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## *Heraclitus and the Identity of Opposites\**

C. J. EMLYN-JONES

**T**he purpose of this paper is to discuss the relationship between opposites which Heraclitus appears to describe in terms of identity or unity. In particular an attempt will be made to determine firstly what Heraclitus means when he says that opposites are τὸ αὐτό or ἓν, and secondly, how far it is correct to interpret this relationship in terms of other elements in Heraclitus' philosophical outlook.

The identity of opposites as such was not influential on the subsequent history of Greek philosophy. Parmenides, in emphasizing the separateness of opposites (albeit as the 'opinion of mortals'), explicitly rejected any idea of their identity and incidentally foreshadowed the separation of opposites in formal logic, from which such notions as the identity of opposites were, by definition, excluded.<sup>1</sup> Anaxagoras based his assertion of the inseparability and, in a sense, the identity of opposites,<sup>2</sup> upon a belief in the infinite divisibility of matter; no piece of matter containing one opposite would entirely exclude others. What Heraclitus appeared to represent as a contradiction was shown by Anaxagoras to be literally true, but, at the same time, explicable on the basis of an original theory of matter.<sup>3</sup> At *Theaetetus* 152 c-e, Plato considered the doctrine that objects simultaneously possess opposite attributes, and linked this doctrine very closely with the doctrine of flux; if everything is always in a process of change

\* I would like to express my gratitude to Professor N. Gulley for valuable criticism of an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>1</sup> DK 28 B 8, 55-58. Discussion of the controversy over the identity of the βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδὲν in B 6, 4 ff. is not necessary here, except to note that even if the passage does not refer to Heraclitus, he would undoubtedly have been included in the condemnation.

<sup>2</sup> DK 59 B 8. Anaxagoras is associated with Heraclitus on this point by Aristotle at *Metaph.* K 1063 b 24, where they both earn his disapproval.

<sup>3</sup> B 6. I am assuming the interpretation of B 4 adopted by J. E. Raven, *The Basis of Anaxagoras' Cosmology*, *C.Q. N.S.* 4 (1954) 123-7, in which the opposites are supposed to exist, as Aristotle thought (*Phys.* A 4, 187 a 22 ff.), alongside other world constituents. For a different interpretation see F. M. Cornford, *Anaxagoras' Theory of Matter*, *C.Q.* 24 (1930) 14-30 and 83-95, and G. Vlastos, *The Physical Theory of Anaxagoras*, *Philos. Rev.*, 59 (1950) 31-57.

an object may with equal validity be described as large and small or heavy and light.

Aristotle believed that Heraclitus, if his doctrine of the identity of opposites was to be taken seriously, had violated a basic law of logic, namely the law of contradiction.<sup>4</sup> The result of this violation, as Aristotle saw it, was that Heraclitus appeared to be stating that the same thing is and is not,<sup>5</sup> that contrary attributes are predicable of the same subject,<sup>6</sup> or that contradictory statements can be true of the same subject.<sup>7</sup> Aristotle said little concerning the unity, as opposed to the identity, of opposites in Heraclitus. This formulation occurred in a number of fragments of Heraclitus, but often associated closely with identity.<sup>8</sup> It is clear that Aristotle had no objection in principle to the idea that opposites could, in certain circumstances, unite, or be called 'one'; at *Metaph.* Δ6, 1015 b 36 ff. he distinguished four senses in which objects might be called 'one', at least one of which might have seemed to Aristotle to be applicable to Heraclitus, namely 'one' through continuity.<sup>9</sup> However, we may note Aristotle's tendency to see identity as a species of unity,<sup>10</sup> reflecting normal Greek usage as far back as Homer.<sup>11</sup> It seems likely that, whatever Heraclitus actually meant, Aristotle assumed that, in asserting the unity of opposites, Heraclitus was actually asserting their identity. Aristotle concludes that one need not assume that Heraclitus was saying what he really believed,<sup>12</sup> or alternatively that he could perhaps have been shown his errors, since he adopted his position in ignorance of what it really implied.<sup>13</sup>

Recent commentators have been more sympathetic. On the one

<sup>4</sup> *Metaph.* Γ 1005 b 17-20.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* b 24-25. Heraclitus did not, as far as we know, make an existential judgment of this kind unless we accept the validity of the second part of DK 22 B 49a, (εἰμέν τε καὶ οὐκ εἰμέν) with e.g. Vlastos, *On Heraclitus*, *A.J.P.* 76 (1955) 343; but see O. Gigon, *Untersuchungen zu Heraclit*, 106 ff. and G. S. Kirk, *Heraclitus: The Cosmic Fragments* (hereafter HCF), 373.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. at *Metaph.* K 1063 b 24.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.* 1062 a 34.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. at B 59 and 60.

<sup>9</sup> This reflects a normal fifth century usage, e.g. Hdt. I, 202, 4, where the Atlantic and Erythraean sea are said to be *μία*, as opposed to the Caspian, which is *ἐπ' ἑωσῆς*.

<sup>10</sup> E.g. at *Top.* 103 a 6 ff.

<sup>11</sup> E.g. *Iliad* 3, 238 ... τῷ μοι *μία* γείνατο μήτηρ.

<sup>12</sup> E.g. at *Metaph.* Γ 1005 b 25-26.

<sup>13</sup> *Ib.* K 1062 a 31 ff.

hand, it has been recognised that Heraclitus' assertion of the identity of opposites was a significant step in the development of logic; as W. K. C. Guthrie puts it: "By boldly stating the absurd consequences of neglecting them (sc. logical distinctions) he unintentionally paved the way for their recognition".<sup>14</sup> This implies, however, that this aspect of Heraclitus' thought is significant merely in terms of what succeeded it; it provided a situation from which philosophy had eventually to be extricated. Alternatively, it has been suggested that Heraclitus believed that the doctrine of the identity of opposites was a serious truth, but that he expressed himself imprecisely. This is the view of M. Marcovich: "... die Opposita sind nicht immer logische Gegensätze, sondern vielmehr Extreme . . . oder sogar keine Gegensätze".<sup>15</sup> Somewhat the same view is taken by G. S. Kirk. He believes that Aristotle's charges of violation of the law of contradiction "... are relevant to the imprecise expression, but not the real intention of Heraclitus' assertions of the coincidence of opposites".<sup>16</sup>

This separation of expression and intention in the case of Heraclitus seems reminiscent of Aristotle's distinction between *διάνοια* and 'obscure' expression in a number of early thinkers.<sup>17</sup> The views quoted above have in common the belief that Heraclitus cannot be taken to mean precisely what he says; the fragments stating the identity of opposites are therefore to be interpreted in a way which makes them logically acceptable.

As a consequence, the identity of opposites has traditionally been connected closely with other elements in Heraclitus' outlook. For example, while it has long been accepted that Heraclitean fire is not a substratum or *ἀρχή*, as Aristotle evidently supposed,<sup>18</sup> it has recently been suggested that, of his predecessors, Heraclitus is most plausibly to be associated with Anaximenes. Just as Anaximenes explained the physical opposites as modifications of one primary substance, so the opposites whose identity or unity Heraclitus stated are all 'the same'

<sup>14</sup> *History of Greek Philosophy*, I, 443.

<sup>15</sup> 'Herakleitos' RE Suppl. 10, Col. 286 f. See also M. Marcovich, *Heraclitus, A Greek Text with a Short Commentary* (hereafter Marcovich), 158-9.

<sup>16</sup> HCF, 94.

<sup>17</sup> Aristotle makes this distinction explicitly in the case of Empedocles at *Metaph.* A 985 a 4-6, and implicitly in many other instances.

<sup>18</sup> *Ib.* 984 a 7-8, followed by Theophrastus. On this, see J. B. McDiarmid, *Theophrastus on the Presocratic Causes*, *H.S.C.P.* 61 (1953) 94.

by virtue of the fact that they are all modifications of fire.<sup>19</sup> On this interpretation, the identity of opposites is to be closely connected with, and, in fact, explained by, Heraclitus' cosmological doctrine of fire.<sup>20</sup>

Related to this is the interpretation of the identity of opposites in terms of the doctrine of flux.<sup>21</sup> Everything is both itself and its opposite because all things are in constant flux.<sup>22</sup> The causal connection of the identity of opposites with the doctrine of flux does not occur in the extant fragments of Heraclitus; the tendency, moreover, of Plato to connect these two elements in a causal relationship<sup>23</sup> arouses suspicion of the authenticity of the connection in the case of Heraclitus. However, a more restricted interpretation which connects the identity of opposites with their inevitable mutual succession in easily recognisable natural phenomena has some support in the fragments, e.g. in DK 22 B 57, 126 and 88. B 88 is of cardinal importance in the present discussion. ταῦτό τ' ἐνι ζῶν καὶ τεθνηκὸς καὶ [τὸ] ἐγρηγορὸς καὶ καθευδὸν καὶ νέον καὶ γηραιόν· τὰδε γὰρ μεταπεσόντα ἐκεῖνά ἐστι κάκεινα πάλιν μεταπεσόντα ταῦτα.<sup>24</sup> Taken as it stands, this fragment is unique

<sup>19</sup> See G. Vlastos, *Equality and Justice in Early Greek Cosmologies*, *Class. Phil.* 42 (1947) 165.

<sup>20</sup> M. L. West, *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient*, 138-40, sees Heraclitus' identity or unity of opposites primarily in terms of cosmological differentiation.

<sup>21</sup> This raises the important question of whether Heraclitus actually proposed a 'Flusslehre'. There are two extremely thorny problems connected with this question: 1) Did Plato correctly derive his attribution of the flux doctrine to Heraclitus from the original fragments or from the more extreme position of Cratylus? (On this see G. S. Kirk, *The Problem of Cratylus*, *A.J.P.* 72 (1951) 239 ff, and HCF, 370 ff. Kirk's conclusions are questioned by G. Vlastos, *A.J.P.* 76 (1955) 338 ff.) 2) Which of the extant 'River fragments' is genuine? (See Kirk HCF, 366-384 and Vlastos *op. cit.* 338-344). Leaving these aside, it does seem that a number of fragments, e.g. B 125, do presuppose a doctrine of flux. In any case, Kirk's distinction between "universality of change" and "constancy of change" (*Natural Change in Heraclitus*, *Mind* 60 (1951) 37) seems more a question of emphasis than radical difference of interpretation, since it would surely be admitted that Kirk is correct in implying that 1) Heraclitus would not have taken such a doctrine to logical extremes, and 2) Stability of a special kind was a central feature of Heraclitus' doctrine.

<sup>22</sup> See H. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy*, 380.

<sup>23</sup> E.g. at *Theaetetus* 182 e.

<sup>24</sup> Text and punctuation of the fragments of Heraclitus will be quoted from DK 6th. or later eds. In B 88 γ' ἐνι is accepted by Wilamowitz as a corruption of γένει, a post-Aristotelian gloss on ταῦτό, and therefore to be omitted. DK omit all articles to avoid inconsistency, but against MSS. evidence. The final phrase τὰδε... ταῦτα is omitted by Wilamowitz (*Lesefrüchte*, *Hermes* 62 (1927) 276), as an appended explanation by a later source.

in the extant remains of Heraclitus as the only example of an assertion of the identity of various pairs of opposites followed by a logical explanation of that assertion. The opposites are stated to be 'the same' on the grounds that they invariably succeed one another. Theoretical statements of this kind are rare in Heraclitus, who preferred to explain, if at all, in imagistic terms (e.g. B 67). Leaving aside, for the moment, the question of how opposites related in terms of mutual succession can be called 'the same thing', it is necessary to consider the text, and especially the final clause, which has come under suspicion. The word μεταπίπτειν, which occurs in several later Presocratics, is found earlier only in this one context. The word occurs especially in Melissus (DK 30 B 8) in a context which makes it possible that a reference to Heraclitus is intended. The author wishes to demonstrate the fallibility of the senses, on the grounds that they admit the inadmissible, namely change, which occurs between opposites. In doing this he seems to refer to previous physical theories which stressed such changes, and especially the reciprocity of living with dead and hot with cold. Kirk is inclined to think that Melissus was here referring directly to Heraclitus when he stated that ... τὸ ζῶον ἀποθνήσκειν καὶ ἐκ μὴ ζῶντος γίνεσθαι, πάντα ἑτεροιοῦσθαι... καὶ μεταπίπτειν ἐκ τοῦ ἐκάστοτε ὀρωμένου.<sup>25</sup> However the mutual succession of hot and cold was a commonplace of early cosmology and also a natural seasonal phenomenon characteristic of the world whose reality Melissus wished to deny. The reciprocal movement of life and death is likely to have been a widespread belief from an early period, perhaps associated with Orphism. At least, the idea was traditional enough to be regarded by Plato as a παλαιὸς λόγος (*Phaedo* 70 c), which is a probable reference to Orphic doctrine.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, in the fragment of Melissus, the idea of change between opposites is presented as an immediately apprehensible everyday phenomenon (δοκεῖ δὲ ἡμῖν...) rather than a philosophical doctrine derived from his predecessors. Heraclitus is therefore a possible, but not a probable source for Melissus. With regard to μεταπίπτειν, if the reference is to Heraclitus, it seems most plausible to suppose that Melissus was using the word to describe what he assumed to be the meaning of Heraclitus, and that this word, along with ἑτεροιοῦσθαι, was a comparative neologism unlikely to have been used before Parmenides.

<sup>25</sup> DK 30 B 8 (3-4). HCF, 140.

<sup>26</sup> See the note of R. Hackforth, Plato's *Phaedo*, *ad loc.*

The matter obviously remains conjectural, but it may be noted that Plato (*Cratylus* 440 a-b) in describing the impossibility of truly knowing that which is continually in motion, used the word μεταπίπτειν and attributed the idea of continual change to the 'Heracliteans'. It seems probable that the last clause of B 88 could have been added by a later source either in explanation of Heraclitus or under the impression that the original text was being restored. In view of the 'explanation' of change between opposites in Melissus and Plato and the difficulty of the fragment without the final clause, such an addition to the text of Heraclitus would have been highly motivated.

If the authenticity of the final clause of B 88, or merely of μεταπίπτειν is in doubt, it is possible that in none of the extant fragments did Heraclitus give a logical explanation of his assertion of the identity or unity of opposites. In the case of B 88 we are left with the simple statement that "there is present as the same thing living and dead, waking and sleeping and young and old". Even without the explicit reference in the final clause, the obvious relationship between the opposites in each of these pairs is one of succession, by virtue of which, one assumes, Heraclitus called them "the same". This, at least, is the only obvious interpretation of νέον καὶ γηραιόν.<sup>27</sup> However, two important questions arise from this. Firstly, in what sense are these, or any opposites, 'the same thing'? Secondly, how can an apparent statement of identity refer to opposites whose relationship appears to be something else?

It has usually been assumed that the meaning of τὸ αὐτό should not be pressed too hard, and that what Heraclitus intended to represent is not identity so much as unity or essential connection.<sup>28</sup> It has also been supposed that, in contrast to Aristotle, Heraclitus' understanding and employment of such terms as τὸ αὐτό was vague, and that, in the words of Kirk "... identity for him did not have the rigid connotation of oneness and inseparability which it has had since Aristotle".<sup>29</sup> However, Aristotle's own analyses of 'the same' and 'one' in the *Metaphysics* and elsewhere make it clear that he was fully aware

<sup>27</sup> Sleeping and waking are also related paradoxically in B 1 (final sentence) to describe the state of men who witness, but are unable to comprehend, the Logos. Living and dead are also juxtaposed in the very difficult B 62, but the exact relationship intended is obscure (see Marcovich, 241 and G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 210).

<sup>28</sup> E.g. by Kirk, HCF, 121, 143.

<sup>29</sup> *Ib.* 93.

of the different meanings which these words could carry.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, Heraclitus does not show that he was aware of these distinctions. Moreover, a belief that words have a fixed meaning is characteristic of certain early periods of thought, and especially archaic Greece.<sup>31</sup> With regard to τὸ αὐτό, what is important is not how the words may be reconciled with logic by post-Aristotelian scholars, but how they were understood by Heraclitus and his contemporaries. Indeed, the assertion that opposites form a unity or that they are 'connected' does not seem strikingly original or controversial. What is both striking and controversial is the assertion that they are the same thing. It seems clear that it is in this second sense that Parmenides understood τὸ αὐτό at DK 28 B 8, 56-58:

τῆ μὲν φλογὸς αἰθέριον πῦρ,  
 ἥπιον δὲν, μέγ' [ἄραιόν] ἔλαφρόν, ἕωυτῶ πάντοσε τωῦτόν,  
 τῶ δ' ἑτέρῳ μὴ τωῦτόν·

Whether or not this was a specific polemic against Heraclitus, Parmenides was clearly concerned to refute the doctrine of the identity of opposites by emphasizing that the basic principles of Parmenides' dualistic cosmogony, fire and night, are totally separate from each other. If τὸ αὐτό is not understood in a specific sense, with the implication of identity, the polemic has little point. Quite apart from this one example from a near-contemporary of Heraclitus, there are no instances in the Presocratics as a whole or in non-philosophical literature in which αὐτός can mean 'connected'.<sup>32</sup> We may conclude that Heraclitus meant, and was understood by his contemporaries to mean, precisely what he said. Indeed, the general silence on this aspect of Heraclitus' thought among his successors and above all the absence of any tendency to interpret αὐτός in any 'loose' sense, are perhaps a measure of the degree to which Heraclitus' paradox of the identity of opposites was taken at face value.

In order to attempt to answer the first of the questions posed above, in which it was asked in what sense opposites are 'the same', it is necessary briefly to consider the language and style of Heraclitus' fragments. It has long been established that the language of the fragments themselves can often be separated from a later context on stylistic grounds, since elements are displayed which are largely absent from 'normal' prose style, and which have more in common with

<sup>30</sup> See especially M. C. Stokes, *One and Many in Presocratic Philosophy*, 7-21.

<sup>31</sup> See R. Robinson, *Ambiguity*, *Mind* 50 (1941) 140 ff.

<sup>32</sup> See DK Register s.v. αὐτός (Identität) and LSJ s.v. αὐτός I, 11.

poetic language, for example, an elliptical mode of utterance, a deliberate and careful use of rhythmic and phonetic patterns and a preference for concrete images rather than logical explanations.<sup>33</sup> In particular Heraclitus frequently used a paradoxical form of words, especially, it seems, in characterising the attitude of the majority of men to the truth which he was revealing, e.g. in B 34: ἀξύνετοι ἀκούσαντες κωφοῖσιν εἰόκασι· φάτις αὐτοῖσιν μαρτυρεῖ παρεόντας ἀπειῖναι. Again, B 17: οὐ γὰρ φρονέουσι τοιαῦτα πολλοί, ὀκόσοι ἐγκυρεῦσιν, οὐδὲ μαθόντες γινώσκουσιν, ἐωυτοῖσι δὲ δοκέουσι.<sup>34</sup> In the opening fragment of the collection (B 1) the failure of men to comprehend what he teaches is specifically stated: ... γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰόκασι, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὀκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῦμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔχει. The language of all these fragments is deliberately paradoxical, and reflects a paradox existing in reality, namely the inability of the majority of men to comprehend that with which they are most familiar. The exact nature of the truth which Heraclitus was revealing is normally associated with the word 'Logos', the exact meaning of which has been a matter of some discussion. It seems most probable that the Logos is in some sense the principle according to which the world is organised (since one of the basic meanings of the root from which λόγος is derived is 'gathering' or 'choosing', and from which comes the idea of 'measure' or 'orderly relationship') and at the same time the word is associated with the discourse of Heraclitus (since another basic meaning of the root is 'account' or 'narration').<sup>35</sup> Most scholars have given varied emphasis to one or other of these two basic meanings,<sup>36</sup> and the point has been made, e.g. by W. J. Verdenius, that, for

<sup>33</sup> See B. Snell, *Die Sprache Heraklits*, *Hermes*, 61 (1926) 357 ff.

<sup>34</sup> See also B 72.

<sup>35</sup> M. L. West (*op. cit.* 124-129) has recently attempted to show that the Logos is nowhere intended to mean more than merely the discourse of Heraclitus (following J. Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 133 n. 1, and H. W. J. Surig, *De betekenis van Logos bij Herakleitos volgens de traditie en de fragmenten*, Nijmegen 1951), but fails to remove the difficulty of the contrast between Heraclitus and his 'word' in B 50.

<sup>36</sup> Kirk (HCF, 37-40) seems to give the connection of Logos with the idea of narration or discourse too little emphasis, while U. Hölscher's translation 'richtige Rede' or 'vernünfte Überlegung' (*Anfängliches Fragen*, 130-136) seems to stress too little the rôle of Logos as an autonomous principle of order, although he makes the valuable point that Heraclitus' paradoxical style reflects the paradoxical nature of his truth.

Heraclitus, there was no fundamental difference between the meaning of his doctrine and the order in the real world.<sup>37</sup>

One fragment which seems to indicate a paradox associated with Heraclitus' conception of the Logos is B 32: ἐν τὸ σοφὸν μόνον λέγεσθαι οὐκ ἐθέλει καὶ ἐθέλει Ζηγὸς ὄνομα. There are a number of difficulties of interpretation here, concerned mainly with the translation of the first five words.<sup>38</sup> However, whether or not the pun on ζῆν is accepted, it seems clear that the paradox may be associated with Heraclitus' difficulty in dissociating his Zeus from the god of myth. Rather than a rational explanation, or the separation of logical and mythical levels of conception, Heraclitus prefers the contradiction to stand. Further examples may help to clarify this point. Referring yet again to the ignorance of the majority of men, Heraclitus says: (B 28) δοκέοντα γὰρ ὁ δοκιμώτατος γινώσκει, φυλάσσει. Here the paradox (reinforced by a superlative) is obtained by the use of different forms of the same word to convey opposite meanings.<sup>39</sup> Another fragment, referring almost certainly to the human search for the logos, displays a characteristic juxtaposition of a word with its negative, to reflect the paradoxical nature of the quest, i.e. B 18: ἐὰν μὴ ἔλπηται, ἀνέλπιστον οὐκ ἐξευρήσει, ἀνεξερεύνητον ἐὸν καὶ ἄπορον. The paradox is sharpened if one punctuates after, rather than before, ἀνέλπιστον.<sup>40</sup> Absence of agreement among editors as to the correct punctuation suggests that the possibility entertained by Gigon, that ἀνέλπιστον may be taken ἀπὸ κοινοῦ cannot be entirely dismissed.<sup>41</sup>

It is important that these paradoxes should not be viewed through Aristotelian eyes. The conscious use of contradiction as a rhetorical or dialectical weapon belonged properly to the period of the Sophists, and had its most elaborate formulation in the *Δισσοὶ Λόγοι* (DK 90), an anonymous sophistical essay written after the Peloponnesian War. Aristotle in *De Sophisticis Elenchis* treated contradiction, paradox

<sup>37</sup> Notes on the Presocratics, *Mnemosyne* 13 (1947) 277, and Der Logosbegriff bei Heraklit und Parmenides I, *Phronesis* 11 (1966) 81-98.

<sup>38</sup> See Kirk, HCF, 392-395 and Stokes, *op. cit.* 106 n. 75 (300).

<sup>39</sup> The pun is maintained in translation by P. Wheelwright, *Heraclitus*, 83: "Even he who is most in repute knows only what is reputed...".

<sup>40</sup> So J. Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 4th ed. 133. W. J. Verdenius, Notes on the Presocratics, *Mnemosyne*, 13 (1947) 279 n. 52. Kirk, HCF, 231, Marcovich, 38.

<sup>41</sup> Gigon, *op. cit.* 2, cites also ἀελ in B 1, but this is dismissed by Kirk HCF, 34 n. 1 and Verdenius *loc. cit.* on the grounds that the parallels cited are not convincing.

and ambiguity exclusively from a logical and dialectical standpoint. In a discussion of fallacies common in argument, he distinguished a number of different methods of producing an illusion of validity, among them ἀμφιβολία and ὁμωνυμία, and demonstrated with examples how ambiguity or flat contradiction might result.<sup>42</sup> Aristotle's belief that these methods cannot be employed seriously arose from his assumption that ambiguity and paradox were species of ἀσάφεια, and therefore a per version of logic; he therefore assumed that examples of such figures were either unintentional, and so the result of incompetence, or deliberate, and so employed for purposes of equivocation.<sup>43</sup> The standpoint from which he tackled the subject made it impossible for him to see paradox or ambiguity except in terms of a subsequent explanation, and so resolution.<sup>44</sup> As his discussion makes clear, he was aware of the distinction between names, which are finite in number, and their corresponding objects which are infinite. The same name or expression must therefore necessarily signify a number of different things, with the consequence that the ignorant (οἱ μὴ δεινοὶ τὰς ψήφους φέρειν) are deceived by the resulting ambiguities, and the experts are able to use them to their own advantage.<sup>45</sup>

It is immediately obvious that this has very little relevance to Heraclitus since, on this point at least, he and Aristotle were inhabiting different worlds. It has long been recognised that Heraclitus' contradictions, paradoxes and ambiguities were neither involuntary nor rhetorical. However it has perhaps not always been appreciated to what extent he saw them as a serious reflection of reality, and above all, of the identity of opposites. To take the well-known B 48: τῷ οὖν τόξῳ ὄνομα βίος, ἔργον δὲ θάνατος. The near-resemblance (identity in all but accent) of βίος and βιός is used to identify two opposites which are normally regarded as radically opposed, i.e. life and the death-dealing weapon, the bow. It has been well established that, for Heraclitus, as for Aeschylus, the connection between names and their corresponding objects was not trivial but often highly significant.<sup>46</sup> In this particular example the polar ambiguity of name and function reflects a polar ambiguity existing in the world. The bow contains simultaneously the two opposites life and death. In this context it is

<sup>42</sup> *De Soph. El.* 165 b 30 ff. and 166 a 7 ff.

<sup>43</sup> *Rhet.* 1404 b 2.

<sup>44</sup> *De Soph. El.* 165 b 34 ff.

<sup>45</sup> *Ib.* 165 a 11 ff.

<sup>46</sup> On this aspect of Heraclitus, see Kirk, HCF, 117-120.

important to note that Heraclitus made no attempt to explain, or otherwise resolve his paradox. Hence the question of how the two opposites are united does not really admit of an answer, since the identity of life and death is not a rational conclusion based upon an argument but an immediate and intuitive apprehension based upon the significant juxtaposition of words similar in form but, potentially at least, opposite in meaning. To those few who are not ἀξύνετοι, i.e. to those who perceive the point of the riddle, the statement is exhaustive and self-explanatory. Kirk places this fragment in a category whose members demonstrate the unity of opposites on the grounds that “the same observer may ascribe opposing attributes to the same object, in certain special cases, because different applications or aspects of the object are being considered”.<sup>47</sup> On the evidence of this fragment, at least, this seems to introduce distinctions which do not exist. Certainly, observers are relevant to the extent that they make the discovery, but the actual association of the opposites, far from being merely an “aspect” of reality, is objectively established as a truth quite apart from human apprehension of it.

The subordination of argument to paradox is perhaps best demonstrated in B 15, where the identity of opposites is explicitly stated: εἰ μὴ γὰρ Διονύσω πομπὴν ἐποιούντο καὶ ὕμνον ἄσμα αἰδοίοισιν, ἀναιδέστατα εἴργαστ’ ἄν· ὡπτός δὲ Ἄϊδης καὶ Διόνυσος, ὅτεω μαίνονται καὶ ληναίζουσιν. The two sentences which form this fragment both contain paradoxes. In the first, it is stated that the failure to celebrate phallic rites in honour of Dionysus is itself most shameful.<sup>48</sup> In the second, by asserting that Dionysus and Hades are the same, Heraclitus (perhaps reflecting traditional belief<sup>49</sup>) is identifying the god of fertility and life with the god of death. The problem of interpretation in this fragment concerns firstly the relationship which may be assumed between the two sentences, and secondly, in what sense Dionysus and Hades may be said to be ὡπτός. The first sentence suggests that what is most shameful is also most to be revered (since omission of it is described as ἀναιδέστατα).<sup>50</sup> This paradox is accom-

<sup>47</sup> HCF, 87.

<sup>48</sup> So A. Lesky, Dionysos und Hades, *Wiener Stud.* 54 (1936) 25, followed by Marcovich, 253. Alternatively, the εἰ μὴ may refer only to Dionysus; so Kirk and Raven *op. cit.* 246. The former interpretation would sharpen the paradox.

<sup>49</sup> Marcovich, 254. Lesky, *op. cit.* 27 ff. believes, on the other hand, that Dionysus was not to be traditionally connected with Death at this time.

<sup>50</sup> See P. Merlan, Ambiguity in Heraclitus, *Actes du XIème Congrès international de philosophie*, 12 (1953) 58.

panied by a word-play on ἄσμα, αἰδοίουσιν and ἀναιδέστατα, and αἰδοίουσιν itself may also contain a polar ambiguity in association with αἰδοῖος. The juxtaposition of these latter two represents a further example of formal identity in words of opposite meaning. However, Heraclitus has given the paradox a further twist by stating that it is the *omission* of αἰδοῖα which is ἀναιδέστατα. Moreover, there is a fairly obvious link, through word-play, with the second sentence. Dionysus and Hades are demonstrably 'the same' because Dionysus is αἶδης (i.e. not ἀναίδης).<sup>51</sup> The pun on 'Αἶδης, which is surely deliberate, is the crux of the whole fragment, since it simultaneously shows why the omission of the Dionysiac rites, rather than their performance, is ἀναιδέστατα, and also enables Διόνυσος to be formally identified with 'Αἶδης (in the sense that his rites are sanctified) and at the same time opposed to him (in the sense that they are concerned with αἰδοῖα). The polar ambiguity of αἰδώς was clearly noted by Euripides (*Hippolytus* 385 ff.) as an instance of a lack of precision inherent in language. For Heraclitus, however, it demonstrated, in a wholly legitimate way, the identity of opposites. The sanctity of shameless rites is therefore not an absurd contradiction arising from the erroneous belief of mortals,<sup>52</sup> but is here given objective truth which is revealed through the words used to describe it.<sup>53</sup>

The variety of relationships exposed in this fragment is impossible to reproduce in translation owing to the compression of utterance possible in a linguistic milieu where puns could be regarded as in themselves revealing a serious philosophic truth. It is significant that many of Heraclitus' puns and word-plays involve the ambiguity of polar relationships.<sup>54</sup> It is also revealing that the majority of these paradoxes and ambiguities occur in fragments which appear to be describing the relationship of men to the Universe, rather than in those which deal with cosmological or other natural phenomena.

<sup>51</sup> See Verdenius, Heraclitus B 82-83 and 15, *Mnemosyne* 25 (1959) 297.

<sup>52</sup> Marcovich, 254 interprets the first part of the fragment as the result of the erroneous belief of men, i.e. men insist on celebrating only Dionysus when Dionysus and Hades are inseparable. This interpretation ignores the word-play which links the two sentences.

<sup>53</sup> A similar interpretation may be possible for B 5, where the apparent absurdity of rites of purification may hide a similar paradox, namely that it is the same thing, namely blood, which stains and purifies. On this see Merlan *loc. cit.*

<sup>54</sup> This is not always the case, e.g. notably B 50 (ὁμολογεῖν) and B 114 (ξὺν νόῳ... τῷ ξυνῶ). However these two fragments are nevertheless closely concerned with the link between man and the Logos.

This suggests what was perhaps already realised in antiquity, namely that the description of natural phenomena is, for Heraclitus, essentially subordinate to a preoccupation with man and his relationship with the underlying principles which govern his existence.<sup>55</sup>

It seems to follow from this that paradox and ambiguity, as revealed in Heraclitus' utterance, are in no sense peripheral or complementary to a study of the relationship between opposites, but may well be of central importance. This conclusion perhaps enables us to give a partial answer to the first of the questions posed earlier, which concerned the sense in which opposites are 'the same thing'. Opposites which are formally identified in words of similar form but contrary meaning are literally 'the same', e.g. in B 15 *ὡυτός* means exactly what it says, whatever conclusions we may draw from the fact of the identity.

It seems possible that this, rather than any logical inferences drawn from observation of physical or cosmological changes, may represent the ultimate origin of Heraclitus' startling assertion of the identity of opposites. At least, such a hypothesis would account in some measure for the lack of conventional explanation of assertions with regard to opposites, which in antiquity gave Heraclitus his celebrated reputation for obscurity. The assertion was, in a sense, its own explanation, since the relationship between opposites was displayed as self-evident in language, which, he believed, reflected the structure of reality. Explanation was neither necessary nor even possible.

However, this hypothesis must be reconciled with the second question posed above, in which it was asked how an assertion or implication of identity could characterise a relationship which, on the face of it, appears to be something else. An attempt to answer this question involves consideration of the remaining 'opposite-fragments' of Heraclitus, to which we now turn.

There are two remaining fragments in which the identity of opposites is explicitly stated, B 59 and 60.<sup>56</sup> At first sight these two fragments do not appear to present problems with regard to the meaning of *ὡυτός*. First, B 60: *ὀδδός ἄνω κάτω μία καὶ ὡυτή*. If we assume, following K. Reinhardt and Kirk,<sup>57</sup> that the cosmological interpretation derived

<sup>55</sup> See Diog. L. (quoting Diodotus): ἀκριβὲς οὐάκισμα πρὸς σταθμὴν βίου.

<sup>56</sup> Stokes, *op. cit.* 90 n. 13 (291) is surely correct (*contra* Marcovich, 213) when he assumes that B 12 is not another example of the coincidence of opposites, since it differs from all the other statements of this kind.

<sup>57</sup> Heraklits Lehre vom Feuer, *Hermes* 77 (1942) 16 ff. Kirk, HCF, 109-112.

from Theophrastus<sup>58</sup> is incorrect, we are still left to decide what the point of this fragment really is. On the face of it, the assertion would appear to be a truism which is on the point of banality.<sup>59</sup> It seems self-evident that ἄνω κάτω are to be identified by virtue of their physical identity in the road. However, it is important to consider not only the significance of the fragment in terms of Aristotelian logic but also the impact which Heraclitus supposedly intended for his audience. It seems likely that the opposites were conceived in some way as having separate and objective existence which made the assertion of their identity a paradox.<sup>60</sup> If we then speak of a logical ‘mistake’ (which, in a sense, we are perfectly entitled to do) we run the risk not only of anachronism but of missing the point of the fragment. For Heraclitus it is the paradox and not the resolution on a logical level which is important. A very similar argument may be applied to B 59: γναφείω ὁδὸς εὐθεῖα καὶ σκολιή· μία ἐστὶ, καὶ ἡ αὐτή.<sup>61</sup> Whatever the correct text here, an ordinary activity is unexpectedly revealed as a paradox. Slightly different in form, although undoubtedly the same in essence, is B 103: ξυγὸν γὰρ ἀρχὴ καὶ πέρασ ἐπὶ κύκλου περιφερείας.<sup>62</sup> On this occasion, the opposites are common, perhaps indicating that any point on a circle may be a beginning or an end. As in the case of the previous two fragments, the obvious nature of the example should not blind us to the paradoxical element. Heraclitus is not, *pace* Kirk, stating that “... apparent opposites are, in certain cases and from certain aspects, the same”,<sup>63</sup> but that (genuine) opposites are (unequivocally) common.

In B 61, Heraclitus again takes an example of opposites occurring in the experience of ordinary men: θάλασσα ὕδωρ καθαρῶτατον καὶ μιαρῶτατον, ἰχθύσι μὲν πότιμον καὶ σωτήριον, ἀνθρώποις δὲ ἄποτον καὶ ὀλέθριον. Two opposites are asserted to be true of the same subject, although they are not themselves asserted to be ‘the same’.<sup>64</sup> These

<sup>58</sup> Diog. L. 9, 8-9.

<sup>59</sup> For this reason among others, the cosmological interpretation of B 60 has recently been advocated by Vlastos, *op. cit.* 349 n. 26.

<sup>60</sup> The objective existence of ἄνω κάτω as opposites is asserted, on other grounds, by A. Rivier, *L’homme et l’expérience humaine dans les fragments d’Héraclite*, *Mus. Helv.* 13 (1956) 155 n. 41.

<sup>61</sup> γραφείων cod. Kirk. γνάφων Marcovich.

<sup>62</sup> Kirk omits περιφερείας (following Bywater and Wilamowitz) plausibly, (HCF, 113) but upholds ἐπὶ κύκλου (*contra* Wilamowitz).

<sup>63</sup> HCF, 115.

<sup>64</sup> This fragment could have been the target of Aristotle’s criticism at *Metaph.* K 1063 b 24 (see n. 6 above).

opposites are discovered as a result of the differing experiences of men and fish. It seems consistent with the evidence of the fragment to assume that the polarity does not owe its existence to these 'observers', but exists quite independently of them. They have a subsidiary, demonstrative rôle.<sup>65</sup> There is no indication of a causal relationship between the two clauses in the text, (i.e., we cannot translate as if we could read ἰχθύσι γάρ...<sup>66</sup> It is also worth noting that this interpretation of the opposites as having independent, objective and concrete existence in the sea is consistent with what we know about Heraclitus' attitude to his fellow men. He is continually at pains to emphasize the gap which exists between men and reality, although they are intimately acquainted with its everyday, practical results and hear Heraclitus' teaching, usually without understanding (B 1). So in B 61, although various observers in (this case men and fish) are quite familiar with different aspects of sea-water, it would not therefore be correct to suppose that this experience determines the reality of the opposites in sea-water.

Kirk classifies B 61 with two other fragments under the heading of fragments in which "the opposites are 'the same' relative to different observers".<sup>67</sup> These two other fragments are B 9: ἔνους σύρματ' ἄν ἐλέσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ χρυσόν, and B 13 ἕες βορβόρω ἤδονται μᾶλλον ἢ καθαροῦ ὕδατι. In these what is undoubtedly emphasized is relativity of preference, and this constitutes the point in each of the fragments; however it is precisely in this respect that they appear to differ from B 61. Moreover, if we reject a hypothetical link between these latter fragments and B 61 (a link which seems to depend entirely upon an

<sup>65</sup> Kirk (Men and Opposites in Heraclitus, *Mus. Helv.* 14 (1957) 155 ff.) interprets the fragment in a way which allows greater importance to observers: "... a contrariety arises from the comparison of a relationship men: sea-water with a relationship fish: sea-water. These relationships are seen to be in some respects opposed; yet a unity between them is supplied by the common factor, sea-water" (*Ib.* 157). Since Kirk naturally rejects the fully relativist interpretation, this half-way position is difficult to understand, especially since the text seems to give no grounds for it (see following note). Rivier (against whom Kirk is directing his remarks) seems nearer the mark when he says (*op. cit.* 145 n. 2): "La mer y est saisie directement dans sa double et objective qualification (comme le montre aussi le mouvement du texte); les hommes et les poissons viennent à titre subsidiaire expliciter le contenu de la thèse."

<sup>66</sup> As it stands, the second clause (ἰχθύσι μὲν ... ἀνθρώποις δὲ) merely indicates *the result* of the assertion in the first clause.

<sup>67</sup> HCF, 72.

assumption of a “human standard” as a factor which determines the nature of the opposites) B 9 and 13 can be interpreted equally convincingly as an estimate by Heraclitus of the worth of his fellow men.<sup>68</sup>

In B 61 the opposites καθαρώτατον and μαρώτατον are stated succinctly and in unqualified terms at the beginning of the fragment. If we take the text as it stands, without qualifications, Heraclitus appears to be emphasizing the paradox which is involved in the simultaneous assertion of these opposites. It follows from this that the assertion of the unity of the opposites in the sea water is no more fundamental than an assertion of their contrariety with regard to each other.<sup>69</sup>

Somewhat similar is B 58: οἱ γοῦν ἰατροί, ἐπαιτέονται μὴδὲν ἄξιοι μισθὸν λαμβάνειν, ταῦτὰ ἐργαζόμενοι.<sup>70</sup> A paradox exists by virtue of the good and evil elements in pain inflicted in the course of surgery. Whatever the status of doctors and Heraclitus’ opinion of them, the wounds inflicted in the course of surgery are designed to effect a cure. Bearing in mind the particular difficulty of the text, this paradox exists not merely in the experience of doctors and patients. Either main interpretation of the fragment (see above n. 70) makes the point that neither doctors nor patients are entirely aware of the paradoxical elements in their mutual experience. Consequently doctors either demand a fee without justification, or (on the other interpretation) are themselves treated unfairly by being underpaid. In either case, it is the widespread ignorance of the significance of pain which cures pain which Heraclitus wishes to emphasize here. Men experience the pain, or they inflict it, but they do not understand fully what is happening. On the other hand recognition of the paradox does not

<sup>68</sup> See E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, 6th ed. by W. Nestle, I.1.794, and Guthrie, *op. cit.* 412. There are a number of low estimates by Heraclitus of his fellow men, e.g. B 29, 39, 104, 121, 125 a.

<sup>69</sup> *Contra* Kirk, *Mus. Helv.* 14 (1957) 157 n. 7.

<sup>70</sup> The text is confused by Hippolytus’ interpolations. Kirk reads (after Bywater and Zeller) ἐπαιτιῶνται μὴδὲν ἄξιον, which partially restores the MS. reading. This suggests that doctors complain that they do not receive a worthy fee for what they do, while DK suggests that doctors, although they demand a fee, do not deserve it. (On this see further Kirk, HCF 88-91). The other crux is exceedingly difficult. Hippolytus adds, at the end of his quotation, τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰς νόσους, emended by Wilamowitz to καὶ αἱ νόσοι. Kirk retains MS. ταῦτα, which seems a simple and effective solution, since it leaves the paradox to speak for itself, whichever reading is accepted for the first clause.

bring about a resolution, since the mystery of the coincidence of opposites (here, in a sense, 'identical') remains.

The subject of B 111 is sickness and health: νοῦσος ὑγίειην ἐποίησεν ἡδὺ καὶ ἀγαθόν, λιμὸς κόρον, κάματος ἀνάπαυσιν. In this fragment Heraclitus records a common experience. Here and elsewhere in Heraclitus it is clear that, though opposites are not considered to be entirely relative to the experiencing subject,<sup>71</sup> nevertheless the experience of men is of importance in the discovery of the connection between opposites. However, it is unlikely that he wished merely to focus attention on a fact which every man could recognise for himself. The idea that sickness etc. is instrumental in causing the enjoyment of its opposite was stated with a deliberately paradoxical intention. Heraclitus' choice of words seems calculated to give this interpretation. It is not man, but νοῦσος which has the capacity (ἐποίησεν = gnomic aorist) to produce an effect with which, one would suppose, it is normally in conflict.<sup>72</sup> The opposites do not exist, therefore, primarily in the "sphere of human judgement",<sup>73</sup> but, in the words of Rivier, "sont envisagées par Héraclite aussi objectivement que s'il s'agissait d'animaux ou de plantes. Nous sommes devant l'expérience humaine la plus pratique et la plus familière, mais en tant qu'elle s'impose comme un fait".<sup>74</sup> It is this element of objectivity, the refusal to see man as "un exemple privilégié" which explains Heraclitus' meaning in B 2: τοῦ λόγου δ' ἐόντος ξυνοῦ ζώουσιν οἱ πολλοὶ ὡς ἰδίαν ἔχοντες φρόνησιν. The opposites and their relationship belong to the realm of τὸ ξυνόν, the reality of which is comprehended by few men.

B 23 is very similar: Δίκης ὄνομα οὐκ ἂν ἤδεσαν, εἰ ταῦτα μὴ ἦν. On the assumption that ταῦτα = τὰ ἄδικα, the opposites here are seen to be connected in the sense that they mutually validate one another in men's eyes. Here again, this fact of human experience is evidence for an objectively existing relationship between opposites, of which humans have only an imperfect knowledge.

The contrast between human judgement and objective reality, implicit in the above fragments, is explicitly stated in B 102: τῷ μὲν θεῷ καλὰ πάντα καὶ ἀγαθὰ καὶ δίκαια, ἄνθρωποι δὲ ἅ μὲν ἄδικα

<sup>71</sup> Burnet is surely incorrect (note on Plato, *Phaedo* 60 b 2-c 8) when he attributes the doctrine of the relativity of pain and pleasure to Heraclitus.

<sup>72</sup> A strikingly similar example of the struggle between νόσος and ὑγεία and their close connection may be found at Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 1001-1006.

<sup>73</sup> Kirk, HCF, 123.

<sup>74</sup> *Op. cit.* 154, n. 40.

ὑπειλήφασιν ἃ δὲ δίκαια. The problem with regard to this fragment is that it is difficult to say whether or not there has been extensive rewording.<sup>75</sup> As it stands, the form of the fragment is peculiar, since God appears to comprehend only one opposite and not both.<sup>76</sup> Heraclitus was not suggesting that moral distinctions are illusory,<sup>77</sup> but that whereas for humans the opposites δίκαια and τὰ ἄδικα are simply and fundamentally opposed and characterise different things, for God they are both associated with everything, but not resolved. In view of the textual problems, further certainty is impossible.

Somewhat different, both in subject-matter and form, is B 57: διδάσκαλος δὲ πλείστων Ἡσίοδος· τοῦτον ἐπίστανται πλεῖστα εἰδέναι, ὅστις ἡμέρην καὶ εὐφρόνην οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν· ἔστι γὰρ ἓν. It is generally agreed that Heraclitus is here directing his criticism against Hesiod, *Theogony* 123 ff., where Day is said to be a child of Night, and born of Night and Erebus. Heraclitus appears to be substituting a rationalist view in which Night and Day are seen to share the same essence, without giving particular priority to either.

The fragment seems to differ considerably from some of those previously considered in two respects: firstly, the opposites are said to be merely ἓν, and not τὸ αὐτό, and secondly, the most obvious interpretation is also the most effective, and represents a radical correction of the traditional mythological view.<sup>78</sup> The unity of day and night as an unbroken continuum is not a paradox but an empirical fact.<sup>79</sup> If this interpretation is allowed to stand it leaves the fragment somewhat isolated, since ἓν is forced to bear a meaning different from μία in B 59 and 60. But the opposites ἡμέρη and εὐφρόνη are not merely μία as one might expect, but ἓν, i.e. "one thing".<sup>80</sup> In view of the powerful symbolic significance of Day and Night in Greek religious tradition

<sup>75</sup> The second half of the fragment, especially ὑπειλήφασιν is very unlikely to be original. Kirk (HCF, 180-181) supposes an original ἀνθρώποις δὲ etc., which is probable.

<sup>76</sup> Marcovich, 484 explains this as indicating that facts which men judge as just or unjust find their higher justification in the insight of God. This interpretation seems suspiciously close to one which would fit an altered Stoic or Neo-Platonic context.

<sup>77</sup> See Vlastos, *op. cit.* 367 n. 65.

<sup>78</sup> So Kirk, HCF, 156 f.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Sophocles, *O.T.* 374.

<sup>80</sup> In view of this, it seems likely that Heraclitus was also objecting to *Theogony* 748-757, where Night and Day are described as alternately entering and leaving the house of Night.

as representatives of opposing, and often antagonistic elements, it seems reasonable to suppose that, whatever the ultimate significance of ἔν, an element of paradox would not have been entirely lost upon a contemporary audience. This could be true even if Heraclitus was ostensibly merely criticising the traditional religious view.

There are a number of fragments in which Heraclitus appears to pass from comparatively isolated statements about opposites to a consideration of their more general significance. For example, B 67: ὁ θεὸς ἡμέρη εὐφρόνη, χειμῶν θέρος, πόλεμος εἰρήνη, κόρος λιμός, ἀλλοιοῦται δὲ ὄκωσπερ <πῦρ>, ὁπότεν συμμαγῆ θυώμασιν, ὀνομάζεται καθ' ἡδονὴν ἐκάστου.<sup>81</sup> Heraclitus' God, far removed from the traditional anthropomorphic deity, is here identified with a number of individual pairs of opposites. This identification takes us further in two respects: firstly, since God is directly identified with the opposites, this constitutes important evidence for the view, maintained earlier, that the contraries are in themselves fundamental to Heraclitus' thought. God does not operate on a higher level.<sup>82</sup> Secondly, assuming that the four pairs mentioned in this fragment are merely representative, God is identified (juxtaposition without copula is quite common in Heraclitus) not merely with an individual pair but with all of them. All of these pairs are found elsewhere in Heraclitus in a number of different relationships which do not necessarily fully explain their significance here. In B 67 the identity of all four pairs with ὁ θεός is seen in terms of a single relationship, namely that of spices thrown onto a fire. The change of ἡδοναί refers not to members of each individual contrariety, but as most commentators have supposed, to change between the various pairs.<sup>83</sup> Therefore the fundamental relationship between either opposite of each pair is not affected. Interpreting the fragment we may perhaps assume that ὁ θεός takes on different aspects at different times. What Heraclitus tells us, however, is simply that God is the opposites, from which it is possible to deduce that the various pairs of opposites are to be identified with the controlling power of the Universe.

<sup>81</sup> ἔλαιον is substituted for πῦρ by H. Fränkel, who also suspects ἀλλοιοῦται as a neologism.

<sup>82</sup> This conflicts with Guthrie, *op. cit.* 487 "... in the unity of the logos all opposing forces are contained and transcended".

<sup>83</sup> If the change were taking place between the individual opposites, this would tend to reduce them to mere extremes of a continuum. Opposites are not important merely inasmuch as they are extremes. In view of the doubt over ἀλλοιοῦται, this interpretation is highly unlikely.

The raising of opposites from the particular to the universal through identification with ὁ θεός is taken further in B 10: συνάψεις ἄλλα καὶ οὐχ ἄλλα, συμφερόμενον διαφερόμενον, συναῖδον διαῖδον, καὶ ἐκ πάντων ἓν καὶ ἐξ ἑνὸς πάντα.<sup>84</sup> The fragment describes the different ways in which the elements of the world are related. On one side a tendency towards unity is stated and, on the other, a tendency away from unity. These elements are clearly intended to be regarded as simultaneous rather than successive.<sup>85</sup> This fragment is of particular importance as evidence that Heraclitus was consciously aware of the two fundamental elements in his doctrine of opposites, namely the unity or identity of opposites and, at the same time, the contrariety which underlies an apparent unity, both of which have been implicit in most of the fragments discussed so far.

Before proceeding further with B 10, the text must be briefly discussed. Whichever variant reading is adopted for the first word, it is clearly subject, as Snell pointed out, rather than predicate.<sup>86</sup> But where does the predicate end? The omission or inclusion of καὶ between συμφερόμενον and διαφερόμενον, συναῖδον and διαῖδον is not merely a stylistic question;<sup>87</sup> it seems more natural to take ἄλλα καὶ οὐχ ἄλλα as the predicate of συνάψεις, and to avoid the awkwardness of taking the singular συμφερόμενον... διαῖδον as predicates of a plural subject, by taking συμφερόμενον and συναῖδον as new subjects, i.e. "... that which is in agreement differs, and that which is in tune is out of tune...". This avoids the assumption of inconsistency in the use of καί, and also lessens the syntactical isolation of the final clause.

If this translation is accepted, it can be seen that, while different aspects of συνάψεις may plausibly be indicated by ἄλλα καὶ οὐχ ἄλλα, the following pairs are not merely describing the συνάψεις, but are themselves expressing the dual relationship of opposites. Furthermore, the form of the fragment itself suggests that equal emphasis is to be placed on either side of the antithesis, i.e. unity and diversity are of equal status as objective facts about the world. Kirk, reading συλλάψεις, and assuming that ἄλλα ... διαῖδον is all predicate, sees the frag-

<sup>84</sup> συλλάψεις, a variant reading, is adopted by Kirk, HCF, 167.

<sup>85</sup> *Contra* Gigon, *op. cit.* 47. The view of the opposites in B 10 as related in terms of alternation has usually been associated with the doctrine of *ekpyrosis*, which is now generally regarded as a Stoic addition to Heraclitus (see the arguments in Kirk, HCF, 335-338).

<sup>86</sup> Heraklits Fr. 10, *Hermes* 76 (1941) 84-87.

<sup>87</sup> See Kirk, HCF, 171-172.

ment as a whole as laying emphasis firmly upon the side of unity, the separateness of things being superficial. He also introduces a personal element ("the person 'taking together'", H C F, 178) which seems absent from this fragment.<sup>88</sup> As a result, on Kirk's interpretation, the superficiality of the human view (represented by the second half of each antithesis) is to be contrasted with the underlying unity, (which is represented by the first half). Quite apart from the difficulties of obtaining this from the text, it seems to be inconsistent with the evidence of the other opposite fragments, in which, as we have found, the contrariety is anything but superficial, and often can be seen as underlying an apparent unity (e.g. in B 48 and 61 in particular). Moreover, the human aspect is confined merely to a discovery of this important truth.<sup>89</sup>

It will have been noticed that in B 10 Heraclitus moves from the unity of opposites to the unity of all things. He states this more briefly elsewhere, e.g. in B 50: οὐκ ἐμοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστὶν ἐν πάντα εἶναι. It is normally assumed that πάντα is here the subject, and that Heraclitus wishes to place emphasis upon the unity rather than the diversity of things. Kirk admits the possibility of the reverse translation but believes that this would not "accord with the sense of the rest of the fragments".<sup>90</sup> On the basis of the fragments considered so far this would not appear to be the case. Assuming that, in concerning himself with πάντα, Heraclitus still has the opposites primarily in mind, it follows that in B 50 equal reality is to be attributed to πάντα and ἐν. Heraclitus is saying neither that all things may be viewed under two aspects, nor that all things are connected, but that all things are one thing, which was surely intended as a genuine paradox.

We have so far talked about paradox without being more specific. In one important fragment, Heraclitus goes a step further and illustrates this paradox in terms of a concrete image immediately familiar to his audience; B 51: οὐ ξυνιαῖσιν ὄκως διαφερόμενον ἑωυτῶ ὁμολογέει· παλίντροπος ἀρμονίῃ ὄκωσπερ τόξου καὶ λύρης.<sup>91</sup> παλίντροπος

<sup>88</sup> Kirk's translation of B 10 (HCF, 168) introduces this 'personal criterion'.

<sup>89</sup> See especially Rivier, *op. cit.* 149 n. 20 for criticism of Kirk.

<sup>90</sup> HCF, 166.

<sup>91</sup> Zeller reads συμφέρεται, cf. Plato, *Soph.* 242 e, *Symp.* 187 a. παλίντροπος is an ancient variant. παλίντροπος occurs in Parmenides 28 B 6, possibly referring to Heraclitus. παλίντροπος is a traditional epithet of the bow or lyre in Homer, and is, perhaps, to be preferred.

(-τονος) ἀρμονίη is clearly explained with reference to the objects which exemplify its operation. Both the bow and the lyre owe their existence to simultaneous contrary movements which result in equilibrium.<sup>92</sup> The choice of these particular objects seems to reinforce the idea of contrariety as basic, since it is the unity of the bow and lyre which is immediately apparent, whereas the tension of contraries constitutes the ἀφανής ἀρμονίη. Men who are familiar with the workings of these objects nevertheless fail to realise that their coherence is being maintained by forces which are also acting towards their disintegration.

The final stage of generality is reached in B 80: εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεῶν. The element of tension or strife suggested in the image of the bow and lyre is here universalized as πόλεμος (which is also given importance in the difficult B 53). It is again worth considering what Heraclitus actually says. War is said to be common (and so, by implication, equated with the Logos, which in B 2 is also ξυνός), and Justice is Strife (or Strife is Justice).<sup>93</sup> Since, for the Greeks, it was precisely the absence of ἔρις which suggested conditions favourable for δίκη, the expression of their identity is paradoxical in the extreme. Nevertheless, the paradox expresses what Heraclitus really means. The opposites are identical. The equation of ἔρις and δίκη may be related to the identity of πόλεμος and εἰρήνη with ὁ θεός in B 67. War is, in an unequivocal sense for Heraclitus, peace. The identity of these two opposites in particular assumes a position of central importance in Heraclitus' thought, since it characterises the relationship between individual opposites, the hidden workings of objects such as the bow and the lyre, and the strife which ensures the continual existence of the Universe.

Heraclitus has been associated with his fellow Ionians in sharing their basic belief that the world was a unity, "... but instead of seeing its unity in its origin from a single substance... he conceived of a single arrangement or formula in all separate things which connected them into a determinate whole".<sup>94</sup> This succinct and illuminating

<sup>92</sup> Vlastos (*op. cit.* 351) reading *παλίντροπος*, believes reference is being made to the bow in operation, but this fails to fit the context convincingly.

<sup>93</sup> It is difficult to decide on the subject here. For *δίκην* as subject, see Kirk HCF, 238, Guthrie, *op. cit.* 447, K. Freeman, *Ancilla*, 30; for *ἔριν*, see Marcovich, 137, Stokes, *op. cit.* 93 n. 28 (293), West, *op. cit.* 137. Deliberate ambiguity cannot be excluded.

<sup>94</sup> HCF, 402.

summary fails, in my opinion, to lay enough emphasis upon the opposites themselves. The opposites were not merely extremes of a continuum or examples of the variety of πάντα, but concrete entities whose mutual dynamic relationship was one of Heraclitus' main pre-occupations.

At the same time, these opposites combine in ways which defy logical analysis. The element of paradox which is everywhere apparent cannot be attributed to stylistic or rhetorical idiosyncrasy, but must be closely associated with a mode of thought whose linguistic origins may well constitute, for Heraclitus, the ultimate origin of his belief in the identity of opposites.

These hypotheses are supported by certain peculiarities concerning the fragments as a whole. It is probably not fortuitous that ἐναντίος or its cognates does not occur in the required sense in the extant fragments of Heraclitus.<sup>95</sup> In view of the importance of opposites in Heraclitus and his reputation in later antiquity as a philosopher concerned with opposites,<sup>96</sup> it is highly unlikely that if the word had occurred it would not have been transmitted. As it is, although occurring in Homer in a purely spatial sense,<sup>97</sup> and liberally attributed by the doxographers to the early Presocratics,<sup>98</sup> the word does not occur in a relevant authenticated context before Parmenides (DK 28 B 8, 55 and 59), where the two opposite μορφαί of the cosmogony of the 'Way of Opinion' are described as existing τάντια. It is also probably not coincidence that the opposites should be thus formally characterised in a context in which Parmenides is emphatically denying any possibility of their identity. For Heraclitus, on the other hand, opposites had not yet entered into this kind of formal relationship precluding their close association as independent entities.

Another feature of the fragments is Heraclitus' choice of words, in the various "opposite" fragments, to denote the relationship between opposites. It was suggested earlier in this paper that Heraclitus was using ἀντίος in its various forms in a precise sense. It is worth noting

<sup>95</sup> One need hardly mention ἀντίον in B 120. τὸ ἀντιξοῦν occurs in the spurious B 8, which is almost definitely a paraphrase by Aristotle (*Eth. Nic.* Θ 2.1155 b 4) of B 51.

<sup>96</sup> See Philo, *Quis rer. div. haer.*, 43.214 = DK I<sup>6</sup> 491.38.

<sup>97</sup> E.g. *Odyssey*, 10, 89; *Iliad* 6, 251; *ib.* 5, 497. For further examples see LSJ s.v. ἐναντίος, ἀντίος.

<sup>98</sup> See DK Register s.v. ἐναντίος. There is a noteworthy discrepancy between examples taken from A and B fragments.

that in the majority of cases, especially in fragments concerned with opposite values (e.g. B 23 and 111) Heraclitus does not state the relationship explicitly, which may suggest that, whatever he may have wished to imply, in his explicit statements he was not willing to push *αὐτός* beyond the bounds of commonsense. The absence of *αὐτός* from the majority of opposite fragments would be a further argument in favour of the view that its meaning was not intended to be extended to take in any other associations.

Finally, something must be said briefly about the second question raised at the beginning of this paper. To what extent is it legitimate to make connections between the opposite fragments and other elements in Heraclitus' philosophical outlook? An answer to this question depends, to some extent, upon one's view of the nature of the surviving collection of fragments, i.e. whether they are considered as isolated utterances or quotations from a connected discourse. The stylistic evidence inclines one to the former conclusion, although certainty is impossible.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, if the concise epigrammatic fragments are merely survivals and much explanatory and connecting material has perished, it seems clear that such 'lost' information was already unavailable to the Peripatetic school, since, if it had been available, it would surely have been used as an aid to the interpretation of a thinker whose way of expressing himself was in many respects so alien to the fourth and later centuries.

There are a number of obvious implicit connections. The element of dynamic tension between opposites, as revealed in the equilibrium of the bow and lyre (B 51 etc.) is reflected in the cosmological cycle, the *πυρός τρόπαι* (B 31), where it seems that *θάλασσα* simultaneously changes in opposite directions, to earth and to *πρήστηρ*. The emphasis here is on *μέτρον*, as in B 30, where the *πῦρ ἀείζων* maintains the order of the cosmos, *ἀπτόμενον μέτρα και ἀποσβεννόμενον μέτρα*.<sup>100</sup> On a cosmological level, *πῦρ* is in some sense basic, as we learn in B 90:

<sup>99</sup> Guthrie (*op. cit.* 406 ff.) bases his belief that Heraclitus did write a book principally on Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1407 b 11, where Aristotle complains about the difficulty of Heraclitus' style. For the contrary view, see Kirk HCF, 7 and E. A. Havelock, *Preliteracy and the Presocratics*, *Univ. of London Bull. Inst. of Class. Studs.*, 13 (1966) 54. B 1 is the only fragment which could really be described as 'connected discourse'.

<sup>100</sup> Kirk, (*Mind* 60 (1951) 35-42) sees *μέτρον* as the key point of contact between cosmology and the opposites doctrine, but seems to overemphasize the importance of this idea in the opposites fragments, where it does not appear to be Heraclitus' primary intention to assert the *regularity* of change.

πυρός τε ἀνταμοιβή τὰ πάντα καὶ πῦρ ἀπάντων ὅκωσπερ χρυσοῦ χρήματα καὶ χρημάτων χρυσός. Fire was of course for Heraclitus much more than a mere element in an Aristotelian sense, and possessed directive and regulative powers. The link between cosmology and the opposites appears to be forged by B 80, in which the paradox that “Strife is Justice” seems to apply equally effectively to the workings of the bow and lyre and the cosmological changes of the Universe. The same may also be said of B 84a (μεταβάλλον ἀναπαύεται), a succinct two-word fragment in which the stark antithesis may refer to the bow, the cosmological cycle, or both.

However, despite these apparent connections, it is clear that the evidence is not strong enough to support a close integration of these two elements of Heraclitus’ philosophical outlook. For example, it is not possible to suppose that fragments such as B 59, 60, 61, 67, 88 and 103, all of which are closely concerned with the relationship between opposites, are merely to be seen as examples of an underlying cosmological doctrine, i.e. that they exhibit the identity of opposites as participants in the underlying unity of πῦρ and the cyclic interchange of elements. The evidence for such an integrated view of the Universe is not forthcoming. It seems more reasonable to accept a lack of conscious integration of the opposites with cosmology and to recognise what seems to be, to the modern mind at least, a failure to mould the diverse elements of thought into a fully coherent whole. This element of dislocation seems characteristic of those other early Presocratics of whose work a considerable quantity has survived, namely Parmenides and Empedocles, where scholars have long been worried (perhaps unnecessarily) about the apparent combination of the logically incompatible.<sup>101</sup>

The biggest single problem in the interpretation of Heraclitus is not so much the reassembling of his thought as the necessity of remaining true to his original intentions.<sup>102</sup> The intentions of Heraclitus, as far as they can legitimately be recovered, seem to suggest that the identity of opposites and the consequent paradox are not primarily the result of reflection upon the various ways in which opposites are related.

<sup>101</sup> Particular reference is intended here to the problem of the relation between the Ἀλήθεια and Δόξα of Parmenides, and the Περὶ Φύσεως and Καθαρμοί of Empedocles.

<sup>102</sup> R. Robinson (*Plato’s Earlier Dialectic*, 4) makes the point that “... the purpose of an interpreter ... is to make himself and others rethink the very thoughts that were thought by someone long ago”.

If anything, the relationship is the other way round – the explanations are of facts which have already been grasped intuitively. The identity of opposites is presented as a mystery which has objective existence outside men and controls their lives, although it is only dimly grasped by most of them. It is clear that here there is a causal relationship. Heraclitus' revelation was only dimly understood because it was a paradox whose meaning could not be reached by normal methods of enquiry and explanation. In reacting against the current concern for *ἰστροπῆ*, Heraclitus ensured his contemporary isolation and effectively cut himself off from future developments.

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