In Heraclitus and Parmenides assumptions which form the basis of our interpretation are subject to frequent reexaminations and revisions. With Empedocles matters are different. Here large hypotheses have for a long time remained unchallenged and are now near the point of hardening into dogmas. In particular the reconstruction of a dual cosmogony in his "cycle", originally a theory which had to contend with others, is now often regarded as established, treated as though it were a fact, and used as premise for further inferences. The only full scale interpretation of the evidence which backs up this theory is Éttore Bignone's *Empedocle*; yet whatever the merits of this book, it can hardly be denied that in the fifty years since its publication we have learned many new lessons regarding the relative value of testimonies and fragments, the trustworthiness of Aristotle's reports on his precursors, and other questions of vital bearing on the reconstruction of a Presocratic system. A recent text book which seeks to fit the material into the framework of two cosmogonies does not in my opinion succeed in strengthening this position²;

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* Interpretations here included were presented to the Conference on Ancient Philosophy held at Amherst College in August 1964. After completing the paper I received through the kindness of H. Diller and U. Hölscher a manuscript of the latter's article: "Weltzeiten und Lebenszyklen. Eine Nachprüfung der Empedokles-Doxographie" (now published in *Hermes* 93, 1965, pp. 7ff.). It was most encouraging to see how often we had reached the same conclusions. As we start from different ἐφόρματι and proceed along different lines, there is little overlapping of the arguments; all I could do was to shorten my paper in a few places, while adding references to Hölscher's study. The paper has been read and commented upon by Alexander Mourelatos and Gregory Vlastos, and I have also received helpful suggestions from Diller and from my colleague Julius Weinberg. To all of them I am most grateful.

¹ Torino, 1916. See esp. ch. III and Appendix 2.

² G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1957) ch. 14. For the reason stated in the text I have more often expressed disagreement with Raven than with any other scholar favoring a dual cosmogony. Raven is far less prone than Bignone to use "parallels" in other Presocratics for the reconstruction of Empedocles' scheme. See also for the theory of two cosmogonies etc. Ferdinand Dümmler, *Akademika* (Giessen, 1889) pp. 217ff.;
on the contrary it may be said that difficulties which were less apparent as long as the discussion confined itself to individual fragments or groups of fragments become more visible when the entire scheme is worked out and presented. Perhaps the wisest course would be to admit ignorance on crucial points. If I, nevertheless, prefer to offer an alternative reconstruction — in essential aspects a revival of von Arnim’s — my hope is that, whether right or wrong, it will serve a good purpose if it shows that opinions currently accepted are not firmly grounded in the evidence at our disposal. I have made no methodical commitment except to keep the Καθόρμοι out of the discussion of περὶ φῶςος. Similar or identical motifs, like the fundamental importance of Love and Strife, the kinship of all living beings, are clearly present in both poems but to argue from recurring motifs to an identity or similarity of doctrine is nothing less than a petitio. There are too many unknown factors. The time interval may have been long or short. The question of priority has not been settled. We cannot assume that Empedocles’ mind was of a rigidly dogmatic cast incapable of responding to new experiences and impressions (nor can we know what these experiences may have been). What we do see is that his attitude to “reality” differs in the two works. Surely the place for a comparison is after the reconstruction of the poems, not prior to or in the course of it.


* Festschrift Theodor Gomperz (Wien, 1902) pp. 16ff. Other scholars who favored a single cosmogony are Zeller, Die Philos. d. Griechen (5th ed., Leipzig, 1892) p. 778ff. (cf. 6th ed., Erster Teil...Zweite Hälfte ed. by Wilhelm Nestle, Leipzig, 1920, 975ff.) and Tannery, Pour l’histoire de la science Hell. (Paris, 1887) pp. 304ff., esp. 308ff. See also Diels, SBB 1898, 414ff., Jaeger, The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers (Oxford, 1947) p. 142. I realize that it might have been of interest to trace some of the problems back to the form in which they were discussed in the 19th century and in particular to compare earlier collections of the fragments with that of Diels; for if my views are approximately correct, it would seem that the arrangement of the fragments in Diels is not invariably better than that of Simon Karsten in the second volume of his Philsophorum Graecorum Veterum Religiae (Amsterdam, 1838).

For an important argument suggesting the priority of the physical poem see Wilamowitz, SBB A 1929, 643. Cf. also K. Reinhardt, C.F. 45 (1950), 170ff. (= Vermächtnis der Antike, Göttingen, 1960, 101ff.).