The Structure of Empedocles' Fragment 17

I. The text

Fragment 17 of Empedocles has long been recognized as the most important in the corpus. In 1998, the significance of this 35-line fragment was further increased by the publication of the Strasbourg papyrus, containing roughly 74 lines of Empedocles. By a tremendous piece of luck, the largest continuous passage, named "ensemble a" by its French editors, overlaps with the end of fr. 17 and adds to it a further 34 partial or complete verses. This makes it the longest continuous fragment in verse from a Presocratic philosopher, although as stated above not every line is fully preserved. Further adding to this good fortune, a stichometric mark on the last line of "ensemble a" indicates that the line was the 300th verse of that particular book. This allows us to estimate that fr. 17, which Simplicius quotes as from the first book of the Peri Phuseos, must have begun at about line 233 of that same book. Thus, not only is fr. 17 now the longest extant passage of Presocratic philosophical poetry, it is also one of the best attested. I trust there will be no objections to quoting most of the text, whose length, far from being objectionable, is an unparalleled luxury in the realm of Presocratic studies. Also, since my argument concerns the general structure of the passage, it does not require detailed consideration of every word in the original. I can thus afford to be more inclusive and let my own rudimentary translation stand for it. Its aim is merely to give Greekless readers a faithful line-by-line version of the text, without any claim to poetic merit. Those who can read the original will no doubt notice some of the choices in interpretation I have had to make, and are urged to enjoy this piece of good fortune rather than dwell on the shortcomings of its translation. The first 35 lines are from Diels-Kranz, the rest of them follow exactly the edition of Martin and Primavesi, including their numbering (the letter 'a' stands for "ensemble a"; dotted i's indicate column numbers; the lines are numbered by column).

Double is my account: for at one time it grew to be one alone
from many, at another in turn it grew apart to be many from one.
But double is the coming-into-being of mortals, double their passing away;
for the coming together of all things both begets and kills (life),
and as [all things] grow apart again [life] is nurtured, then disappears (lit. flies away).
And, continuously changing, they never cease,
at one time through Love all of them coming together into one,
at another in turn each carried apart through the hatefulness of Strife.
Thus, on the one hand, in that they have learnt to grow into one from many
10 And that from the one growing apart in turn they spring,
in this (regard) they come into being and their lifespan is not secure;
on the other hand, in that continuously changing they never cease,
in that (regard) they are forever immobile within the cycle.
But come, listen to my words, for learning increases the thinking-organs.
15 For just as I said before, speaking the limits (outline?) of my words,
Double is my account: for at one time it grew to be one alone
from many, at another in turn it grew apart to be many from one,
fire and water and earth and the immense height of air
and destructive Strife apart from them, equally balanced in all ways
and Love within them, equal in length and breadth.
Look upon her with your understanding, do not sit with amazement in your eyes,
she who is reckoned even by mortals as born within their joints,
and through whom they think friendly thoughts and perform fitting works,
calling her rightfully (eponymon) Joy and Aphrodite.
20 She no mortal has seen whirling among them (the roots?).
But listen to the deceitless order of the account:
For all of these things are equals and peers as to age,
and each oversees its own honour, and has a particular character,
but they dominate in turn as time revolves.
30 And besides them nothing more comes-into-being or ceases-to-be;
for if they were continuously destroyed they would no longer be.
And what could increase this totality? And from where would it come?
Or how would they be destroyed into nothing, since nothing is void of them?
But they are (always) themselves, yet running through one another
35 they become different (things) at different times and are always ever alike.
a (i) 6 But in Love we come together (to form) a single cosmos
and in Strife in turn it grows apart to be many from one,
from which (many) is everything, as many as ever were, as are, and as will be
hereafter;
and (from which) trees have sprung, and men and women,
a (ii) 1 and beasts and birds and fish which thrive in water,
and long-lived gods mightiest in honours.
But under her (Strife) they never cease leaping about continuously,
in close-packed whirls...
5 without pause, nor...
But many generations first (or: before)
before passing from them...
but leaping about in all directions they never cease.
For neither the sun...
10 the onrush swelling with (?)
nor any of the other...
but changing continuously they leap in all directions within a circle.
For then the untrodden earth runs, and the sun,
and the sphere (?), of a size such as now men may reckon.
In just this way all these things ran through one another and each reached as it wandered a different particular place, self-willed; and we were coming together in the middle places to be one alone. But whenever Strife has trespassed upon the depths of the whirl, and Love has come to be in the middle of the eddy, there all these things come together to be only one.

II. Analysis.

Content
The subject matter of the passage is cosmological. Along with fr. 26 and fr. 35, these lines constitute the core evidence for reconstructing Empedocles' physics. It is to these lines that we owe our clearest account of the six everlasting first principles, the four "roots" earth, air, fire and water, and the two "psychological" powers Love and Strife, and of their interaction to form a never-ending cosmic cycle. Although the cycle has proven to be one of the most controversial aspects of Empedocles' philosophy, the papyrus has vindicated a more recent trend back to the traditional interpretation, originating with Panzerbieter, against older and more recent challenges. According to this traditional view, Empedocles posited an endless cosmic alternation between two extreme situations: a complete unification of all things under Love, and a total separation of the four visible elements under Strife, with two worlds like ours in between, in which Love and Strife co-operate (cf. lines 1-13).

But that is not all we learn from these lines. The passage, most notably lines 26 to 35, is also our main evidence for Empedocles' polemical attitude towards Parmenides and for the form of his response to the latter's "much contending elenchos." As generations of critics have not failed to note, line 26, but listen to the deceitless order of the account is a direct counter-claim to the goddess' characterisation of mortal opinion, in Parmenides' poem, as a deceitful array of words, and the following lines re-use Parmenidean arguments and language to confer upon the first principles an Eleatic-inspired set of qualifications marking them off as "really real."

As for the new section, the biggest surprise of the papyrus is the introduction of an "us", in one form or other, to the cosmology. At line a (i) 6, Empedocles declares that we come together into one cosmos through Love. The personal form of the verb is used in a formula already well attested in the indirect textual tradition, but so far only known to us in the participial form. The difference turns on the modification of a single letter, a Y standing where a N would have been expected, giving sunerchometha, "we come together", rather than the neuter plural participle sunerchomena, "coming together." It is one of two, perhaps three instances of this new reading, the others being c 3 and potentially a (ii) 17, although the editors do not think so. In two of them, however, a (i) 6 and c 3, a second hand, perhaps the owner of the papyrus, has corrected the verb back to the more familiar (to us) participle. Although the editors chose to retain the new reading with the "we", the corrections may leave room for doubt. As to more standard cosmological doctrine, the continuation is valuable not so much for any further novelties, but for stressing the traditional cosmological function of first principles. Whereas in

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the previous lines, 27 to 35, Empedocles highlights their abstract, Parmenides-inspired qualities, the following lines describe them in more familiar cosmogonic guise. Thus the poetic formula describing the emergence from the first principles of *everything, as many (things) as ever were, as are, and as will be hereafter / and (from which) have sprung plants and men and women, beasts and birds and fish which thrive in water / and long-lived gods, greatest in honours* (lines a (ii) 8-a (i) 2) neatly balances the Eleatic account preceding it. The formula itself was already known to us, with some slight variation, from fr. 21, but its use here shows the emphasis Empedocles puts upon reconciling Parmenides' *to eon* with the sensible world, thereby transforming both, and revealing them within a new, integrated perspective.

**Context**

The insistence on what we can loosely call the most basic entities of Empedocles's system, as well as his consistent use of the same abstract terms to name Love, Strife and the elements, as opposed to his more usual practice of varying their epithets, all strongly indicate the introductory nature of the passage. Of course the fact that it began some 230 lines into the first book means that we are not dealing with the very beginning of the work, but probably with the beginning of the doctrinal exposition. This will have naturally been preceded at least by a proem of some sort, following the model of Hesiod and Parmenides.

Although the nature and content of the proem can only be conjectured, a good case has recently been made for seeing in the proem of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* a reworking of Empedocles. In particular, the importance Lucretius gives to Venus, while an oddity in terms of his Epicurean physics, makes perfect sense in an Empedoclean context. Still, with over 230 lines to fill, it may seem that this is too long for a proem alone. Against this possibility is the fact that we have no grounds to suggest that other cosmological doctrine could have preceded fr. 17, whereas we do have evidence to suggest a rather long proem. Not only could it have contained a hymn to Love, as suggested by the Lucretian material, but we could also include within it both Empedocles' criticism of ordinary mortal understanding, as in the order proposed by DK, as well as material on more religious and "demonological" questions, which have usually been assigned to the *Katharmoi*. The hymn to Love, moreover, would have a likely model in Hesiod's hymn to the Muses in the *Theogony*, which spans 115 lines of a thousand line poem.

**Poetry and the first principles**

As will be felt especially on a first reading, Empedocles' exposition is quite dense, dogmatic and some may think even rather muddled. A modern reader will no doubt be put off, on the one hand, by his employment of his first principles as if they were self-evident axioms, needing no further analysis or argument, and on the other hand, by the obscure sequence of ideas. Indeed, within the compass of some 70 lines, Empedocles alternates repeatedly between dogmatic asseverations about the cycle or the first principles, and various arguments or exegetical remarks meant to bolster those assertions, but there does not seem to be any obvious logical principle to the exposition. For our immediate purposes, we can somewhat artificially separate out these interwoven strands of thought into three more or less distinct intentions. For it seems Empedocles wants to do three things at once. He wants to tell us what is the case about the cosmos (its furniture consists of six first principles; they interact so as to form a cycle), why that
is the case (it allows for generation and change, yet also meets Eleatic criteria of reality, i.e., it is the best available [but this is only implicit]), and what follows from its being the case (double is the birth and death of mortals; the illusory nature of absolute change; and many other teachings beyond our immediate concern, notably the doctrine of metempsychosis, which must somehow relate to this framework\[21\]). Having said all that, we should also stress that all three are not so readily separable in practice, and they are really meant to work toward a single effect: to achieve persuasion.\[22\]

While some of this dogmatism and obscurity may be accountable in terms of cultural traditions and the figure of the "archaic sage," who in succeeding seers and prophets as "maîtres de la vérité" inherit part of their stage-craft, that is only a partial explanation.\[23\] Indeed, if we make more of it than simply a style, if we declare it a sufficient explanation, it almost amounts to branding Empedocles a charlatan, for we thereby deny any element of design to what must have been one of the most important passages of the whole work, if not the most important one, the principle exposition of the doctrine. A more promising line of explanation for the organisation of the passage would be preferable, especially if it could give a more integrated view of its organisation. Since the passage is obviously not meant to stand as a single argument -which is different from saying that it does not contain arguments -it may be that applying concepts and modes of analysis drawn from the study of literature can do a better job.

In this regard, it will be well to remember that Empedocles' instrument of expression was, after all, hexameter verse. Heraclitus, a prose writer, as well as possibly Anaxagoras, if he preceded Empedocles, allow us to dispense with any notion of this being for lack of an option.\[24\] He clearly preferred verse. And yet modern scholars, no doubt following Aristotle's lead, generally disregard the study of poetic form in Empedocles in order to concentrate instead upon doctrine.\[25\] The limitations of such an approach have long since been recognised for other Presocratics. The work of Fränkel\[26\] and Mourelatos\[27\] on Parmenides, Kahn on Heraclitus,\[28\] and Schofield on Anaxagoras\[29\] among others have all displayed an acute sensibility to the contribution literary form makes to the overall meaning of those thinkers. And while Empedocles has certainly not been neglected by scholarship, there has not been a proportionate amount of scrutiny given to the role of poetic form in his work. Even Bollack's massive study of the Peri Phuseos, while it makes a number of incisive general comments in the introduction, does not contribute much to this question in the commentary.\[30\] A conspicuous exception, and perhaps the best assessment so far of the relation between poetic form and philosophical content is Daniel Graham's article on symmetry in the Empedoclean cycle, to whose approach I am deeply indebted.\[31\] In what follows, I present some preliminary results of a more literary approach to the passage, the first part of a larger investigation of the role of poetic form in Empedocles.

The motif
We have already noted that the organizing principle of the passage is not derived from a single chain of argument. Where employed in fact, it is used in an entirely ancillary mode, to support or explain Empedocles' main thesis concerning the cycle. For now, then, in order to concentrate exclusively on the propositional content of the passage, its story or mythos, we will forgo
examining these different supporting arguments or comments. They are interesting enough on their own to deserve separate study, and have already received much more attention than the poetic features of the passage. I will be focussing therefore on what Empedocles simply asserts to be the case, and on the way he asserts it, at the expense of some of the reasons why he thinks it so, or of the consequences of its being so.

The fundamental thesis of the passage is the alternation of the one and many. This is set out in the first two lines, before we even know what it actually refers to. (In this there is something of a parallel to the 'suppressed subject' of Parmenides' way of truth.) It is repeated, in the same order, between seven and nine times in the roughly 70 continuous lines of the passage. As many critics have observed, this is an effective means of conveying the idea of an endlessly recurring cycle.32

Hexameter poetry, moreover, in which the Homeric model had conditioned the listener to expect repetition and the use of formulae, turns out to be a fairly easily adapted tool to this specific end. The eternal recurrence of the cycle of unification and separation of the cosmos thus is not only described in fr. 17, but through the use of repetition it is actually imitated:

"We see then that Empedocles is not content to state a principle of eternal recurrence, but at the same time he thematizes the principle and represents it by weaving a texture of motifs which embody the principle. Thus B17 must be read as more than an argument or a program for an argument: it is also a mimetic structure which portrays the world condition which it describes."33

But while this was appreciated in a loose enough fashion by earlier scholars,34 it was Graham who first pointed out how consistently this motif is employed in the Empedoclean corpus. As his analysis has shown, despite variations in wording and sentence-structure, this theme almost always takes the form of a specific AB pattern or motif: unification, then separation; the one, the many; Love, Strife. Consider for example lines 1-2:

Double is my account: for at one time it grew to be one alone from many, at another in turn it grew apart to be many from one.

In most cases this occurs within two lines, as at lines 1-2, 3-5, 7-8, 9-10 and 16-17 (an epic verbatim repetition of 1-2), a (i) 6-7, but as the papyrus now shows it can be shorter, as in the formula at lines a (ii) 24 and 30.35 Perhaps another instance of this motif is to be restored in the damaged lines a (ii) 16-17, although the editors think otherwise.36 Notwithstanding Graham's assertion to the contrary, one or two exceptions can be found to this pattern in the corpus, but it remains very much the dominant scheme.37 His analysis of the passage, however, while it remains by far the most penetrating to date, does not clarify the integration of these repetitions of the motif into some larger formal structure.

The structure of the passage

Once one recognises the motif as such, a larger pattern does emerge. Taking our cue from the repetitions of the motif, we notice a progression in scale, most obviously of the simple number of lines between each repetition, but also in the detail of exposition each presents.38 The effect is
comparable to the experience of an approaching object, in which details gradually become
discernible where at first only the broadest patterns could be perceived. Both conceptually as
well as structurally, then, the passage can be divided, with regard to the treatment of its main
theme, into movements of increasing scale, with each unit expanding upon and clarifying the
preceding one.

The key marker, again, is the repeated motif of the double tale, always told in the same order.
Thus the opening merely sets out, quite starkly, the main theme, the principle of alternation: the
many increase or grow, "to be one alone", then this one grows apart into many. What exactly
this refers to, and why it should be so, is as yet unclear. The following lines (3-5) are
fundamental for the reconstruction of the cycle but enigmatic because of their great brevity. All
we need retain of them for now is that they provide a sort of commentary upon the first lines by
pointing out the corollary for mortal creatures of the initial statement of alternation. At the same
time, they afford Empedocles a second run at the motif, for even this 'consequence' is explained
in terms of the AB structure.39

Having set out the fundamental concept of alternation between unity and plurality, and
explained its corollary for mortals, Empedocles in line 6 caps off that first direct presentation (if
one wishes to consider lines 4-5 indirect) by insisting on its reality. He does this by asserting the
permanence of this state of affairs, its immortality. But in so doing, he also paves the way for the
second direct exposition of his principal concept, in lines 7-8, in which he manages, while
retaining its unification-separation motif, both to vary its form and, by specifying the agents of
the process, to refine the picture it offers:

at one time through Love all of them coming together into one,
at another in turn each carried apart through the hatefulness of Strife.

Note once again that the order of exposition has not changed. By repeating the motif,
Empedocles facilitates its recognition, but by repeating it in a modified form, he also forces the
listener to discern the similarity behind its slight metamorphosis. This training of the listener to
recognise sameness-in-change and search beneath the surface of words is an interesting
Heraclitean effect in Empedocles to which we will return.

But note also what has changed. The causes of this alternation are clearly now first given: Love
and Strife. These two may seem out of place in what is, after all, a cosmological passage, but
then again Hesiod's cosmogonic Eros would have served as a precedent. It is clear that
Empedocles has taken pains to situate their presentation in this passage at least, within a cosmic
context, where their domain is clearly taken as universal (line 7: eis hen hapanta). We are being
told not to expect only the ordinary human associations of these two terms. On another level, we
can note that if the principle of alternation now has an explanation, i.e. Love and Strife, the latter
remain little more than postulates. Why they should have whatever properties they possess is not
explored here or elsewhere in the fragments, beyond vague references to necessity.

After pointing out the consequences of this state of affairs with respect to the Eleatic challenge to
becoming, or at least to a certain portion of its strictures (lines 9-13), Empedocles returns for a
third time to his main theme, in lines 14ff. The hearer is enjoined to pay particular attention to
what follows, implying the importance of its content. Empedocles explains that so far he has only given an account in outline, and then repeats word for word the unification-separation theme of lines 1-2. This of course is more compact than what was already given at lines 9 and 10, but only serves to call the theme once more to mind, where it is now given its fullest exposition.

Concerning the motif itself, we recall that it is a tiny encapsulation of the cosmic cycle. Also observe that it ends at the moment of separation of the one into many. It seems no accident that this is also the moment at which the separate parts of the cosmos are most discernible, _qua_ separated and hence pure, and here is where Empedocles chooses to list them for us (line 18). First the four elements are named in one line, serially, and then Strife and Love, each with their own line, and perhaps correlated with a stronger conjunction (τε...καί). For unlike the elements, they are opposites. 40

It will also be worthwhile to consider briefly the implications of the little aside of line 15 in relation to what we have observed so far. The _peirata_ are declared to be the bounds of Empedocles' _mythoi_, the whole of which are contained in lines 1-2/16-17. In this sense, the rest of the work is merely an exercise in 'unpacking', in developing and making explicit this pattern. As such, these bounds must mirror, or perhaps be identified with, the boundaries of reality itself. For if Empedocles' discourse is to be faithful to a reality conceived of as confined within necessary boundaries, in keeping with the spirit of Parmenides' strictures, it too must be contained within such bounds. 41 This suggests a further point, however, for the use of this term: is Empedocles _implicitly_ making a comparison with his own work, a copy of nature, perhaps a painting? The limit or outline reminds one of the incised outline used to sketch in the figures to which layered colors were later applied, according to standard Greek painting technique. This would seem to find some support in the fact that, as we know from Simplicius, the simile of the painters in fr. 23, followed fr. 17 and fr. 21 and was used to illustrate the two passages. 42 By analogy to the mixing of pigments by painters, the simile displays the capacity of a fixed number of elements to produce through mixture the full variety of the natural world. The point is given particular vividness by Empedocles' re-use of the same poetic formula at 8ff and 21.10ff to enumerate the creatures of the world, _trees, and men and women_, etc. If this is the case, then the image of the outline or sketch would imply two things for this poem: 1) it is confined within boundaries which mirror or are the same as those of the world and 2) the account thus far is correct but minimal and must still be filled in. The second implication would also provide further internal evidence of the introductory nature of the passage.

The next appearance of the motif does not occur until lines a (i) 6-7. Until then, Empedocles attempts to sustain the claims advanced so far, another instance of argumentation following upon direct exposition. He does so following two very different tacks, the articulation between the two being line 26, a direct address to the disciple. 43 The hymn to Love, at lines 20 to 26, combines traditional hymnic form with quasi-empirical observation to assert the reality of Love's presence among men, while in the next subsection, lines 26 to 35, the first principles are qualified in such a way as to display their ability to meet the Eleatic challenge to becoming. Here too, however, we can note a looser retention of the AB pattern, as the hymn to Love precedes the Eleatic account of individual first principles, whose individuality once again must be correlated with
Strife.

From lines 35 onward we can only rely on the papyrus, too ill-preserved in many places to be usefully discussed without having to enter into textual matters. Let us merely note that we have a return to the motif at lines a (i) 6-7, and then, less assuredly, at a (ii) 16-17. In between, Empedocles leaves behind the more abstract aspects of his system to turn to more detailed physical description of the cosmos in different phases of the cycle. At lines a (i) 8-a (ii) 2, he asserts, in a formula better known from fr. 21, the capacity of his first principles to generate, no doubt via mixture, living creatures, such as plants, humans, animals and, rather stunningly as well, "long-lived gods, greatest in honour." The next lines are too garbled for us to have a clear idea of their content. The editors suggest that they describe the world under complete Strife, a sort of recurring chaos, which finds its end when Love begins to expand anew from the centre, as described in more detail in fr. 35. Whatever their precise content, the mention of the more familiar aspects of the world, from plants, beasts and men to the sun (a (ii) 9 and 13), completes a descent from a highly abstract and obscure level of discourse to one in which Empedocles' listeners could recognise themselves and their surroundings, albeit transplanted into a cyclical cosmos.

III. Conclusion

The proleptic style

The theme of alternation of one and many, as given particular expression in the unification-separation motif, is employed by Empedocles to create an over-arching structure for the first presentation of his system. This larger pattern is a progressive increase in detail with each successive deployment of the motif. While retaining the same general pattern, each depiction is more detailed than the next, going from the most abstract and general to the particular and familiar. At first, this expression is a mere assertion, without any particular applicability or obvious explanatory power, but as it is repeated and expanded it gains in intelligibility, until at last the known world also enters the picture. Once there, however, the hearer is brought to realise that the world he knows is no longer the whole it may have been previously felt to be, but is now seen to be a mere part of a larger whole. In this regard, Empedocles' main exposition of his philosophical framework is another example of what is sometimes called by literary critics the 'proleptic style' in archaic literature, an approach characterised by the gradual development of recurrent images and themes, passing from an initially enigmatic statement to some form of resolution or solution. The best known exponents of this style were, respectively, Aeschylus in poetry, and perhaps Heraclitus in prose, if Kahn's hypothesis is correct, to which list we may now add Empedocles. That our analysis of the passage conforms to an established literary style or trope for the period can only reinforce its validity.

Word and thing

We may now wonder: What does Empedocles' poem achieve, or what purpose does it serve? There is an obvious didactic force to repetition alone, which certainly must be acknowledged, but I would suggest that the proleptic presentation also achieves a subtle persuasion of its own. It is of a kind, however, to which we may be less sensitive than its intended audience was. Despite this, I think that the probable assumptions that support it can be elicited from consideration of
another passage of great importance, fr. 110:

For if, pressing these things down into your close-packed thought organs, you will kindly watch over them with pure cares, not only will all these be at your disposal for your whole span, but you will acquire many more from them; for they will increase 5 themselves, each according to its character, whatever be its nature (phusis).

But if you strive after other things, such as among men abound, wretched things in countless number and which blunt their thoughts, truly they will quickly abandon you as time revolves, wanting to reach their very own kind; for know that all things have thought (phronesis) and a share of understanding.

As so often happens in studies of Empedocles, critics have wondered what the actual subject is here. On the one hand, the agricultural metaphors, the language of growth, and the use of the term nature all seem to point toward a description of the elements. On the other hand, the talk of thinking organs must mean we are here discussing the teachings of the master. DK even adds in parentheses to the translation: "die Lehren des Meisters?" I suggest that the question itself may be misguided, reflecting our rather than Empedocles' habits of thought. It is more likely that for Empedocles words and things are not clearly distinguished, especially in the case of their being 'true' to one another. This is of course no novel insight. Discussing the path of the Muses in Pindar's sixth Olympian ode, and its relation to the proem to Parmenides' poem, Fränkel wrote in 1930:

"For of course the 'path' of a journey taken by the Muses is at one and the same time the course of the song and the course of the ideas, thoughts and other contents expressed therein. Utterance and thought, word and thing were inseparable in archaic times...."47

So here too then the teachings are not 'about' something, and hence implicitly separate from them; in as much as they are true, the teachings will be identical with the things. Thus, our passage shows how the account of the world is true, and herein lies its persuasive force, not only because it imitates the structure of the world but because, like the world it describes, Empedocles' logos seems to grow.

Epilogue: Heraclitus and the dangers of metaphor
We have already noted a certain stylistic similarity between Empedocles and Heraclitus, and I would like to end with a few final reflections on some further affinities between the two. Like his Ionian predecessor, Empedocles uses the proleptic style to introduce his doctrine. Both, moreover, are committed to a view of nature and the world as a living but eternal and indestructible order, although they go about expressing its stability in different ways. Both are also committed to the intelligibility of this order. For Heraclitus, this intelligibility is the logos, which is eternal and yet which men ever fail to understand (fr. 1), and which has modern counterparts in concepts and metaphors such as "the voice of nature" and the "language of the real." For Empedocles, this community of nature and human beings is expressed rather via a sort of universal sympathy of all things, a panpsychism as found in the last line of fr. 110.
Now it is a regular feature of the use of metaphor - for this is how I think we should characterise these expressions - that it often produces a certain fusion between the two compared objects, and that properties belonging exclusively to one part can rub off onto the other.\(^{48}\) In a famous study of comparison in Greek literature, Snell points out that when, at *Iliad* 15.615 ff., Homer compares the Acheans, as they resist the attacks of Hector, to a rock in the sea, which endures despite wind and waves,

"...it is not quite correct to say that the rock is viewed anthropomorphically, unless we add that our understanding of the rock is anthropomorphic for the same reason that we are able to look at ourselves petromorphically, and that the act of regarding the rock in human terms furnishes us with a means of apprehending and defining our own behaviour."\(^{49}\)

For the philosopher given to metaphor, perhaps even more than for the poet, there exists a danger in the use of metaphor of a sort of contamination, whereby the comparison drags along a further series of associations not intended by the author. Awareness of this danger in Heraclitus seems to be at least one strand of the possible meanings of fr. 32: "the wise is one alone, willing and unwilling to be spoken of by the name of Zeus", as if one single concept or term were insufficient to capture the essence of the guiding *logos*. For Empedocles, poet of nature, the use of the proleptic style has an obvious application: the growth of the account. I suggested above that this may have contained an element of persuasion for the listener. But, as I also said, the account only *seems* to grow. Indeed, despite the apparent expansion of the account, it, like the cosmos it describes, remains within the same *peirata*; although we see more of it and understand its various articulations better, it itself does not change as to the fundamentals. Indeed, as Empedocles tells us in fr. 8, "there is no growth (*phusis*) of all mortal/things, nor any end in destructive death, but only mixture and dissolution of the mixed..." At the same time, Empedocles is more willing than Heraclitus to tolerate some degree of mortal error in this regard and go along with custom, as he tells us in fr. 9. Perhaps here as well, then, in the use of this proleptic style to present the changeless order of nature, we can suspect a superficial concession to appearances for the sake of persuasion. On a deeper level, only a *logos* whose appearance contradicts its reality can give a faithful account of a world that does as much.\(^{50}\)

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**Notes:**


2. The other would be Parmenides B1, quoted by Sextus Empiricus, *Against Learned Men*, VII 111ff.

DK.

4. Given that their text is a first edition, there are some points, including some significant ones, where my views concerning restorations and other textual matters diverge from theirs. Despite this, in order to avoid overburdening the discussion, I have used their unaltered text as the basis of my translation. The reader should in any case refer to DK and M. and P.'s edition of the papyrus for discussion of more specific points and philological issues.

5. I take tên of line four as a cognate accusative, and hè of line five as a passive form of the same construction. The proper object of the killing and begetting is then thnêta, which I render all-inclusively as "life."

6. At line a (i) 6, a second hand had corrected the first person plural sunerchometha to the participle sunerchomena by adding a nu. M. and P. retain the first. For lines a (i) 8 to a (ii) 2, cf. DK 21, 9 ff. For lines 18-20, cf. DK 35.3-5 and M. and P. 218-222.

7. The account claims to cover "everything", cf. 17.7, 17.30, a (i) 8, 26.7, 35.5

8. Fr Panzerbeiter, Beiträge zur Kritik und Erklärung des Empedokles, Meiningen, 1844.


10. The need to take account of Parmenides or Eleatic doctrine "...required a philosophical depth and sophistication not needed by the early Milesians to do the same job." B. Inwood, The Poem of Empedocles, Phoenix Presocratics volume III, U. of Toronto Press, 1992 p. 20. Empedocles' cosmology accordingly has an Eleatic facet that deals with issues of "Being"; this facet represents the metaphysical side of Empedocles' teachings.

11. She actually says, B8. 51-2: " and from this point on (in the poem), learn mortal opinions, as you listen to the deceitful array of my words (kosmon emôn epeón apatêlon akouôn)."

12. The fragments of the Presocratics are almost all known to us indirectly, via quotations from other authors. The papyrus is thus one of the largest pieces of unmediated Presocratic text.

13. They restore the verb to eisērchometha. See note 36 below.


16. Cf. the small hymn to Love in 17. 21-26 above.
17. So also M. and P. 112-114.

18. As was always indicated by Plutarch, *De exilio* 17, 607 c the source of most of DK 115. The papyrus, "ensemble d" in particular, confirms the unity of Empedocles' doctrine, see. M. and P. 83 ff. The significance of this is considerable, but a full discussion of it remains beyond the immediate scope of this paper. If one wishes to take the further step of denying the existence of two separate poems, then one could also include the address to the Acragantines, DK 112, cf. Inwood's ordering, (1992).


20. Contrast Parmenides' way of truth, B8 with its program of signs at 8.2-4 and the following sequence of arguments in support of each sign.

21. See note 18.

22. Cf. among others DK 71, 113 and 133.

23. For a good analysis of this style, see Schofield *An Essay on Anaxagoras*, Cambridge, 1980, pp. 2-33. Compare the fairly dogmatic opening statements of Ion of Chios (DK 36 B1), Anaxagoras (Dk46 B1) and Philolaus (DK 32 B1-6).

24. This is sometimes suggested of Parmenides, but it is a very weak argument.


29. See note 19.

31. See note 9.


34. See Guthrie, note 32.

35. Not transcribed above. Line a (ii) 30 *opsei gar xunhodon te diaptuxin te genethlês* "for you will see (A) the coming-together and (B) unfolding of birth" (perhaps life? M. and P. translate "the stock." The term means birth, but often designates the product of the action rather than the action itself, see p. 247.)

36. M. and P. 208-9. I disagree, but the point is relatively minor for my present purpose.

37. Graham (1988) 304 mistakenly refers to lines B21.9-10 as an instance of the AB motif. In fact the lines in question are 7-8 and the motif here is reversed to BA, as the line 7 deals with separation, 8 with unity.

38. There are, respectively, between each occurrence of the motif, (1-2) 1 line (3-5) 1 line (7-8) (9-10) 5 lines (16-17) 18 lines (a (i) 6-7) 17 lines (a (ii) 16-17).


40. Note as well that in this instance Strife is named first: this may be once more that, since we are considering each of the separate fundamental constituents of the cosmos, we are viewing them through Strife, as it were.

41. B8 30 ff.

42. Simplicius, *Commentary in Aristotles' Physics*, 159.27. The word, however, also has associations with weaving, one of its meanings being strand, linking it to a set of well-established metaphors for highly-wrought poetic discourse. This is the interpretation offered by Graham (1988), 301, following R.B. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought*, Cambridge, 1954, 310 ff. The latter provides a list of examples from Homer and lyric authors.

43. Cf. a similar articulation by the same means at line 14, and a longer one at lines a (ii) 21 to 30, see M. and P.'s text. The length of this disjunction indicates a strong transition to a new subject, away from the presentation of the general framework.

44. Cf. the critique of partial mortal knowledge in fr. 2.

46. (1979) 87 ff. As Kahn himself states, even if he is wrong, the plurality of fragments on same themes means there was obviously some sort of correlation or resonance intended between them.


50. I would like to thank Brad Inwood for helpful criticisms of earlier drafts of this essay.

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