is true’, and that this ambiguity is intentional. But (1) I do not believe that ἔντος can mean ‘although it is true’ (Hdt. I 95, 1 τὸν ἔντος λέγειν λάγον ‘to tell the true story’ is different), and (2) K. does not explain how λάγον can refer both to Heraclitus’ discourse and the structure of the world (his remark, p. 98, ‘The tension between word and content is essential here’, is not very helpful). I have suggested (Phronesis 1966, 81 ff.) that the connection lies in the fact that λάγον means ‘reasoning’, ‘argument’, and that the process and result of Heraclitus’ reasoning, his (dynamic) system of thought coincides with the (dynamic) system of the universe. If this view is accepted, the ambiguity of the phrase is not intentional, for the archaic mind does not draw a sharp distinction between the sphere of thought and that of its object 1). On the other hand, there seems to be an intentional ambiguity (overlooked by K., pp. 269-70) in B 32: οὐχ θέλει contradicts ἔχει, but is also compatible with it in so far as the latter means ‘uses to’ 2).

3707 GP Zeist, Homeruslaan 53

W. J. Verdenius

1) I omit to discuss further inaccuracies in K.’s commentary on B 1: e.g. γενομένως (‘come to pass’) does not ‘echo’ γίνοντας (‘turn out to be’), διαρέων does not mean ‘putting each thing in its place’ (p. 99), etc.


This essay is a refutation of a dissertation by N. van der Ben defended at the University of Amsterdam in 1975 1), in which the author lifted a large number of fragments from Empedocles’ Katharmoi in order to place them at the beginning of the physical poem, which is where editors before Stein and Diels (i.e., before the first publication of Hipp., Ref. V-X, in 1851) had put them. Interpolating other fragments—among which 31 B 30, about Strife’s resumption of power—into Kath. 31 B 115 (itself, to be sure, assembled by editors from various sources) and appending the majority of Kath.-fragments, van der Ben reconstructed a proem for the Periphyseos in which a katabasis of the soul is described. In order to justify his inclusion of 31 B 30, he argued that the evidence which had been interpreted by other scholars as pertaining to a cosmic cycle does not bear out this interpretation. O’Brien (O.) successfully

tears down this untenable construction. He apologizes for writing a monograph contra, claiming that it is urgent that someone take upon himself the burden of exposing the defects of much of today's scholarship, and that this can only be achieved by making a serious example of somebody's deviations.

Of course, one is grateful that van der B. has been refuted. It would have been sufficient, however, to point out that the description of contents of the Kath. at Hipp., Ref. VII 30, 3 (= Vorsokr. ad 31 B 110, where we hear that this poem—toûς 'Εμπεδοκλέους Καθαρ-μοῦς—forbade procreation and the consumption of meat) as corroborated by Hippolytus’ interpretation of 31 B 115 at Ref. VII 29, 22, precludes the reallocation of fragments advocated by van der B. To the clear evidence of Hipp., O. however adds possible allusions to the title of the Kath. in two Middle Platonist authors quoting from 31 B 115, viz., Celsus ap. Orig., C. Cels. VIII 53, ἐκκαθαρσθη, and Plut., De Isid. 361 C, καθαρθέντες (16-18). This is followed by a plausible interpretation of references in the sources pertaining to the location of fragments at the beginning of each of Emp.’ major poems (21-28). He rehearse the evidence in Emp., 31 B 17, Plat., SpH. 242 d-243 a, Arist., Phys. VIII 1, 250 b 23 f., 252 a 5 f., Cael. I 10, 279 b 14 f., Met. B 4, 1000 a 18-b 21, all in favour of a cosmic cycle (29-65). He points out that Eudem., fr. 110 Wehrli ap. Simpl., In Phys. pp. 1183, 28-1184, 4, is not the first to ascribe such a cycle to Emp., and perhaps even provides independent evidence in its favour (40-1). Simplicius, whatever his own preferred view, certainly knew Aristotle’s (42 f.). Finally, Vorsokr. 31 B 30 indisputably refers to a crucial phase in the cycle (51-54)².

Incidentally, O. argues a good point, not always appreciated by scholars³). Emp. himself always speaks of Love as uniting, and Strife as separating, different elements. The paradox that Love must also separate and Strife also unite, viz. parts of one and the same element was invented by Aristotle (GC II 6, 333 b 32 f.). O., however, does not sufficiently apply this insight into Aristotle’s argumentation on another occasion, for the point that Strife, called a destructive agent by Emp., is also a constructive one in that it generates plurality (which is a necessary condition for the construction of compounds [by Love], and that, conversely, Love, called a constructive agent by Emp., is also a destructive one in that it destroys the plurality (i.e., the world and the individual living beings therein when generating the One God, Sphairos) is likewise an invention of Arist. (Met. B 4, loc. cit)⁴). One may even carry Arist.’ critique ad absurdum by arguing that Strife, by generating the plurality from