DEATH'S OTHER KINGDOM: HERACLITUS ON THE LIFE OF THE FOOLISH AND THE WISE

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THE COMMON STOCK of humanity has no understanding of the nature of reality, thinks Heraclitus, and only a very few humans ever comprehend it.[1] A significant number of fragments comment on the epistemic condition of the common man, and the frequency with which Heraclitus returns to the common man's epistemic state indicates that he thought it important to appreciate his plight.[2] For plight it is. The contrast between the wise, who know the truth, and the foolish, who do not, could not be sharper; it is equivalent to the difference between the quick and the dead. Heraclitus develops his characterization of the ignorant mass of mankind through a number of images, the more significant of which may be appreciated as joining in the imagery of death. The dead who dwell in the house of Hades, as Homer depicts them, share many of the features Heraclitus ascribes to the foolish. The dead in the poems of Homer act like sleepwalkers who lead a kind of subhuman life, in which they suffer from forgetfulness and in most circumstances lack comprehension, sensation, and speech. A survey of the Homeric picture of the dead contributes significantly to the conclusion that Heraclitus judges the foolish to be like the dead as Homer portrays them. Like Homer and the Greeks in general, Heraclitus links sleep and death in a significant way, and his use of the imagery of sleep in his characterization of the foolish advances in a major way the impression that the foolish are like the dead. The fragments and the testimonies about his beliefs testify to the possibility that Heraclitus even believes that sleep is a form of death. The scholarship on Heraclitus has overlooked how the fool-

1. The numeration of the fragments is that of the sixth edition of Diels-Kranz, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (1951). The translations are largely Kahn's (1979) with some occasional alterations of my own, and in some cases, which are noted, I follow the decisions of Diels-Kranz about the Greek rather than Kahn's. My debt to Kahn is deep and undisguised, and I conform to his view of the "linguistic density" of the fragments and of the "resonance" that holds between them (p. 89).

2. Even by a conservative standard a large number of fragments may be appreciated as bearing in one way or another upon the inadequate epistemic state of humankind. Those that provide some description of the nature of the inadequacy include B1, B2, B17, B19, B34, B70, B71, B72, B73, B74, B78, B79, B83, B89, B97, and B107. Those that may be taken merely to label humans as lacking in comprehension include B27, B51, B87, and B104. A number of fragments also comment on the inadequacy of those extraordinary humans who are credited with wisdom or claim it for themselves: B28a, B40, B42, B56, B57, B81, B106, B108, and B129. Some fragments concern wisdom as something humans can achieve, B116, or exhort humans to achieve wisdom, B112 and B50, or to avoid folly, B95.

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ish are equivalent to the dead, and thereby it has not appreciated as fully as it might an important dimension of Heraclitus' epistemology. Heraclitus underscores heavily the great value he ascribes to wisdom by depicting the foolishness of the bulk of humanity as a kind of death. The wise who have knowledge, by contrast with the ignorant, would be like the living, and, since they are already alive, their life would count as a heightened state of existence, arguably comparable to the life of the divine.

Heraclitus gives prominence to something he calls "the Logos," what "all things come to pass in accord with" (B1), but just what this Logos is remains a contested issue. The "Logos" may be the nature or essence of reality, what Kahn describes as "the eternal structure of the world as it manifests itself in discourse."[3] Or, as others contend, it may be a universal principle or law that regulates the basic workings of reality.[4] Or, as a few have insisted, it may be Heraclitus' true "account" of reality as he expresses it in his own book, or *logos*.[5] Whatever the "Logos" may be exactly, Heraclitus believes that the comprehension of the "Logos" yields the comprehension of reality. According to fragment B50, it is what it is "wise" for human beings to "listen" to, instead of to Heraclitus, what they should "agree" with, or, more literally, what in their agreement they should make their own *logos* the "same" as. Human beings, however, "forever fail to comprehend" the Logos, "both before hearing it and once they have heard it" (B1).[6] Yet despite the incomprehension it generally meets with, the Logos is open to all and even possesses a certain kind of simplicity. It is common to everything, "all things come to pass in accord with the Logos" (B1), and in its commonality it is available for the comprehension of everyone: "Although the Logos is common, most men live as though their thinking were a private possession" (B2). B50 furnishes Heraclitus' only surviving explicit declaration of the message of the Logos, "all things are one," which may provide the sum of its message in this concise form. At any event, the truth does not consist merely in "much learning," which does "not teach understanding." If understanding could be achieved through much learning, it would have taught those polymaths, who Heraclitus plainly thinks have no understanding, "Hesiod and Pythagoras, and also Xenophanes and Hecataeus" (B40). Hesiod, like Homer, is an epic poet of the distant past, and, again, like Homer, he enjoys the high regard of the Greek world, "the teacher of most," says Heraclitus (B57). Hesiod's poems on the origin of the gods and on practical wisdom were staples of the curriculum of the educated Greek. Among the polymaths, Heraclitus also names members of a new class of intellectuals, those who engage in "inquiry" (ἱστορίη), independent research on a variety of topics, including cosmology.[7]

3. Kahn 1979, 94, cf. 98; see also Kirk 1954, 39.

4. E.g., Guthrie 1962, 425; Hussey 1972, 39.

5. E.g., West 1971, 114–15; Barnes 1982, 59; Robinson 1987, 75.

6. There is a well-recognized ambiguity in the syntax of αἰεί in the opening sentence of B1, first noted by Aristotle (*Rh.* 1407b14–18), and I follow Kahn (1979, 93–94) in reading αἰεί with both the first and second clauses of the opening sentence.

7. For an account of ἱστορίη, see Kahn 1979, 96–97.

The truth or reality in its commonness stands before everyone, and in its openness it may even be described as what is "obvious": "Men are deceived in the recognition of what is obvious, like Homer who was wisest of all the Greeks. For he was deceived by boys killing lice, who said: what we see and catch we leave behind; what we neither see nor catch we carry away" (B56). The puzzle whose solution eluded Homer was part of the Homeric tradition, at least in late antiquity,[8] and doubtless Heraclitus intends the puzzle to be emblematic of reality. The use of children as the propounders of this puzzle to the "wisest of all the Greeks" underscores the obviousness of the truth, and even its simplicity, since the puzzle may be expressed and understood by mere children.

Yet the "obvious" that stumps Homer, the "wisest of all the Greeks," is after all a puzzle. Since this puzzle likely reflects the character of reality, the commonality and obviousness of reality do not keep it from being a puzzle that is difficult to understand. "Nature loves to hide" (B123), says Heraclitus, and "the hidden harmony is better than the obvious" (B54). The "nature," φύσις, that is hidden is presumably not "nature" in the collective sense, but the "nature of things," the sort of "nature" Heraclitus declares in B1 he will expound upon, "distinguishing each thing according to its nature and telling how it is."[9] Reality in its puzzlement Heraclitus likely finds comparable to the puzzling oracles of Delphi: "The lord whose oracle is in Delphi neither tells nor conceals, but gives a sign" (B93). The "signs" are there among the nature of things, "obvious" for those who may discern them, or once they have discerned them, but only if they bring hard work to bear upon them. Despite the openness of the truth, its apprehension is no easy matter: "Seekers of gold dig up much earth and find little" (B22).

The commonality and openness of the truth indicate that it requires for its acquisition no special dispensation of the sort that may be ascribed to the poets. Hesiod reports that while he was shepherding his sheep on Mt. Helicon the Muses of Olympus spoke to him and "breathed into" him "a divine voice

8. Kahn 1979, 111.

9. The ancient authors who preserved B123 took the word φύσις to mean "nature" as the collection of all natural objects. Kirk 1954, 227–31, argues that in the time of Heraclitus it is unlikely that φύσις would bear that sense. Kirk appeals to the use of φύσις in other fragments, particularly B1, for his interpretation that it means the essence of a thing, "the real constitution of a thing, or of things severally," and he also looks to other authors around the time of Heraclitus for additional evidence. As Kirk admits, if φύσις means "essence," Heraclitus would be expected to say "the nature of things," so that "nature" would clearly apply severally to the essence of each thing. Marcovich 1967, 33, concurs with Kirk on the translation of φύσις, "the real constitution of things," and Robinson 1987, 162, explicitly follows Kirk. Guthrie 1962, p. 418 and n. 3, says that he is "in full agreement" with Kirk, although he does not think that the translation "nature" is "altogether misleading." Kahn 1979, 105, appears to subscribe to Kirk's view, when in his comment on B123 he says that what hides is "the truth, the characteristic nature of things (*physis*)." Hussey 1982, 34, too conforms to Kirk's translation when he glosses the φύσις of B123 as "the nature of things." In his analysis of B1, Verdenius 1947, 274, calls on R. G. Collingwood 1945, 44, 81, to support his view that φύσις in early Greek philosophy means "the essence or nature of things." For a survey of the early history of the modern scholarship on φύσις, see Kirk 1954. Heraclitus probably does use φύσις for the essence of each thing, but he uses it in B123 also in a general way, so that in speaking of the "nature" of each thing he is making a general comment about the obscurity that is the common characteristic of the nature of every sort of thing. Although Heraclitus declares in B1 that he "distinguishes each thing according to its nature (κατὰ φύσιν), declaring how it is," we do not find him in the surviving fragments laying down systematically the peculiar nature of each kind of thing, but rather expounding upon the metaphysics of things generally, often by commenting on the nature of an object, such as sea water (B61) or the posset (B125).

to celebrate things that shall be and things that were aforetime" (*Theog.* 22–32). Homer calls upon the Muses of Olympus to recount to him the lords and the ships of the Danaans who fought at Troy, "for you, who are goddesses . . . know all things" (*Il.* 2.484–85).[10] Since most of humanity remains uninspired by the Muses, the truth, if it issues only from the inspiration of the Muses, could not be common and open to all, but a special privilege vouchsafed to the few, those whom the divine Muses choose to favor. The hard work needed for the apprehension of the truth is also at odds with the immediacy of the poetic inspiration the Muses provide through their intervention. The hard work that yields the truth relies on the senses for its tools, capacities that are the common heritage of all humanity: "Those things that come from sight, hearing, learning from experience: these I esteem" (B55). Knowledge has an empirical basis, and does not depend upon the extra-human or the divine. The poets are special targets of Heraclitus' scorn, because their inspiration amounts to an exceptional claim for themselves, of possessing a special dispensation and the immediate apprehension of the truth without difficulty. Homer and Hesiod, the greatest and most revered of the epic poets, are singled out for contempt, although the poet Archilochus does not escape chiding (B42), as well as Xenophanes (B40), who also wrote in verse. The poets possess no special knowledge from the divine because they merely return to their audience their audience's own values. The common people "believe the bards of the people and take the mob as their teacher . . ." (B104). If the common people who are the mob take the mob for their teacher in the form of the poets, then the poets in their poems would appear merely to return to the common people their own opinions. Reliance on the poets for the unknown is, therefore, reliance upon untrustworthy authorities (A23). Others who are not poets Heraclitus singles out for derision, those who through their "inquiries" might be thought to make an unjustified claim for themselves of a special knowledge. Among these Pythagoras, "the prince of impostors" (B81), receives special attention (B25). Yet the contempt of Heraclitus is not reserved for some benighted few, who are purveyors of pseudo-wisdom in one form or another. It takes in the great mass of mankind, and all are on a par in their ignorance: "Most men do not think things in the way they encounter them, nor do they recognize what they experience, but conjecture for themselves" (B17, cf. B104).

Heraclitus employs a number of images to describe the epistemic situation of humanity, and their situation is poignant. Many of these images merge in the imagery of death, as Homer may have conceived of death, or as we find it portrayed in the Homeric poems, and humans are in a state epistemically equivalent to death. Central among these images is the condition of sleep. When humans are not in contact in their thoughts with the common world of reality, the objective truth, they are in a private, subjective domain of their own making: "Although the Logos is common, most

10. Although some renderings are my own, I rely on Lattimore for the translations of Homer and for those of Hesiod on Evelyn-White in the Loeb Classical Library.

men live as though their thinking were a private possession" (B2). Pythagoras, who is perhaps Heraclitus' prime example of the peddler of pseudo-wisdom, "made a wisdom of his own," a wisdom of merely his own fabrication (B129). The privacy of the ignorant amounts to a state of sleep, and the state of those humans who in their thinking are in contact with the objectivity of truth amounts to a state of wakefulness: "The world of the waking is one and common, but the sleeping turn aside each into his private world" (B89).

In sleep men make up a world of their own, a world of dreams. "A man strikes a light for himself in the night, when his sight is quenched" (B26), just as most men make up a world of their own when they "conjecture for themselves" and "do not think things in the way they encounter them" (B17). Heraclitus, unlike most in antiquity, does not credit dreams or sleep with the possibility of yielding anything of positive epistemic value. Homer credits those dreams that come by way of the "gate of horn," as opposed to those that come by way of the "gate of ivory," with truth (*Od.* 19.560–67), and the gods may send messages, some truthful (*Od.* 4.795–837), some deceptive (*Il.* 2.5–6), to humans through their dreams. The souls of the dead may visit the living in their sleep and communicate with them. The soul of the dead Patroclus visits Achilles in his sleep and urges him to bury his body as quickly as possible so that his soul may enter the realm of the dead (*Il.* 23.65–98, cf. Pind. *Pyth.* 4.159–63). Pindar even believes that sleep provides a superior epistemic condition.[11] The soul, αἰῶνος εἴδωλον, which is of a divine nature, is inactive, asleep, when a man is awake; it becomes active during his sleep, and "in many dreams it reveals an approaching decision of things pleasant or distressful" (frag. 131b). For Heraclitus, "all we see asleep is sleep" (B21).

In fragment B17 Heraclitus holds that most men "conjecture for themselves"; they do not "think things in the way they encounter them," and, he adds, "nor do they recognize what they experience." Although this fragment does not mention sleep, the reference to the lack of recognition may reflect another phenomenon of sleep, which Heraclitus introduces in the closing sentence of B1 in his characterization of the common man's epistemic state: ". . . other men are unaware of what they do awake, just as they are forgetful of what they do asleep."[12] Humans awake amount to those who, having slept, are forgetful of what they do in their sleep. Humans dream in their sleep; dreams are what they "experience," and it is a common experience to know that one has dreamed and not to be able to recall the dream. Marcus Aurelius, who often quotes from memory and is perhaps not a thoroughly reliable witness,[13] reports that "Men forget where the way leads"

11. Trans. by Race in the Loeb Classical Library. On the epistemic superiority or value of sleep, Dodds 1951, 135, cites, besides Homer and Pindar, Xenophon (*Cyr.* 8.7.21), and even Plato (*Resp.* 9.571d–572a), among others.

12. It is perhaps possible to read differently this last clause of B1, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὕδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται, so that men are forgetful of their commonplace experience while asleep, and this is how Barnes 1982, 58–59, reads it when he translates the last sentence of B1 as " . . . but other men do not notice what they do when they are awake, just as they are oblivious of things when asleep."

13. For qualms over the reliability of Marcus, see Kahn 1979, 104.

(B71), perhaps in just the way sleepers who are dreaming forget what they have dreamed when they awake. Forgetfulness entails a previous state of knowledge. For Heraclitus this may mean that humans have the "experience" (μαθόντες, B17) of reality and that this experience is adequate for knowledge, just as we know our own dreams when we have ("experience") them, and the experience is sufficient for the knowledge. Humans, however, do not retain this "experience," all that they need for knowledge; they have forgotten it.

Sextus Empiricus gives us another slant on the forgetfulness of the sleeper, who is "forgetful during sleep," in a testimony, *Adversus mathematicos* 7.129–30 (A16), which some scholars take to be the rendition of a Stoic distortion of Heraclitus, although it arguably has features of a Heraclitean nature.[14] Humans are "forgetful during sleep," presumably of what they know when awake, and when awake they are again "in their senses" or "intelligent" (ἔμφρονες). The loss of the "power of remembering" comes through the loss of perception ("in sleep the channels of perception are shut"), and with this loss the "power of reasoning" or "of thought," or almost all of it, is lost. On Sextus' account of the forgetfulness of sleep, the parallel Heraclitus draws between the ignorant and the sleeper would make them comparable in the inoperability of their senses and reason: the ignorant, after the fashion of the sleeper, do not make use of their cognitive powers for the apprehension of the reality before them. Sextus' testimony conforms with fragment B89 inasmuch as his testimony and the fragment present sleep as a lack of apprehension of the objective world of the wakeful.

On either of these interpretations of the forgetfulness of the sleeper, the cognitive condition of ordinary humans is much the same. Reality is before them; it is something they "encounter," "experience," and they have the information they need and thus should know very well, but instead "conjecture for themselves" (B17). There is a mismatch between the thoughts, the "conjectures" of ordinary humans, and the reality they experience in common with one another, and this mismatch is comparable to that between the thoughts of the dreamer in the forgetfulness of his waking state and what he experiences in his dreams. It is also comparable to the mismatch between his dreams and what he experiences in his waking condition, when his cognitive faculties are fully functional. Humans, reports Marcus, "are at odds" with that with which they "most constantly associate," and they "should not act and speak like men asleep" (B72).

Therefore, reality "appears strange" to humans, as Marcus also reports, still in the same context as his other comments surveyed above on Heraclitus (B72). In accord with Marcus' description, humans are like strangers in their own land: the reality that is common to all. The conceit that humans

14. Kahn 1979, 294–96, puts no faith in Sextus' report, but it has its defenders who believe that it retains something of Heraclitus' views on sleep: Fränkel 1975, 390; Burnet 1930, 152–53; Kirk 1954, 341, and 1983, 205–6; Claus 1981, 126, 128; Guthrie 1962, 430. Burnet maintains that the "striking simile of the embers" argues for the report's reflecting genuine Heraclitean sentiments, and Kirk 1983, 206, points out that Sextus is also a good reporter, who is capable of quoting accurately from Heraclitus, including the lengthy B1.

are like aliens shows up in Heraclitus' statement that "eyes and ears are poor witnesses for men if they have barbarian souls" (B107). "Barbarians" are non-Greeks, those who ordinarily do not understand and cannot speak Greek, who are merely "babblers" to a Greek, as the sound of the word βάρβαροι indicates.[15] Humans fail to appreciate what their eyes and ears inform them about in just the way the Greekless fail to appreciate what is spoken to them in Greek.[16] Humans do not understand the import of their own senses, after the fashion of those who do not understand the language spoken to them; the reality the senses communicate is "foreign" to them. This failure to understand the import of their own senses leaves human beings in a state in which they are equivalent to the deaf and the dumb and the blind, where their most important senses for apprehension are not functional: "Not comprehending they hear like the deaf. The saying is their witness: absent while present" (B34); "not knowing how to listen, neither can they speak" (B19). Humans cannot apprehend, "hear," reality, because their "barbarian souls" render them equivalent to the deaf, "they hear like the deaf," and in keeping with their "deafness," based on their "barbarism," they are inarticulate, "neither can they speak," make sensible comments about reality. Their speech amounts to barbarian babble for those who conform to the Logos, or perhaps even amounts to the prattle of children. Heraclitus, probably with the mass of humanity in mind, says that a man "hears" from a god that he is νήπιος ("childish" or, more literally, "infantile," "not yet speaking"), an adjective drawn from the negative prefix, νη-, and ἔπος (B79). The barbarian or childish souls contrast, then, with those, "speaking with understanding," who "hold fast to what is common to all" (B114). They would be unable to heed the urging of Heraclitus, in "listening" to the Logos to "agree" that "all things are one," where the word for "agree" is ὁμολογεῖν, which literally would mean "to speak the same thing" or even "to speak the same language."

Heraclitus uses "hearing" as one of his most important expressions for the apprehension of reality[17] and "deafness" for the lack of apprehension. This is probably due to the association of the Logos with reality: "It is wise,

15. In the time of Heraclitus βάρβαρος had yet to take on a pejorative connotation, and it simply signified a Greekless foreigner, LSJ s.v. 1.1; see Nussbaum 1972, 9–10.

16. The standard reading of B107 takes the language that the "barbarian souls" do not understand to be the "language" of the senses or of sensation; e.g., Kahn 1979, 107. Nussbaum 1972, 9–13, objects, however, to this reading and argues that the language the barbarian souls do not comprehend is their own language. She contends that the truth about the appearance of things cannot be comprehended without the proper understanding of one's own language, since the truth depends upon the power of "connected reasoning" that comes with human linguistic ability. Wiggins 1982, 31, follows Nussbaum's reading. The users of a language, contends Nussbaum, fail to appreciate how their language reveals the unity of opposites in their failure to recognize the interdependence of opposing words for their meaning, e.g., as in the opposition of "justice" and "injustice" (B23). Nussbaum is certainly correct in contending that for Heraclitus humans generally fail to appreciate semantic interdependence, and that language if properly understood provides more evidence for the unity of opposites. Yet there is good reason to keep to the standard reading of B107, since, as Hussey 1982, 34, points out, this reading allows the fragment to fit in neatly with a number of fragments that treat the ineptitude of human beings as their inability to interpret correctly what is given to them in sense-perception. Hussey cites for support frags. B56, B93, B123, and B54.

17. Frag. B112 provides another example, when it describes wisdom as involving "giving ear to" (ἐπαΐοντας) things "according to nature."

listening not to me but to the Logos . . ." (B50). But Heraclitus does not ignore sight and blindness, as the fragment on Homer's failure to understand the riddle of the children would indicate (B56). Humans are like Homer in their failure to recognize what is "obvious," φανερόν, what is "visible," or even "shining," an adjective from the verb φαίνειν, "to bring to light," "to show forth." Homer, being blind, cannot see what is "shining" before him and, as the representative of the incomprehension of human beings, he represents their "blindness" to the reality openly visible to them (cf. B46).

The common man's epistemic state is equivalent, then, to the blind and the deaf, and, like the deaf, he is dumb. He can neither comprehend nor speak intelligibly about reality, just as a barbarian, or a child, can neither comprehend Greek nor speak it intelligibly. He is cut off from reality, like a sleeper in a dream world of his own making who in his sleep is forgetful of reality, or who is forgetful of reality after the fashion of the waking who are forgetful of what they have dreamed. The uncommon man who pretentiously claims a wisdom for himself that he does not possess is no better off than the common man, since both alike fail to comprehend what is right before them in the most ordinary of their experiences. Fragment B50 provides the only surviving explicit statement of the message of the Logos, "all things are one," and this could be its central message (B10).[18] The fragments indicate that the oneness Heraclitus urges his audience to take account of is the "unity of opposites," a unification that may manifest itself in a wide variety of ways, but in which opposites are so tightly drawn together that the most commonplace of objects and events may be seen to display in various circumstances opposing properties: "Sea water is the purest and foulest of waters; for fish it is drinkable and life-sustaining, for men it is undrinkable and deadly" (B61). The powers of sea water could hardly escape the notice of the average Greek, who lives among the islands and along the long irregular coastline of the Aegean. No truth could be more trivial than "cold things warm up, warm cools off, moist parches, dry dampens" (B126). Yet the import of these banal observations mostly remains unheeded. Each object possesses in its nature opposing powers,[19] and the opposition of these powers is required for the maintenance of the object and for the well-being of the cosmos. Hesiod, "the teacher of most," fails to recognize from the everyday cosmic occurrence of the change between day and night that day and night are "one" (B57). Homer, "wisest of all the Greeks," ardently wishes for a world without conflict and fails thereby to recognize that if his wish were granted it would rid the world of the harmony and peace he yearns for (A22). There could be no concord without the conflict between opposites, and "justice is strife" (B80).

18. The unity of opposites is a "cardinal" feature of Heraclitus' thought, says Hussey 1982, 43. The message of the Logos is surely more than the unity of opposites, although the fragments may be thought to indicate that unity is the central message and especially that unity is what both the learned and the unlearned fail to appreciate. For helpful reflections on just what the foolish fail to pay heed to, see Nussbaum 1972, Wiggins 1982, and Hussey 1982.

19. Hussey 1982, 44, describes the "essence" of objects as providing them with "an ambivalence in their powers."

These failures in comprehension of Hesiod and Homer run through the generality of humanity (ἄνθρωποι), who, unlike god, divide justice from injustice when they designate some things "just" and others "unjust" (B102).[20] In B80 Heraclitus stresses that "justice is strife," and many scholars[21] think that he is targeting in particular the natural philosopher Anaximander, who thought that the dominion of one cosmic power over another is an "injustice" for which the victorious power would pay a "penalty" as a "retribution" to the vanquished power (B1). Heraclitus understands that in the exchange between opposing powers at the cosmic level the unqualified charge of "injustice" misfires since the generation of every power is the destruction of another (B36, B76).

Without the strife between opposing forces no object, at any level in the cosmos, could sustain itself, even down to such homely objects as the bow and the lyre. Humans fail to appreciate that the strife within the nature of objects issues in a beneficent unity: "They do not comprehend how each thing in quarrelling with itself agrees; it is a harmony turning back on itself, like that of the bow and the lyre" (B51).[22] The examples of the bow and the lyre are broad in their sweep and likely comment on the state of the cosmos as a whole, since the bow and the lyre represent the distant extremes of the violence displayed in war and hunting and the peacefulness represented in music and poetic recitation. Heraclitus may also select these examples because Homer characterizes the bow as a lyre when he describes Odysseus as like a musician who is preparing his lyre for a performance, when he is stringing and testing his great bow, which he will presently use in his slaughter of the suitors (*Od.* 21.404–13). An audience educated under Homer might be expected to recognize this additional reference to the unity of opposites in the contrasting examples of the bow and the lyre.

Events and objects are hardly alone in indicating the unity within opposition, since the language of daily use also reflects this unity in a variety of ways: "The name of the bow is life, but its work is death" (B48). One word for "bow" is βιός, which differs only in accent from βίος, a word for "life," and Heraclitus takes this minor linguistic fact about βιός to bring the bow within the circle of simple examples where the unity of opposites is exhibited in a way that is open to all. The name of the Furies, Ἐρινύες, is derived from ἔρις, the word for strife, and Justice has the Furies for her assistants (B94). Since "justice is strife" (B80), Heraclitus may take the name for the helpers of Justice as pointing to the oneness of justice and strife.[23] When in B23 Heraclitus says that "they would not know the name of Justice, if these things did not exist," he presumably has in mind that it is "unjust things" that make possible the knowledge of justice, and thus he is stressing that a

20. The syntax of B102 leads many scholars to think that it is a paraphrase, although most take it to be a reliable paraphrase; Robinson 1987, 149. Kahn 1979, 183–84, doubts its accuracy.

21. E.g., Kirk 1954, 401; Vlastos 1955, 356; Kahn 1979, 206–7.

22. See Vlastos 1955, 348, and Kahn 1979, 195, for good reasons for retaining παλίντροπος over the alternative παλίντονος.

23. See Wiggins 1982, 28–29, and Hussey 1982, 54, for this analysis of B48; for that of B94 see Hussey 1982, 54.

"name" like "justice" is not meaningful in isolation, but only with its opposite, "injustice."[24] Wherever men may turn, whether it be to deeds or words, they are confronted repeatedly with the confirmation of the unity within opposition.

This cluster of images, of sleep, of forgetfulness, of deafness and blindness, of dumbness, of the incomprehension and inarticulateness of barbarians or infants, Heraclitus may intend to merge in the imagery of death. Most cultures draw a parallel between death and sleep, in which death and sleep are images of one another: "our little life is rounded in a sleep," says Prospero. The ancient Greeks were no exception. Hesiod and Homer both speak of sleep as the "brother" of death (*Theog.* 756, *Il.* 14.231). Homer even calls them "twin brothers" (*Il.* 16.672, 682), and on the recommendation of Hera Zeus gives orders for the personifications of both death and sleep to escort the body of the dead Sarpedon to his homeland for burial (*Il.* 16.453–57, 671–75, 681–83). A profound sleep falls upon Odysseus "most like death" (θανάτῳ ἄγχιστα ἐοικώς, *Od.* 13.79–80), and the dead Promachus "sleeps" (εὕδει, *Il.* 14.482). A warrior struck down in battle, "lay down to sleep a brazen sleep" (πεσὼν κοιμήσατο χάλκεον ὕπνον), a sleep so strong that it binds with brazen bonds (*Il.* 11.241). Homer also locates "the country of dreams," although without elaboration, near the abode of the dead (*Od.* 24.12–13).

The parallel between sleep and death is easy enough to appreciate. Both give the impression that sensation, comprehension, communication, and the behavior of the active human life no longer exist. The sleeper, however, is still alive, and may on waking fully engage in the activities he appears to lose in sleep. Despite this significant difference, the parallel between death and sleep remains an especially strong one for the Greek educated by Homer's poems. For Homer the dead are not annihilated, but lead a kind of life in the house of Hades, a life that is emptied of the activities of the living human being and thus is closer to the condition of sleep. When Achilles awakens from the dream in which the soul of the dead Patroclus appears to him, he comments upon the condition of the dead: "Even in the house of Hades there is left something, a soul and an image, but there is no real heart of life (φρένες) in it" (*Il.* 23.103–4). Homer's image of sleep may plausibly be appreciated as extending beyond the corpse of the dead and as applying perhaps even more vividly to the "dead" who "dwell" (νεκροὶ ναίουσι) in the "house of Hades" (*Od.* 11.475–76, cf. 11.34, *Il.* 23.51).

For Homer, the word ψυχή, which later Greeks adopted for the "soul," designates what alone of a man survives his death, and in Homer's poems ψυχή appears only in contexts involving the dead, the dying, the threat of death, or fainting.[25] Homer never speaks of the function of a living man's

24. Nussbaum 1972, 11, and Kahn 1979, 185, offer similar comments on B23, and B111 may perhaps be exploited in the same fashion. Nussbaum 1972, 11, especially stresses the importance of the interdependence of the meaning of words for Heraclitus' conception of the unity of opposites, since she understands the failure of most humans to appreciate the nature of reality to be based on their failure to understand their own language.

25. The account of the Homeric view of ψυχή is drawn from Rohde 1925, 3–54; Snell 1953, 8–17; Furley 1956; Nussbaum 1972; and Claus 1981.

ψυχή, and he assigns the powers of sensation, thought, and emotion to other capacities or bodily parts, most notably, θυμός, the "heart." The word ψυχή is etymologically linked with the verb, ψύχειν, "to breathe," and a man's ψυχή departs his body through his mouth or a wound. In all likelihood, then, ψυχή originally had some reference to "breath."[26] Evidently, a man's ψυχή is what provides him with the primary basis for his life, and that is why death is usually marked by its departure.[27] In surviving literature, it is in Heraclitus that we find the first explicit additional use of ψυχή as the basis of intelligence and speech (B107).[28] The ψυχή, or "soul," of the dead Homer usually calls an "image" (εἴδωλον) of the living person (*Od.* 11.80, 476, 24.14, *Il.* 23.104); he also calls it a "shadow" (σκιή, *Od.* 10.495) or likens it to a shadow. Odysseus says that the soul of his dead mother is "like a shadow or a dream" (σκιῇ εἴκελον ἠὲ καὶ ὀνείρῳ) when it "flies away" from his embrace (*Od.* 11.207–8). Homer typically, but not consistently, presents the souls of the dead as possessing no intelligence and as devoid of sensation (ἀφραδέες, *Od.* 11.475–76),[29] or virtually so, since the souls of the dead are attracted, presumably through smell, to the offering of blood Odysseus prepares for his encounter with the soul of Teiresias.[30] Heraclitus is reported to have said that "souls smell things in Hades" (B98), and, although this may be in mockery of the Homeric conception of the soul,[31] it may yet be a correct inference about that conception. The soul of the seer Teiresias Homer explicitly allows to be the sole exception to the rule that the souls of the dead are without cognitive capacities. Teiresias' "mind" (φρένες) remains "firm"; for Persephone grants him "intelligence" (νόος) so that he "alone understands" (οἴῳ πεπνῦσθαι) among the souls of the dead (*Od.* 10.492–95). If Homer does not regard the ψυχή of the living human being as the basis of the capacities for sensation, thought, and emotion, this would explain why he does not attribute these capacities to the ψυχή in the underworld. The soul in the underworld is merely an "image" of the living, empty of most of the powers of the living. Homer's view of the dead lends itself to the analogy with the sleeper, since the souls of the dead are alive, but remain in a state devoid of the capacities and activities typical of human beings. As Rohde puts it, the souls of the dead lead an "unconscious half-life."[32]

Although the souls of the dead cannot perish, they count as "the dead" who "dwell" (νεκροὶ ναίουσι) in the "house of Hades" (*Od.* 11.475–76). Odysseus addresses the soul of the dead Achilles as Achilles himself and as someone who is dead, but who was once alive. Odysseus tells Achilles that,

26. Snell 1953, 9, and Furley 1956, 3.

27. E.g., Nussbaum 1972, 153, and Claus 1981, 61.

28. Snell 1953, 17; Kahn 1979, 107, 127; Hussey 1982, 45. Nussbaum 1972, 5, holds that for Heraclitus ψυχή is a "central faculty" that is responsible for "connected reasoning and language-learning," which his predecessors had no explanation for. West 1971, 149–50, contends that by the time of Heraclitus all, or most of, the psychic capacities were united in ψυχή. See Claus 1981, 125–38, for more on the nature of ψυχή as it appears in the fragments of Heraclitus.

29. The soul of the dead, contends West 1971, 149, is for Homer "void of intelligent thought and articulate speech except when poetic convenience demands otherwise."

30. Rohde 1925, 37, suggests that the "scent of blood calls up spirits."

31. Nussbaum 1972, 158, and Schofield 1991, 24–25. Kirk too raises the question of irony (1983, p. 208, n. 3).

32. Rohde 1925, 24.

"before" when he was "alive" (πρὶν μὲν γάρ σε ζωόν), he was honored among the Argives, and that now he rules mightily "among the dead" (νεκύεσσιν); and, Odysseus concludes, "therefore you should not at all grieve being dead" (τῷ μή τι θανὼν ἀκαχίζευ). Achilles demurs, and tells Odysseus not to try to console him about "death" (θάνατον, *Od.* 11.484–88). In this colloquy the soul of the dead Achilles is identical with the dead Achilles.[33]

The souls of the dead may also be thought to lead a kind of subhuman life, like that of an animal. They "flutter" or "fly" about (*Od.* 11.207, 222, 24.7); they are like "terrified birds" in the "clamor" they make (11.605–6); they surround Odysseus with an "eerie cry" (ἠχῇ θεσπεσίῃ, 11.632–33). When the souls of the suitors killed by Odysseus travel to the underworld under the escort of Hermes, they are compared to "bats," "gibbering," or "squeaking" (ταὶ . . . τρίζουσαι), as they trail after Hermes (*Od.* 24.5–9, cf. *Il.* 24.101). The souls of the dead have no intelligent speech in their senseless state, like the ignorant on Heraclitus' view, who possess "barbarian souls." It is worthy of note that Heraclitus uses one of Homer's verbs, πτάσθαι, for the "fluttering" or "flying" of the souls of the dead, to describe "a foolish man," βλὰξ ἄνθρωπος, as someone who "loves to be in a flutter," ἐπτοῆσθαι φιλεῖ, over every *logos* he encounters (B87). The bestiality of the foolish is explicit in Heraclitus' statement that "dogs bark at those they do not know" (B97).[34] As Kahn conjectures,[35] just as dogs in their brutality are incapable of distinguishing between strangers, men in their foolishness are incapable of judging the value of the novel *logoi* they hear. If, however, Plato's report can be accepted (*Hippias Major* 289b), even "the wisest man appears an ape" before the wisdom of a god (B83). This comparison would suggest that the foolish and the wise among human beings differ only in degree when it comes to the wisdom that belongs without qualification to a god. A man in his foolishness Heraclitus also likens to a child, when he is subjected to the judgment of a god (B79), and "human opinions" one testimony describes as "the toys of children" (B70, cf. B74). A child too might be thought to lead something less than a fully human life.[36]

The soul of Odysseus' dead mother and the souls of his dead comrades from the Trojan war do not know him when they emerge from the underworld, attracted by his offering.[37] When Odysseus allows the souls of some

33. At one point Homer will even speak "of the dead who have died" (νέκυων κατατεθνηώτων, *Od.* 11.147), where the plural of νέκυς may stand for the ψυχαί of the dead (e.g., *Il.* 15.251). Nussbaum 1972, 154, cautions against speaking of the souls of the dead as dead, since souls cannot perish and are what survive death. Hussey 1991, 518, holds that a "state of death" applies only to the corpses of the dead and never to their souls in the underworld. Rohde 1925, 6, contends that Homer will count as the "self" of a man sometimes his living body and sometimes his soul. Rohde concludes that what should be learned from Homer's practice is that both the body and soul could be counted as the "self," and that a man exists once as an "outward and visible shape" and then in death as an "invisible image."

34. B29 compares the mass of men to "cattle," but it does not explicitly put the comparison in an epistemic context.

35. Kahn 1979, 176.

36. Fränkel 1975, 382, contends that in the time of Heraclitus the Greeks considered childhood to be "a useless contemptible preliminary state to maturity."

37. Odysseus' dead comrade Elpenor is an exception (*Od.* 11.51–78). Even as a mere ψυχή he retains his senses because his body has yet to be properly buried and thus destroyed by fire. Only then will his soul be allowed to enter the house of Hades and only then will it take on the senseless nature of the souls of the dead; see Rohde 1925, 19.

of the dead to drink from his offering they "immediately know" him (*Od.* 11.153, 390), and they acquire full sensation and intelligence. They converse with him, and all the knowledge they possessed in their life becomes available to them. The advent of their knowledge gives the impression of the return of memory,[38] and Homer probably does equate the senselessness of the dead with forgetfulness. The dead warrior Cebriones lies in the dust, "forgetful of his horsemanship" (λελασμένος ἱπποσυνάων, *Il.* 16.776, cf. *Od.* 24.40). Achilles says that, even when he is dead, he will not forget his friend Patroclus, "though the dead forget the dead in the house of Hades" (εἰ δὲ θανόντων περ καταλήθοντ' εἰν Ἄΐδαο, *Il.* 22.389–90). Forgetfulness (λήθη) does furnish a significant dimension of the life of the underworld, at least in the writings of some of the later ancients. In a fragment that may be from a work by the poet Simonides, who is roughly a contemporary of Heraclitus, the author speaks of the underworld as "the halls of Lethe" (184 Bergk). In the *Frogs,* Aristophanes mentions "the plain of Lethe" as a place in the underworld, and Rohde takes this reference to be the earliest that can be dated with any assurance to make Lethe a geographical feature of the underworld. But he also notes that Aristophanes in the casualness of his reference must be alluding to a belief well known to his audience.[39] In the myth of Er of *Republic* 10, Plato has the souls of those about to be reincarnated travel to "the plain of Lethe," where they forget what they know by drinking from "the river of Neglect," or what Plato also may refer to as "the river of Lethe" (621a–c). Yet, as the passages from Homer indicate, especially the remark of Achilles about the dead, the idea that the souls of the dead are in a state of forgetfulness, or what is comparable to forgetfulness, in their senselessness was already a part of the Homeric conception of the condition of the dead.

The souls of the dead on the Homeric view are comparable to slumberers, or somnambulists, in their half-conscious, subhuman life. They are likely in a state of forgetfulness, in which they are senseless, or largely so, and without understanding or comprehension, which renders them incapable of intelligible human speech and leaves them in a mere state of "gibbering." For Heraclitus the ignorant live in a private world of their own making, comparable to the privacy of sleep, where they are forgetful of reality. They are unable to appreciate the import of their senses, and this leaves them in a state equivalent to the blind and the deaf, the senseless, who have no understanding. Like the deaf, the ignorant are also dumb, incapable of speaking intelligibly about reality, or, like barbarians for the Greeks, they remain inarticulate babblers or, like infants, prattlers. The supposition that Heraclitus regards the ignorant as like the dead in the house of Hades is bolstered by his likening them to the sleeper, since he too may be thought to treat sleep as comparable to death, or perhaps even as a kind of death.[40]

38. Rohde 1925, 36, is thus impressed with the advent of the knowledge: "the blood drunk by the souls gives them back for a moment their consciousness; their remembrance of the upper world returns to them."

39. Rohde 1925, vii, n. 21.

40. Hussey 1991, 521, who also views Heraclitus in the light of Homer, suggests that since Homer has death and sleep escort the corpse of Sarpedon, Heraclitus intends the mass of humanity to be "no better than corpses in respect of knowledge, just as they are no better than sleepers in B1." Rather, they are like the souls of the dead in the underworld, not merely the corpses of the dead.

Two difficult fragments, B21 and B26, contribute centrally to the impression that Heraclitus treats sleep like death. B21 reads: "Death is all things we see awake; all we see asleep is sleep" (θάνατός ἐστιν ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ὁρέομεν, ὁκόσα δὲ εὕδοντες ὕπνος). B26 holds: "A man kindles a light for himself in the night, when his sight is quenched. Living, he touches the dead in his sleep; waking, he touches the sleeper" (ἄνθρωπος ἐν εὐφρόνῃ φάος ἅπτεται ἑαυτῷ ἀποσβεσθεὶς ὄψεις, ζῶν δὲ ἅπτεται τεθνεῶτος εὕδων, ἐγρηγορὼς ἅπτεται εὕδοντος).[41] Even without a complete analysis of these fragments and others they may draw in their wake, B21 and B26 may be appreciated as providing sufficient grounds for the belief that Heraclitus draws sleep and death closely together.

The opening of B26 at first suggests a man's lighting of a lamp when darkness falls and his vision fails because of the lack of sunlight. But a context involving sleep more likely calls for the "light" a man makes for himself in dreaming during sleep. The second clause of B26 should follow up on the theme of dreaming, and would, most likely, suggest the common Greek view that the living may be in "contact" with the dead in their dreams. The third and final clause, in which the waking man has "contact" with the sleeper might then be his remembrance of what he has dreamed when he awakes.[42]

There is, however, more to B26 than this. Since sleep is a private realm cut off from the common world of reality (B89), the light of dreamlight is a false light, a private light in place of the common, public light of the day. Heraclitus does not, then, believe, as was common among the Greeks, that in the dreams of sleep there is any genuine communication with the dead who dwell in the house of Hades. The deeper significance of the sleeper's "contact" with the dead lies elsewhere.

B21 opens cryptically with, "Death is all things we see awake," and, as Kahn argues,[43] this clause plausibly comments upon the constant state of change within nature, in which bodies emerge from the perishing of other bodies, that the "birth" of one element is the "death" of another (B36). On this interpretation Heraclitus might just as well have said that "life" is all we see awake. He might, however, readily agree with this because of his drawing together of opposites into some sort of unity, in particular, life and death (B88, B48, B15); and his focus on "death" may reflect his predilection for stressing the negative of any opposing pair (B80, B53). However this may be, B21 corroborates the cognitive worthlessness of sleep. All "we see" awake is death, but, if we turn to sleep, no epistemic advantage seems to be gained, in disagreement with Pindar (frag. 131b), since "all we see asleep is sleep." Yet since B26 ties sleep and death together, this fragment may, in turn, comment on B21. If sleep is "contact," whatever that may mean exactly, with the dead, then the two clauses of B21 are more balanced

41. In full B26, as Clement has passed it down, reads ἄνθρωπος ἐν εὐφρόνῃ φάος ἅπτεται ἑαυτῷ ἀποθανὼν ἀποσβεσθεὶς ὄψεις, ζῶν δὲ ἅπτεται τεθνεῶτος εὕδων ἀποσβεσθεὶς ὄψεις, ἐγρηγορὼς ἅπτεται εὕδοντος. The sixth edition of Diels-Kranz brackets ἀποθανών as Clement's own gloss and the second occurrence of ἀποσβεσθεὶς ὄψεις as a dittograph.

42. A conjecture of Kahn 1979, 215, and of Schofield 1991, 27.

43. Kahn 1979, 214.

than might at first be presumed,[44] since they both concern death in some respect. Awake "we see" only death; asleep all we see is sleep, but as B26 indicates in sleep we are in "contact" with the dead. Then, just as in our waking state, we also have to do with the dead in our sleep. In addition, ἅπτεσθαι could even mean "perceive," at least in the time of Sophocles,[45] so that B26 might be read to mean that in sleep humans "perceive" the dead. In the light of this reading of B26, B21 would mean no matter where we turn, in waking or in sleeping, we "perceive," or perhaps "experience," death in some form or another. The grammatical construction of B21 bears out the connection between death and sleep. Its first word is θάνατος and its last ὕπνος, and their positions at the extremes of the sentence Heraclitus may intend as a comment upon their nature. Just as in B90 the location of "fire" at the beginning and "gold" at the end of the sentence are surely intended to reflect the parallel between fire and gold Heraclitus develops in B90, since if the sentence is thought to form a ring, it would end where it began.

But on this reading of B21, after the fashion of the ring construction of B90, "sleep" should be death, or a state much like death, and the "contact" the living in their sleep have with the dead in B26 should amount to a version of death. ἅπτεσθαι can contribute to this interpretation also, where "contact," in the sense of "come up to" or "reach," may mean something like "match." This seems to be how Freeman reads ἅπτεται in the second clause when she translates it as, "while living, he approximates to a dead man during sleep": the sleeper, although alive, is like the dead.[46] The third clause of B26 reads on Freeman's rendering, "while awake, he approximates to one who sleeps." The state of the common man in his ignorance amounts in his waking life to sleep (B1, B89), but Heraclitus likely has more in mind than this. As others have observed,[47] the second and third clauses form a proportional statement, as waking is to sleeping, sleeping is to death. On the view that ἅπτεται means something like "resemble," sleep would be the term, on the basis of the proportion, that draws together waking life and death. The opposites of life and death are somehow the "same," as Heraclitus makes explicit in B88, and, for that matter, so too are waking and sleeping the "same": "the same things in us, living and dead and the waking and sleeping and young and old."[48] As waking life resembles sleep, sleep resembles death; thus life resembles death, so much so, perhaps Heraclitus thinks, that he is willing to say that life and death are the "same."

Sleep resembles death primarily in the loss of cognitive powers, and Sextus provides evidence for thinking that the failure of the capacity for thought in sleep is due to the dying down, "quenching," of the fiery stuff that is the soul (A16). Most students of Heraclitus take the soul to be fire

44. See West 1971, 148, for the presumed lack of balance.

45. LSJ s.v. 3.4.

46. Freeman 1971, p. 26, with n. 1. Stokes 1971, 98, too reads ἅπτεται in the second and third clauses as "resemble," when he paraphrases it as "next best thing to (next to)," and Barnes 1982, 74, agrees with Stokes that "resemble" is a plausible reading of the verb.

47. E.g., Stokes 1971, 98.

48. The MSS differ over the text of the opening of frag. B88, and I follow Diels-Kranz with ταὐτό τ' ἔνι. The translation conforms to the suggestions of Robinson (1987).

(B36),[49] and of the same nature as the fire Heraclitus identifies with the cosmos: "The cosmos, the same for all, no god or man has made, but it ever was and is and will be: fire ever living, kindled in measures and in measures quenched" (B30).[50] Although Sextus' report is larded with Stoic conceptions and the terminology of a later time, it may yet retain in its outline something of Heraclitus' views on sleep. Sextus testifies that in sleep that part of us which we share with the environment, our capacity for reason, our "mind" (νοῦς) and presumably our soul, is largely cut off from the environment and the power it has for sustaining our reasoning capacity. This severing is a result of the closing down in sleep of the senses, the "channels" that provide the mind's connection with the common environment, and only respiration remains as what keeps the mind "rooted in" the environment. Because of this severance, the mind becomes forgetful, and its power of reasoning is diminished. When awake the senses reëstablish contact with the environment, and reason and remembrance are restored. Sextus uses an image to express the mind's or soul's relationship to what it is akin to in the environment in its waking and sleeping states, which, in its vividness, would appear to originate with Heraclitus: "just as coals, when they are brought close to the fire, begin to glow, and are quenched (σβέννυνται) when they are separated from it, so it is with that portion of the environment which resides as a visitor in our bodies and becomes nearly irrational because of the separation" (130). The "quenching" of the coals would suggest a dying down of the fire that is the soul, and thus it would suggest that sleep is a physical condition that approximates the death of the soul, where death comes about through moisture: "For souls it is death to become water" (B36); "for souls . . . it is death to become moist" (B77).[51] Vlastos has offered reasons for thinking that among the Presocratics it was a common belief that sleep comes about through a loss in "organic heat."[52] If the soul does fluctuate between flaring up in wakefulness and dying down in sleep,

49. E.g., Kirk 1954, 341; Vlastos 1955, 364–65; Guthrie 1962, 433; Marcovich 1967, 361; Nussbaum 1972, 155; Claus 1981, 126. Kahn 1979, 238–40, 245–54, is an important exception, who argues for the soul's being air because fire cannot alternate, as the soul may, between being moist (B117) and being dry (B118); Robinson 1987, 104–5, follows Kahn. West 1971, 150, also inclines toward the view that the soul is airy rather than fiery. See Schofield 1991, 29, who holds that the soul is fire, for arguments against Kahn's position.

50. Aristotle offers a monist interpretation of the physics of Heraclitus in which fire is the fundamental stuff of all things (*Metaph.* 984a7), and the doxography preserved in Diogenes Laertius follows Aristotle (9.7–9). On Aristotle's monistic view (*Metaph.* 983b6–21), all things would for Heraclitus emerge from and return to fire, and all things would merely be permutations of fire, which would be conserved throughout all its transformations. Barnes 1982, 60–64, ascribes to Heraclitus a monism of the Aristotelian form, although Barnes admits that the evidence is "thin." Fire certainly plays a central role in Heraclitus' physics, as several fragments attest (B36, B76, B31, B90), although it is not obvious exactly what its role amounts to. The supremacy of fire in the cosmos, as Vlastos 1954, 360–61, argues, is not because it alone constitutes objects; rather, fire is the first among the elements because it is the standard by which the other elements are measured. Water and earth always measure up to the same amount of fire in their transformations, and thereby fire is what remains constant throughout the exchange from one element to another (B90). Wiggins 1982, 13–18, offers an interesting elaboration upon Vlastos' interpretation by suggesting that Heraclitus' belief in the conservation of fire is in the spirit of the much later idea of the conservation of energy. Some version of Vlastos' interpretation is likely correct.

51. I follow Diels-Kranz for the construction of B77 and read ἢ θανάτου in place of the μὴ θανάτου of the MSS.

52. Vlastos 1955, 365.

it may approximate during the course of the day the "kindling" and "quenching" of the cosmic fire of B30. Accordingly, this approximation in fluctuation may signify that Heraclitus had a unified cosmology and anthropology, evidence for which some have located in Heraclitus' use of the same verbs, ἅπτεσθαι and ἀποσβέννυσθαι, for the "kindling" and "quenching" of the cosmic fire of B30 and the "kindling" and "quenching" connected with the soul in B26.[53]

Like Homer and the Greeks in general, Heraclitus connects death and sleep in significant ways. Sleep is a death-like state, and Heraclitus' description of mankind in their ignorance as sleepers, then, contributes centrally to the impression that he judges the ignorant to be on a par with the dead. When the image of sleep joins the images of the forgetfulness of the ignorant, of their blindness and deafness, which amounts to their loss of perception and reason, of their dumbness or childish prattle, which is their inability to speak intelligibly, and of their bestiality, their subhuman condition, the ignorant for Heraclitus take on significant features of the dead in the house of Hades as they appear in the poems of Homer.

The wise among humankind should then be in a state opposite to that of the ignorant or the foolish. Wise men would not possess "barbarian souls," but cultured ones. They would be able to understand the testimony of their senses (B107), and would possess full use of their cognitive capacities. The wise would be able to "listen" to the Logos; they would be able to speak intelligibly by bringing their *logos* into agreement with the Logos (B50). "Speaking with comprehension" (ξὺν νόῳ λέγοντας), the wise would hold to what is "common to all" (τῷ ξυνῷ πάντων, B114). The pun on ξὺν νόῳ and ξυνῷ indicates that "speaking with comprehension" amounts to "speaking what is common," namely, the Logos, which is "common" to everything (B2), in accord with which "all things come to pass" (B1). Thus the wise would partake in the public cosmos, what is "one and common," as one of "the waking" (B89). Since the foolish in the death-like state of their ignorance are yet alive, the life of the wise man should count for something more. He is certainly no "barking dog" (B97), or "prattling infant" (B79), in his articulateness, but should his life count for something extra-human, indeed, divine, or what for a human may approximate the divine? There is reason to believe so.

Heraclitus stresses in B32 that unqualified wisdom belongs to the divine alone: "The one, the wise alone, is not willing and is willing to be spoken of by the name of Zeus." A first reading of B32 yields the suggestion that this supreme divinity is unwilling to be called "Zeus" because it should not be simply identified with the Zeus of traditional religion; however, it is willing to be called "Zeus" because traditionally Zeus is the mightiest and most important of the gods. Since wisdom at its highest pitch amounts to understanding the scheme of the cosmos, "the wise is one, to know the plan that steers all things through all" (B41),[54] it is to be expected that wisdom at this

53. Schofield 1991, 28–29.

54. I follow Robinson's translation and the text of Diels-Kranz. For difficulties over B41 see Kirk 1954, 386–90, and Vlastos 1955, 352–53.

highest level would be the prerogative of the divine, the "wise" that is "set apart from all" (B108). By contrast with the wisdom of the divine, man does not fare well. He is called "childish" or "infantile" by a god (B79), and the "wisest man" is like an "ape" before the wisdom of a god (B83). Yet wisdom to some degree is possible for humans, since Heraclitus surely must count himself among the wise. He is the spokesman of the Logos, and in the opening of his book he says that he will be "distinguishing each thing according to its nature and declaring how it is" (B1). The admonition of B50, that it is "wise" to listen to the Logos, would be pointless if wisdom were closed to human beings, and B118 allows for the possibility of a wise "soul" when it states that a "dry soul" is "wisest and best." Self-knowledge and "sound thinking" (σωφρονεῖν) are possible for all men (B116), and in B112 Heraclitus says that "sound thinking" just is "wisdom" and the "greatest virtue" or "greatest excellence" (ἀρετὴ μεγίστη), which he appears to exhort men to pursue when he elaborates on the "greatest virtue" by appealing to the activity of "giving ear to things according to nature."[55] Since the soul possesses a *logos* that "increases itself" (B115),[56] it may be open to humans to expand indefinitely their intellectual capacities and their comprehension of reality.

In fragment B32 Heraclitus also indicates that what is wisest of all may also be what pre-eminently possesses life, and thereby he may be indicating that wisdom and a higher form of life go hand in hand. When Heraclitus speaks of the one wise thing as unwilling and willing to be called "by the name of Zeus," the genitive he uses for "of Zeus" is Ζηνός, instead of Διός.[57] It is a common suggestion among students of Heraclitus that he uses Ζηνός deliberately so that he may allude to the infinitive ζῆν, "to live," and may suggest thereby that "life" is, or is involved in, the meaning of "Zeus." In the *Cratylus* Plato plays etymologically on the accusative form of the name for Zeus, Ζῆνα, in much the same sort of way; he has Socrates maintain that Zeus is well named, since he is the "cause of life" and that "through whom life belongs to all living things" (396a–b). The wisest thing, which is the supreme god, is also the source of "life," or possibly what is most fully "alive," or even "life" itself, and it is pertinent that the cosmic fire of B30 is "ever living." Since "wisdom" and "life" are likely featured together in B32, one may plausibly suppose that Heraclitus intends to indicate their intimate connection. With wisdom comes life, or life at a higher pitch, and both wisdom and life are displayed emphatically in the divine.

55. For the punctuation of B112 I follow Kahn 1979, 120–22, who adopts the punctuation of Bollack-Wismann.

56. For questions over the authenticity of B115, see Kahn 1979, 237.

57. Kahn 1979, 268–71, asserts without offering any supporting evidence that Ζηνός is the older and less usual form of the genitive, and this observation he uses to bolster his opinion that Heraclitus deliberately picks the less frequent genitive to indicate the connection between "Zeus" and "life." I can find no supporting evidence for Kahn's comment about the frequency and antiquity of Ζηνός with respect to Διός, and Kirk 1954, 392, and Marcovich 1967, 445–46, hold that Ζηνός is a common enough form of the genitive. Even if Kahn is wrong about the rarity of Ζηνός, this would not significantly undermine his opinion about the wordplay on Ζηνός, which is an opinion shared by a large part of the scholarship: e.g., Guthrie 1962, 463; Hussey 1972, 36; Claus 1981, 132; Robinson 1987, 102; for the opposing view on the role of Ζηνός in B32 see Kirk 1954, 392, and Marcovich 1967, 445–46; see also Kahn 1979, p. 270 and n. 398.

In fragment B63 Heraclitus speaks of those who "arise" (ἐπανίστασθαι), in some fashion, and "become wakeful watchers of the living and the dead" (φύλακας γίνεσθαι ἐγερτὶ ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν). The passage has come down to us in part corrupt, and its context is lost.[58] The Christian Hippolytus, who preserved this fragment for us, took it to be a reference to the resurrection of the body, which is highly unlikely in the case of Heraclitus, who thinks that it is more fitting to cast away corpses than "shit," κόπριον (B96). Today its language is commonly taken to allude to the golden race of men in Hesiod's story of the five generations of men (*Op.* 109–26, 252–55).[59] This is the first and best generation of men, who lived like gods in their ease of life and strength of body, and whose death was like "sleep" overcoming them (116). After their death they became "pure" or "holy divinities" (τοὶ δαίμονες ἁγνοί, 122), and "immortal watchers of mortal men" (ἀθάνατοι . . . φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων, 253), whose task it is to assure that justice be done. Heraclitus' description, "wakeful watchers of the living and the dead," appears to be a deliberate echo of Hesiod's "immortal watchers of mortal men," and, on the model of Hesiod's story, some scholars take Heraclitus to be referring to a special class of human beings who "arise" from the dead to become "wakeful watchers." Hesiod does not speak of the resurrection of the golden race as their "awakening," but it would seem to be implicit in his description of their death as like a sleep overcoming them (116).

Whatever Heraclitus takes these "watchers" to be exactly, he plainly regards them as living no ordinary sort of life in their capacity as "watchers

58. See Kahn 1979, p. 254 and n. 358, for the difficulty over the opening of B63.

59. Guthrie 1962, 478; Marcovich 1967, 396; West 1971, 153–54; Nussbaum 1972, 168; Kahn 1979, 254–56; Kirk 1983, p. 208 and n. 1; Robinson 1987, 125. Heraclitus might also have found the "golden race" an attractive model, since he correlates gold and fire in B90, and since he would likely credit the superiority of the "wakeful watchers" to the condition of their fiery soul (B118). Nussbaum 1972, 167, questions καὶ νεκρῶν as Hippolytus' unscrupulous addition, and she maintains that he added the phrase in order to make the passage appear to support him in his debate with the members of the Noetian heresy whom he charges with deriving their beliefs on bodily resurrection from the pagan philosopher Heraclitus. Nussbaum holds that in the time of Heraclitus, νεκρός could only mean "corpse." LSJ allows that the plural of νεκρός can mean for Homer "dwellers in the nether world," and it cites Pindar, a younger contemporary of Heraclitus, as using in frag. 203 the adjectival form of νεκρός to describe "dead horses." Nussbaum recognizes in her n. 30 that on four occasions Homer uses the plurals, νεκρῶν (*Od.* 10.526, 11.34, 632) and νεκροί (*Od.* 11.475), to designate the souls of the dead in Hades, but she contends that since these plurals are in line-final position their use for the souls of the dead may be explained away as due to metrical considerations. Yet these references clearly show that Homer will use the plural of νεκρός to mean the "dead," and, no matter what the author of the Homeric poems may have actually believed, his uses of the plural of νεκρός for the "dead" provide precedents for the authors who succeed him. In addition, at *Il.* 23.51 Homer uses the singular of νεκρός at the beginning of a line to designate the soul of the dead Patroclus: . . . ὅσσ' ἐπιεικὲς / νεκρὸν ἔχοντα νέεσθαι ὑπὸ ζόφον ἠερόεντα . . . (". . . what befits / a dead man to have, when he goes beneath the murky darkness. . ."). Achilles is speaking in this passage about what the dead Patroclus deserves for his funeral, and Achilles is describing Patroclus' soul as what is νεκρός in its journey to the underworld. Kahn 1979, 255, renders the νεκρῶν of B63 as "corpses," although he maintains that νεκρός is ambiguous between "corpse" and "dead." He entertains the idea that Heraclitus, who has no respect for "corpses" (B96), is playing on the ambiguity of the whole phrase, ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν, between "the living and the dead" and "living things and inert beings like dumb earth," so that Heraclitus could extend the vigil of the "wakeful watchers" over the "elemental as well as human affairs." As Kahn notes, most translators of B63 render νεκρῶν by "the dead": e.g., Burnet 1930, 141; Diels 1951, 164; Guthrie 1962, 478; Marcovich 1967, 396; Freeman 1971, 29; Kirk 1983, 209; McKirahan 1994, 127. Robinson 1987, 43, and Hussey 1982, 51, like Nussbaum, render the word as "corpses."

of the living and the dead." The evident allusion to Hesiod's golden race of men would suggest that these "watchers" have achieved some level of divinity, and in Heraclitus' description wakefulness is a significant part of their nature. Since wakefulness is the state of those who are in a superior cognitive condition, of those who share in the objective cosmos that is "one and common" (B89), Heraclitus would seem to attribute a feature he ascribes to divine or semi-divine beings also to those "wakeful" humans who have achieved wisdom. The wise, then, among human beings would be like the divine, not simply in their possession of some degree of wisdom, but more vividly in their wakefulness. Since the divine in its wisdom is what may be most fully alive, those humans who are like the divine in their achievement of wisdom would likely lead a life that counts as an enhanced form of existence, something divine or approaching divinity. If for Heraclitus there is no ground between folly and wisdom, the odd consequence follows that there is no place for humans between the subhuman and the superhuman. The human condition only allows human beings to be one or the other.

B63 has been thought to indicate that Heraclitus believes in some version of the resurrection of the dead, since he speaks of the "wakeful watchers" as those who "arise," and especially since he appears to model his "wakeful watchers" on Hesiod's golden race of men.[60] Yet the survival of the souls of the dead is difficult to accommodate within Heraclitus' physics and metaphysics.[61] In sharp contrast with the Homeric view of the soul, Heraclitus holds that souls perish, like everything else, and that in their death, souls are replaced by water (B36, cf. B31, B76).[62] Nothing seems to survive the constant change of the cosmos, except the pattern of the cosmos itself: the "everliving fire" is "kindled in measures and in measures is quenched" (B30). Another reading of B63 is possible, however. These "wakeful watchers" who "arise" in some fashion may be simply those humans who have achieved wisdom in their lifetime. When these humans overcome their ignorance and folly, they may be thought to "arise" from death, as an "awakening" from the "sleep" that counts as their ignorant stupor. In their achievement of wisdom the wise become most fully alive, and as much like the divine as is humanly possible. Therefore, their resemblance to the "holy divinities" of Hesiod's story of the golden race could still be deliberate on Heraclitus' part, and through the resemblance he may mean to indicate the divine-like nature of the wise in their epistemic superiority. Their wakeful watch over the living and the dead may be their correct assessment of all that there is, what would amount to what is covered by the scope of the living and the dead, since the whole of reality might be counted as the "living" and the "dying" of the elements.[63]

60. E.g., West 1971, 153–54; Kahn 1979, 255–56.

61. See Nussbaum (1972) for these difficulties and for a compelling case against Heraclitus' belief in the resurrection of the soul.

62. Nussbaum 1972, 153, stresses the contrast with Homer's conception of ψυχή.

63. Kahn 1979, 255, too allows for the possibility that "living and dead" refers to the condition of the elements and thus that the vigilance of the "wakeful watchers" extends over the general workings of the cosmos (see n. 59 above).

Through the constant exchange of fire, water, and earth for one another in their coming to be and passing away, the "living" of one element is the "death" of another (B36, cf. B62).

The mob is pitiful in its epistemic deprivation. Even though the mass of mankind do not recognize it, they live a life that counts as death, like the souls of the dead as Homer depicts them. They lead a life less than fully human; they are like sleepers, forgetful, blind and deaf, uncomprehending, and incapable of intelligible speech. The life of Heraclitus, of the wise who know, also demands our pity, despite its divine-like nature, since the wise understand their situation, and they recognize only too well that they live surrounded by the intellectually dead. This cannot help but be a frightening situation for the wise, a state of intellectual isolation, which is rarely relieved by coming into contact with another like themselves. In the conclusion of the *Meno* at 100a, Socrates speaks of the man who, because of his knowledge of "virtue," of human excellence, is capable of teaching another to be like himself; this man, Socrates says, would be among the living what Teiresias is among the dead, "he alone has understanding; the others are flitting shadows" (cf. *Od.* 10.495).[64] Heraclitus, and the few like him, share the same plight, that of those whose portion it is to live as the living in the house of Hades.[65]

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64. It is likely that Plato believes with Heraclitus that the life of ordinary, unenlightened human beings is comparable to death in its Homeric representation. In the famous image of the cave in *Republic* 7, the life of ordinary people is located under ground. More important, when Plato describes what those who have been aloft think about the life of the cave dwellers, he puts their thoughts in a paraphrase of the words of the soul of the dead Achilles when he describes his distaste for life in the underworld (*Od.* 11.489–91). He who returns to the cave would prefer to live the life of the servant of a landless man and suffer anything than to have the opinions of the cave dwellers and to live their life (516d–e).

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