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The First Fragment of Heraclitus

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The interpretation of Heraclitus will always remain controversial. The main reasons are his peculiar mode of expression, the fragmentary character of the evidence, and the very way ancient authors quoted his sayings. If progress is still to be made, it is necessary to discuss the arguments given in support of one or another interpretation in order to determine in each case what is probable, what is merely possible, and what is unlikely or impossible. Such a discussion should contribute to clarify the points on which scholarly opinion is likely to differ and to eliminate poor and irrelevant arguments. The following analysis of Heraclitus' first fragment has been prompted, among other things, by the preceding considerations. The fragments will be cited according to the numbers in the B section of chapter 22 of Diels-Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*.¹ For the sake of brevity my discussion takes its starting point from, and presupposes knowledge of, the commentaries of Kirk² and of Marcovich.³ This explains the prominent character of my disagreements with these

¹ I refer to the 6th edition, 3 vols., Berlin 1951-52. The alleged later editions are mere reprints. This work is referred to as *FVS*.

² G. S. Kirk, *Heraclitus. The Cosmic Fragments* (Cambridge 1954; reprinted, with corrections, 1962; my references are to the latter). Hereafter = Kirk.

³ M. Marcovich, *Heraclitus. Greek Text with a Short Commentary* (Mérida, Venezuela 1967) and *Eraclito. Frammenti*. Introduzione, e commento (Florence 1978). Hereafter these books are referred to as Marcovich¹ and Marcovich², respectively.

The following publications will be cited by their authors' names alone: E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* I, ii⁶ (Leipzig 1920). Herausgegeben von W. Nestle; J. Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*⁴ (London 1930); K. Reinhardt, *Parmenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* (Bonn 1916); O. Gigon, *Untersuchungen zu Heraklit* (Leipzig 1935); R. Walzer, *Eraclito*. Raccolta dei frammenti e traduzione italiana (Florence 1939). Other references will be self-explanatory.

two scholars. For the reader's convenience I print the text with a short critical apparatus in which purely orthographical variants have been disregarded.

τοῦ λόγου τοῦδ' ἔοντος αἰεὶ⁴ ἀξύνεται γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκούσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γνωμένων γὰρ πάντων⁵ κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπίρρσιον εἰοίκασι πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγέυμαι κατὰ⁶ φύσιν διαίρων ἕκαστον⁷ καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λαυθάει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιούσιν ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὐδοντες ἐπιλαυθάνονται.

"τοῦ Aristotle, Clement: τοῦ δὲ Hippolytus: om. Sextus ⁴αἰεὶ Aristotle, Clement, Hippolytus: om. Sextus ⁵πάντων Hippolytus: om. Sextus ⁶κατὰ . . . ἕκαστον Sextus: διερέων κατὰ φύσιν Hippolytus (omitting ἕκαστον).

The entire fragment is cited by Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. Math.* VII. 132) only. It is possible that the omission of τοῦ or τοῦ δέ (see *infra*), of αἰεὶ, and of πάντων are due neither to him nor to his source but to one or more scribes. Hippolytus (*Ref. Omn. Haeres.* IX. 9. 3 [pp. 241–42 Wendland]) gives the passage up to ἔχει, omitting the final comparison (τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους . . . ἐπιλαυθάνονται). Clement (*Strom.* V. 111. 7 [II, pp. 401–02 Stählin]) has the first sentence only, from τοῦ to πρῶτον, and Eusebius (*Praeparatio Evangelica* XIII. 13. 39 [II, p. 214 Mras]) himself quotes this passage of Clement's. Finally, also Aristotle (*Rhet.* 1407 B 16–17) cites the first sentence, but only from τοῦ to ἄνθρωποι γίνονται (in this order).

Both Aristotle and Sextus tell us that this text occurred at the beginning of Heraclitus' book. However, neither the former's ἐν ἀρχῇ αὐτοῦ⁴ τοῦ συγγράμματος nor the latter's ἐναρχόμενος (sc. Ἡράκλειτος) . . . τῶν περὶ φύσεως necessarily implies that those in our fragment were the very first words of Heraclitus' treatise.⁵ This topic has been usually discussed in connection with whether at the beginning of our text one should read τοῦ λόγου or τοῦ δὲ λόγου. A majority of recent scholars, including Kirk and Marcovich,⁶ has adopted the latter reading, though it is transmitted by Hippolytus only. The reason given is that advanced by Zeller⁷ long ago: it is easy to see that δέ

⁴ This is the reading of the MSS. Ross and Kassel in their respective editions of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Marcovich, and others have adopted Richard's emendation αὐτῆ. To my mind the emendation is not at all necessary; but even if it is adopted, it would really not affect the point at issue here, since even ἐν ἀρχῇ αὐτῆ τοῦ συγγράμματος would leave open the possibility that some words preceded 22 B 1 in the Heraclitean original.

⁵ Cf. F. Susemihl, *Jahrb. f. Class. Philol.* 107 (1873), 146, followed by Nestle in Zeller–Nestle I, ii⁶, p. 793, note; W. Capelle, *Hermes* 59 (1924), 202; W. J. Verdenius, *Mnemosyne*, III ser., 13 (1947), 271; Kirk, p. 35.

⁶ Kirk, pp. 33 and 36; Marcovich¹, p. 2 = Marcovich², p. 4.

⁷ Cf. Zeller in Zeller–Nestle, I, ii⁶, p. 792, note.

was omitted by our other sources because for their purposes it was superfluous and stylistically disturbing, whereas it is difficult to explain why any one should have added it if it was not present in his source. Yet the matter is not so easily disposed of. For one thing, such connectives are sometimes added for no reason at all. Moreover, in this case, the variant may be due to a scribal mistake. For it is possible that the first *τουδε* in ΤΟΥΔΕΛΟΓΟΥΤΟΥΔΕΟΝΤΟΣ was caused by dittography. On the other hand, *δέ* is omitted both by Aristotle and by Clement, who does not depend on Aristotle,⁸ and there is no reason to think that they both purposely omitted this word. Such an omission would more probably be due to scribes. Consequently, it seems to be just as likely that Heraclitus wrote *τοῦ δὲ λόγου* as that he wrote *τοῦ λόγου*. If I have printed the latter reading, it is only to call attention to the fact that the prevailing opinion is not as certainly right as its proponents believe it to be. And hereafter whenever I cite *τοῦ λόγου* as the reading at the beginning of our text, it is with the understanding that Heraclitus may well have written *τοῦ δὲ λόγου*.

If *τοῦ δὲ λόγου* is the correct reading, then *δέ* is either connective or inceptive. The latter possibility is that preferred by most recent scholars.⁹ However, even now there are some who believe that *δέ* is connective and that in what preceded frag. 1 Heraclitus must have given a hint as to what he meant by *this* Logos.¹⁰ This last contention seems to me more than doubtful,¹¹ and even if the *δέ* is connective, it is likely, given the statements of Aristotle and of Sextus cited above, that not much preceded our text.¹² On the other hand, if Heraclitus wrote *τοῦ λόγου*, it is likely that those words came at the very beginning of his treatise, and the same is true if *δέ* is the right reading and is inceptive.¹³

⁸ This ought to be obvious, since Clement's citation is longer than Aristotle's.

⁹ Cf. e.g. Gigon, p. 1, Verdenius, *op. cit.* (note 5 *supra*), pp. 274–75; Kirk, p. 36.

¹⁰ Cf. e.g. M. L. West, *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient* (Oxford 1971), pp. 114–15.

¹¹ West (cf. note 10 *supra*) cites with approval Diels' suggestion that something like 'Ἡράκλειτος Ἐφέσιος τάδε λέγει preceded frag. 1. But he does so on the assumption, shared by others (cf. e.g. Burnet, p. 133 with n. 1), that *ὁ λόγος δδε* refers to Heraclitus' own discourse. Yet it was because of this that Reinhardt, p. 217, n. 1 rejected the *δέ*, for there are strong reasons for thinking that in frag. 1 Logos cannot primarily mean Heraclitus' discourse or doctrine (cf. the concluding remarks of this paper). However, Reinhardt did not consider the possibility that the *δέ* may be merely inceptive.

¹² It is hardly likely that either Aristotle or Sextus' source, who knew the relative collocations of the present fragments 1 and 2 (cf. note 37 *infra*), would have said that what they cite of frag. 1 came at the beginning of Heraclitus' book if a long and/or important statement had preceded.

¹³ For inceptive *δέ* cf. Ion of Chios 36 B 1 *ἀρχὴ δέ μοι τοῦ λόγου* and Kirk, p. 36.

A more fundamental question is the construction of αἰεί. Aristotle cited the first words of our fragment precisely to illustrate his point that it is difficult to “punctuate” (διαστίξαι) the text of Heraclitus, since it is unclear (ἄδηλον) whether αἰεί goes with what precedes or with what follows it.¹⁴ Modern scholars are not agreed on this: some take αἰεί with ἔοντος, while others attach it to ἀξύνετοι. Prominent among the latter are Reinhardt, Snell, Kranz, Kirk, and Marcovich.¹⁵ Their main argument is (i) that αἰεί leading up to καὶ . . . καί is an archaic figure typical of Heraclitus’ style. To this Marcovich has added two arguments: (ii) In αἰεί ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι—in contrast to the rhythmical unit τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ’ ἔοντος—there is an intentional alliteration a-a-g-a; (iii) The construction of αἰεί with ἔοντος is a *lectio facilior* prompted by the influence of the epic formula αἰὲν ἔοντες (Homer, *Il.* I. 290, etc.). Now the second argument may be dismissed with the remark that it begs the question, since it simply assumes that Heraclitus meant αἰεί to go with ἀξύνετοι. Moreover, the alliteration alleged by Marcovich is of no significance as it is vowel alliteration only. The third argument implies a misuse of the notion of *lectio facilior*, but I postpone its discussion for later. As for the first argument, it is anything but decisive. αἰεί followed and taken up by καὶ . . . καί is a normal construction in archaic and in later Greek, but so is also the use of καὶ . . . καί in the sense “both . . . and,” even without a preceding αἰεί. The essential point that must still be established is whether *here* Heraclitus intended αἰεί to be taken up by καὶ . . . καί. I submit that there are strong reasons for thinking that he did not.

However, before we go into this question, it is convenient to determine what would be the likely meaning of τοῦ λόγου τοῦδ’ ἔοντος, if αἰεί goes with ἀξύνετοι. For, given Aristotle’s statement mentioned above, one must acknowledge that the construction of αἰεί with what follows it must be possible, and hence that the construction τοῦ λόγου τοῦδ’ ἔοντος must also be so. Of those who take αἰεί with what follows, Kranz, Kirk, and others¹⁶ take τοῦδ’ as predicative: “The Logos being this.” But in that case one would have expected τοιοῦδ’ instead of τοῦδ’, or, at the very least, the τοῦδ’ to come after and not before ἔοντος. Kirk argues that the fact that in the next sentence τόνδε is not predicative in κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε “does not tell against its predicative

¹⁴ Cf. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1407 B 14–15 and 17–18.

¹⁵ Reinhardt, pp. 217–18; A. Busse, *Rheinisches Museum* 75 (1926), 206–07; B. Snell, *Hermes* 61 (1926), 366 = *Gesammelte Schriften* (Göttingen, 1966), p. 139, n. 3; Kranz, *FVS*⁶ I, p. 150, note; Kirk, p. 34; Marcovich¹, p. 9 = Marcovich², p. 10.

¹⁶ Kranz, *FVS*⁶, I, p. 150; Kirk, p. 35; J. Bollack and H. Wismann, *Héraclite ou la séparation* (Paris 1972), p. 61.

use earlier.”¹⁷ But the question is whether any reader who was not defending an interpretation would detach *τοῦδ’* from the rest of the phrase in *τοῦ λόγου τοῦδ’*. Moreover, the passage from *ὁ λόγος* to *ὁ λόγος ὄδε* in the next sentence would at least be unnecessary. The probability then is that *τοῦδ’* is attributive, and it is so interpreted by Marcovich and others.¹⁸ In that case, one must take *ἔοντος* existentially and probably having concessive force: “This Logos, existent, or real though it is.”¹⁹ This meaning gives a reasonable sense, but it considerably weakens the force of the whole first sentence of the fragment, especially when it is compared to the sense yielded by that sentence when *αἰεί* is construed with *ἔοντος*.

One of the main objections against taking *αἰεί* with *ἄξύνετοι* is that the former word, prominently emphatic here, and important for Heraclitus, as frag. B 30 shows (*ἦν αἰεί καὶ ἔστιν καὶ ἔσται*),²⁰ would be almost otiose. Its omission would not at all affect what he is saying, since *καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκούσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον* would suffice to convey the notion that men fail to understand the Logos both before and after they have heard it. There would be only slightly more emphasis if *αἰεί* were taken up by *καὶ . . . καί*. Kirk himself unwittingly betrays the weakness of taking *αἰεί* with what follows when he states that *αἰεί* with *ἔοντος* makes sense “and expresses something that Heraclitus believed” but that “it is to be rejected only on the ground that *αἰεί* goes rather with *ἄξύνετοι*.”²¹ Moreover, since Heraclitus says that men are uncomprehending both before they have heard the Logos and after they have heard it, it makes better sense to take *αἰεί* with *ἔοντος*. For, unless the assertion is made that *this* Logos exists always, that *it* is always present in the universe, that is, also before men have heard it²² from Heraclitus, it would be pointless to reproach

¹⁷ Kirk, p. 35.

¹⁸ Cf. P. Tannery, *Pour l'histoire de la science hellène*² (Paris 1930), p. 198; Reinhardt, p. 217, Snell, *Hermes* 61 (1926), 365–66 = *Gesammelte Schriften*, pp. 139–40; Marcovich¹, p. 9 = Marcovich², p. 9.

¹⁹ The meanings “existent” and “real” are frequently connected with each other and with the meaning “true.” In the present case the last mentioned meaning is also possible, if by “true” we understand what is the case in the sense of what is real; but the meaning “true” as the opposite of “false” is, I believe, impossible. Cf. Busse (above, note 15), pp. 205–06.

²⁰ In 22 B 30 one must punctuate with a colon after *ἔσται*, cf. Kirk, p. 310 with references.

²¹ Kirk, p. 35.

²² This to my mind is a decisive reason for rejecting those interpretations which, like West’s (*op. cit.* in note 10 *supra*, pp. 115 and 116), take *ὁ λόγος ὄδε* to mean “This discourse of mine.” If that were Heraclitus’ meaning, then he would be blaming men only for not understanding the Logos after they have heard it. But the fragment as

them for not knowing it even before they had so heard it.²³ Finally, with ἔοντος αἰεί Heraclitus in all probability meant his readers and/or hearers to recall the epic formula αἰὲν ἔοντος used of the traditional gods,²⁴ and the similar use of αἰεί by Pherecydes (7 B 1 Ζᾶς μὲν καὶ Χρόνος ἦσαν αἰεὶ καὶ Χθονίη) and perhaps by other authors of cosmogonies. Marcovich contends that (in Heraclitus) to take αἰεί with ἔοντος is a *lectio facilior*,²⁵ but this is really a misapplication of a valid principle of textual criticism. There a variant reading is considered to be a *lectio facilior* when it can be explained as an intentional change from a reading that is more difficult to understand. In the present case, however, it is most improbable that Heraclitus placed αἰεί next to ἔοντος without intending his readers and/or hearers to recall the formula of immortality applied to the gods of traditional Greek mythology.²⁶ And if he intended to allude to this formula, it was in order to suggest that it is the impersonal Logos, in accordance with which all things happen in the universe, that is eternal and not the traditional, anthropomorphic gods. And there is other evidence of Heraclitus' hostility to anthropomorphism and to traditional Greek mythological thought.²⁷

The preceding are, I submit, valid reasons for thinking that Heraclitus meant αἰεί to go with ἔοντος. If this is so, it is surely noteworthy that, with the exception of Aristotle, the extant ancient authors who in citing or alluding to this part of the fragment make it clear how they construe αἰεί, all took this word with ἔοντος. They are Clement, Amelius, Hippolytus, and perhaps Cleanthes.²⁸ It must

a whole and other relevant evidence (cf. e.g. 22 B 2, 17, 34, 50, etc.) show that Heraclitus supposed that men could understand the universe by themselves, since he blames them for not doing so.

²³ This second argument has been rightly emphasized by Gigon, p. 6; Verdenius, *op. cit.* (note 5 *supra*), p. 279; H. Cherniss, *Selected Papers* (Leiden, 1977), p. 16, n. 13.

²⁴ Cf. Homer, *Il.* 1. 290, 494, XXIV. 99; *Odyssey* I. 263; Hesiod, *Theog.* 21, 33; *Op.* 718.

²⁵ Cf. Marcovich¹, p. 9 = Marcovich², p. 10.

²⁶ The notion that αἰεί can go both with ἔοντος and with ἀξύνετοι (cf. e.g. Gigon, p. 2) must be rejected. Such an ἀπὸ κοινοῦ construction is impossible here, since in reading the text we would have to make a pause either after ἔοντος or after αἰεί. This is precisely the point Aristotle makes when he cites the first few words of our fragment. His testimony is incompatible with Gigon's suggestion.

²⁷ Cf. 22 B 5, 15, 30, 40, 42, 53, 56, 57, 62, 67, 104, etc.

²⁸ That Clement took αἰεί with ἔοντος is clear from the way he cites the fragment (*Strom.* V. 111, 7 [II], pp. 401–02 Stählin): ἀντικρυς δὲ ὁ μὲν Ἡράκλειτος “τοῦ λόγου τοῦδ’ ἔοντος αἰεί,” φησὶν, “ἀξύνετοι κτλ.” Hippolytus for his part precedes the citation of B 1 with the words (*Ref.* IX. 9. 3 [p. 241, Wendland]) ὅτι δὲ λόγος ἐστὶν αἰεὶ τὸ πᾶν καὶ διὰ παντὸς ὦν, οὕτως λέγει. Amelius, cited by Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* XI. 19. 1 (II,

also be said that, contrary to what is sometimes asserted,²⁹ Aristotle does not state, nor necessarily imply, either, that the ambiguity of αἰεί is incurable. For Aristotle was not concerned with analyzing the part of Heraclitus' statement he quotes. He was merely trying to find an example of ambiguity in "punctuation"³⁰ in connection with the general rule "that a written composition should be easy to read and therefore easy to deliver; for it is the same thing."³¹ But this rule is violated when there are many connectives, "or where the punctuation is difficult, as in the writings of Heraclitus."³² He claims, after citing the beginning of Heraclitus' first fragment, that it is unclear (ἄδηλον) whether αἰεί goes with what precedes or with what follows it.³³ Hence for Aristotle the very fact that two constructions of αἰεί are possible suffices to make the construction ἄδηλον and therefore difficult to read and to deliver, for we would have to stop and think and give arguments in favor or against one or the other construction.³⁴ However, that something is ἄδηλον means simply that it is not self-evident or obvious; it does not necessarily follow that Aristotle himself, if that had been his purpose, would not have been able to decide in favor of one of the two possibilities he mentions. In other words, Aristotle is recommending that we write in such a way as to avoid all possible ambiguity, a rule he himself not infrequently violated.

The next point is to decide how the initial genitive should be construed. Those who take αἰεί with what follows, however they construe the words τοῦδ' ἔοντος, take τοῦ λόγου as an objective genitive depending on ἀξύνετοι. Even some of those who take αἰεί with ἔοντος also take the initial genitive to depend upon ἀξύνετοι, while taking ἔοντος αἰεί as modifying τοῦ λόγου τοῦδ'.³⁵ However, if one takes αἰεί with ἔοντος, there are good reasons for taking τοῦ λόγου τοῦδ' ἔοντος

p. 45 [Mras]), says: καὶ οὗτος ἄρα ἦν ὁ λόγος καθ' ὃν αἰεὶ ὄντα τὰ γινόμενα ἐγένετο, ὡς ἂν καὶ ὁ Ἡράκλειτος ἀξιώσειε κτλ. As for Cleanthes, if in line 21 of his *Hymn to Zeus* we read ὡσθ' ἕνα γίγνεσθαι πάντων λόγον αἰὲν ἔοντα (cf. G. Zuntz, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 63 [1958], p. 303), it is likely that he there had Heraclitus in mind and that he read αἰεί with ἔοντος in 22 B 1.

²⁹ Cf. e.g. Calogero, *Gior. Crit. della Filos. Ital.* 17 (1936), 196.

³⁰ Given the context, with διαστίξαι Aristotle seems to mean some sort of dot or stop to be made at appropriate places of a text in order to facilitate the reading of it. Cf. also note 26 *supra*.

³¹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1407 B 11–12.

³² Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1407 B 12–14. It is noteworthy that Aristotle says, not that it is impossible to punctuate Heraclitus' written statements, but that it is difficult to do so: τὰ γὰρ Ἡρακλείτου διαστίξαι ἔργον κτλ.

³³ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1407 B 17–18.

³⁴ Cf. notes 26 and 30 *supra*.

³⁵ Cf. e.g. West, *op. cit.* (note 10 *supra*), p. 117.

αἰεί as a genitive absolute, having concessive force: "Though this Logos exists always men are uncomprehending both before they have heard it and once they have heard it." In the first place, the assertion of the perpetual existence of the Logos acquires emphasis from the beginning, and greater prominence is given to the state of ignorance in which men live. Secondly, the word *ἄξύνετοι*, which for Heraclitus, as Kirk himself says,³⁶ has a positive meaning and which he employs in another fragment (B 34) in a similar way ("ignoramus"), would be used here too in an absolute, derogatory, and not merely negative sense.

According to the testimony of Sextus, the second fragment of Heraclitus in Diels' edition came soon after the first.³⁷ If in the latter *αἰεί* was meant to be taken with *έόντος*, and if the whole initial genitive is absolute, then there is a striking parallel between *τοῦ λόγου τοῦδ' έόντος αἰεί* and *τοῦ λόγου δ' έόντος ξυνοῦ* in 22 B 2, which is certainly a genitive absolute.³⁸ It is in fact possible, perhaps even likely, that the first part of Heraclitus' book contained a series of predicates of the Logos, in the genitive absolute, followed by contrasting statements in which men's failure to understand was emphasized.³⁹

Two additional questions concerning the first sentence are the meaning of the present *γίνονται* and of *τὸ πρῶτον*. To begin with the latter, in all probability here it means "once" rather than "for the first time."⁴⁰ For it is Heraclitus' point that men are uncomprehending both before they have heard the Logos and also after they have heard it, not merely that they fail to understand it when they hear it for the first time. This latter meaning would leave open the possibility of men's understanding the Logos when they hear it for the second or third time, etc., and such a meaning is precluded by the rest of this fragment as well as by the rest of the related evidence.⁴¹

As for *γίνονται*, it is taken by Verdenius, who in this is followed by Kirk,⁴² as implying result: "men's coming across the Logos results in incomprehension." This meaning is possible but not necessary, and I doubt that it was here intended by Heraclitus. He thought that all

³⁶ Cf. Kirk, p. 34.

³⁷ Sextus (*Adv. Math.* VII. 133), having cited B 1 and having commented on it, says: *ὀλίγα προσδιελθὼν ἐπιφέρει*, and then quotes B 2.

³⁸ I should like to emphasize that I do not base my interpretation of B 1 on the parallelism between B 1 and B 2, as some scholars do (cf. e.g. Gigon, p. 3).

³⁹ Cf. 22 B 2.

⁴⁰ Cf. Kirk, p. 34 with his reference to LSJ, s.v. IIIe.

⁴¹ Both in this fragment and elsewhere (cf. e.g. 22 B 2, 17, 34, etc.) Heraclitus speaks of men's failure to understand as characteristic of the human condition.

⁴² Verdenius, *op. cit.* (note 5 *supra*), pp. 279-80; Kirk, p. 40.

men live in a common world, but that they fail to see the common law and system of the universe (cf. 22 B I 14, 2, 30, 89⁴³); that is, they fail to see how things are related to one another and, hence, do not apprehend the Logos. Therefore, I think it preferable to take ἀξύνετοι γίνονται to denote the state of ignorance in which men live despite the fact that the Logos is always there and that Heraclitus explains it to them. Like the above mentioned scholars, I see no contrast between εἶναι and γίγνεσθαι implied in this fragment, as Gigon thinks there is.⁴⁴

The purpose of the fragment's second sentence is not so much to explain the state of ignorance in which men live as to justify Heraclitus' assertion to that effect. It begins with a concessive genitive absolute, which tells us that "though all things happen according to this Logos," men are like people of no experience (ἀπείροισιν), i.e. they are ignorant. I believe the next participle, πειρώμενοι, is temporal-concessive rather than purely concessive,⁴⁵ and not frequentative, as Diels and Marcovich, among others, take it.⁴⁶ It is not the case that men are like the inexperienced each time they experience words and deeds such as Heraclitus explains. Rather, though all things happen according to this Logos, men are like the inexperienced even when they experience (i.e. are acquainted with) words and deeds such as Heraclitus explains. In other words, that men are ignorant before they have heard the discourse of Heraclitus is bad enough; but it is much worse that they continue to live in ignorance and fail to understand even when they become acquainted with Heraclitus' doctrine, for in this last case they had the opportunity to compare Heraclitus' statements with the facts, as all things happen according to this Logos.

The word-play ἀπείροισιν-πειρώμενοι is most probably intentional, as are the similar ones in 22 B 2, 28, 48, 114, etc. According to Kirk, "in the present case it is simply a stylistic trick and can imply no underlying connexion of sense between the similar word-forms, for the connexion is quite obvious."⁴⁷ Yet it is difficult to agree that because a connection is quite obvious the word-play must be simply a stylistic trick and nothing more than that. The word-play here does convey the implication that men, though acquainted not only with

⁴³ In B 89, at least the first part is, *pace* Kirk, authentic, cf. Vlastos, *American Journal of Philology* 76 (1955), 344 ff.

⁴⁴ Cf. Kirk, pp. 40–41 against Gigon, p. 3.

⁴⁵ Cf. also Kirk, pp. 33 and 41.

⁴⁶ Cf. Diels in earlier versions of *FVS*, an interpretation adopted also by Kranz in the 6th edition. Marcovich¹, p. 9 = Marcovich², p. 10.

⁴⁷ Kirk, p. 41.

the facts but also with Heraclitus' doctrine, nevertheless are like the inexperienced in that they fail to understand. Other fragments, too, stress men's characteristic inability to understand;⁴⁸ but here, in 22 B 1, the point is made that if one fails to understand the Logos, then one cannot really possess any true experience, which among other things requires repetition and memory, memory of the connection between the things that constitute a single experience.⁴⁹ Similarly, men may become acquainted (*πειρώμενοι*) with Heraclitus' doctrine more than once but they still fail to understand, and so are like the inexperienced. To my mind this is the reason why in this context the word *ἄπειρος* was used for "ignorant." In fact, this fragment, not mentioned by Liddell-Scott-Jones, s.v. *ἄπειρος* (A), is evidence of the connection between the literal meaning "without trial or experience" and the absolute sense "inexperienced," "ignorant."

The words *ἑπέων καὶ ἔργων* were probably meant to recall the epic formula *ἔπος καὶ ἔργον*. Kirk says that in Heraclitus "the words are the means of explanation, the deeds or events are the things which are explained."⁵⁰ This is true, but only up to a point. For there is here an implication that men could see the Logos in language itself even apart from their hearing it from Heraclitus. Now Heraclitus believes that his doctrine is instantiated in human speech (cf. for example the connection made between *βίος* and *βίως* in 22 B 48 and that between *ξὺν νόῳ* and *ξυνός* in B 114), and so I suggest that he meant that men by themselves could see the Logos there as well as in the facts of experience. If this is so, then it is likely that he used *ἑπέων καὶ ἔργων* as a polar expression for "the whole of human experience," as Reinhardt and others have thought.⁵¹

The verb *διηγέσθαι* has received little attention on the part of interpreters, even though there has been a lot of discussion as to whether Heraclitus' book was a collection of aphorisms or a continuous exposition.⁵² I agree with Walzer (p. 42, note 7) that *διηγείσθαι* indicates, not a collection of aphorisms but rather a descriptive writing, i.e. a treatise. The first fragment of Heraclitus supports such an interpretation and so do, among others, 22 B 114, 30, etc. It is

⁴⁸ Cf. note 41 *supra*.

⁴⁹ Cf. Aristotle's words in *Metaphysics* 980 B 28 – 981 A 1: *γίνεται δ' ἐκ τῆς μνήμης ἐμπειρία τοῖς ἀνθρώποις· αἱ γὰρ πολλὰ μῆμαι τοῦ αὐτοῦ πράγματος μᾶς ἐμπειρίας δύναμιν ἀποτελοῦσιν.*

⁵⁰ Kirk, p. 41.

⁵¹ Cf. Reinhardt, p. 218, Marcovich¹, p. 9 = Marcovich², p. 10.

⁵² Cf. Zeller in Zeller-Nestle, 1, ii⁶, p. 788, n. 1 and the references given by Mondolfo in Zeller-Mondolfo, *La filosofia dei Greci nel suo sviluppo storico* (Florence 1961), pp. 13–15.

therefore likely that the aphoristic character of other fragments is due to the way they have been transmitted to us and not to Heraclitus himself. But even if some of Heraclitus' utterances were aphorisms, it is unlikely that the whole book was merely a collection of such utterances. It is noteworthy that *ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγέυμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαίρειων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔχει* must refer to the whole or to most of Heraclitus' treatise and not merely to its first part.

The two participial phrases, (*διηγέυμαι*) *κατὰ φύσιν διαίρειων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔχει*, have given rise to several different interpretations. First of all one must decide what is here meant by *διαίρειν*. Marcovich takes it in the literal meaning "to divide," in the sense of "taking apart." As examples he gives the bow in 22 B 51 (it consists of two arms and of the unifying string) and the analysis of a word, as in 22 B 48 ("the name and the function are the two constituent parts of every given thing").⁵³ However, even apart from the fact that his interpretation of B 51 is questionable and that the implication he sees in B 48 is too far-reaching,⁵⁴ it is doubtful, in the light of our evidence, that Heraclitus devoted the essential part of his treatise to the type of analysis Marcovich describes.⁵⁵ But I think Marcovich is right in his attempt to relate the two participial phrases to the rest of Heraclitus' statements. However, if we are to take *διαίρειν ἕκαστον* in the sense "to divide each thing," I believe that Heraclitus was thinking of his predecessors' procedure of dividing their main "material substances"⁵⁶ into contraries. Thus, for example, Anaximenes asserted (using the mechanism of condensation and rarefaction) that all was air and then proceeded to divide this body into contraries: hot and cold, humid and dry, etc.⁵⁷ It is this procedure on the part of his predecessors that Parmenides illustrates when he describes the opinions of mortals.⁵⁸ If this is what Heraclitus meant by *διαίρειν ἕκαστον*, then we must think of his doctrine of identity-in-difference, of the unity of contraries, etc., which presupposes not only some sort of classification of things into contraries but also contrariety in the

⁵³ Marcovich¹, p. 10 = Marcovich², pp. 10–11.

⁵⁴ Even in B 48 itself I cannot see that Heraclitus implies that the name and the function of the bow are its two constituent parts.

⁵⁵ Heraclitus seems to place more emphasis on the bringing of things together rather than on "taking them apart." The unity of things, i.e. of contraries, seems to be what he claims as his most original contribution. Cf. 22 b 2, 10, 30, 41, 51, 54, 57, etc.

⁵⁶ By this expression I mean to refer simply to the most widely distributed bodies in the universe mentioned by the Presocratics, e.g. water, fire, etc.

⁵⁷ Cf. Anaximenes 13 A 1, A 4, A 5, A 7, B 1, B 2, etc.

⁵⁸ Cf. Parmenides 28 B 8, 55–59 with L. Tarán, *Parmenides* (Princeton 1965), p. 225.

things themselves. This procedure could be illustrated by fragments such as B 12 ποταμοῖσιν τοῖσιν αὐτοῖσιν ἐμβαίνουσιν ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα ὕδατα ἐπιρρέϊ, B 36 ψυχῆσιν θάνατος ὕδωρ γενέσθαι, ὕδατι δὲ θάνατος γῆν γενέσθαι, B 48 τῷ τόξῳ ὄνομα βίος, ἔργον δὲ θάνατος, B 61 θάλασσα ὕδωρ καθαρώτατον καὶ μιαρώτατον, ἰχθύσι μὲν πότιμον καὶ σωτήριον, ἀνθρώποις δὲ ἄποτον καὶ ὀλέθριον, etc. However, it is also possible that we must take διαιρεῖν here in the more general sense “to distinguish,” as Kirk⁵⁹ among others does, for Heraclitus may have meant merely to say that each thing⁶⁰ is described by him κατὰ φύσιν. But I cannot agree with Kirk that διαιρέων here is (merely) the process of analysis that leads up to a judgment. It seems to be rather the process by which a thing is described and thereby is differentiated from anything else, though of course in Heraclitus that very differentiation will show it to be related to everything else. As for κατὰ φύσιν, I should prefer to take it not as “according to each thing’s origin,” nor as “according to each thing’s nature,” nor as “according to each thing’s real constitution,” but in its true adverbial meaning “properly,” “as it ought to be (sc. described).”⁶¹ One objection common to the rejected interpretations is that at this stage in his book it is not likely that Heraclitus would have written κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων if he had meant to ascribe to φύσις a technical meaning. I agree with Verdenius and Kirk⁶² that ὅπως ἔχει is not a different process from κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων, but that the two are related. Heraclitus proposes to describe each thing correctly and so to be able to state how it is.

In the third and final part of the fragment, Heraclitus proceeds to describe the kind of life the rest of men (τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους) lead because of their ignorance of the Logos, in strong contrast with Heraclitus’ own condition (ἐγὼ διηγέμαι κτλ.). Kirk and Marcovich, among others, take the final part of the fragment to mean that the rest of men fail to understand what they do once they are awake (taking ἐγερθέντες as an ingressive aorist participle), just as they forget what they do when they are asleep: “But the rest of men fail to notice what they do after they wake up just as they forget what they do when asleep” (Kirk’s translation). Before discussing this interpretation it may be well to indicate a point of agreement: ποιούσιν, which must also be supplied with the second clause, should not be interpreted too literally. ποιεῖν here refers not only to what men actually *do* but

⁵⁹ Kirk, pp. 33 and 41–42.

⁶⁰ In any interpretation of the words in question ἕκαστον is a rhetorical exaggeration.

⁶¹ Cf. J. W. Beardslee, Jr., *The Use of φύσις in Fifth-Century Greek Literature* (diss., Chicago 1918), p. 47.

⁶² Verdenius, *op. cit.* (note 5 *supra*), p. 273; Kirk, pp. 42–43.

also to their mental and emotional life. Moreover, the second clause refers to our dreams when we are asleep; it certainly does not refer primarily to the motions or gesticulations we may perform while we are asleep.⁶³

The difficulties of the interpretation they have adopted have not escaped Kirk and Marcovich themselves, and are indeed formidable. If we take *ἐπιλανθάνονται* to mean "they forget," then Heraclitus would be saying that men once they are awake fail to recognize, to see the ever-present truth just as they, on waking, forget what they did in sleep, that is, they forget their dreams. However, in the first place, it is not the case that men always forget their dreams; quite frequently they do not forget them. And so we would have a first important inconcinnity. Heraclitus would be comparing the perpetual failure of ignorant men to understand the truth with something that happens to men sometimes only. And there is evidence in Heraclitus himself that he did not think that we always forget our dreams.⁶⁴ Secondly, and even more important, even if men did forget their dreams, it is hard to see the propriety of comparing men's customary failure to know the truth with the fact that once they are awake they forget their dreams. This difficulty should not be dismissed with Kirk's remark that "slight inconsistencies in complex images are not uncommon in the archaic style."⁶⁵ The comparison would not be slightly inconsistent but rather a *non sequitur*. Marcovich for his part betrays the weakness of the interpretation to which he subscribes when he states that "the sentence would be complete in itself even without *ἐπιλανθάνονται*, (which cannot mean the same as *λανθάνει*): possibly Heraclitus added this word for the sake of balance or of the word-play."⁶⁶ For we would have to suppose that for the sake of balance or of word-play Heraclitus added a word, *ἐπιλανθάνονται*, and ruined the whole point of the comparison, as without it the statement would yield a good sense: "But it escapes the rest of men what they do once they are awake, just as it escapes them what they do while they are asleep." I agree with Marcovich that *ἐπιλανθάνονται* does not mean the same as the preceding *λανθάνει*, but to decide what Heraclitus had in mind it is necessary to see first what he meant by the comparison in general.

One must note two points. First, that to the man who knows the Logos, specifically Heraclitus himself (*ἐγώ*), the nescience of the rest

⁶³ Contrast West, *op. cit.* (note 10 *supra*), p. 116, who thinks that the reference is to bodily movements which men make while asleep.

⁶⁴ Cf. 22 B 21 with B 26; B 75; B 89.

⁶⁵ Kirk, p. 44.

⁶⁶ Marcovich¹, p. 10 = Marcovich², p. 11.

of humanity in wakefulness is strongly contrasted. Secondly, Heraclitus must have meant to compare men's failure to apprehend the Logos when they are awake with what happens to them when they are asleep and dreaming. In other words, he is comparing two states, and we must keep in mind that to sleep and dream is for Heraclitus, as Kirk himself says, "a real if diminished form of activity."⁶⁷ Now *ἐπιλανθάνομαι* literally means "to let something which one previously knew escape one's notice";⁶⁸ here, used of what happens to men while they are dreaming, it must refer to this: the successive images we see in our dreams escape our notice in such a way that we do not understand—because we are not conscious of—the nature of what we do in our sleep. This is in fact the way in which some interpreters have understood *ἐπιλανθάνονται* in this fragment.⁶⁹ To Kirk's and Marcovich's objection that there is no parallel to such a meaning, one must answer that it is the context that is crucial for deciding what a word means. Moreover, the middle *ἐπιλανθάνομαι* or *ἐπιλήθομαι* frequently bears the meaning "to forget" in the sense of "not being conscious of." Thus, for example, when at the beginning of Plato's *Apology* (17 A 2–3) Socrates says *ἐγὼ δ' οὐκ αὐτὸς ὑπ' αὐτῶν ὀλίγου ἑμαυτοῦ ἐπελαθόμην*, he surely means to say that the effect of his accusers' speeches was such that he almost "forgot himself" in the sense of "not being conscious of who he really was." If this interpretation is right, then the comparison makes sense: "(in contrast to Heraclitus who knows the Logos) it escapes the rest of men what they do once they are awake, just as when they are asleep they are unconscious of (i.e. do not understand) what they do." Heraclitus does not mean to say that the rest of men when awake have no knowledge at all of what they do but only that the true significance of it escapes them. For example, they see day and they see night, but they do not understand that night and day are a single thing (cf. 22 B 57). The interpretation of the final comparison given here makes better sense of *ἐγερθέντες* as an ingressive aorist than that of Kirk and Marcovich does. In their interpretation the comparison would be between two things that happen when men are awake: they fail to understand the Logos just as they forget their dreams. In my interpretation, men, once they are awake, fail to understand the Logos just as when they were asleep they did not understand their

⁶⁷ Kirk, p. 44.

⁶⁸ Kirk, p. 44.

⁶⁹ Cf. e.g. Gigon, p. 6; Kranz *FVS*⁶ I, p. 150; Walzer, p. 41; H. Fränkel, *American Journal of Philology* 59 (1938), 318 with n. 18.

dreams. The implication is that the waking life of the ignorant majority has a dreamlike quality.

This fragment, then, implies the geometrical proportion-pattern "the man who knows the Logos is to men awake who fail to understand it as the latter are to those who are asleep and dreaming."⁷⁰ The pattern A:B::B:C was used by Heraclitus in other connections also,⁷¹ and the specific one implied in the first fragment is also to be reconstructed with good probability from other texts.⁷²

This is not the place to discuss the meaning of Logos in Heraclitus, since several other fragments would have to be taken into account. Nevertheless, something can be gathered even from this fragment itself, and belongs to the present discussion because it affects the interpretation of our text. The main point is that the Logos cannot be simply Heraclitus' discourse,⁷³ nor can it even refer principally to it.⁷⁴ For it is clearly implied here that men could have known the Logos even before they heard it from Heraclitus.⁷⁵ All things happen according to the Logos, yet men are like the inexperienced even when they experience such words and deeds as Heraclitus describes; it follows that the Logos is always there but men fail to understand it because they fail to see the connection that exists between all the facts with which they are acquainted. In short, the Logos must be a formula or pattern in accordance with which all things happen in the universe. The discourse of Heraclitus expounds and explains this Logos, but the Logos' existence is independent of it. The discourse of Heraclitus "is" the Logos only in the sense that it describes the formula according to which all things happen in the universe; but the two are not identical, and they are clearly differentiated in frag. B 50: οὐκ ἐμοῦ ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας κτλ.

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⁷⁰ I do not mean to say that this geometrical pattern was the main purpose of this part of the fragment, but that it is implied here.

⁷¹ Cf. especially H. Fränkel, "A Thought Pattern in Heraclitus," *American Journal of Philology* 59 (1938), 309–37, though there is no need to follow him in all his interpretations of individual fragments.

⁷² Cf. 22 B 89 with B 72 and Cherniss, *Selected Papers*, p. 39 with n. 13.

⁷³ As e.g. West, *op. cit.* (note 10 *supra*), pp. 115 and 117 would have it.

⁷⁴ As Burnet, p. 133 and n. 1, suggests.

⁷⁵ Cf. note 22 *supra*.

