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In this paper I argue that the *logos*, the primary object of knowledge in Heraclitus' epistemology, is a unity both as an object of knowledge and as an instance of being rather than becoming. Section I begins with discussions of knowledge and Heraclitus' conception of *logos*; section II is concerned with knowledge and unity. The two later sections of the paper explore the consequences of the account I attribute to Heraclitus: section III considers being, unity, and change; and section IV discusses Heraclitus' views of knowledge and sense perception.

I. Knowledge and Logos

Several recent studies of Heraclitus have investigated his epistemological terms and strategies;¹ here, my object is to explore the requirements that Heraclitus places on the *object* of knowledge. In his frequent rebukes to his rivals, Heraclitus indicates that the mere accumulation of information is not knowledge. For instance, in fr. 40 he chides Pythagoras, Hesiod, Xenophanes, and Hecataeus: they have much learning (*polymathiê*) but no understanding (*noos*); in fr. 129 Pythagoras is further accused of *kakotechnia* (malpractice).² An important clue to the condemnation of polymathy appears within fr. 40 itself: the polymaths fail to understand what they think they know. This is echoed in frs. 1 and 34: people prove forever uncomprehending (*axunetoi*) of the account (*logos*) which holds forever that Heraclitus gives (fr. 1);³ uncomprehending (*axunetoi*), hearing as the deaf do, they are "absent while present" (fr. 34). In the presence of the truth they simply do not comprehend.⁴ Knowledge is not the mere collection of material even if the beliefs so held are true. Rather, it requires the understanding of that material; and so a certain kind of insight separates the polymaths of fr. 40 from the true lovers of wisdom who inquire into many things in fr. 35. The contrast between these two fragments raises the question of how Heraclitus conceives of knowledge and its object.

Heraclitus likens the possession of real knowledge to the comprehension of language, and the structure of the world to the structure of language.⁵ On this analogy it is natural for him to speak of wisdom as the grasping of a *logos*. Heraclitus uses both *gnôsis* and *xunesis* to indicate knowledge: *gnôsis* implies direct acquaintance with the object of

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knowledge, while *xunesis* suggests a grasping or appropriating of the object.⁶ This accounts for Heraclitus' repeated rejection of simple sense-perception and the mere accumulation of information as genuine knowledge. Because they fail to have direct acquaintance with and to grasp the underlying connection between things, the polymaths and others are "deaf hearers": by failing to comprehend what they happen to run into they are literally "absent while present." Yet Heraclitus' talk of "graspings" places requirements not only on the knower, but also on what is known, the *logos*: the words *gnôsis* and *xunesis* suggest that genuine speaking and knowing have an intimate connection with the world, with the things themselves and with the way things really are.⁷

The concept of *logos* in Heraclitus (particularly as it appears in frs. 1, 2, and 50) is both central and controversial. There is little agreement among commentators about the nature, status, or even the larger role of the *logos* within Heraclitus' system. Some see it as an independent force that guides the universe while others view *logos* only as a shorthand reference to Heraclitus' own words.⁸ Neither of these extreme views is, I think, correct.

The word *logos* appears in contexts that refer to Heraclitus' own theory in frs. 1, 2, and 50, and in a reference to competing theories in 108:⁹

Although this account (*logos*) holds forever, people forever prove uncomprehending, both before hearing it and once they have heard. For although all things come to be in accordance with this account (*logos*), people are like the unexperienced when they experience such words and deeds as I set forth, distinguishing each according to its nature and saying how it is (*kata phusin diaireôn hekaston kai phrazôn hokôs echei*). But other men do not notice what they do awake, just as they forget what they do asleep. (1)

Although the account (*logos*) is shared, most men live as though having a private understanding (*zôousin hoi polloi hôs idian echontes phronêsin*). (2)

Listening not to me, but to the account (*logos*) it is wise to agree that all things are one. (50)

Of all those whose accounts (*logoi*) I have heard, none has arrived at this: to come to recognize what is wise, set apart from all. (108)

In these passages, *logos* has at least the meaning 'report' or 'account'. Indeed, M. L. West has maintained that in frs. 1 and 2 *logos* "refer[s] to Heraclitus' discourse and nothing else."¹⁰ West adamantly rejects any claim that "Heraclitus used *logos* in some larger sense of his own: the truth behind the discourse, divine reason, the 'formula of things', the Logos, and so on."¹¹ There are two difficulties here. First, West supposes '*logos*' to have either only its ordinary senses or only a special "Heraclitean" sense

in all of the fragments. His thesis depends in part on the claim that in a number of the fragments 'logos' has an ordinary sense of 'measure', or 'ratio', or 'report' and thus can have no special sense in other fragments. But there is no reason to think that Heraclitus did not use the word in several senses. As Kahn (most recently) has pointed out, Heraclitus' language is rich with ambiguities and resonances;¹² that *logos* has no special philosophical force in frs. 31b and 39 (or even frs. 45 and 115) does not imply that Heraclitus would not (or could not) use it in a specialized sense connecting with the more ordinary senses in other fragments.¹³ A second defect of West's argument (an argument endorsed by Barnes and Mackenzie) is the vagueness of its target. For West, any interpretation of *logos* in frs. 1 and 2 that treats it as more than a reference to Heraclitus' own discourse or in any way other than "the ordinary senses of the word attested in and before the fifth century" must necessarily regard it as "a metaphysical entity."¹⁴ But it is unclear what West takes such a metaphysical entity to be. West mentions no particular interpretation: he simply says that "almost all students of Heraclitus have supposed that . . . [he] . . . used *logos* in some larger sense,"¹⁵ adopting a view which he calls a 'Logos-Doctrine'. Mackenzie mentions Marcovich's claim that the *logos* might be conceived as corporeal, and then asserts that Kirk reifies the *logos* in suggesting that it might be "something independent."¹⁶ Barnes refers to Guthrie, Hölscher, and Marcovich, but gives no exact account of the position he rejects; he says only that "most scholars have found in *logos* a technical term, and they have striven to discover a metaphysical sense for it."¹⁷ The assumption seems to be that in frs. 1, 2, 50 and 108 either *logos* refers to a mysterious (and vague) independent metaphysical force or it is merely a reference to Heraclitus' discourse. But there is a third, more plausible, alternative.

Heraclitus' assertion that the *logos* is common (*xunon*) (fr. 2) and his pronouncement that all things come to be in accordance with the *logos* (*ginomenôn . . . pantôn kata ton logon*) (fr. 1) suggest that he has more in mind than simply the words of his book or the verbal content of his utterances. The *logos* also encompasses the truth given in his utterances, and this is a truth that is objective and independent of anyone's having thought or heard it.¹⁸ That his hearers can be ignorant of the *logos* before Heraclitus tells it implies that it is there for the hearing and grasping, separate from Heraclitus' particular utterance of it. But I do not see how the minimalist interpretation (that *logos* means only Heraclitus' doctrine) can function here: what can be made of a 'common discourse'?¹⁹ Fragment 108 asserts that there are *logoi* competing with Heraclitus' own, but that these are false

because they do not give an adequate picture of the way things are; these *logoi* fail to connect with the way the world really is. These considerations suggest that the notion of *logos* in Heraclitus is more complex than West and his supporters allow.²⁰

Fragment 108 is instructive. First, Heraclitus says he has heard other *logoi* and while this might suggest that *logos* here has only the sense of the words or utterances of these unnamed others, that is too impoverished an interpretation of this complicated fragment. The claim that “none has arrived at” (*oudeis aphikneîtai*) the point of recognizing that which is wise indicates a connection with *xunesis*: the other accounts miss coming together with the truth that his own *logos* enunciates and so they have failed to “arrive at” this truth. But failing to arrive at a place suggests that one has set out for it. Heraclitus sees the proponents of the other *logoi* as proposing accounts of how things are that have the same philosophical status as the one he himself offers, but those accounts are unsuccessful. They also aim at, but miss, an independent truth. A similar use of *logos* occurs in fr. 87: “A fool tends to become all worked up over every *logos*.” Reading this with fr. 108, we have a contrast between Heraclitus himself who can distinguish between true and false *logoi* and the stupid person who enthusiastically accepts them all without discrimination. In this, the fool is like the polymaths who collect but do not investigate.²¹ Second, fr. 108 offers an analysis of the errors of the other *logoi*, saying they have missed seeing that what is wise is *pantôn kechôrismenon*.²² Now, this phrase can mean either that what is wise is separated or set apart from all things (the choice of Kahn and Robinson) or that what is wise is different from all things (Marcovich and Mackenzie).²³ It is not clear that the two translations mark a real distinction: ‘different’ and ‘set apart from’ could both signify ‘transcendent’ (that is how Marcovich takes it, while translating ‘different’²⁴) or merely ‘not the same as’, focusing on the claim that the truth is different from other things.²⁵ Translation will not decide the issue of interpretation here. What must be considered is the point of the claim that *to sophon* is set apart or is different, coupled with the assertion that the others with whose *logoi* Heraclitus is acquainted have not gone so far as to recognize or know that which is wise. The object of knowledge, the content of the *logos*, is something to be gained, grasped, or arrived at, set apart from the phenomena. In failing to complete the journey, Heraclitus’ competitors fail to achieve *xunesis*. But if the *logoi* here are simply the utterances of the others (and not their proposals of the truth of how things really are) the images of arrival and the failure to arrive are lost.²⁶ Third, while the claim that what is wise is set apart from or different from all connects 108 with other

fragments in which *xunesis* appears, the insistence on the difference and apartness of what is wise (*to sophon*) is evidence that Heraclitus sees a split between the phenomena of the everyday world (rivers, carding wheels, roads, etc.) and the world of knowledge or wisdom.²⁷ It is here, in the images of separation and difference, that a Heraclitean distinction between being and becoming begins to emerge.

II. Knowledge and Being

Heraclitus believes that his *logos* gives a picture of the way things really are and that it is a true account of the world; moreover, what makes it true is that the world really is the way the account asserts it to be. Heraclitus thus assumes both a referential theory of meaning and a theory that makes truth an immediate correspondence between beliefs and the world. But to this Heraclitus adds the complication that the accumulation of true beliefs does not, by itself, constitute understanding. Understanding Heraclitus' *logos* is not only having true beliefs but also linking them together into a network in which the beliefs are mutually supporting and explanatory. This is the import of such fragments as 17, 35, 40, 41, 54, 107, 108, 112, and 114. Together they present a contrast between mere bits of information and real knowledge; the latter is the comprehension of the system as a whole.

A. P. D. Mourelatos has argued that underlying much early Greek literature and philosophy is the view that the world is a collection of discrete and unconnected *things*. To speak (truthfully) is to name and point to a thing (thus the difficulty of false speaking or naming) and to know is to grasp or reach out to that thing. There are two important notions that follow from what Mourelatos calls the naive metaphysics of things: a strong and fundamental use of the verb 'to be', and a view that we might call 'knowledge by strong acquaintance'.²⁸ To speak of something is to point at it or reach towards it; to know an object is to grasp or hold it. On such a view it is particularly appropriate to speak of knowledge, as Heraclitus does, as *gnôsis* or *xunesis*. Mourelatos shows that Heraclitus' arguments concerning opposites are destructive of the naive metaphysics of things. Seeing connections between opposites so strong as to be able to declare that the opposites are unified, Heraclitus challenges the separate existence of opposite character powers, adopting what Mourelatos calls a "*logos-textured*" account of the world. This is illustrated in the attack on Hesiod (fr. 57),²⁹ and the claims about the road (fr. 60) and the carding wheel (fr. 59).³⁰ But even as Heraclitus challenges this aspect of a naive metaphysics of things he maintains its epistemological assumptions. Insisting on the unity of the opposites and on the changes between opposites

that occur in sensible objects, Heraclitus nevertheless also maintains the necessity of unity in the object of knowledge.³¹

The attacks on the polymaths in fr. 40 and on Hesiod in 57 indicate that understanding and comprehension are the fundamental epistemic concepts for Heraclitus. Moreover, these fragments suggest that unity has a double role to play in Heraclitus' theory. Suppose that the polymath has a true belief. Why then should Heraclitus quarrel with him? First, in fr. 40 the term 'polymath' suggests a lack of system in the sheer accumulation of true beliefs. The polymaths' beliefs are not integrated into a systematic and explanatory whole, the understanding of which constitutes knowledge. The polymath may well hold a true belief without understanding why that belief is, as a matter of fact, true; for the justification that Heraclitus seems to demand, seeing that and how the single belief is part of a system that is a unified whole, is missing here. Such knowledge will ultimately be knowledge of the *logos*, for the *logos* is the deeper truth of the systematic connectedness of things in the world. To see the connection is to understand why the belief is true; to exhibit that connection is to justify and to explain. Second, fr. 57 indicates that Hesiod does not truly know day and night, because he fails to know that they are one. Heraclitus does not deny that Hesiod knows many things, but the fragment questions the extent and depth of that knowledge.³² True knowledge implies knowing the whole of each thing, that is, knowing it as a complete unity, so that no part of it is left out. Hesiod knows that day and night are opposites and so apparently do not inhabit their house at the same time; but Hesiod's knowledge is incomplete, for he fails to know that there is actually a unity that underlies and thus connects the opposites. Each knowable can and must be known completely in itself as a unified whole. Simply knowing more things is not to have more knowledge; instead, Heraclitus insists that real knowledge is knowing in a different, deeper way. Thus, Hesiod fails to grasp the whole of day and night and so fails to understand and to know properly.³³ This, too, is a failure to grasp the *logos*, for its subject is the truth about the way things are. *Logos* is both the account of how things are and Heraclitus' shorthand way of referring to the actual facts of the matter that the *logos* expresses.

If to name is to gesture towards the thing named, and to know or to understand is to grasp and to appropriate the thing known for oneself, then, for this process to proceed smoothly, for knowing to be successful, what is grasped must be both cohesive and complete. One grasps a whole, not just a collection or multiplicity of aspects; so for this reason as well the object of knowledge by strong acquaintance must be a unity. (Compare gripping a tennis ball with attempting to hold onto a handful of mercury.)³⁴ The re-

quirement here is that the object of knowledge must be unified; not that there is only one object of knowledge possible.³⁵ Each thing that is known is a complete and stable whole, to be grasped and held by the mind or *psuchê*. A divided or pluralistic object is inconstant and unstable; it shifts between its various aspects and cannot be held in the appropriate way. An object of knowledge then, must be constant in the way that the Greek tradition conceived of being as both stable and uniform.

III. Being, Unity, and Change

In fr. 1 Heraclitus declares that he “distinguishes each thing according to its nature, saying how it is.” His *logos* then is this account; one who has grasped it will have understanding or *xunesis* of how things really are. Fragment 2 adds that this *logos* is common (*xunos*) but that “the many live as though having a private understanding.” The truth that can be comprehended (the content of the *logos*) is both independent of an individual knower (for it is not *idion*) and publicly available (for it is *xunon*).³⁶ Failing to recognize the common character of the *logos* is a grave mistake, for Heraclitus’ claim is that private understanding is not real understanding at all.³⁷ This is supported by fr. 89: for those who are awake there is a common universe which can be grasped and understood, but sleepers turn away into a private universe.³⁸ The necessity of paying attention to the common is stressed further in fr. 114:

Those speaking with insight must hold firmly to that which is common to all, just as a city does to its law, and even more strongly. For all human laws are nourished by one, the divine <law>; for it rules as far as it wishes, and is enough for all, and still remains.

Here the message that the *logos* is common to all is repeated from fr. 2, and something more is added.³⁹ A city may enact particular laws; but these are dependent upon the single divine law which gives them their legitimacy. In the same way, one who desires to have insight or understanding (*noos*) must ground this understanding in the common, identified by fr. 2 as the *logos*, because it is both the epistemological basis for explaining the various phenomena of the physical world and a link to the foundation of the phenomenal world. Political legitimacy is linked to divine law; epistemological justification is linked to the common *logos*. The message is repeated in fr. 112: “Thinking well is the greatest excellence and wisdom: to speak and act what is true, perceiving (*epaiontas*) things according to their nature (*kata phusin*).”⁴⁰ The reference to nature (*phusis*) echoes the words of fr. 1, and the claim that thinking well is the greatest excellence and

wisdom links 112 to fr. 2 with its assertion that what is common must be followed (and that private understanding never counts as wisdom). Moreover 112 connects with fr. 41 where we learn that *hen to sophon*: knowing the plan that steers all things. But knowing *this* means knowing the true nature of things according to the *logos*.

While the content of the *logos* turns out to be that the sensible world is subject to change (frs. 59, 60, and 67), the *logos* itself (the message about the measured changes of the *kosmos*) is both permanent and unchanging.⁴¹ The formal characteristics of the *logos* justify Heraclitus' demand (in fr. 50) that we listen not to him but to the *logos* and his claim (fr. 108) that what is wise is separate or different from all things. The independence (as contrasted with being common) of the *logos* as an object of knowledge is stressed in fr. 41: "The wise is one, knowing the plan by which all things are steered through all."⁴² Here is Heraclitus' insistence that the proper object of knowledge is the structure or plan of the *kosmos*, and that this knowledge cannot be reduced to a polymathic collection of beliefs about the individual constituents of that *kosmos*. Rather, wisdom (whether human or divine is irrelevant here; Heraclitus means both⁴³) involves mastering (*epistasthai*) the plan or pattern (*gnômê*) of things; it is clear that this mastering is identified with grasping the *logos*. Moreover, frs. 41 and 108 together demonstrate that only such knowledge is wisdom or *xunesis*. None of the competing accounts (*logoi*) have gone so far as to see the complete separateness of the one thing that is wise: this is the true *logos* that only Heraclitus has uttered. That such wisdom can indeed be gained, because the independent, unchanging *logos* is there for the grasping, only adds to Heraclitus' contempt for those polymaths such as Pythagoras and Hesiod who might have heard and understood the independent *logos* but did not. Heraclitus must then conceive of the *logos* as something independent of the phenomena it describes, something the knowledge of which is not identical with the beliefs we have about the sensory world. Moreover, in order to be a proper object of knowledge, this *logos* is both a unity and an instance of being.

Although it is clear that Heraclitus draws a distinction between being and becoming and relies on it, his is not yet a 'two world' metaphysics. But given his epistemological claims, there must be a double aspect to the world. Heraclitus presumes that the object of knowledge is something real, unified, and apart; this assumption is itself a part of a metaphysics of things. Yet the being-becoming distinction is given a characteristically Heraclitean twist, because the truth about the world that the *logos* presents is that change is constant and such change entails plurality. This appears in fr. 10: "Grasp-

ings: wholes and not wholes, convergent divergent, consonant dissonant, from all things one and from one thing all.”⁴⁴ ‘Graspings’ here refers both to the action of the mind in reaching out to understand the *logos* and to the unified object which is grasped, as well as to the unified entities in the world about which that truth tells. The truth that is grasped asserts that the elements of the sensible world together are a diversity that can be and are unified, and that each object in the world is itself both a converging unity and a diverging plurality.⁴⁵ ‘Consonant’ and ‘dissonant’ suggest the relations of the opposites; in fr. 8 Aristotle paraphrases a Heraclitean claim: “Heraclitus said that what opposes unites, and that the finest attunement stems from things bearing in opposite directions, and that all things come about by strife.”⁴⁶ Here the thing grasped, the harmony or attunement (*harmonia*), is the result of the combining of consonant and dissonant: what opposes (dissonance) unites into consonance; and a whole or unity comes out of what is not whole or many. But as things come together they are also pulled apart and this is the universal action of strife.

Discord is fundamentally important in the fragments and Heraclitus does indeed insist on the significance of strife. But the roles of strife and war in Heraclitus’ views should not be overemphasized.⁴⁷ This is the problem in those interpretations that mistakenly see Heraclitus committed to a doctrine of radical flux. Fragment 80 asserts that “it is necessary to know that war is common (*xunon*), and justice strife, and all things come to be through strife and necessity;”⁴⁸ and while this implies that strife is a necessary component of the world, it should not suggest that strife is the main focus of Heraclitus’ theory.⁴⁹ Heraclitus also emphasizes the harmony of the elements of the world and notes that the relation between strife and harmony will be misconstrued: “they do not comprehend (*xuniasin*) how differing it agrees with itself; there is a back-turning (*palintropos*) connection (*harmoniê*) as in the bow and the lyre” (fr. 51).⁵⁰ Here, there is a tension and pulling apart generated by strife or war, but that tension produces the harmonious arrangement or collecting that just is the bow or the lyre. Differing, it agrees, and the result is a connection or accord. Strife is a concealed but necessary part of the overall pattern: “The hidden connection (*harmoniê aphanês*) is better than the obvious (*phanerês*) one” (fr. 54). The reality of strife is obvious, but Heraclitus warns that the obvious is not the whole truth: “nature (*phusis*) loves to hide” (125); “unless he hopes for the unhopèd for, he will not discover it, for it is not to be found out, and it is trackless” (18). The point is that it is difficult to find the true nature of things given in the *logos*. Unless one expects such difficulty one cannot hope to understand, for the obvious is unlikely to be the whole truth. *Aporon*

(trackless) here surely means that the truth is intractable, not that it is impossible to find. Right thinking can lead to a grasping of the *logos*, but the task is neither easy nor unimportant. Heraclitus ridicules those who claim differently: Hesiod and Homer have great reputations but “what the most esteemed [of persons] recognizes and holds fast to is [mere] seeming” (fr. 28a).⁵¹ To this we might add 47: “Let us not conjecture rashly about the most important matters.”⁵²

IV. Knowledge and Sense Perception

Heraclitus’ pronouncements about sense perception appear to be inconsistent. In fr. 107 he announces that “eyes and ears are evil witnesses to those having barbarian souls” (*barbarous psuchas echontôn*) while at the same time affirming in fr. 55 that he prefers what comes from sight, hearing, and experience. Fragment 101a asserts that “eyes are more accurate witnesses than ears.”⁵³ But the difficulties here are, I think, only apparent, and the fragments about sense perception can be fitted together into a coherent account of the role of perception in knowledge.

It has been suggested that Heraclitus repudiates claims to perceptual knowledge because perception is essentially private.⁵⁴ I do not think that this interpretation will stand. Heraclitus denies that sense perception is the sole means to knowledge; certainly the import of fr. 107 is that the language of sense perception cannot be understood by one whose soul is barbarian or incapable of understanding it.⁵⁵ If the language of sense perception were transparent and immediately understandable, there would be no barbarian souls and no problem of perception.⁵⁶ So, Heraclitus’ concerns suggest that information provided by the senses is not transparent in the appropriate way: the barbarian soul fails to possess or understand the proper canons of translation and interpretation for the data supplied by the senses. Such a soul is like the polymaths of fr. 40: it has information but no understanding. But this is not a problem of privacy. The possibility that persons might not perceive in the same way does not enter Heraclitus’ arguments.⁵⁷ The reasons why sense perception cannot be the sole source of knowledge are given in frs. 1, 123, and 108. Fragment 1 says that Heraclitus will distinguish each thing according to its *phusis* saying how each thing is (*phrazôn hokôs echei*). This is specifically linked to the *logos* that holds forever and in accordance with which things come to pass. Fragment 123 asserts that *phusis* loves to hide, while fr. 108 specifically claims that the wise is something set apart from all. The fragments together indicate that *logos* cannot be grasped or understood by the senses alone. The real nature that is

hidden is not available to sense perception: a part may be revealed through the senses, but the unified whole of a thing, its real *phusis*, is not. Fragment 10 insists that taking a part for the whole is a mistake.

What, then, is the proper role of perception in knowledge? A hint is given in fr. 93: “the lord whose oracle is at Delphi, neither speaks nor conceals, but gives a sign” (*oute legei oute kruptei alla sêmeinei*). This is often taken as reference either to Heraclitus’ own cryptic and enigmatic style, or to the *logos* itself. A more plausible view is that it refers to both.⁵⁸ But the fragment also illustrates the role of sense perception in knowledge. The truth about things is neither utterly concealed from nor entirely revealed to sense experience; rather, the perceptible world is a series of signs about the way things really are. Taking a sign for the whole truth is a mistake; but so is refusing to read a signal. Moreover, the analogy with the Delphic oracle is significant. In addition to insight one also needs some understanding of Apollo himself, of the Pythia, and of the translations and interpretations of past signs in order to begin to decipher correctly.⁵⁹ The point here is that as sense experience reveals more to the discerning soul, the soul will better comprehend further sense experience. But this does not explain how the soul actually learns the language and thus ceases to be barbarian. I do not see evidence in the fragments that Heraclitus confronted this problem directly. But fr. 107 asserts that true knowledge, whatever its particular source, must be firmly grounded in the *logos*. What, then, is to be made of frs. 55 and 101a? The latter does not, of course, give any absolute epistemic preference to sense perception. I agree with Marcovich’s reading: it is better to come to a direct understanding of things oneself rather than relying on second-hand teaching, authority, or hearsay. Thus the fragment is not a direct comment on the proper role of sense-perception.⁶⁰ Although in fr. 55 Heraclitus says that he prefers things of sight, hearing, and experience he does not (as Marcovich pointed out) tell us to what these things are preferred. Nor does he tell us why they are preferable. Fragment 55 is thus another passage that favors *historiê* over *polymathiê*, expanding the attack on hearsay made in 101a. Genuine *historiê* is to be preferred because it can lead to a synthesizing of experiences; here it is contrasted with the collection of discrete bits of information that is not harmonized into a network of beliefs. In real understanding there is such a network that gets its epistemic structure from underlying principles articulated by the *logos*. The polymaths of fr. 40 suffer from a failure of connection. *Mathêsis* is only the first step; Heraclitus’ linking of *mathêsis* with sight and hearing in fr. 55 indicates that the experiences are connected and integrated into a unified

whole. The soul in question is not barbarian. Moreover, fr. 55 affirms that knowledge is not limited to grasping the *logos*; but the senses can give real understanding only insofar as the evidence thus acquired is integrated into the account contained in the *logos*.

Knowledge of the *logos* cannot be grounded in sense-experience (despite the endorsement of perception in frs. 55 and 101a). It may be a psychological fact that much knowledge is gained through perception, but Heraclitus stresses that its epistemological grounding is in the *logos*. Moreover, knowing the *logos* is crucial because it turns out to be necessary for knowledge of the sensible world. So, for Heraclitus, *gnôsis* or *xunesis* of the world of becoming outside of ourselves must ultimately be grounded in a grasping of the *logos*, in knowledge of that which is.

There remains the question of the relation between the unified object of knowledge and the pluralistic, changing world of sense perception. It is clear that Heraclitus sees the phenomenal world as subject to change, although the changes are regular and regulated rather than capricious and uncontrolled because they are governed by the principle articulated in the *logos*. But the *logos* is one and unchanging while the phenomenal world is both many and subject to change; there is, then, a discontinuity between the two which must be overcome. Heraclitus' account of the role of perception in knowledge implies that some of the truth about the *logos* is obtainable through the senses. Thus, there must be some manifestation of the truth contained in the *logos* in the sensible world. There is evidence of this in fr. 67: "The god is day night, winter summer, war peace, satiety hunger; it changes as, whenever mixed with spices, it is named according to the pleasure of each."⁶¹ The perennial puzzle faced by any theory that depends on an unchanging truth or principle to explain the changing world of the senses is how the unity of that which is can be manifested in the pluralistic world of becoming. Heraclitus here provides two interconnected illustrations (or signs) of how this is possible. First, one and the same thing (the god) can be manifested in the opposites day and night, summer and winter, war and peace, satiety and hunger, because this one thing is all of those opposites (compare the unity of day and night in fr. 57).⁶² Second, this unified principle can appear and be named in many processes although it remains the same throughout. It is important to note that in fr. 67 Heraclitus does not conceive of *ho theos* as a substratum that alters; rather each set of opposites and each new process just is *ho theos* under yet another description.⁶³ Thus sense perception, in providing information about its objects, grasps wholes and not wholes, consonances and dissonances, and so on (fr. 10). It might inform us of the whole of its particular object but in-

sofar as that object is a manifestation of the one fundamental being (which can appear in other guises) it reveals only a part. The same is true of that intellectual grasping of the *logos* which is understanding. Unless this also includes understanding of *logos*' manifestation in the sensible world, it is only partial understanding.⁶⁴ The god that is all of these things is one whole and complete being; as such it is the proper object of knowledge. As the physical manifestations of this being it is becoming and the object of sense perception. In this way, Heraclitus suggests a way across the gap between being and becoming: just as there is unity in the sensible opposites up/down, summer/winter, war/peace, etc., so the *logos* encompasses both being and becoming. As the principle that explains, it is being; as the manifestations of the content of that principle, it is becoming and change; perception and understanding are thus connected and complement one another insofar as their objects are connected.⁶⁵ A further illustration of this principle is in fr. 114: the divine law nourishes and supports human law yet it is never exhausted. Human laws are pluralistic manifestations of the divine law and as such are (paradoxically) both parts of and identical with that law.

In this paper I have argued that there is a significant epistemological aspect to Heraclitus' teachings: his conception of the *logos* is closely linked with his understanding of the nature of knowledge and its unified object. Moreover, in conceiving of the *logos* as both unified and unchanging, Heraclitus marks a metaphysical distinction between being and becoming; in showing how the sensible world reflects and is known through the *logos* he begins to explore how that metaphysical gap might be crossed.⁶⁶

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NOTES

1. See especially J. H. Lesher, "Heraclitus' Epistemological Vocabulary," *Hermes* III (1983), 155-70 and M. M. Mackenzie, "Heraclitus and the Art of Paradox," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* VI (1988), 1-37. Moravcsik's assertion that "it is pretentious to talk of Heraclitus' epistemology, since the fragments contain no precise doctrine about evidence or justification" (J. Moravcsik, "Heraclitean Concepts and Explanations," in K. Robb, ed., *Language and Thought in Early Greek Philosophy* (La Salle, IL: Hegeler Institute, 1983), pp. 134-52; p. 142) is misplaced. As Lesher's article shows, it makes good sense to speak of Heraclitus' epistemology; and I hope to show that Heraclitus is concerned with both evidence and justification.

2. Although fr. 40 castigates all four of Hesiod, Pythagoras, Xenophanes, and Hecataeus, the grammar of the sentence separates the former two from the latter. All four make spurious claims to knowledge, but Hesiod and Pythagoras compound their error by making claims to divine inspiration and justification. (I owe this point to J. Lesher.) But despite the differences between the four they all similarly fail to understand what they have learned. For dissenting opinions on the nature of Heraclitus' rejection of *polymathiê*, see J. Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, Vol. I (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 146; and W. J. Verdenius, "Notes on the Presocratics," *Mnemosyne* 13 (3rd Series, 1947), pp. 271–89, pp. 280–81. Both contrast the effort of the knower involved in the pursuit of *historiê* (recommended in fr. 35) with a less active borrowing implied in an acquisitive sense of *manthanein*; Pythagoras is thus scolded because he simply takes over other people's views without actually inquiring himself. But this will not do. One acquires knowledge in many ways, and inquiring can be just as acquisitive as learning.

3. The deliberate ambiguity of the first line of fr. 1 was noted by Aristotle; it seems clear that Heraclitus intends to say both that the account holds forever and that persons are ever uncomprehending of that account. See particularly Kahn's discussion of this passage in C. H. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) (hereafter 'ATH'), pp. 92–98.

4. The use of *axunetoi* here is important; both it and its positive counterpart will have a larger role to play in my account; compare with fr. 51. See Lesher, pp. 163–67.

5. See Kahn, Lesher, Mackenzie, A. P. D. Mourelatos, "Heraclitus, Parmenides, and the Naive Metaphysics of Things," *Exegesis and Argument, Phronesis* Suppl. I, ed., E. N. Lee, A. P. D. Mourelatos, and R. Rorty (Assen Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1973) (hereafter 'NMT'), pp. 16–48; M. C. Nussbaum, "P ψ uchê in Heraclitus I," *Phronesis* XVII (1972), pp. 1–16 (but see also Lesher's criticisms of Nussbaum); and T. M. Robinson, *Heraclitus: Fragments; A Text and Translation with a Commentary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

6. Lesher has shown that Heraclitus' use of *xunesis* indicates that real understanding is "not just being brought together physically with a thing, or even being perceptually aware of it, but . . . grasping the deeper meaning of what we encounter, and . . . heeding the message." Lesher, p. 165.

7. See Nussbaum (pp. 3–5) and Lesher (pp. 167–69) on this.

8. This is the position taken by Barnes, and it is shared by M. L. West in *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), and probably by Mackenzie. Certainly Mackenzie does not wish to reify the *logos* and she approvingly quotes Barnes and acknowledges West; but in speaking of it as an object of knowledge she seems to move closer to a middle position.

9. This does not mean, of course, that the other fragments in which the term appears fail to be philosophically important; rather, in those fragments *logos* can more naturally be given an ordinary reading. See Mackenzie, p. 31, n47.

10. West, p. 124. I assume that West would include fragments 50 and 108 in his claims as well. For a discussion of the etymology of *logos* (a discussion that undermines West's claims) see C. H. Kahn, "A New Look at Heraclitus," *American Philosophical Quarterly* vol. 1, no. 3 (1964), 189–203; pp. 192–93 and nn10, 11, and 12 are especially relevant here.

11. West, p. 124. Indeed, West interprets *ginomenôn . . . pantôn kata ton logon* as “everything happens in accordance with my account” (p. 115) without accepting that this suggests an independent truth that the account conveys.

12. “The extant fragments reveal a command of word order, imagery, and studied ambiguity as effective as that to be found in [Pindar and Aeschylus]”; Kahn, ATH, p. 7; see also pp. 87–95 and Myles Burnyeat’s review of Kahn (“Message from Heraclitus,” *The New York Review of Books*, 13 May 1982, 45–47).

13. This is noted by M. Marcovich, “Heraclitus: Some Characteristics,” *Illinois Classical Studies*, 7 (1982), 171–88, p. 182; but Marcovich notes only two senses of *logos* in Heraclitus: ‘principle’ and ‘proportion’. In his 1964 article Kahn stresses “the essential importance for Heraclitus of significant word-play, as a means of saying several things at once. Hence much fruitless debate about the ‘true’ or primary meaning of *logos* in the fragments. In fact, Heraclitus uses the word with different senses in different contexts, but each use is designed to allude to the others at the same time” (p. 192).

14. West, pp. 128 and 129.

15. West, p. 124.

16. Mackenzie, p. 9 n19.

17. Barnes, p. 318, n7. and p. 59. (In the pages to which Barnes refers, Guthrie is canvassing fifth-century notions of *logos* and not arguing for an interpretation.)

18. We can distinguish three possibilities here: (a) the *logos* is simply Heraclitus’ discourse; (b) the *logos* is a set of propositions that are true independently of Heraclitus’ utterance of them; (c) the *logos* is an extra-linguistic truth expressed by the propositions in (b). Because Heraclitus himself does not explicitly mark a distinction between propositions and the content that they express his claims slide between (b) and (c).

19. West reads fr. 114 “one must follow the common” as “one must take one’s stand on universal principles” (p. 118). This is at odds with West’s other claims about *logos*.

20. Kahn, the recent commentator who is most alive to the complexity of Heraclitus’ language, recognizes the *logos* as “not merely [Heraclitus’] statement: it is the eternal structure of the world as it manifests itself in discourse” (ATH, p. 94).

21. The problem extends beyond the fool’s inability to discriminate among the *logoi* he hears: fr. 19 asserts, “not knowing how to listen, neither are they able to speak.”

22. For a different reading of fr. 108 see W. A. Heidel, “On Certain Fragments of the Pre-Socratics: Critical Notes and Elucidations,” *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 48 (May, 1913), 681–734; 712–13. Heidel reads the *hoti* as causal: “‘for wisdom is far removed from all’ (‘men’ or ‘of them’).”

23. On the translation of *pantôn* as “all things” see Kahn ATH, p. 115; and Mackenzie p. 11 n24.

24. M. Marcovich, *Heraclitus: Greek Text with a Short Commentary* (Merida, Venezuela: 1967), p. 438.

25. Mackenzie reads the claim as focusing on the oppositions in the world rather than the unity (what she calls the opposition of unity as opposed to the unity of opposites); pp. 11–12.

26. The insistence of West and Barnes that *logos* has no metaphysical force in Heraclitus has led them to overestimate the separation possible between an utterance and its content or its meaning, and the truth specified by that content or meaning.

27. The proper interpretation of *to sophon* is a difficult issue. Kahn takes *to sophon* as the content of the competing *logoi* (including Heraclitus' own). Marcovich (1967) (agreeing with Gigon) takes it theologically, referring to the being named in fr. 32; and this seems to be Robinson's view as well. If the use is theological, I think that it is so only in the broad sense of applying divine predicates to the content of the *logos*.

28. Mourelatos argues that the naive metaphysics relies on a notion of being in which "there is ultimately only one use of 'is', the one that makes direct contact with reality. . . . Neither fully a predicative copula nor a marker of identity, this 'is' might be called the 'is' of introduction and recognition, since it has its paradigm . . . in acquaintance" (Mourelatos, NMT, p. 20). For a fuller discussion of this issue, see Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970). I use the term 'strong acquaintance' here to indicate both the reaching out and grasping aspect of such knowledge (*xunesis*) and the notion that this is knowledge by direct acquaintance (*gnôsis*).

29. While fr. 57 says that Hesiod missed the underlying unity of night and day, Heraclitus does not entirely condemn Hesiod: after all, he was right in seeing that night and day are in a sense different. This is what Mackenzie calls the opposition of unity (pp. 18–21).

30. Reading *gnapheiô(i)* in fr. 59; *grapheôn*, the manuscript reading and the choice of Kirk in G. S. Kirk, *Heraclitus: The Cosmic Fragments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954) (p. 97) and Robinson (p. 122) is quite attractive, but the *gnapheiô(i)* (equally well-attested to) of Hippolytus, Ref. IX suggests the former reading. See Mackenzie's discussion, p. 7, n13. See also C. Osborne, *Rethinking Early Greek Philosophy: Hippolytus of Rome and the Presocratics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 167–69.

31. For a discussion of the many interpretations of the unity of the opposites in Heraclitus, see M. Stokes, *One and Many in Presocratic Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 89–100.

32. See Mackenzie, pp. 18–21, on Hesiod's knowledge.

33. It is worth noting that the unified whole of the object is not to be identified simply with the claim that the opposites are one. That Heraclitus illustrates the failure to understand this sort of unity with Hesiod's deficiency with respect to the unity of day and night gives the account a peculiarly Heraclitean twist.

34. The tennis-ball analogy suggests Parmenides B8.42–44. Parmenides' claim that what is is like the expanse of a well-rounded sphere illustrates the completeness and perfection of being. The completeness of being entails that it is completely and perfectly known. See 28B3: "the same thing is for thinking and for being" (*to gar auto noein estin te kai einai*).

35. The contrast here might be illustrated by Archilocus' comment on the fox and the hedgehog: "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing" (*poll' oia' alôpêx, all' echinos hen mega*; Diel 103; Lasserre-Bonnard 177). Even though he maintains that the object of knowledge must be unified, Heraclitus does not qualify as a hedgehog.

36. I do not accept Mackenzie's equation of what is private with sense perception (p. 28). Fr. 107 implies that sense perception can give knowledge in some circumstances, and the comparisons of what is *idion* with sleeping (frs. 1, 89) do not suggest that sense perception has the same suspect status as "private wisdom." (If the perceptual awareness of the oppositions within unity are linked with strife and war, then fr. 80's explicit linking of war and the common counts against Mackenzie's claim.) Nor is Mackenzie's related claim that the awareness of the 'opposition of unity' is something gained through the private view convincing.

37. Heraclitus must equate a private understanding with "understanding that which is not common." On the face of it, this is a mistake; surely one could have a private understanding of something common. Heraclitus seems simply to have conflated 'private understanding' with 'understanding the private'.

38. It has been widely noted that the use of *koinos* rather than *xunos* indicates that 89 is a paraphrase and not a quotation; Marcovich (1967), however, accepts it as genuine. As Kahn, Robinson, and Mackenzie note, whether or not the wording is genuine, there is no reason to think that the content is not Heraclitean. Here too the claim is that because the object of the sleepers' understanding is private, they have a private understanding.

39. As is usually the case, Heraclitus gives no reference for *pantôn* in fr. 114. I take it, then, that "common to all" includes both "common to everything" and "common to all men."

40. Fr. 112 is accepted as quotation by Diels; treated as paraphrase by Marcovich (1967), Kirk, and Barnes. Kahn accepts it as genuine, as does Robinson; their arguments are convincing.

41. These are changes both in the sensory world (roads, the paths of carding wheels, the aging of persons, etc.) and of the sensory world (the turnings of fire, the transformations of the seasons, and so on). On my account, knowledge of the *logos* leads to an understanding of all of these. For a fuller account of the nature of change in Heraclitus, see Kirk.

42. There is an important textual problem here. Kahn's reading of the fragment, with his suggestion *hokê kubernêsai*, is consistent with Robinson's reading of *hoteê ekubernêse*. Mackenzie reads the fragment differently, concentrating on what she sees as the fragment's insistence that "everything is distinct" (p. 11); she does not discuss the textual difficulties. The other problem in this fragment is *gnômê*: is it to be understood as the plan or purpose by which all things are steered (as in Kahn and Robinson) or as (true) judgment as to how all things are steered (Kirk)? Marcovich (1967 and 1982) treats it as a personified Intelligence, and Mackenzie translates "the reason which rules." The Kahn/Robinson and Kirk readings amount to the same thing. It seems most likely that Heraclitus is trading on the connection between judgment and purposive action that is contained in *gnômê*: see for instance the comments of Diano and Serra in *Eraclito: I Frammenti e le Testimonianze* (1980), pp. 113-14. My thanks to Zeph Stewart for discussing this point with me.

43. See Kahn ATH, p. 171.

44. With Marcovich, Kirk, Barnes, Kahn, Robinson, and Mackenzie I take the first word of the fragment to be *sullapsies*. The text then reads: *sullapsies; hola kai ouch hola, sumpheromenon diapheromenon, suna(i)don dia(i)don, ek pantôn hen kai ex henos panta*.

45. Mackenzie's account of the river fragments is particularly relevant here. See Mackenzie, pp. 1–4.

46. EN 1155b4. There is now general agreement that this is not a direct quote but a reminiscence and paraphrase, although it is quite possible that *antixoun sumpheron* are Heraclitus' own words.

47. As is the case, for instance, in Marcovich (1982), pp. 177–78.

48. Reading *chreôn* following Diels, Kirk, and Marcovich.

49. As Mackenzie notes, the unity of the opposites and the opposition of unity are both equally part of Heraclitus' system.

50. Reading *palintropos* with Kahn, Robinson, Leshner, Mackenzie. See Marcovich (1967), pp. 119 and 125 in favor of *palintonos*; for *palintropos* see Kahn (ATH), Robinson and especially Mackenzie (p. 10, n22).

51. For an analysis of the linguistic density of this fragment see Marcovich (1967), pp. 78–80 and Kahn ATH, p. 211.

52. Marcovich argues that 47 is a paraphrase and not a quotation, although Kahn accepts it "because it appears in a context (D.L. IX. 71–3) with verbatim citations from other authors" (ATH, p. 106). Robinson correctly points out that whether or not we have a literal quotation of Heraclitus' actual words here, the thought is consistent with Heraclitus' views.

53. The authenticity of the fragment has long been questioned. Kahn doubts that we have Heraclitus' own words, while Robinson says that its textual base is "somewhat flimsy" (p. 148). See Marcovich (1967), pp. 22–24.

54. See Moravcsik (p. 45); Mackenzie apparently links sense perception with the private (she refers to, but does not discuss, frs. 55 and 101a in her account of the private); see p. 28. It must be noted that Mackenzie argues that Heraclitus recognizes the need for both the private and the common.

55. *Barbaros* here means no more than "non-Greek speaking;" that is, the soul in question is incapable of speaking or understanding the language in which eyes and ears "speak" to it. How can eyes mislead a barbarian soul? The answer is suggested by considering the difficulties of correctly interpreting the gestures of someone whose language one does not speak. Cf. Nussbaum here.

56. As not being immediate we might say that the language of sense perception fails to be common or universal. But this is not the sense of privacy that Moravcsik and (apparently) Mackenzie wish to attribute to sense perception.

57. Moravcsik suggests that perception is private while cognition is common: perception is apparently "private and incommunicable" while arguments about cognition "can be stated in public" (p. 145). But surely reports of sense perception can be public and common insofar as a common language is spoken, and the particular processes of thought and understanding may be just as private as sense perception.

58. Both Kahn (ATH) and Robinson take it as having a double sense, while Mackenzie takes it as a reference to the indirect communication of god with man.

59. There were, of course, many layers of interpretation at Delphi. First there are the utterances of the Pythia; then the priest who translates this into hexameters. Then there are the envoys who must interpret the translation. Past experience and insight are crucial at this stage.

60. Marcovich (1967), p. 24. See also Kahn (ATH), Robinson, and Kirk (who interprets it in terms of sight and hearsay).

61. Both the text and the meaning of this fragment are hotly disputed. For discussions of the alternatives see Kirk, pp. 184–201 and Marcovich (1967), pp. 413–17. Following Kahn and Mackenzie I omit *pur* (or any other noun) after *hokôspêr*; Heraclitus' point here is not tied to the nature of fire, but is rather to illustrate the relation of that which is to the phenomenal world. See Kahn's discussion of the structure of the fragment and his account of its contrasting elements (ATH, pp. 276–81). There may well be a connection with fire here, insofar as fire is identified as the sign of the *logos*; what I wish to stress is that fire does not function in this fragment as a substratum such as Anaximenes' air.

62. Heraclitus' talk of *ho theos* is not specifically theological. *Logos* can well be conceived as divine insofar as it is eternal and shares in those characteristics traditionally thought to denote divinity.

63. See Kahn, ATH, pp. 279–81 on this point.

64. Thus Mackenzie is correct in stressing the importance of perception for Heraclitus.

65. The best illustration of this plurality within unity in Heraclitus is in the river fragments 12, 49a, and 91. See Mackenzie's masterful discussion of these fragments on pp. 1–7.

66. This paper was written while I was a Junior Fellow at the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, DC; it is a pleasure to acknowledge the help and support of Zeph Stewart and the staff of the Center. James H. Leshner, A. A. Long, and Thomas M. Robinson were generous with comments and suggestions; I am especially indebted to Eve Browning Cole and to Eyjólfur Kjalar Emilsson.