

ΤΕΣΣΑΡΑΚΟΝΤΑΕΤΗΡΙΣ

ΘΕΟΦΙΛΟΥ ΒΟΡΕΑ

ΤΟΜΟΣ ΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΣ

ΕΝ ΑΘΗΝΑΙΣ
ΤΥΠΟΙΣ : "ΠΥΡΣΟΥ", Α. Ε.
1940

Ε.Υ.Δ της Κ.τ.Π
ΙΩΑΝΝΙΝΑ 2006

ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΙΩΑΝΝΙΝΩΝ
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HERACLITUS OF EPHESUS

by

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It is a pleasure to present to an outstanding scholar of modern Greece a summary of investigations on the philosophy of Heraclitus that have now been carried on for almost thirty years⁽¹⁾. Unfortunately it will be but a very incomplete sketch, since time and space fail and much important material is not available here.

It would be interesting to know when Heraclitus' book was written—if, indeed, it was composed at any one time and does not rather represent the result of a long and continuous elaboration. At any rate, it contains, in a most condensed and even compressed form, the result of life-long speculation and we may perhaps assume that its author worked on it until he felt that death was near. Tradition will have it that he died at the age of sixty and that he had «flourished» about 500 B. C., that is to say, that he was somehow connected with some historical event located at that date. If he was from 30 to 50 then, his book was probably completed at some time between 490 and 470. From the way in which he mentions Pythagoras, Xenophanes and Hecataeus we may infer that the first of these was already dead whereas the two others were still alive⁽²⁾. But that does not solve our difficulty. There is a slight indication that the

(1) Zu Heraklit, Zeitschrift für die österreichischen Gymnasien, 1910, S. 61 ff. Über die ursprüngliche Reihenfolge einiger Bruchstücke Heraklits. Hermes, Band 58 (1923), S. 20 ff. «Heraklits Einheitslehre» von Alois Patin als Ausgangspunkt zum Verständnis Heraklits. Wiener Studien, Band 43 (1924), S. 115 ff. Ἐδίζησάμην ἑμεωυτόν. Festschrift für Julius Schlosser. Wien, Amalthea-Verlag, 1926, S. 1 ff.

(2) Πολυμαθὴν νόον ἔχειν οὐ διδάσκει. Ἡσίοδον γὰρ ἂν ἐδίδαξε καὶ Πυθαγόρην, αὐτὸς τε Ξενοφάνειά τε καὶ Ἐκκαταῖον. (Frg. 40 Diels-Kranz).

book was not finished before 480⁽¹⁾, and in that case Heraclitus' glorification of war as making «some slaves and others freemen»⁽²⁾ may not have lacked some significance from the point of view of contemporary history: perhaps he would not have expressed himself in this way, if the barbarians had not recently been defeated by the Hellenes⁽³⁾.

What was his position with respect to the affairs of his city? Frg. 121 reads: «It would become all the men of Ephesus to hang themselves, one by one, and to abandon the city to the non-adult, having expelled Hermodorus, their ablest man, for they said (*i. e. thought*): «among us there shall not be one who is ablest; but if there is, let him stay elsewhere and among others»⁽⁴⁾. I wonder whether Heraclitus himself was dwelling within his native city when he wrote these words. Is there not a certain flavor of the refugee or emigrant mentality about them? In this context it may be noted that some ties seem to have connected him with Italy and Sicily: he mentions Pythagoras and Xenophanes, but neither Anaximander nor Anaximenes; his doctrine of opposites seems to be influenced by Pythagoras and Alcmaeon; Aristotle and Theo-

(1) The words κλέος ἀνάσσειν in Frg. 29 recall ἀνάσσειν τε κλέος in Simonides' poem in honor of Leonidas and his companions. If one of them borrowed from the other, it was certainly the philosopher and not the poet.

(2) Πόλεμος . . . τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε, τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους. (Frg. 53).

(3) If, as is currently assumed, Parmenides referred to Heraclitus in Frg. 6, the date suggested above would be too late, for Parmenides must have been «very old» when Socrates was «very young» (although he looked as fresh as if he were but 65, Plato, Parm. 127 A): hence, he was in all probability born not later than 535 and he cannot have been more than 50 when he wrote the poem in which the goddess addressed him as κοῦρος (Frg. 1,24). But that assumption is absolutely untenable, as Zeller and Reinhardt have shown long ago. Parmenides refers to «crowds lacking judgment» (ἄκριτα φῦλα) that is, to the masses of average men and most certainly not to an isolated thinker who could hardly be known and assuredly could not have «crowds» of followers at the time. Comp. Imago. Zeitschrift für Anwendung der Psychoanalyse auf die Geisteswissenschaften, Band X (1924), S. 2, Ann. 1 and S. 8, Ann. 25.

(4) Ἄξιον Ἐφεσίοις ἠβηδὸν ἀπάγξασθαι πᾶσι καὶ τοῖς ἀνήθοις τὴν πόλιν καταλιπεῖν, οἳτινες Ἐρμόδωρον, ἄνδρα ἕωυτῶν ὀνήσιτον ἐξέβαλον φάντες ἡμέων μηδὲ εἰς ὀνήσιτος ἔστω, εἰ δὲ μή, ἄλλη τε καὶ μετ' ἄλλων (Frg. 121).

phrastus emphasize that he shared Hippasus' views about Fire; and it was Empedocles who agreed with him in holding that the world oscillates between two phases and that its present phase is due to, and dominated by, Strife. Moreover, there was a tradition to the effect that Hermodorus, too, went to Italy and even played a part in the legislation of the Roman decemviri. But who was this Hermodorus and what was the cause for which he stood? Heraclitus, with remarkable emphasis, stressed the significance of Law. «The people must fight for (*their*) law as if for the walls (*of their city*)» (1). «All human laws grow out of the divine One» (2). The law, as it stood, was probably aristocratic and the «people» were the nobility. But if Hermodorus had been the head of an oligarchic faction, why should Heraclitus have condemned «all» his fellow-citizens? Was he, then, a «tyrant», or at least a would-be «tyrant», supported by the masses? Heraclitus certainly held that «to follow the advice of one man is a law too», arguing that «to me one man is worth ten thousand, if he be the best» (3). But that he whom Timon justly termed «mob-abusing Heraclitus» should have taken his stand by the side of the masses is hardly credible either. Perhaps the consideration of another fragment may shed some light—or at least some twilight—on the problem. «In Priene there lived Bias, the son of Teutames, who was more considerable than the others (*i. e. the other citizens*). And indeed the Prieneans dedicated a sanctuary to him, termed the Teutameum» (4). Now, Ephesus and Priene are very close to each other. A car takes you from one to other in about an hour.

(1) Μάχεσθαι χρῆ τὸν δῆμον ὑπὲρ τοῦ νόμου ὅκωσπερ τείχεος (Frg. 44).

(2) . . . τρέφονται γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἀνθρώπειοι νόμοι ὑπὸ ἐνὸς τοῦ θείου. . . (Frg. 114), not to be understood as referring to the one divine law, of which the philosopher could not go on to say: κρατεῖ γὰρ τοσοῦτον ὀκόσον ἐθέλει, since the law is not a thing possessed of desire or will. Comp. Wiener Studien 43, S. 129.

(3) Νόμος καὶ βουλῆ πείθεσθαι ἐνὸς (Frg. 33) and: εἷς ἐμοὶ μύριοι, εἰάν ἄριστος ᾦ (Frg. 49).

(4) Ἐν Πριήνῃ Βίας ἐγένετο ὁ Τευτάμεω οὐ πλείων λόγος ἢ τῶν ἄλλων. Καὶ οἱ Πριηνεῖς δὲ τέμενος αὐτῷ καθιέρωσαν, τὸ Τευτάμειον λεγόμενον. (Frg. 89). That the second sentence probably forms part of the fragment and is not due to a later scholar was first seen by Patin (not by the writer, as Kranz puts it).

May we not suppose that there was a certain rivalry between them? And would it not seem as if Heraclitus had exalted the latter in order to disparage the former? «The Prieneans knew how to honor their greatest man, whereas the Ephesians did not». A parallel was thus established between Hermodorus and Bias. But Bias was neither an oligarchic leader nor a tyrant. He was rather a sage, a statesman and perhaps a lawgiver, of the type of Solon. Hence, Hermodorus may have been a man of the same type. And indeed «Hermodorus, the Ionian» had drafted laws⁽¹⁾. Possibly he was a contemporary of Bias and Heraclitus had not known him personally at all. The philosopher's ire might have been kindled by the thought: the Ephesians misjudge me just as they misjudged their greatest man. But if he did happen to live in Heraclitus time, may he not really have come to Rome and may not the Romans, after all, have had good reasons for honoring his memory by the statue mentioned by Pliny?

Timon termed Heraclitus not only «mob-abusing», but a «riddler» likewise⁽²⁾. Indeed, his «obscurity» soon became proverbial. Aristotle gives a somewhat superficial account of it, complaining that it requires «an effort to punctuate Heraclitus»⁽³⁾. A good example of this is afforded by Frg. 87 usually supposed to mean; «A dull man is apt to be frightened by every (*new*) word (*i. e. thought*), but the point of which is only grasped when it is punctuated thus: «Man is dull: he is apt to be frightened by every new word»⁽⁴⁾. This kind of obscurity is simply the effect of a very compressed style and was certainly not deliberately aimed at for its own sake. But another and a much more significant sort of obscurity, or rather ambiguity, was as certainly wiled. Indeed, obscurity was the fashion of the age which felt that it was easy and even vulgar to write in a way understandable to the average reader: it was only by expressing yourself in a way intelligible but to the wisest and most refined that you could prove you belonged to the intellectual and cultural *élite* just beginning to emerge, and

(1) A 3a Diels-Kranz.

(2) ὀχλολοῖδος and αἰνικτής.

(3) A 4 Diels-Kranz.

(4) Βλάξ ἄνθρωπος ἐπὶ παντὶ λόγῳ ἐπτοῆσθαι φιλεῖ.

were not like those poets who just «sing to the vulgar» — like Homer or Hesiod (1). There are many arrows in my quiver, says Pindar toward the end of the second Olympic ode, but they are meant but for those who have understanding; the others may stare as the raven does when the eagle, the bird of Zeus, soars high above him. Aeschylus, too, cannot have been unaware of the obscurity of his *cantica*. And Heraclitus himself explicitly extolled divine ambiguity: «The Lord whose is the oracle at Delphi does not reveal (*his meaning*) nor does he conceal it; he hints at it» (2). Heraclitean obscurity is not quite the same, however, as oracular ambiguity. Usually the philosopher's pronouncements have, first of all, a literal and often somewhat trivial meaning behind which, however, there looms an indefinite number of more general and also more profound meanings. Let us consider but two instances. «Way up — (*way*) down — one and the same» (3). The foreground meaning of this would seem to be the simple and unpretentious statement that we often descend a hill by the same path by which we ascended it (although it might also mean that, given three paths on different levels, the path on the middle level may be termed either «the upper path» when envisaged from below, or the «lower path» when beheld from above). But Theophrastus already appears to have interpreted the words as referring to the transformation of matter in a cosmic process: the stages remain the same whether fire is transformed first into water and thence into earth, or whether earth is retransformed first into water and thence into fire. «But there's need to know that warfare implies communion and justice discord and that all things are generated by discord and neediness» (4). Warfare implies communion, or rather, it is «common» since, of course, both parties must be engaged in it. But there certainly is an allusion to a Homeric phrase also, pointing out that the risk, too, is shared by both (5). Did it

(1) δῆμων αἰδοῖσι πείθονται καὶ διδασκάλῳ χρεῖωνται δμῖλῳ . . . (Frg. 104).

(2) Ὁ ἀναξ οὗ τὸ μαντεῖον ἔστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρύπτει, ἀλλὰ σημαίνει (Frg. 93).

(3) Ὀδὸς ἄνω κάτω μία καὶ αὐτή. (Frg. 60).

(4) Εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνὸν καὶ δίκην ἔριν καὶ γιγνόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεῶν. (Frg. 80).

(5) ξυνὸς Ἄρης.

occur to Heraclitus, moreover, that war brings the warring peoples into contact and entails mutual influences? Or that it is also «common» to all the warriors taking part in it on the same side and thus proves a principle of unity and organization? We can hardly decide. But we see from another fragment⁽¹⁾ that an infinitely more general interpretation was certainly in his mind: every contrast is a kind of warfare and by contrast contraries are inseparably bound up with each other, such as right and left, up and down, sleeping and waking, life and death, master and servant, gods and men. Justice implies discord. Now, the term standing for justice also means judicial procedure, lawsuit, litigation, and that litigation implies discord is obvious and trivial. But evidently, an insight by far more profound is behind: if there were no injustice, there would be no need for justice⁽²⁾: if there were no conflicting interests, there would be no need for law; law really *is* a way of settling quarrels and disputes. All things are generated by discord and neediness. The foreground meaning probably is that generation presupposes the contrast of Male and Female and that men do not act when not prompted by some need. But in the background the view seems to loom that there would be no change whatsoever if the equilibrium of contraries were never disturbed; that all Becoming serves the purpose of restoring it; and is thus conditioned by some neediness, that is, some deficiency or «hunger» on the one hand, and, indeed, some corresponding excess or «satiety» on the other⁽³⁾. The danger of reading such background meanings into the text where they were not intended is, of course, as great as that of overlooking them where they may be clearly described and often we have no means of guarding against either⁽⁴⁾.

(1) Frg. 53.

(2) Comp. Frg. 23.

(3) ἔλλειψις - ὑπερβολή· χρησιμοσύνη or λιμὸς-κόρος. (Frg. 64, 67).

(4) Some instances may be given of this, all referring to the concept of Soul (ψυχή). Fragments 45 and 115 have generally been supposed to be particularly profound and even mysterious. Ψυχῆς πείρατα τῶν οὐκ ἂν ἐξεύροιο πᾶσαν ἐπιπορευόμενος ὁδόν· οὕτω βαθὺν λόγον ἔχει. (Frg. 45). Since Heraclitus clearly identified Soul with Fire or Heat and since the term βαθύς originally refers to the soil and simply means Rich or Fertile, my guess is that by these words he wanted but to state that

Heraclitus has often been termed a metaphysician. That may mean anything or nothing. But if it is understood to imply that he aimed at transcending appearances and at discovering entities or principles removed from sense-perception, then this designation is certainly inappropriate. He tells us in so many words that he «preferred what may be seen, or heard, or found out; (1)» that it is what is «manifest» what men are mistaken about (2); and that error arises when people are unable to understand the testimony of their eyes and ears because they have «souls of barbarians», that is, of such as are incapable of understanding the language of these witnesses (3).

Fire or Heat pervades the entire universe and that its amount can never be exhausted. I should, therefore, translate them thus: «You cannot find out the limits of Soul, whatever road you may take; so plentiful is its nature». Similarly I should discount excessive profundity in interpreting and rendering the second: Ψυχῆς ἐστὶ λόγος ἐαυτὸν αἰξῶν (Frg. 115). It would seem mainly to refer to physiology and to mean: «The nature of Soul is growth». But perhaps there was an inkling of mental development likewise, and of the mind's natural capacity for learning. On the other hand, the real point of the very fragment (Frg. 36) which, when compared with Frg. 31 shows that Heraclitus identified Soul with Fire seems to have escaped all interpreters: ψυχῆσι θάνατος ὕδαρ γενέσθαι, ὕδατι δὲ θάνατος γῆν γενέσθαι, ἐκ γῆς δὲ ὕδαρ γίνεται, ἐξ ὕδατος δὲ ψυχή. «For souls it's death to become water, for water it's death to become earth, but from earth emerges water and from water soul». As may be seen from Frg. 76 some of the ancients already ignored the fact that death is referred to but in the first half of the sentence and fancied they were just consistently working out the philosopher's thought by inserting its mention into the second half likewise: And it's death for earth to become water, and for water to become soul. But we know (Heraclitus A 6 Diels-Kranz) that Heraclitus held movement to be characteristic of life, and rest of death. Hence, to pass from a more fluid to a more solid state implies death in a very specific and literal sense: but to pass from a more solid to a more fluid state means revival and was certainly termed «emerging» or «being born» (γίνεται) deliberately and on purpose.

(1) Ὅσων ὄψιν ἀκοή μάθησις, ταῦτα ἐγὼ προτιμέω. (Frg. 55).

(2) Ἐξηπάτηνται οἱ ἄνθρωποι πρὸς τὴν γνῶσιν τῶν φανερῶν. . . (Frg. 56).

(3) Κακοὶ μάρτυρες ἄνθρωποισιν ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ ὄτα, βαρβάρους ψυχὰς ἐχόντων. (Frg. 107). Comp. Frg. 72: «They disagree with the statements (referring to things) with which they are most familiar and the facts which confront them daily appear strange to them». (ᾧ μάλιστα διηνεχῶς ὀμιλοῦσι λόγῳ, τούτῳ διαφέρονται καὶ οἷς καθ' ἡμέραν ἐγκυροῦσι,

What is it, then, that this testimony reveals to those whose «Hellenic» souls are able to understand it? Three tenets are usually assumed to be most essential to the teaching of Heraclitus: 1. The ultimate reality is Fire; the world has emerged out of fire in the past and will be reabsorbed into it in the future. 2. All things whatsoever are perpetually changing, a universal state of flux prevails; nothing endures, nor is anything ever at rest; in truth, there is no Being, there is but Becoming. 3. Change, however, though it is universal, strictly conforms to an unchanging and eternal law, expressing the nature, or the decree, of the divine *Logos*, or world-reason. The first of these assumptions, stated by Aristotle and Theophrastus already, is certainly true in the main, but needs qualification and clarification. The second, although it may be traced back to Plato, or rather to his elder friend Cratylus, is very doubtful. The third, due to the Stoics, is certainly wrong if expressed in the form indicated above, although a somewhat similar statement would be correct.

Some of the words in which Heraclitus expressed his doctrine regarding fire may be quoted: «To those awake there is one common order of things, but of those asleep each one turns aside into an order of his own. But this world, (*I mean*) the same for all, was not made by any god nor by any man, but ever was, is and will be: everliving fire, kindled according to measure and extinguished according to measure. (*But*) fire turns: first into ocean, but ocean (*again*) half into earth, and half into flame (¹). By «flame» I render a Greek word which, according

ταῦτα αὐτοῖς ξένα φαίνεται). One must not be misled by statements such as «occult harmony better than manifest» (ἁρμονία ἀφανής φανεροῦς κρείττων, Frg. 54) or: «Nature is apt to hide herself» (φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ, Frg. 123), or that there are things no one would be prepared for since they are «untraceable and inaccessible» (ἐὰν μὴ ἔλπηται ἀνέλπιστον, οὐκ ἔξευρήσει, ἀνεξερεύνητον ἔόν καὶ ἄπορον, Frg. 18). That knowledge is, on principle, attained to by the use of the senses and by interpreting their testimony in the right way does not, of course, imply that it may not be much more difficult to find out some things than others or that there may not be some which it is even very hard to discover.

(¹) Τοῖς (μὲν) ἐγρηγοροῦσι εἰς καὶ ξυνός ἐστι κόσμος, εὐδόντων δὲ ἕκαστος εἰς ἴδιον ἀποστρέφεται. (Frg. 89. Comp, Wiener Studien 43, S. 130). κόσμον (δὲ) τόνδε, τὸν αὐτὸν ἀπάντων, οὔτε τις θεῶν οὔτε ἀνθρώπων ἐποίησεν,

to its derivation, ought to mean something that burns or cremates but which, in archaic meteorology, mostly stands for sheet-lightning. Since this would not make sense here and since the context cogently calls for a reference to those hot vapors that rise from the sea and which Heraclitus (as Theophrastus tells us) believed to be gathered in, and to shine forth from, the heavenly luminaries, we must suppose it to designate the blazing flames visible in the sun and the other celestial bodies. This is important because it suggests that when Heraclitus spoke of «fire», he was thinking rather of heat than of flame, the latter arising from the former but by a somewhat complex process of transformation.

Hence, even viewed as a theory of primeval matter, Heraclitus' doctrine, when compared with that of Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes, reveals a progress in the direction of the less concrete and tangible and comes near the more modern ideas of Force and Energy. Nor is it difficult to understand that he identified Fire and Soul, since the latter was, for all the Presocratics, mainly the principle of life and since «the Warm»⁽¹⁾ was by so many ancient thinkers supposed to distinguish the living from the dead and was, even by Aristotle, held to be an indispensable prerequisite of animation. The question has lately been much discussed whether the philosopher's description of the process by which fire «turns» into water and thence into earth and flame, then to be reversed till it returns to its starting point referred to the gradual formation and, again, to the dissolution of the universe or rather to the every-day phenomena of rain, sedimentation, evaporation, and so forth. Heraclitus himself was evidently not explicit on the point. But since Greek philosophy originated in mythology (merely substituting, *e.g.*, Water or Air to Earth, and the Unlimited to Chaos) and since all the Presocratics (with the exception, of course, of some of the Eleatics, but not of Parmenides himself), down to Democritus (and even to Plato), presented their cosmology in the form of cosmogony, it can

ἀλλ' ἦν αἰεὶ καὶ ἔστι καὶ ἔσται πῦρ αἰεζῶον ἀπτόμενον μέτρα καὶ ἀποσβεννόμενον μέτρα. (1'rg. 30). πυρὸς (δὲ) τροπαί' πρῶτον θάλασσα, θαλάσσης δὲ τὸ μὲν ἥμισυ γῆ, τὸ δὲ ἥμισυ πρηστήρ. (1'rg. 31).

(1) Τὸ θερμόν.

hardly be supposed that Heraclitus should have departed from this viewpoint altogether. On the other hand, for Anaximenes already (and, as Aristotle guessed, even for Thales) the everyday phenomena had evidently been the model on which they had worked out their cosmogony, and surely Heraclitus did not differ from his predecessors in this respect. He would not, for instance, have assumed that the earth had emerged from water, if he had not known that a process of this sort goes on even now in the estuaries of great streams.

The theory of universal flux is explicitly attributed to Heraclitus by Plato, who, however, at once goes on to say: «and, likening things to the flux of a river, he says that one cannot enter the same river twice»⁽¹⁾. This would, by itself, suggest that this interpretation of Heraclitus was based solely on his pronouncements about the impossibility of entering the same river twice. But these pronouncements have come down to us and so we may judge for ourselves whether they justify Plato's interpretation. Now, Aristotle tells us that Plato had been familiar, since early manhood, «with Cratylus and the Heraclitean views» concerning the universal flux⁽²⁾, and in another passage that Cratylus was one of those «who claimed to «heracliticize», but objected that Heraclitus had not carried his theory of the flux far enough⁽³⁾. The words about «not entering the same stream twice» are thus quoted again and again. It is highly improbable that there was anything else to quote. If the philosopher had propounded the theory explicitly, the passage would almost certainly have been preserved. Hence, we have a fair chance to evaluate the significance of his statement ourselves. It ran thus: «We enter the same rivers and we do not; we are (*the same*) and we are not. (*For-even*) when we enter the same rivers, the waters that follow each

(1) Λέγει που Ἡράκλειτος ὅτι πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει καὶ ποταμοῦ ὄψῃ ἀπεικάζων τὰ ὄντα λέγει ὡς δις εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν ποταμὸν οὐκ ἂν ἐμβῆιης. (Cratylus 402a).

(2) Ἐκ νέου... συνήθησιν γενόμενος... Κρατύλῳ καὶ ταῖς Ἡρακλειτείσι δόξαις... (Metaph. I 6).

(3) ... ἢ... δόξα... ἢ τῶν φασκόντων Ἡρακλειτεῖσιν καὶ οἶον Κρατύλῳ εἶχε, ὅς... Ἡρακλείτῳ ἐπειρήμα εἰπόντι ὅτι δις τῷ αὐτῷ ποταμῷ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμβῆναι· αὐτὸς γὰρ ᾤετο οὐδ' ἄπαξ (Metaph. IV 6).

other are others and others; and the souls, too, stream up from the moisture (*as others and others*)»⁽¹⁾. The foreground meaning is quite clear: yesterday's river and today's river are the same, inasmuch as their channels are; but they are not, since the waters are different; and so we too are the same today as we were yesterday, since our bodies are, yet not the same, since our soul, or vital heat, has been renewed. What about the less obvious meaning? That the passage was intended to illustrate the unceasing change of all things, is possible. But even in that case we ought to refrain from exaggeration. In Heraclitus' time there was no atomic theory. Consequently, imperceptible, or microscopic, changes were most likely out of the question. Our body changes in so far as we eat and excrete. That is what Epicurus had in mind when he made one of his characters say: A yard does not remain a yard when you add something to it, or take something away. Even so with man: «one grows, another dwindles, and so we are changing all the time...»⁽²⁾. Really all the time? Are there no phases of stability? Does the water not remain water for some time, after it has emerged from heat and before it evaporates into flame? We possess a tiny little fragment that would seem to answer the question in the affirmative: «It rests from change»⁽³⁾. But that is not all. Again and again Heraclitus emphasizes the identity of opposites: what is good, is bad also; what is useful, is detrimental too; life is death and death is life, and so on and on. Are our fragments not simply meant to explain that the identical is non-identical as well and that what is the same is yet, at the same time, not the same? If they are, then the doctrine of universal flux evaporates into nothing, or rather, turns out to be just the interpretation of such as «claimed to heracliticize».

The concept of a divine Logos is simply a Stoic fabrication. Neither Plato nor Aristotle say a word about it. Yet both were

(1) Ποταμοῖς τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἐρβαίνομεν τε καὶ οὐκ ἐρβαίνομεν, εἰμέν τε καὶ οὐκ εἰμεν. (Frg. 49a). ποταμοῖσι τοῖσιν αὐτοῖσιν ἐρβαίνουσι ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα ὕδατα ἐκίχθητ' καὶ ποταῖ δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν ὑγρῶν ἀναθυμιῶνται. (Frg. 12).

(2) ὁ μὲν γὰρ αὖξεται, ὁ δὲ γὰρ μὲν φθίνει, ἐν μεταλλαγῇ δὲ πάντες ἐντὶ πάντα τὸν χρόνον. (Frg. 2 Diels-Kranz).

(3) Μεταβάλλον ἀναπαύεται. (Frg. 84a).

extremely interested in the notion of cosmic reason. They extol Anaxagoras for having accounted for cosmic order by referring it to Thought⁽¹⁾. Aristotle even says that in so far as he held this doctrine, Anaxagoras was like a sober man among drunkards. How could he have failed to note a substantially identical doctrine, if he had found it in Heraclitus? Furthermore, Logos, in fifth-century Greek, never means Reason⁽²⁾. It means any kind of linguistic expression and is used wherever we, nowadays, would point to the thoughts expressed by the words. Hence, it may also stand for any discourse, as well as for the doctrine expressed by it; and if, as is now almost universally admitted, Heraclitus' book began thus: «This is the *Logos* of Heraclitus, son of Blosson, of Ephesus. But although this *Logos* is eternal (i. e. eternally true or valid), men do not listen to it...»⁽³⁾, is it not evident that we must interpret the term in the way just indicated? If, now, we discard the interpretations of ancient thinkers and modern scholars and turn to the remains of Heraclitus' book, as far as known to us, three other trains of thought appear to be much more essential to his thought than those just discussed.

1. Alois Patin was the first to see that the philosopher himself had clearly pointed out one discovery as being his most important and most original contribution: «Of all whose discourses I heard not one attained to the knowledge of wisdom (*as being*) separated (*i. e. distinct*) from every other thing»⁽⁴⁾,

(1) Νοῦς.

(2) Comp. Wiener Studien 43, S. 125.

(3) (Λόγος Ἡρακλείτου Βλόσσωνος υἱοῦ Ἐφεσίου). Τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδε ἔόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι... (Frg. 1).

(4) Ὀκόσων λόγους ἤκουσα, οὐδεὶς ἀφικνεῖται ἐς τοῦτο, ὥστε γινώσκειν [ὅτι] σοφόν [ἐστὶ] πάντων κεχωρισμένον. (Frg. 108). Whether we strike out the two bracketed words, does not make much difference to the meaning. But it is amusing to note why we must hold them to have been inserted later. In one of the manuscripts a marginal note has slipped into the text: since (he would be) either a god or a beast (ἢ γὰρ θεὸς ἢ θηρίον). This is a reminiscence from Aristotle's Politics: man is a social being; an absolutely isolated man would have to be either superhuman or subhuman, «either god or beast». Hence, the author of the marginal note fancied Heraclitus was referring to «a wise man separated from all (other men)». But this misunderstanding was possible only if the text he copied read: σοφόν πάντων κεχωρισμένον.