators of individual Upaniṣads, base themselves on the fact that in the classical Sanskrit language the word *ātman* is used in everyday language to refer to one's own psycho-physical complex, in contrast with what is not oneself, that is, the Other, and that the word therefore also has the function of a reflexive pronoun.

As in the case of *asu*, the etymology of the word *ātman*, which is assumed to be related to German "Atem," in Old German "ātum" and Old Saxon "ādhom," meaning "breath," has not yet been clarified. An early, still much quoted etymology connects the word with the verbal root meaning "to breathe" that is traditionally considered to be at the base of the word *asu*.[137] Such an etymology would again provide a parallel, e.g., to the Latin *anima*, but cannot be maintained any longer from the linguistic point of view.[138] From the point of view of the history of ancient Indian religion and philosophy, however, another derivation which was suggested in early days of scholarship on India would be equally suitable, namely from a verbal root meaning "to move back and forth, to wander."[139] Even though he does not consider such an etymology, the Dutch historian of religion Jan Heesterman stresses the aspect of the brisk movement of breath which takes place continuously and its resulting aspect of having an unsteady, changeable nature; these aspects of breath, he assumes, explain the fact that many

135 Cf. Deussen 1897 (translation into English in 1980). Earlier translations of individual Upaniṣads, also from one European language into another, are listed in Renard 1995.

136 Cf. Müller 1879, 1884.

137 Cf. n. 21 above.

138 The derivation from √*an* has been unambiguously rejected already in Mayrhofer 1956, s.v. *ātman*. Cf. also Bodewitz 1991: 48.

139 √*aṭ*/*at*. Cf. Weber 1895: 32 [846], n. 2; cf. also Debrunner 1954: 761.

words for "soul" point at notions connected with the pneumatic sphere, as he calls it.[140] The background of this assumption is Heesterman's own, not expressly stated understanding of the Vedic *ātman* as a "soul" in the sense of the individual human Self and thus individualized intrinsic human nature. This understanding of his is coupled with the supposition that in archaic thinking the "soul" is not uniform but multiform and divided by nature; the latter aspect explains, according to Heesterman, the many different Vedic notions of "soul." The "soul," he claims in this connection, was conceived as something substantial and at the same time as a continuously changing process, being in constant flux in more than one sense.[141] The pertinent linguistic derivation is still considered valid from the point of view of advanced Indo-European linguistics represented by contemporary scholars like Eichner who in his explanation of the word *ātman* in the meaning of "breath" assumes another relevant nuance of the underlying reconstructed Indo-European root, namely, "to return periodically."[142] However, Eichner does not comment upon the possible relevance of such an assumption for our understanding of the special aspects involved in the ancient notion of *ātman* as a kind of "soul."

Another relatively recent solution to the etymological problem has been suggested by a distinguished linguist and scholar of Vedic religion, the late Paul Thieme, who bases his hypothesis on the easily observable difference in the speed of the movement of wind and breath respectively, and assumes a verbal root meaning "to sneak, to move silently" to account for the word *ātman* as originally referring to breath.[143]

Whatever the linguistic–historical truth may be, both hypotheses agree with the observation that in its oldest usage the word *ātman* refers to breath as a concrete wind-like entity[144] and that this usage involves already in the *Ṛgveda* a more

[140] Cf. Heesterman 1995: 30f.

[141] Cf. Heesterman 1995: 29–31. It may be added, highly speculatively, that some transitive/causative derivation of the word *ātman* from a verbal root "to move back and forth" would open up the possibility to see in the original concept of *ātman* a reference to one of the vital functions manifesting the "power of life" inside a body that I have not yet addressed, namely, the controlled moving and manoeuvring of a body; there is an old, though certainly not universal equation in Indian culture between the mobile and the animate, as opposed to the stationary and the inanimate.

[142] Cf. Eichner 2002: 141, who reconstructs a verbal root $\sqrt{}^{*}h_2et(h)$.

[143] Cf. Mayrhofer1988, s.v. *ātman*. Mayrhofer rejects all previous suggestions and considers Thieme's solution as the only acceptable one.

[144] Cf. Arbman 1927a: 134 and 180, n. 1, and Willman-Grabowska1929–1930: 12–13; cf., e.g., *ṚV* 7.87.2 (cf. Arbman 1927a: 10, Geldner 1951–1957: vol. 2, 258 and Maurer 1986: 99; cf. also Oberlies 1998: 503, n. 210, who seems to understand *ātman* as a subtle material vital power here, not [also] as concrete breath). This position is rejected in Bodewitz 1991: 48; Bodewitz further claims that the pre-Upaniṣadic *ātman* is "not concrete" and "unspecific" and cannot be "concretized as a soul-concept"; it is "just the Self," referring to an "undifferentiated personality-concept" (loc. cit.). However, Bodewitz does not refer to any specific passages in this connection.

abstract conceptuality taking into consideration the vital aspect of breath.[145] In the macrocosmic realm, for example, the divine powers Sun and Rain are each called *ātman* of the mobile and the immobile, presumably implying an understanding of Sun and Rain respectively as the source of all life and thus as a cosmic vital power.[146] In the microcosmic realm, this macrocosmic vital power, conceived as some more abstract principle, manifests itself in individuated form as the specific life that indwells animate beings or certain important events, such as the ritual, which were considered to be animate.[147] There is textual evidence that life in this sense of individual vital force, again termed *ātman*, can be possessed and transferred by those in whom it dwells, and that it can be increased as well as diminished.[148] Finally, there are contexts which are sometimes not easily distinguished from the previously mentioned ones in which the term *ātman* may refer to what could be designated as a subtle, breath-like "vital soul." Just as in the case of the related notions that have already been addressed in this contribution, namely, *asu*, *āyus* and *prāṇa*, no cognitive or other psychical functions are ascribed to this *ātman*,[149] in striking contrast to the conceptuality of *ātman* in the later religious and philosophical traditions where consciousness is the most important characteristic of *ātman* or even its very nature. In the ancient period, *ātman* in the last-mentioned sense seems to be merely responsible for the body's being alive.

This *ātman* is addressed in a well-known, very complex hymn of the *Ṛgveda*, transmitted in the tenth and last cycle of hymns in this collection.[150] It must have been used on the occasion of the cremation of the dead and refers to several, not necessarily disparate notions about the fate of a recently deceased person in the

[145] Cf. Willman-Grabowska 1929–1930 passim and, e.g., Maurer 1986: 100, n. 2.

[146] Cf. *ṚV* 1.115.1 and 7.101.6, and Arbman's comments in Arbman 1927a: 10. Geldner's translation of *ātman* with "Seele" is not very meaningful in such contexts (cf. Geldner 1951–1957: vol. 1, 151, and vol. 2, 271); similarly, e.g., Lüders 1951: 19 und 1959: 506, Lommel 1955: 43 and Maurer 1986: 172, who mentions, however, the vivifying role of *ātman* in a note. The translation "vital breath" (cf. O'Flaherty 1981: 175) is more literal and context-sensitive, implying an understanding of *ātman* as a "breath-soul." Cf. also the remark in Oberlies 1998: 503, n. 210 ("subtle vital power" preferred to "immaterial soul").

[147] Cf. Arbman 1927a: 10 for further passages. Similarly, the divine power Wind is said to be the *ātman*, the vital power, of the Gods in *ṚV* 10.168.4. Again, Geldner translates with "Seele," whereas Thieme interprets the term in a concrete way, translating as "Atem" (cf. Thieme 1964: 59; cf. also Willman-Grabowska 1929–1930: 12–13, O'Flaherty 1981: 176 and Maurer 1986: 215); cp. also Oberlies loc. cit. (cf. n. 146 above). Arbman (1927a: 10) sees the passage as testimony for the air/wind-like nature of the "vital soul" *ātman* which is for him practically identical with *prāṇa*.

[148] For this interpretation of *ātman* as concrete individual "[power/force of] life" I include those passages which are adduced by Willman-Grabowska (1929–1930: 13) to document a usage of the term *ātman* referring to the "principe essentiel et intérieur qui fait que l'objet donné est ce qu'il est ... ."

[149] This has already been observed in Strauss 1925: 39.

[150] Cf. *ṚV* 10.16. On the conceptual complexity of this hymn cf. O'Flaherty 1981: 47–49.

process of being cremated. The centrally relevant third verse may be analysed as follows:

(8)

cakṣus (sight / "perceptive soul")	→	sun	(macrocosmic element)
ātman ("vital soul" / "breathing-soul")	→	wind	(macrocosmic element)
??? ("free soul"?)	→	heaven	(upper world layer)
??? ("free soul"?)	→	earth	(lower world layer)
??? ("free soul"?)	→	waters	(macrocosmic realm /element)
compact bodily parts / bones (*śarīra*)	→	plants	(macrocosmic constituent).[151]

To explain, first, the *cakṣus* of the dead person, that is, his/her sight, i.e., vital faculty of seeing (or: his/her "perceptive soul"),[152] which is presumably not functioning any longer but considered to be still present in or near the corpse, is enjoined to go to the sun, in accordance with the ancient – almost universal – correlation of this subtle material sense faculty (or specialized "soul") with the most brilliant and illuminating heavenly body; this correlation grounded in the analogy between the "lamp" of the microcosm and that of the macrocosm is also encountered in the Ṛgvedic hymn about Puruṣa.[153] Then the *ātman* of the dead person is dispatched to the wind, a clear indication of the fact that this microcosmic entity was conceived to be wind- and thus probably breath-like.[154] It may be considered that the word *ātman* refers here merely to concrete breath.[155] This is improbable, however, because in contrast to the invisible vital faculty of sight (or: "perceptive soul") breath, i.e., concrete breath, should somehow be perceptible to be indirectly addressed here so that the injunction becomes meaningful; this is clearly not the case any more when the corpse has been laid out on the funeral pyre. Furthermore, concrete breath would not fit well in the triad encountered here, comprising [1] sight (or: the "perceptive" "soul"), that is, the most prominent among the sensory vital faculties (or: forces) (subsequently conceived as a

[151] Cf. *ṚV* 10.16.3.

[152] Cf. n. 85 above.

[153] Cf. *ṚV* 10.90.13 (analysis [6]), treated above, pp. 146–147.

[154] For the reworking of this verse in *AV* 18.2.7 cf. p. 132 above. There seems to be a vague reference to *ṚV* 10.16.3 in *Taittirīya-Saṃhitā* 3.1.4c (ed. Albrecht Weber, in *Indische Studien* 11 [1871]), in connection with the animal sacrifice (cf. also Krick 1982: 289, n. 727); here, *ātman* has been replaced with *prāṇa*. In 3.1.4h, the *prāṇa* of the sacrificer is mentioned in accordance with this terminology.

[155] Horsch (1968: 470) assumes that the word *ātman* here simply refers to breath itself; cf. also Weber 1895: 846, Horsch 1971: 112, and e.g., Lommel 1955: 108, Krick 1982: 48, Maurer 1986: 259, Dange 1995–1996: 26 and Oberlies 1998: 382, n. 218 (cf., however, n. 157 below). Oldenberg (1917: 524) does not translate the word *ātman* in his rendering of the present verse, but his explanation in Oldenberg 1915: 52 suggests that he considers the term to refer to concrete breath here, as opposed to the following development of the term discussed by him.

sense faculty), [2] *ātman*, and [3] the compact bodily parts or bones, mentioned later on in the same verse, with whom the deceased person is sent to the plants – the word used here is *śarīra*, which later on in the classical Sanskrit language refers in the singular number to the body as such. Because core constituents of the human person as a whole are expressly addressed in this triad, some reference to a "power of life" would be expected here in the second slot taken by *ātman*. I therefore think that it is justified to assume that the word *ātman* refers here to the breath-like "vital soul"[156] or "body-soul" still lingering next to the lifeless body.[157] In continuation of the above discussion about *asu* as an individuating "free soul" or "excursion soul," next to the "vital soul," I would further like to suggest the possibility that such an "individuating soul" is also involved here in the cremation hymn, after death conceived as a conscious entity: with words and phrases embedded in the injunctions directed at the triad, the "dead" person is addressed directly and sent, in conformity with the order of things (?) *(dharman)*, to heaven, to earth and to the waters.[158] As nobody would think of addressing a corpse, the imperatives could be addressed to the "free soul" that remains of the former person, essentially constituting the individual, nameable person in his/her continued existence – even imagined in a similar, although very subtle, not really physical shape or form – after death.[159]

[156] Cf. also Arbman 1927a: 10 and Geldner 1951–1957: vol. 3, 147 ("Lebenshauch"); cf. also O'Flaherty 1981: 49 ("life's breath") and her remarks on *ātman* on pp. 47–48. Weber (1873: 210) probably thinks of *ātman* as a "unitary" "soul" when he states that the "soul" enters the air.

[157] The role of the "eye" would in this case be that of a prominent vital faculty. Given the context, it seems less probable that *ātman* was conceived merely as a specialized "vital soul," namely, the "breathing-soul," here, together with the "eye" as another such "soul," i.e., the "perceptive soul." – Oberlies' translation of the word *ātman* as "Atemkraft" (1998: 501; cf. also p. 503) suggests that he changed his mind (cf. 1998: 382, n. 218) and interpreted *ātman* in this context as the vital faculty of respiration.

[158] I interpret the injunctive statement relating to the waters as a poetic variation of the preceding twofold injunction relating to heaven and earth, i.e., I understand *hita* in the sense of "placed, enjoined" (cf. also Geldner 1951–1957: vol. 3, 148, Horsch 1971: 112 and Maurer 1986: 259) with an allusion to the derived meaning "adequate, fitting, agreeable." It would be difficult to explain why an ordainment or determination implied by the injunctive statement and maybe referred to by the word *dharman* should be modally or causally effective with regard to the future place of residence of the deceased person, and at the same time his/her liking or personal preference be decisive (cf. Lommel 1955: 108). Or should one understand this ordainment in the sense of a natural order of things (cf. the paraphrase in O'Flaherty 1981: 49: "if that is your fate") which is of such a character that the specific aspects within this larger framework which relate to oneself on the one hand and one's personal liking on the other hand would be (pre)supposed to harmonize? This latter understanding of the term *dharman* would probably go together with the interpretation of the term in this passage by Böhtlingk and Roth (1861, s.v. *dharman* 2): "(nach dem innern Gesetz einer Sache usw.) naturgemäß."

[159] O'Flaherty's statements are terminologically slightly confused here as she speaks at the same time of the body dispersing or disintegrating into heaven, earth and the waters and of

To sum up the resulting hypothetical picture of the notions involved in analysis (8): After death, the "eye," i.e., sight, the central vital faculty of seeing (or: the specialized "perceptive soul"), the breath-like "vital soul" called *ātman* (or: the specialized "breathing-soul"), and the solid bodily element of (wo)man return to those natural elements from which they have arisen:[160] the "eye" to the sun, breath-like *ātman* to the wind, and the compact bodily parts or bones to the plants; the latter can be conceived as the origin or source of the former if one considers that the substance or essence which nourishes and builds up the solid bodily element of (wo)man is extracted from edible plants, directly or indirectly in the case of the consumption of meat and animal products. The unnamed individuating "free soul," which I suggest is the addressee of the second person imperative statements in the verse under analysis, an entity constituting the essentially independent individual, has become completely "free" now, restrained merely by some order of things or determination (?) *(dharman)* which is not further explicated. Given the limits of the present contribution it is not possible to elaborate on the difficult term *(dharman)* and on possible interpretations of its precise meaning in the present context.[161] It can merely be pointed out that according to one possible direction of interpretation *dharman* regulates the fate of the "free soul" after death with respect to its cosmic place of residence: heaven and earth, mentioned in the verse, are the two worlds, or rather, world layers, of the ancient Vedic cosmology, which are in the course of the development of cosmological concepts supplemented by a third layer, the so-called intermediate space located between them. The waters mentioned here also refer to a specific macrocosmic realm, namely, the primordial cosmic waters from which the world as we know it arose in the beginning; these waters are still present today in the form of the heavenly ocean and are also surging beneath the (flat) earth: every night the sun submerges in these waters and thus earth plunges back, as it were, into the primordial dark and unfathomable watery chaos.[162] Un-

the "dead man" himself or the "soul of the dead man" going into these three worlds (or of "one's" choosing of one or the other of the mentioned worlds) (cf. O'Flaherty 1981: 47). On speaking about the dead person in the sense of his/her "free soul" cf. Arbman 1926: 107ff.

160 Cf. also Arbman 1926: 144, 156–157, 161–162, 178, 181 and 184–190 about the annihilation of the "body-soul(s)" together with the body. Bodewitz's suggestion that the term *ātman* already refers to the self of man here (a role which according to Bodewitz is consequently also taken by *prāṇa* because of the parallel with *ṚV* 10.90.13) (cf. Bodewitz 1992: 51) is therefore problematic. – The fact that the "eye" and the *ātman* return to their source (cf. also Arbman 1926: 161, 179, 182 and 198 on the return to its origin of the "body-soul") seems to rule out the belief that the "free soul" and the "body-souls" reunite after death (on this possibility cf. Arbman 1926: 157–158).

161 Cf. n. 158 above on some considerations.

162 Cf. Bodewitz 1982 on the various stages of Vedic cosmogony and especially the role of the waters.

der the presupposition that "we" are our "souls," that is, our now continuously[163] conscious individuating "free souls," the notion of such a "power of life" only implied in the passage underlying analysis (8)[164] would here respond to and express the human hope for survival, that is, the continuation of some personal and conscious life after death.

VII.

A precise analysis of the historically most relevant verse in the Ṛgvedic cremation hymn 10.16 (analysis [8]), with the purpose of clarifying the notion of *ātman* in this context, brings with it a closer look at the involved notion(s) about life after death and the varieties of this notion in ancient India, a topic already touched upon in the discussion of some of the Atharvavedic prayers and closely connected with notions of "powers of life," including ideas about their relationship with the body and the elusive person. As Flew suggests, the supposedly universal hope for survival after death may even be considered as a major motivation behind the assumption of an immortal "soul."[165] I have already alluded to the fact that the cremation hymn *ṚV* 10.16 as a whole may combine various conceptions of the afterlife. One of them is the archaic notion of immortality as reconstitution: in the case of especially meritorious persons, e.g., if the dead person belonged to the small elite of especially praiseworthy sacrificers or heroic warriors, it was believed that the deceased would be transferred to heaven, to enjoy all kinds of physical pleasures there together with the gods or his(/her?) equally meritorious forefathers.[166] One may take verse 3 of hymn 10.16 (cf. analysis 8), to allude to this so-called reconstitution variant of immortality[167] because elsewhere in the hymn there is evidence for this belief.[168] The enjoyment of heavenly pleasures may have been imagined to take place by means of the present body in reconstituted form or even by means of the same unscathed body which has only seemingly been harmed by the funeral fire:[169] on the one hand the cre-

163 That is, not only during dreams and – presumably – during deep sleep or swooning.

164 It is impossible to decide whether the poet-priest intended to address the "free soul" termed *asu* here or whether he believed in some other "free soul" going under a different name (e.g., *manas)*, or whether he had already a "unitary" "soul" in mind, no matter what it may have been called.

165 Cf. Flew 1967: 149.

166 Cf. Oldenberg 1917: 530–535, to be modified by the observations in Arbman 1927b: 339–341, 345–349 and 361–368. Cf. Bodewitz 1994: 26–27 and 33–38 on the late appearance of this positive idea about life after death in the *Ṛgveda (pace* Horsch 1971: 106) and Schmithausen 1995: 47.

167 Cf. Flew 1967: 140.

168 *ṚV* 10.16.5 (cf. also Arbman 1927a: 36) refers to this rare, but nevertheless hoped-for situation.

169 Cf. Arbman 1927a: 75, 90, 93–94 and 173.

mation fire is requested to heal the damage afflicted to the corpse by beasts of prey,[170] on the other hand it is implored not to burn the body, not even to scorch the skin together with the solid body underneath.[171] The hymn also refers to the ritual substitutes that are cremated along with the corpse in the form of sacrificial animals or their most tasty parts and in this way offered to the funeral fire.[172] Certainly, the burning of the body must have been clearly observed, but it is reinterpreted here as an act of "cooking," that is, as the positive act of causing the body to attain a "well-done" state, in the sense of a mature, complete and purified state, ready to be handed over to the forefathers.[173]

However, regarding the passage of analysis (8) this interpretation is problematic as one would have to assume that the constituent elements of the dead person that were dispatched to the sun, the wind and the plants respectively would have to be extracted from these locations to allow for a complete reconstitution of the body for the purpose of enjoying physical pleasures in heaven. Furthermore, the passage also mentions earth and the waters as two further cosmic destinations that have to be considered. The verse thus seems to express alternative and very much different fates after death, one of them being a reconstituted bodily existence in heaven, another a new bodily existence on this earth, and still another continued existence with a different body in the heavenly waters. The second notion can be inferred from the ancient texts in two forms. One of them is the belief that a deceased male assumes renewed physical existence in his own family-line, normally (and preferably) as his own grandson, a belief well-known from other cultures and manifest in the custom of naming the grandson, and not the son, after the grandfather, although usually not before the latter's death[174] ("terrestrial immortality").[175] Further, there was the belief that the ancestors returned to this world after some time, to dwell in the vicinity of the habitations of their descendants in the bodily form of birds.[176] In both cases reconstitution of the very same body would certainly not be meaningful. This

[170] Cf. *ṚV* 10.16.6. Cf. also Arbman 1927a: 36 and 93.

[171] Cf. *ṚV* 10.16.1; cf. also Oldenberg 1917: 585, Arbman 1927a: 37 and 93, and Horsch 1971: 112.

[172] Cf. *ṚV* 10.16.4 and 7; cf. also Oldenberg 1917: 577–578 and 587.

[173] Cf. *ṚV* 10.16.1–2; cf. also Arbman 1927a: 37 and 93. On the conflicting statements in *ṚV* 10.16 cf. also O'Flaherty 1981: 48–49. On the responsibility of the surviving relatives to ensure the completeness of the bodies of their ancestors cf. Arbman 1927a: 37–39 and 126; on their role in the reconstitution of the body of a recently deceased relative cf. Arbman 1927a: 91–92.

[174] Cf. Witzel 1984: 145. For a possible explanation of how this process was imagined cf. Arbman 1926: 164–165. Cf. also Horsch 1971: 116–117, with n. 20, and 120 for references to later Vedic literature, and Schmithausen 1995: 49–50 for further literature.

[175] Cf. Bodewitz 1994: 31.

[176] Cf. Oldenberg 1917: 564, Arbman 1927a: 174–175, Horsch 1971: 117, n. 21, Witzel 1984: 145 and Schmithausen 1995: 51. On the appearance of the "free soul" in the form of a bird even during the lifetime of a person cf. Arbman 1927a: 181.

also holds good if the reference to "earth" in analysis (8) would be a reference to the old Indo-European idea of a dark subterranean realm where the "common" dead are bound to go to after death. Allusions to this general realm of the dead can be found plentifully elsewhere in Vedic literature,[177] which makes the latter assumption more probable than the two alternatives mentioned above; this would entail the idea that the "dead" dwell in this realm in the form of their "free souls," maybe accompanied by their "mental souls" *(manas)*,[178] i.e., experience existence as some kind of shadow-beings of themselves when compared to their former personalities,[179] and in any case not in their reconstituted bodily form. Finally, also in the case of the third notion, namely "going to the waters," which may refer to continued existence on or rather as heavenly bodies, especially the stars, located within the cosmic waters,[180] reconstitution of the earthly body with all its vital forces does not make much sense. It may very well be that the "eye," *ātman* and compact bodily parts of the deceased person were imagined to return to their sources forever in the case of continued existence in or rather under the earth (i.e., in the subterranean realm of the dead) and in the (heavenly) waters which is based on the continuation of the respective "free soul." In the case of continued existence in heaven with a reconstituted body, however, which – as the hoped-for and preferred fate after death – forms the main concern of the hymn with its many references to the body of the dead person, the after-death allocation of the compact bodily parts to the macrocosmic element of plants would not apply.[181] As regards the initial two allocations of constituents of the person to the wind and the sun, it is conceivable that they also apply to this variant of afterlife because a "vital soul" (or "breathing-soul") *(ātman)* and a vital faculty of sight (or "perceptive soul") could have been imagined to be newly created from these macrocosmic elements after the body has been reconstituted in or has miraculously been transferred in purified form to the heavenly realm. The two newly formed constituents would then join this body and perform their functions in it, for the benefit of the "free soul" which has reached there by the

[177] Cf. Oldenberg 1917: 538–540 and 544–555, Arbman 1927a: 55 and especially Arbman 1927b and 1928. Cf. also the critical examination of some relevant Ṛgvedic passages in Bodewitz 1994, referring to the stratification proposed in the unpublished thesis by Hyla S. Converse, with the resulting corroboration of Arbman's thesis.

[178] Cf. above p. 136. On the complete lack of life and consciousness, or at least the lack of their presence in the full sense, in the "free soul" cf. Arbman 1926: 189 and 201–202, on the endowment of the "free soul" with life and intellectual capacity, and the development of a unitary notion of a "soul" cf. pp. 202–204 and 206–211.

[179] Cf. again Flew 1976: 141.

[180] Cf. Oldenberg 1917: 565–566; cf. also Parpola 1985: 58–64 and Schmithausen 1995: 50.

[181] The return to the plants may be a reference to the customary burial of the bones after cremation, itself a reference to the subterranean realm of the dead (and possibly to the earlier practice of burial), and at the same time reflect the awareness of the organic transformation of the compact bodily parts into new living plant-matter (cf. also Horsch 1971: 116, n. 18b).

path of the gods and especially meritorious ancestors. However, it could also be the case that for the bodies of ancestors transferred to heaven such worldly "body-souls" were not considered necessary or that the issue just did not come up in the reflections on bodily heavenly existence after death.[182]

Under the above interpretation the passage analyzed in (8), although not referring to three variants or possibilities of afterlife based on *one* coherent concept, would nevertheless show consistency as regards the subject or entity which is addressed in it with the second person imperative forms.[183]

To conclude this rather detailed discussion of the important verse *ṚV* 10.16.3 (analysis [8]), even though I certainly cannot claim to have solved all the problems involved in its interpretation, on its own as well as in context, I think that the interpretation of *ātman* as the/a pneumatic "vital soul," next to an implied individuating "free soul" which is not named explicitly, can stand at least as a hypothesis.

VIII.

In the *Atharvaveda* we find evidence not only for a distinction between *asu*, as the "free soul," and *prāṇa*, as the pneumatic "vital soul" or specialized "breathing-soul," but furthermore a distinction between *ātman* and *prāṇa*, e.g., in a two-verse incantation[184] whose specific function is unfortunately not clear. The subsequent hymn which is directed at desire *(kāma)* as a cosmic power could indicate that the two verses express some analogical love spell or represent a formula used in connection with successful courtship or the union with a desired person. In the first verse, the "whole I" is differentiated into "my *ātman*," "my sight," and "my hearing," and finally into three kinds of respiration, "breathing forwards" (i.e., outwards), "breathing backwards" (i.e., inwards) and "breathing in between":[185]

(9) "I":
my *ātman* ("vital soul")
my sight *(cakṣus)*
my hearing *(śrotra)*
my forward respiration *(prāṇa)*
my backward respiration *(apāna)*
my in-between respiration *(vyāna)* =
the whole "I."

It has to be stressed that "I," which according to the majority of later Brahminical philosophers,[186] just as in the context of the Platonic notion of "soul," cannot refer to the body and must therefore refer to some non-physical "soul" or "power of life,"[187] is obviously employed by the author of this verse to refer not to a single entity, but to a collection of several material and subtle material entities. This complex referent could be subsumed under the notion of "individualized life," approaching a more differentiated idea of a person that comprises *ātman* as the "vital soul" and five essential vital faculties of a subtle material nature. The special context may be responsible for the fact that neither the "free soul" nor the mental vital faculty *(manas)* is mentioned here.

A clear distinction between *ātman* and *prāṇa* is also made in an Atharvavedic prayer for protection directed at the three "worlds" heaven, earth and intermediate space, as becomes evident from the introductory invocations and the macrocosmic correspondences essential to the prayer.[188] The praying person entrusts him/herself to Heaven and Earth,[189] equating his/her "eye" *(cakṣus)* with the sun (which belongs to heaven), his/her *prāṇa* with the wind (connected with the intermediate space in which wind moves back and forth), his/her *ātman* (directly) with the intermediate space, and his/her solid body *(śarīra)* with the earth. After these identifications, the word *ātman* is used again in an obviously different sense, in the concluding phrase "I lay down the *ātman* for Heaven and Earth, for protection":[190]

(10)				
	"eye"	–	sun	(heaven)
	prāṇa	–	wind	(intermediate space)
	ātman	–	intermediate space	(intermediate space)
	solid body	–	earth	(earth)
	ātman	:		heaven and earth

Like the expression "(the whole) 'I'" in the Atharvavedic love spell (?) adduced above (analysis [9]), the term *ātman* in the conclusion probably refers to the to-

[182] Cf. Arbman 1926: 179–180.

[183] Space does not allow discussion of another interpretation of the passage analyzed in (8), namely, the ultimate dispersal and dissolution of the person in the various macrocosmic elements, constituents and realms.

[184] Cf. *AV* 19.51.1–2.

[185] On this interpretation of the three types of breath(ing) cf. Bodewitz 1986: 333–334 and 337–341. The occurrence in the triad makes it very improbable that *prāṇa* refers to the/a "vital soul" here; the mention of *prāṇa* as a vital faculty, together with two other types of respiration, furthermore implies that also "eye" and "ear" are understood here as (sensory) vital faculties. On the whole verse *(AV* 19.51.1) cf. also Heesterman 1995: 30.

[186] Cf. Preisendanz 1994: 235–237 and 298, with further references.

[187] Cf. Flew 1967: 142.

[188] Cf. *AV* 5.9 translated already in Weber 1898: 197–199; cf. also Willman-Grabowska 1929–1930: 17.

[189] Although intermediate space is also invoked in *AV* 5.9.3 and mentioned in 5.9.7, the praying person entrusts him/herself only to Heaven and Earth, understood as a divine parental couple who grants protection (5.9.7) and the full life-span *(āyuṣkṛt, āyuṣpatnī)* (cf. 5.9.8); the empty intermediate space between them obviously possesses only a faint character, or even no special character at all, and is not personified.

[190] Cf. *AV* 5.9.7. Weber (1898: 198) suggests that this verse is an evening prayer, followed by a morning prayer in the following verse *(AV* 5.9.8).

tality of the listed entities, from the "eye" to the solid body, i.e., to the psycho-psychical whole of the praying person,[191] his/her Self; thus the usage of the word *ātman* as a reflexive pronoun and therefore the meaning "myself" may also resound in this passage. What, then, about *ātman* in the equation part of the prayer? Because the whole person *(ātman)*, when submitted for protection, should also include the individuating "free soul,"[192] it could very well be that the term *ātman* refers to this entity here, whereas *prāṇa* and *cakṣus* refer to two specialized "body-souls," the "breathing-soul" and the "perceptive soul," or *prāṇa* to the breath-like "vital soul" in general and *cakṣus* to sight, the most important sensory vital faculty. Although a different terminology would be used, the entities involved, including the solid body, would thus be those referred to explicitly and implicitly in the third verse of the cremation hymn *ṚV* 10.16 (analysis [8]) (cf. above pp. 151ff.). This interpretation implies that here too – on the evidence of the equation of *ātman* with intermediate space, and *not* with wind – the "free soul" (named *ātman)* is not imagined as breath-like and of a subtle physical nature any longer, as opposed to *prāṇa*. Furthermore, although the relation of wind and *prāṇa* to intermediate space relates *prāṇa* to *ātman*, the correlation of the latter directly with empty intermediate space points at its conception as something almost immaterial or non-substantial as compared to *prāṇa*.[193]

This "de-substantialization" can also be observed elsewhere, in an Atharvavedic prayer for rescue or help directed to several god-like powers.[194] The following entities are entreated to return to the praying person(s), a process which presumably involves divine intervention:

(11) *prāṇa*
ātman
"eye"
asu.

Here, *ātman* is distinguished not only from *prāṇa*,[195] but also from *asu*; the "eye" *(cakṣus)* completes the enumeration of the most essential non-physical components of the praying person.[196] The additional differentiation of *ātman* from *asu* may point at an even more abstract notion of *ātman* which is divorced not only from that of a pneumatic "vital soul" or specialized "breathing-soul," but also somehow from the ancient notion of a subtle material "free soul." Considering the usages of *ātman* in the *Atharvaveda* which come close to that of a reflexive pronoun (cf. above p. 160), one could speculate that it is the now more clearly conceived individuating aspect of the "free soul" which becomes associated with this separately conceived *ātman* (i.e., Self), possibly even together with the aspect of thinking or consciousness as manifest during *all* conscious states because *manas* is not mentioned here. This would leave *asu* with the main functions of a "dream-soul" (possibly as a conscious agent observed by another conscious agent, the *ātman)* and of a representative of the person during all unconscious states as well as after death, fulfilling the latter function as a conscious agent, just as in the dream-situation, or even as the sole continuation of the former person in this state. This passage referring to the psychical components of a person could thus be interpreted as follows:

(11)' "vital soul" / "breathing-soul" *(prāṇa)*
(conscious?) Self (?) *ātman*
"eye" = sight / "perceptive soul" *(cakṣus)*
"free soul" *(asu)*.

It cannot be completely ruled out, of course, that with *ātman* and *asu* the "vital soul" and the individuating "free soul" are meant here, together with the two vital faculties respiration and sight.[197]

IX.

In the speculative–proto-philosophical treatises of ritual science, the Brāhmaṇas, as well as in the Āraṇyaka-s, treatises that may have been composed in the seclusion of the forest by those who had retreated from the world and traditional orthodox religious practices and that were meant to be taught and studied there, the microcosmic–macrocosmic correlations relating to the deceased person in the Ṛgvedic cremation hymn discussed above (analysis [8]) are transferred to the animal organism. This becomes evident in a formula which is used during the *paśubandha*, the animal sacrifice. Just as in the passage of analysis (11) *ātman* is distinguished from *asu* as well a from *prāṇa*. According to a Brāhmaṇa-passage

[191] Cf. also Willman-Grabowska 1929–1930: 17 on the usage of the word *ātman* in *AV* 11.8.31. Horsch (1968: 470) may have had this or a similar passage in mind when he speaks of the employment of the word *ātman* to denote the person as a "more or less substantial entity."

[192] This would especially be the case if Weber is right in interpreting the prayer as an evening prayer (cf. n. 190) because during dreams and deep sleep the "free soul" leaves the body.

[193] Arbman (cf. Arbman 1927a: 81) supposes such a development only for later times. – Oberlies (1998: 502–503) refers to *AV* 5.9.7 in connection with the microcosmic–macrocosmic correlations in the hymn about Puruṣa *(ṚV* 10.90.13, analysis [6]) and refers also to *ṚV* 10.16.3 (analysis [8]), but does not attempt to unravel the details, similar to Arbman 1927a: 10, n. 2.

[194] Cf. *AV* 6.53.2; cf. again Willman-Grabowska 1929–1930: 17 and Schlerath 1968: 148.

[195] Similar to the case of some other special situations, one would have to assume here that the "vital soul" or "breathing-soul" may leave the body briefly; cf. above p. 136.

[196] The solid body as the physical component next to the four psychical components may be alluded to in the second half of the verse, by means of God Vaiśvānara's epithet *tanūpā* if the word *tanū*, just as the word *ātman* in its second occurrence in *AV* 5.9.7 (analysis [10]), refers to the psycho-physical totality of a person – the physical component would just not be addressed separately here, different from the situation in 5.9.7.

[197] Arbman seems to assume an emphatic repetition here and assigns the same role as "support of life" to *asu*, *prāṇa* and *ātman* in this passage (cf. Arbman 1927a: 15, n. 2).

the priest responsible for the strangulation of the sacrificial animal is first enjoined to let the "eye" of his victim go to the sun, then to release its *prāṇa* into the wind, its "ear" into the directional quarters, its *asu* into the intermediate space, and finally its compact body *(śarīra)* to the earth:[198]

(12)

"eye"	→	sun
prāṇa	→	wind
"ear"	→	directional quarters
asu	→	intermediate space
compact body	→	earth.

As Oldenberg has already noted,[199] the place occupied by *ātman* in *ṚV* 10.16.3 (analysis [8]) is here taken by *prāṇa*, whereas the place occupied by *ātman* in the Atharvavedic prayer for protection adduced above *(AV* 5.9.7; analysis [10]) is taken by *asu*. These correlations confirm the above suggestions for the meaning of the terms *ātman* and *prāṇa* in these two contexts, and may indicate that here the term *asu*, inasmuch as its referent is correlated with empty, intangible intermediate space, was understood as referring to the individuating "free soul" as a more advanced, immaterial or abstract concept – as already suggested for the term *ātman* in the prayer for protection (analysis [10]) – or, although this is less probable, even in the sense of a conscious[200] Self as speculatively proposed for the term *ātman* in the Atharvavedic prayer for rescue treated above (analysis [11]).[201] *prāṇa* may still fulfil the role of the "vital soul" here, although the co-occurrence with two vital faculties could indicate that this role is already giving way to that of the vital faculty of respiration in this passage[202] and being transferred to *asu* whose vital functions, next to the function of individuation, have been pointed out above (cf. pp. 143–144). A tentative analysis of the formula used during the animal sacrifice would thus look as follows:

(12)'

"eye" (sight)	→	sun
prāṇa ("vital soul" / respiration)	→	wind
"ear" (hearing)	→	quarters
asu ("free soul" / vital conscious Self?)	→	intermediate space
compact body	→	earth.

The two passages just looked at would in this way imply an increasingly unitary notion of the "power of life."

The interpretation of *asu* in analysis (12) receives some support from the fact that the corresponding sacrificial formula which is used during the actual animal sacrifice does not repeat the introductory scenario described in the passage of analysis (12) in all its details. In one of its variations, found in an Āraṇyaka belonging to the *Yajurveda*, the formula correlates the *ātman* (instead of *asu)* of the animal with intermediate space:[203]

(12)'

"eye"	→	sun
prāṇa	→	wind
back	→	heaven
ātman	→	intermediate space
limbs	→	sacrifice
solid bodily parts	→	earth.

Sight is said to go to the sun, the "vital soul" or faculty of respiration to the wind, the back to heaven, and *ātman* to intermediate space; with its limbs the sacrificial victim obtains the sacrifice, with its solid bodily parts the earth. According to another version of the formula in a ritual hand-book, the macrocosmic elements and the constituent elements of the animal are equated in a slightly diverging order, and again the microcosmic constituent related to intermediate space is *ātman*, not *asu*:[204]

(14)

sight	–	sun
prāṇa	–	wind
ātman	–	intermediate space
limbs	–	sacrifice
back	–	heaven
compact body	–	earth.[205]

198 Cf. *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* 2.6.13 (= 6.6.13); cf. Keith 1920: 139. Cf. also Oldenberg 1917: 524.

199 Cf. Oldenberg 1917: 526, n. 1; cf. also Arbman 1927a: 10, n. 2, and 56, n. 2.

200 "Conscious" should not necessarily be taken to mean "thinking" here, unless the animal personality would have been completely paralleled with human personality in the ritual context.

201 According to Oldenberg, the passage of analysis (12) indicates that *asu*, appearing in connection with *prāṇa*, has to be understood as a breath-like support of life; cf. Oldenberg 1917: 526, with n. 1. Keith (1920: 139) translates *asu* with "life." Arbman who inappropriately understands intermediate space as air ("Luft") (Arbman 1927a: 14) takes *asu* as an impersonal element (Arbman 1927a: 57, n. 2). Cf. also his interpretation of *asu* in the passage of analysis (11) referred to in n. 197 above.

202 Cf. also analyses (7) and (9), with n. 185 above, possibly further the passage of analysis (6) according to the third alternative interpretation offered above.

203 Cf. *Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka* 3.4.1 (ed. H.N. Apte, Poona 1879).

204 *Śāṅkhāyana-Śrautasūtra* 10.17.4 (ed. A. Hillebrandt, vol. 1, Calcutta 1888). Caland (1953: 283) translates the word *ātman* as "body" (cf. also n. 209 below); however, the close connection with the passage analyzed in (12) and with *asu*, the special relationship to intermediate space and the present sequence of the equations speak against such an interpretation.

205 In the formula which follows upon this formula in the ritual according to the *Kātyāyana-Śrautasūtra* (6.1.16) and the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* (11.7.2.6) *ātman* is also correlated with intermediate space. However, there the term could refer to the trunk, i.e., the central, core part of the body (cf. Eggeling 1885: 122), as opposed to the limbs, owing to its dissociation from terms relating to vital faculties and grouping with body-terms:

back	–	heaven
ātman (torso)	–	intermediate space
limbs	→	sacrifice
solid bodily parts	→	earth.

As evident already in the Atharvavedic passage of analysis (10) discussed above, the original wind-like "vital soul" *ātman* has as a "free soul" undoubtedly lost its subtle physical character in the speculations of the Brāhmaṇas and Āraṇyakas and become conceptually divorced from the material and perceptible world, again symbolized by its essential connection with the empty intermediate space.[206] Its vital function was assumed by the more materially conceived *prāṇa*, in the sense of the "vital soul" or the specialized "breathing-soul" (cf. analysis [10] and, for *ātman* as the Self, analysis [11]). Once *prāṇa* was "demoted" and considered as the vital faculty of respiration, comparable to the faculties of seeing, hearing, etc., some notion of a basic vital function would have again been connected with *ātman* (cf. analyses [13] and [14], similarly for *asu* in the passage of analysis [12]), even though as a less prominent function that was of less interest to the early priestly philosophers than others of its functions.[207] The central function of *ātman* seems to be that of the Self, as suggested above in the interpretations of the passages analyzed in (11) and (13), in conjunction with the passage of analysis (12) possibly relating to *asu* as the Self. This is to be viewed and understood in connection with another Vedic usage of the term *ātman*, namely, to refer to the body in the special sense of its "core" or "essence," i.e., the trunk, as opposed to the limbs. Such a meaning of the word *ātman* is possibly evidenced already in a singular passage in the *Ṛgveda*,[208] and can certainly be observed in the

On the term *ātman* referring to the trunk or even the whole body in the Brāhmaṇas see n. 209 below.

206 Cf. similarly also, e.g., *ChUp* 3.14.2 where *ātman* is said to be (open) space *(ākāśātman)*; cf. Strauss 1925: 45, with further reference to *ŚPB* 10.6.3.

207 It cannot be completely ruled out, of course, that the vital function was never excluded from the concept of *ātman*, but was retained in the sense of a basic function, and that therefore even older passages that mention *prāṇa* next to *ātman* have to be understood as referring to *prāṇa* in the sense of a mere vital faculty.

208 Cf. Willman-Grabowska 1929–1930: 14 and Geldner's translation (Geldner 1951–1957: vol. 3, 390). In the case of the passage *ṚV* 10.163.5–6 an alternative interpretation is conceivable, namely, that the word *ātman* refers here to the psycho-physical totality of the person: after consumption, understood as a demonic force, has been removed from various parts of the body (cf. the preceding verses), it is now said in conclusion to be removed from the whole person *(ātman)* (cf. also the remark in Arbman 1927a: 13, n. 2). This could be understood to mean that the disease is removed not only from the whole body, i.e., the named physical constituents of the person, but inclusively and so to say prophylactically also from his/her non-physical personal constituents that were not mentioned before because consumption is manifest only physically. Regarding the passage *ṚV* 9.113.1 adduced by Willman-Grabowska in this connection, I agree with her conjecture that it is more probable that here the "soul" ("l'âme," to be specified as "vital soul"; cf. also Renou 1956: 51 and Thieme 1964: 44) or the "complete being" ("l'être entier"; cf. also Arbman 1927a: 13, n. 2: "das Selbst, die eigene Person" ... "ohne Unterscheidung von Körper und Seele," and Horsch 1968: 470: "die Person als mehr oder weniger substantielle Einheit") is referred to (possibly also the individual vital power, cf. above p. 151). Geldner (1951–1957: vol. 3, 119) and O'Flaherty (1981: 133) render *ātman* as a reflexive pronoun here, a function

Brāhmaṇas[209]; it cannot be ruled out that in the case of the so-called *saḍḍhotṛ*-formula in the two adduced variants (analyses [13] and [14]) this meaning is alluded to or vaguely associated owing to the mention of the limbs and the back, especially in the triad in analysis (13) because of the suggestive top-down order of the physical constituents back–trunk(?)–limbs. Such a special usage of the term *ātman* can be understood as derived from the developed usage of the term in the Brāhmaṇas as it can be assumed for the passages analyzed in (13) and (14) (and maybe already for the passage of analysis [11]), namely to refer to that which primarily constitutes the individual living being, be it god, human or animal: his/her/its Self, true and real being, essence, or core.[210] In other words, I would like to suggest that the extended special usage of the word *ātman* to refer to the trunk of the body was possible because – by way of its assuming the individuating function of the "free soul" *asu* – the *ātman*, although originally just a "vital soul," was associated with the rather abstract individuated core of a living being and thus conceived as his/her/its central identifying component or essence and (eventually?) also as responsible for life; if this idea is transferred to the physical realm, the trunk could indeed be conceived as the core or essence of the body, as constituting its *ātman*.

X.

From here on the way is open for the philosophical and mystical quest for *ātman* as the "core" of the human being and his/her true and ultimately real individual nature.[211] This quest commences in the later parts of the Brāhmaṇas and in the Āraṇyaka-s, which generally speaking follow upon the former from the point of view of literary history and history of thought; it reaches its climax in the early philosophical speculations preserved in the teachings of the Upaniṣads. In accordance with the inclination of the Upaniṣadic thinkers to reduce the whole world to a single principle, the human *ātman* or essential nature is now identified in many Upaniṣadic teachings with the one single principle that is at the basis of this world, the Absolute. Although this Absolute is conceived differently in the numerous teachings, its designation as *brahman*, already prefigured in the Brāh-

which the word does not yet generally have in the *Ṛgveda* (cf. Debrunner–Wackernagel 1929–1930: 489–490, referring to altogether three such usages, and Burrow 1973: 269).

209 Cf. Arbman 1927a: 13, n. 2 and Willman-Grabowska 1929–1930: 18–19 and 21 passim; cf. also n. 205 above.

210 Cf. also Willman-Grabowska 1929–1930: 20–21.

211 This may be the meaning of the word *ātman* which caused Bodewitz to consider this Sanskrit term as representing in some contexts "a generic concept like the English word 'soul'" (cf. Bodewitz 1991: 36). – On the more archaic, even though already slightly modified notion of *ātman* (and *puruṣa)* (cf. below p. 167) as the "free soul" that leaves the body during sleep (a topic not addressed in older Vedic literature) cf. Arbman 1927a: 85–88.

manas, was established at this stage; in choosing this term, the early Upaniṣadic philosophers took recourse to an old term that relates to the true and adequate verbal formulation of the awe-inspiring real nature of this world by the Ṛgvedic poet–priests;[212] Schopenhauer's fascination with and adaptive interpretation of this identification in the context of his own philosophy has been referred to above (cf. I.). A further remarkable and important aspect of *ātman* that becomes prominent in the teachings of the Upaniṣads is its conscious nature,[213] that is, the function of consciousness and cognition which was earlier on ascribed to *manas* as the "mental soul," a conscious "free soul,"[214] or the mind – next to sensory vital faculties and the vital faculty of respiration –, has now become an important, almost foundational aspect of the *ātman* of living beings, which foremost include humans, but to a certain extent also animals. This can be seen as a clear step towards the development of a unitary notion of a "soul" termed *ātman*.[215] An interesting Āraṇyaka-passage[216] specifies that in (smaller) plants and trees, which are devoid of the vital faculty of respiration *(prāṇa)*, an *ātman* is present, albeit underdeveloped inasmuch as it lacks consciousness; their *ātman* is called *rasa*, literally: "juice," referring to their vital essence or specific "vital soul" that manifests the "power of life" in them too, although not to themselves (at least not in the sense of becoming *intellectually* manifest) but to us intellectually conscious creatures – who have the obligation to respect this order of life accordingly, I would like to add. In creatures possessing *prāṇa*,[217] however, the *ātman* is more developed because it becomes manifest as consciousness *(citta)*. Here again, a distinction of degree is made: compared to the *ātman* of animals the *ātman* in (wo)man *(puruṣa)* is more developed; there it reveals itself by way of intellectual understanding *(prajñāna)*: only (wo)man verbalizes and "sees" (i.e., conceptualizes?) what has been cognized, knows about what belongs to the morrow, knows about the world and That which is not the world, and desires That which is without death by means of what is mortal. This passage demonstrates in an impressive manner that the notion of *ātman* in Indian philosophy – quite different from the mainstream of Western thought on the "soul" – extends to non-human and even vegetal creatures, and not only in the early period under examination here. The early thinker who composed the adduced Āraṇyaka-passage would not

[212] Cf. especially Thieme 1952.

[213] Cf., e.g., Strauss 1925: 51, relating to *Aitareya-Āraṇyaka* 2.3.2 and *ChUp* 8.12 (4–5). Cf. also in general Arbman 1927a: 11 and 128–129, n. 2, with numerous references.

[214] Cf. also Arbman 1927a: 179.

[215] Cf. Arbman 1927a: 13.

[216] Cf. *Aitareya-Āraṇyaka* 2.3.2 (ed. A.B. Keith, Oxford 1909), translated in Keith 1909: 216–217.

[217] Literally: "bearing *prāṇa*" *(prāṇabhṛt)*.

sympathize, e.g., with those who want to prove the existence of an *ātman* / a "soul" on the basis of arguments such as the universal desire for immortality.[218]

Many other aspects of the human *ātman* are considered and discussed by the thinkers and early philosophers of the Upaniṣads, and old, more archaic notions reappear in the course of their speculations, such as the notion of *puruṣa*, as a "technical" term specifically referring to a manikin-like "free soul" dwelling in the pupil of the eye or the heart,[219] which is now used in a more sophisticated way to refer to a vital, conscious, active and individuating "unitary" "soul" in (wo)man.[220] It is the term *puruṣa* which according to Arbman refers originally and *exclusively* to the "free soul" in ancient Indian culture.[221] The adjective *jīva* ("living"), previously used as a qualification of *asu* (cf. above pp. 127 and 143), reappears as a qualification of *ātman*, the individual essence of a human being, in the famous teaching of *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* 6.11[222] where the word *jīva* also functions by itself as a noun referring to some kind of "unitary" "soul" that attends to the functions of earlier "body-souls," especially the vital functions of breathing and thinking/consciousness, as well as to the functions of a "free

[218] Cf. Flew 1967: 149, with reference to the *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man* by the Scottish philosopher Dugald Stewart (1753–1828).

[219] On this idea cf. in general Arbman 1926: 126 and 145, relating to Indian culture Arbman 1927a: 69, 119–120, 135 and 144; on the miniature, often thumb-sized *puruṣa* which is considered identical with the deceased person (i.e., as his/her "free soul," cf. n. 221 below), also in later popular belief, cf. Arbman 1927a: 79.

[220] Cf., e.g., *BṛĀUp* 2.3.1, 3 and 5–6 (on 3 cf. Arbman 1927a: 135, 136 and 138, on 5f. op. cit., p. 119; on 6 cf. Strauss 1925: 59 and Arbman 1927a: 145); see further *BṛĀUp* 4.4.4–5 according to the Mādhyandina recension (cf. Schmithausen 1995: 53–54). In the ritualistic context cf. especially *ŚPB* 10.5.2.7 (on 10.5.2 in general cf. Arbman 1927a: 135 and Bodewitz 1996: 43). The cosmogony of *BṛĀUp* 1.4 which is based on a primordial *puruṣa*-like *ātman* (in the sense of a complete living organism?) should probably be separated from this complex and rather be related in the widest sense to the hymn about Puruṣa and its cosmogony in the *Ṛgveda*. Cf. also *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* 4.12 (with Weller 1953: 129–130) and 6.17 (cf. also Arbman 1927a: 107); the latter passage is identified as an element of compilation by Weller (1953: 198) which, however, does not reduce its value. For further passages in this Upaniṣad that concern the localization of the inner Self (also called *ātman* and "the Ancient" [*purāṇa*]) in the heart, cf. Weller 1953: 103.

[221] Cf. Arbman 1927a: 134–148. Relying mainly on Upaniṣadic passages, Arbman introduces the element of functioning inside the body and even governing it in connection with this notion of *puruṣa* (identified with *ātman*). However, this seems to contradict his earlier very decided statements in Arbman 1926 (cf. n. 45 above) and 1927a, unless the notion of the "free soul" had – in his opinion – already been expanded in the passages referred to. This may be indicated by Arbman's concluding words on this complex in Arbman 1927a: 148. – The treatment of the concept of *puruṣa* and the discussion of Arbman's hypothesis are outside the scope of the present contribution.

[222] Cf. *ChUp* 6.11.1.

soul."[223] In the religio-philosophical tradition of the Jainas *jīva* ("that which is alive") becomes the main technical term for the "soul" roughly in this latter sense from the time of their canonical scriptures, whose core goes back to the fourth century BCE.

The reflections on *ātman*, *puruṣa* and *jīva* are now almost inseparably connected with the question about life after death and numerous ideas about the mode and causality of repeated birth for living beings, foremost for human creatures. However, even a sketch of this fascinating and highly complex topic in its ancient developmental phase is definitely outside the scope of the present contribution. I would merely like to mention that in the development of teachings about repeated rebirth which soon included ethical considerations and connotations – as opposed to the assumption of an automatic process similar to a law of Nature – the notion of the conscious and active, individual and eternal *ātman*, *puruṣa* or *jīva* becomes connected with the aspect of moral retribution, also in the classical philosophical traditions, regardless of their diverging metaphysical presuppositions. In the classical period of Indian philosophy this aspect, more precisely, the assumption that only a conscious, individual and permanent (i.e., eternal) *ātman* that is responsible for its own actions can guarantee that good and bad actions bring about right/just consequences, is utilized argumentatively in proving the existence of such an *ātman*. Especially in the Brahminical philosophical traditions of Vaiśeṣika (philosophy of nature), Nyāya ("logic") and Mīmāṃsā (the comprehensive ritual science that in classical times developed its own philosophy in the context of Vedic hermeneutics) this and other aspects of the *ātman* touched upon above were thus argumentatively resorted to in the classical and early medieval periods, and additional arguments of different types developed, especially in the context of the heated philosophical controversy about the existence of an *ātman* conducted with Buddhist opponents.[224] Their diametrically opposed positions in this question are addressed by Birgit Kellner in her contribution to the present volume.

[223] Cf. *ChUp* 6.11.2 and 3. A very early preference to, or rather predecessor of this unitary notion of a "soul" called *jīva* may be found in *ṚV* 1.164.30c (cf. the translation in Geldner 1951–1957: vol. 1, 233; cf. also Bodewitz 1991: 46 and Dange 1995–1996: 26) where it is said that the *jīva* (m.) of the/a dead person wanders at will / independently (*jīvo mṛtasya carati svadhābhiḥ*), a phrase which may be compared to the one in *ṚV* 10.16.5b. The referent of *jīva* is clearly something rather concrete here which makes a translation of the word as "life" (cf., e.g., O'Flaherty 1981: 79) problematic.

[224] Cf. especially Oetke 1984.

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