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Knowledge, Language, and Communication in Heraclitus

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Signed declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself. The work presented here is my own and it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified. Any included publications are my own work, except where indicated throughout the thesis and summarised and clearly identified on the declarations page of the thesis.

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Abstract

The main objective of this thesis is to provide an interpretation of Heraclitus' epistemology in connection with his ideas of language and communication. It proposes an interpretation of his philosophical doctrine that focuses on answering two interrelated epistemological questions: what is knowledge in Heraclitus' doctrine? And how do we acquire it? These two main questions imply four other questions that treat the problem of the role that language and communication play in pursuing and understanding knowledge: why does Heraclitus consider that people fail to understand? Is our language a suitable medium to communicate knowledge to others? Is the way in which Heraclitus uses language, his obscure style, important in this process? What do people need to do in order to understand?

The thesis is divided in four main sections. First, I offer a general introduction to the study of Heraclitus, where I argue that many of his fragments and his philosophical doctrines point to the problem of knowledge, its acquisition, and communication. Second, I argue that the object of knowledge in Heraclitus' epistemology is the *logos*, an independent, eternal, divine, cosmic, and complete description of the cosmos, which cannot be directly communicated to other people. Third, I propose that such an idea of *logos* implies that Heraclitus had a theory of correctness of names: in the *logos* everything is described correctly. However, language is not a suitable medium to directly communicate this *logos* among humans. As a result, Heraclitus proposes the solution of referring and pointing to this *logos* indirectly, by using analogies, allegories, and different puns and word play. Lastly, I argue that people, and in particular their souls, are an important part of the process of knowledge. Heraclitus sees soul as material (by default) and locates it within his cosmology. Most importantly, he attributes several physiological and psychological functions to the human soul. I propose that, while Heraclitus cannot tell us the *logos* directly, he can direct us to it and help us in realising that our personal *logoi* are wrong, which makes our souls 'barbarian' and unable to properly understand the world reported to us by our senses and its true *logos*.

Lay summary

Heraclitus of Ephesus was a Greek philosopher active around the early fifth century BC. Like most philosophers of the time, we do not have a book in which we can read his ideas directly. We only have quotations and paraphrases of these ideas in other later authors. Ancient and modern scholars and other people interested in him have collected and put together these phrases and ideas, his fragments. At the same time, from the evidence found in the fragments they have tried to understand his thought as a whole. The text I present here is my interpretation or my attempt at understanding the fragments of Heraclitus, and in particular those fragments that talk about knowledge, language, and communication. The goal of my interpretation is to propose a theory that provides an answer to the following questions: what is knowledge in Heraclitus' doctrine? How do we acquire that knowledge? How can we teach others about knowledge? Can we just tell it to other people in a normal conversation? Is Heraclitus trying to communicate this knowledge to his audience? Is the way in which Heraclitus uses language necessary to communicate his message? I consider three main aspects of this problem in Heraclitus. 1) The object of knowledge: that which we need to understand or grasp in order to acquire knowledge. 2) The language that we use when we communicate knowledge. And 3) the soul (or mind) of the person attempting to understand this knowledge. I argue that the object of knowledge is the *logos*. This is a Greek word that means 'speech' or 'account' but that for Heraclitus represents a divine and perfect description of the universe. However, we cannot tell this *logos* to other people in the same way we tell them theories or stories. Even when we use language correctly we cannot communicate the *logos* directly. For Heraclitus, although wise people like him can help others by indirectly referring and pointing to this *logos*, people need to find this knowledge by themselves. However, their souls (or minds) need to be ready and cleansed so that they can see and understand the world that surrounds them and its *logos* with their own eyes and ears.

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Abbreviations

ATH	Kahn, C.H. (1979), *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, Cambridge.
DK	Diels, H., and Kranz, W. (1952), *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, ed. 6, Berlin.
KRS	Kirk, G.S., Raven, J.E., and Schofield, M. (1983), *The Presocratic Philosophers*, Cambridge. Kirk, G.S., Raven, J.E., and Schofield, M. (2007), *The Presocratic Philosophers*, ed. 2, Cambridge.
LSJ	Liddell, H.G., and Scott, R. (1925–1940), *A Greek-English Lexicon*, ed. 9, revised by H.S. Jones, Oxford.
TEGP	Graham, D.W. (2010), ed. and tr., *The Texts of Early Greek Philosophy*, 2 vols., Cambridge.
TLG	*Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, at: http://www.tlg.uci.edu/.

Introduction

0.1. Fragments and doxography

Heraclitus offers us a particular challenge when it comes to determining and interpreting his thought. Unlike most poets and the later prose-writing Presocratics, we do not have any long, continuous passages by Heraclitus. Most of his fragments are small quotations in later authors. Depending on the editors and editions, Heraclitus has between 110 and 150 fragments.[1] Additionally, the majority of these references in antiquity are phrases embedded into a particular text, argument, and context. Most authors present the quotations followed by an interpretation. In other cases, their interpretation is clear by the context in which they quote a particular fragment. In general, these quotations in other authors, the fragments, are our most reliable source for understanding Heraclitus and his doctrine. Even though the fragments come from other authors, we can safely say that they as a whole represent Heraclitus' original work.

There is another important source about Heraclitus' philosophical doctrine: ancient reports. The best known and most popular ideas attributed to Heraclitus do not come from the fragments themselves but from the interpretations of his doctrines in antiquity. The main authors of these reports are Plato and Aristotle. Another big portion of quotations and interpretations comes from later doxographers (Aetius, Sextus Empiricus, and Diogenes Laertius), early Christian writers (Hippolytus, Clement, Origen), Stoics (Marcus Aurelius), sceptics, Neo-Platonists, and several other philosophers and writers.[2] There is usually a difference, sometimes an important one, between what the fragments say and what the later authors report. Consequently, we may say that we have two different versions of Heraclitus, the one who speaks to us through his own writings, and another one, who is described, explained, updated, and appropriated by other authors in later texts.

[1] There are several different numberings for the fragments depending on the editions. I will use the numbering of the edition by DK (1952), where a number preceded by an 'A' means it is considered a testimony, and preceded by a 'B' means it is considered original. The Greek texts are taken from TEGP and all translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

[2] A complete list and analysis of Greek doxography is Diels (1879). For the problems of doxography and reception, see Osborne (1987), and Runia and Mansfield (1997) and (2009).

Regarding these two kinds of evidence, I agree in general with Osborne's approach.[3] The fragments should not be taken out of context and interpreted as isolated statements. The authors who quote Heraclitus were closer (in time, as well as culturally and linguistically) and in many cases probably had direct access to his text. This means that even though most of them used him with a particular agenda, they most likely had a good understanding of Heraclitus' texts and ideas. The fact that some fragments are quoted out of context and just to serve the author's purpose does not mean that we need to ignore their interpretation altogether. On the contrary, we need to understand why the sources thought of Heraclitus and interpreted the fragments in a particular way. The fragments are what we have left of Heraclitus' work but they are not isolated. Their wording in many cases probably differs from Heraclitus' originals, but the ideas presented in them are Heraclitean. Our interpretation of the fragments must not only look for coherence between the ideas expressed in the different fragments, but it must also look for coherence within his philosophical and historical context. In this regard, comparisons with contemporaneous authors prove useful when trying to identify whether an idea attributed to Heraclitus was current at that time or a latter development (and more likely wrongly attributed to him, e.g. Christian doctrines by Hippolytus). Hence, a doctrine which Plato attributes to a previous author or present in fragments of authors before Heraclitus is more likely (but not necessarily) related to Heraclitus, as his ideas might have influenced those authors or he might have been influenced by them.

0.2. Modern approaches to Heraclitus

My analysis takes as its starting point the standard modern editions of Heraclitus. These usually consist of more elaborate and holistic interpretations that aim to explain Heraclitean thought as a whole and connect most of the separate doctrines together, taking into account both the fragments and the later reception of Heraclitus.[4] It is

[3] See Osborne (1987), 1–32.

[4] I take into consideration the following editions of Heraclitus' fragments: Kirk (1954); Wheelwright (1959); Mondolfo (1966); Marcovich (1967); ATH; Robinson (1987); and Mouraviev (2002), (2006a), and (2006b). And the following general works on the Presocratics: Burnet (1892), (1928), and (1930); Guthrie (1962); Barnes (1979) and (1982); KRS (1983) and (2007); McKirahan (1994) and (2010); Warren (2007); and TEGP. See section 'Editions of Heraclitus and the Presocratics' of the bibliography,

important to keep in mind that modern interpretations usually extract and give importance to topics that perhaps were underestimated or overlooked by the ancients. Even though I tried to include as many as possible as part of my interpretation, certain modern works were more influential than others, some in regard to my general interpretation of Heraclitus' philosophical doctrine, and some in respect of my view of particular topics or fragments. For clarity I want to acknowledge the most important of them here.

The editions that were the most influential in my interpretation of Heraclitus as a whole are the following. Kirk's *Heraclitus. The Cosmic Fragments* (1954) provides a good analysis of many individual fragments, takes into consideration other interpretations of the time, and provides good doxographical and textual analysis, and a critical apparatus for each fragment. Even though it focuses on Heraclitus' cosmological thought, it offers a comprehensive interpretation of his philosophy. Marcovich's *Heraclitus* (1967) was central in my research as it is a complete edition that provides very thorough analysis of all the fragments; it provides excellent doxographical and textual analyses, and critical apparatuses. Kahn's *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (1979) was essential in helping me come closer to the problem of language in Heraclitus and in particular to understanding his mode of expression as part of his philosophical message. Robinson's *Heraclitus: Fragments* (1987) changed several of my preconceptions about Heraclitus and helped me in particular to approach the difficult role of the divine in Heraclitus' philosophy. Graham's *The Texts of Early Greek Philosophy* (2010) was my main edition of the Presocratics; it is very compact and concise, and provides the most important data when working with Presocratic philosophy in a very precise manner and with a clear analysis.

Regarding specific topics in Heraclitus, the following articles should also be mentioned. My interpretation of *logos* follows Robinson's interpretation of Heraclitus in general and in particular his article 'Heraclitus and *logos* — Again' (2013), also Johnstone's 'On "*logos*" in Heraclitus' (2014), and Tarán's 'The first fragment of Heraclitus' (1986). For the problem of language in Heraclitus, Robinson's 'Heraclitus

where I mention some other relevant items. I include in the bibliography Laks, Most, et al. (2016), a recent edition of the texts of Presocratic philosophers, which unfortunately came out too late for me to properly discuss it in this thesis.

and Plato on the language of the real' (1991), Havelock's 'The linguistic task of the Presocratics' (1983), and Frankel's 'A thought pattern in Heraclitus' (1938b) were fundamental in several of my arguments. For the concept of *psychē* in Heraclitus, Nussbaum's article 'ΨYXH in Heraclitus' (1972) guided my interpretation in what refers to the psychological part of the soul and its relation to language, and Betegh's 'On the physical aspect of Heraclitus' psychology' (2007) was central in my understanding of its cosmic and material part.

0.3. On Heraclitus' book

Some of the ancient commentators attribute a book to Heraclitus, from which we could suppose the fragments come. Aristotle makes the first known mention of a book written by Heraclitus in his *Rhetoric* 1407b14. Sextus Empiricus (*Adversus Mathematicos* 7.132) and Diogenes Laertius (9.5–6) attribute a book to him as well. Some other authors mention Heraclitus' book during antiquity and medieval times, but it is likely that they did not have access to this book themselves and were just taking the words of previous authors as their testimony.[5]

The existence of the book is well attested, and most scholars agree that there was a book containing Heraclitus' philosophical thought. However, there is still controversy about two matters: 1) did Heraclitus himself write the book or did someone else, such as one of his followers? 2) In what style or format was the book written? Was it a treatise in continuous prose, such as the work of Melissus, or a collection of aphorisms or maxims, like the ones of the Seven Sages, or some *sui generis* combination of poetry, prose, aphorism, and treatise? Several scholars support the hypothesis that the book was a collection of separate utterances, in a manner of maxims, sayings, or aphorisms. Marcovich, KRS, Most, Graham, and Granger defend this position.[6] On the other side, supporting that Heraclitus wrote a continuous prose

[5] For a full survey of mentions of the book in antiquity, see Mouraviev (2004), 67–69.
[6] Marcovich says that he follows Kirk's approach to Heraclitus *grosso modo* and uses the word 'sayings' instead of 'fragments', just as Kirk does to imply that they were uttered and not written down, in Marcovich (1967), XVI–XVII. KRS (1983), 184. See Most (1999), 349–350, 357; TEGP, 186; and Granger (2004a), 7–11, who says that later authors who collected the fragments could have reconstructed his arguments somehow.

treatise, we find Guthrie, West, Barnes, Mondolfo, Sider, and Mouraviev.[7] Kirk and Kahn propose a book written in a special way that combines prose and poetry.[8] All these positions have good arguments, and we have some evidence for corresponding kinds of compositions in that period.[9]

Overall, however, it is not clear how useful the questions about the form and order of the book are for understanding Heraclitus' philosophical doctrine. For Kahn and for Mouraviev it is an important matter.[10] Both understand that the internal structure of the book was planned and, therefore, meaningful for the understanding of his thought. I sympathise with Kahn that our organization of the fragments should try to be meaningful, as the original order was, but disagree with Mouraviev's idea that finding it is a necessary condition for the understanding of Heraclitus' thought.

My approach to the problem of the book and its order will follow Erick Havelock's idea about literacy and orality in the time of Presocratic philosophy. He says:

> Greek authors generally up to about the beginning of the fifth century, and Athenian authors down to as late as the Periclean age, composed their

[7] Guthrie (1962), 408. West (1971), 112 n. 2. Barnes (1983), 104. Mondolfo (1958), 75. Sider (2009), 455. Mouraviev (2009) and (2011).

[8] Kirk (1954), 7: 'I hazard the conjecture that Heraclitus wrote no book, in our sense of the word. The fragments, or many of them, have the appearance of being isolated statements, or γνῶμαι: many of the connecting particles they contain belong to later sources. In or perhaps shortly after Heraclitus' lifetime a collection of these sayings was made, conceivably by a pupil. This was the "book": originally Heraclitus' utterances had been oral, and so were put into an easily memorable form.' ATH, 7: 'The impression that the original work was a kind of commonplace work, in which sentences or paragraphs were jotted down as they occurred to the author, is largely due to the fact that Heraclitus makes use of the proverbial style of the Sages, just as he invokes the enigmatic tones of the Delphic oracle. But Heraclitus has many literary strings to his bow; he does not always speak in riddles or aphorisms. Among the quotations are four or five long passages of several connected sentences. Fragment I is a carefully wrought proem, which suggests the beginning of a well-planned book.'

[9] We have the example of the *Dissoi Logoi*, which collect arguments and positions notable in that time, and dated around the fifth century BC. See TEGP, 877. Additionally, Greek gnomological tradition could have started before Plato. According to Searby (1998), 30, 'the first recorded use of the word γνωμολογία, "speaking in gnomes", occurs in *Phaedrus* (267C), where Plato uses it to describe the sententious style of the sophist Polus.' This means that at this time, people started making collections of sayings, not that authors wrote books in aphorisms. See Searby (1998), 28–42 for gnomological tradition in the Classical period.

[10] Kahn (1964), 190–191: 'There is of course no chance of restoring these shattered and incomplete fragments to the order in which Heraclitus himself disposed them. But once we assume that Heraclitus' ordering had some plan, it becomes the interpreter's task to arrange them in the most meaningful pattern he can find. Not only does arrangement imply interpretation; interpretation, in turn, involves arrangement; and the methodical complement to a new interpretation of Heraclitus would be a complete reordering of the fragments to replace the meaningless sequence of Diels.' See also Mouraviev (2009), 18.

> works under the form of audience control, managing their language so as to meet the needs of listeners rather than readers. This had precise effects upon the style and substance of what they said.[11]

And under this supposition, he states that the Presocratics 'too are poised between literacy and non-literacy. Their style of composition is a form of mediation between ear and eye. They expect an audience of listeners, yet look forward to a reception at the hands of readers.'[12] Consequently, I believe Heraclitus' fragments should be understood, first, as part of a speech or different speeches defending a particular idea and meant to be presented in front of people, and secondly subjected to the thoroughness of being preserved in a written form.

0.4. The doctrines of Heraclitus

Since antiquity, several doctrines have been attributed to Heraclitus. Before turning to my own concerns, it may be useful to survey the most relevant. These are the following. First, the doctrine of universal flux, also known as *panta rhei*. Second, that fire is the first principle, or *archē*, and that the universe is periodically destroyed by the power of fire in a cosmic conflagration, or *ekpyrōsis*. Third, that there is a unity or natural connection between opposites. Fourth, that there is a cosmic *logos*. Fifth, that Heraclitus was obscure and that his obscure style was part of his philosophical doctrine. Sixth, that soul is a cosmic element that is also responsible for some of our bodily and mental functions when inside body.

0.4.1. Cosmos and flux

Heraclitus inherited many cosmological ideas from Presocratic philosophers before him, especially from the Ionian thinkers Anaximander and Anaximenes. For them, everything in the cosmos is composed of one (or some) basic element or material. This basic element makes up all variety of things by blending and changing its state, and most natural phenomena (meteorological and astronomical) can be explained by

[11] Havelock (1983), 8.
[12] Havelock (1983), 9.

understanding this elemental transformations and blending.[13] In Heraclitus' particular case, fire plays a central role in the configuration the cosmos, which 'was not created by any mortal or god but it has always existed and will exist forever' (B30).[14] Most importantly, for him, the elemental transformations by which natural phenomena are explained and by which the cosmos is organised seem to imply that things are constantly changing. This idea is known as the doctrine of the universal flux. It states that everything in the cosmos is always changing or in motion.[15] The doctrine does not have much support in the fragments themselves, i.e. none of the fragments in fact states that everything is in motion, but the notion of a material becoming and cosmic change can be deduced from some fragments that talk about elemental transformations (B31, B36, B62, B67, B76, B84a, B125, and B126) and by the famous river passage, 'you cannot step twice in the same river.'[16] This theory is especially associated with Heraclitus because of the testimony of Plato and Aristotle. They attribute this idea to Heraclitus and try to find solutions for its implications in different passages (Plato, *Theaetetus* 152d2–e8 and *Cratylus* 402a8–10; Aristotle, *De Anima* 405a25–29 and *Metaphysics* 1010a7). The main idea is that everything in the cosmos is in constant motion, and nothing is stable; that nothing is, but everything is becoming. The river passage presents us with an analogy or example for this idea: the water that constitutes the body of the river is constantly flowing and, therefore, is always different since it is continuously replaced by different waters. However, the exact functioning of this continuous flux in the cosmos, its reach and implications are not clear in the fragments. Plato himself notices in *Theaetetus* 181c that the flux theory can refer to two different kinds of motions: displacing and altering. If we take into consideration that Heraclitus thought this theory in the context of Milesian physics, it is probably true that the basic particles are always being displaced. However, it would be hard to argue that for

[13] This is the general perception of the physics and cosmology of the first Presocratics as interpreted by Aristotle, in particular in *Metaphysics* A and in *Physics* A and Γ. Whether Aristotle was a good historian of philosophy and represented their doctrines correctly, see Cherniss (1935), Guthrie (1957), and Collobert (2002).

[14] For cosmology in Heraclitus, see KRS (2007), 197–203; Kirk (1954); and Lebedev (1985).

[15] For Heraclitus' theory of flux, see Graham (1997) and (2009); Hülsz Piccone (2009); Wiggins (2016).

[16] See TEGP, 190–191 and Graham (2013). There are different versions of the river fragment (A6, B49a, B91; *Theaetetus* 160d6–8; Plutarch, *Natural Questions* 912a), but seemingly the most reliable is B12: 'On those stepping into rivers staying the same other and other waters flow.' Trans. TEGP, Greek text: ποταμοῖσι τοῖσιν αὐτοῖσιν ἐμβαίνουσιν ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα ὕδατα ἐπιῤῥεῖ· καὶ ψυχαὶ δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν ὑγρῶν ἀναθυμιῶνται.

Heraclitus everything was changing in every respect and at every moment because some fragments suggest that these cosmic movements and general change are directed by some higher power (B1, B53, B64, B80, B94) and constrained by measures (B30), which indicates the stability of some higher order.[17] This in turn implies that the flux theory is connected with other doctrines such as fire and the cosmic *logos*.

0.4.2. Fire

This doctrine has been understood in different ways. The most common view in antiquity is that Heraclitus thought everything was composed of fire as a material principle or *archē*, and that consequently he was a material monist. This idea, however, does not find much support in the fragments themselves. Just as with the flux theory, none of the fragments states that everything is fire. However, from the fragments that talk about fire, or refer to it, we can infer that fire had a major role in Heraclitean cosmology, and that it was most likely related to his other doctrines. We know that fire is in exchange for everything (B90), its kindling and quenching control the universe (B30), it steers everything in the form of thunderbolt (B64), and it judges and convicts all things (B66). Plato does not attribute any fire doctrine to Heraclitus directly but in *Theatetus* 153a1–9 he suggests a connection between the flux theory and fire. The first explicit attribution of a fire theory to Heraclitus was done by Aristotle in his interpretation of physical theories of the first philosophers, whom he classifies as *physikoi*. He says that Heraclitus posited fire as a material principle, in the same way Thales proposed water and Anaximenes, air (*Metaphysics* 984a7–8).[18] Aristotle is also the first who mentions a doctrine closely related to fire in Heraclitus' cosmology, which is also one that is very controversial among modern interpretations of Heraclitus: the *ekpyrōsis*, or world conflagration: the idea that the cosmos at some point in time comes to its destruction into fire and, then, at some other time it is reborn out of fire (*De Caelo* 279b12).[19] The exact role of fire in Heraclitus' physics and cosmology is

[17] The most extreme versions of the flux theory most likely correspond not to Heraclitus himself but to how Plato and Aristotle make use of this theory for their arguments in particular passages. For instance, to emphasise the contrast between Being and Becoming in Plato's *Timaeus*.

[18] Also Lucretius 1.635–711, describes Heraclitus as the leader of those who think fire is a material principle (*materies rerum*).

[19] For e*kpyrōsis* in Heraclitus, see Kirk (1951) and Mondolfo (1958). Inwood (1984), 229, provides some arguments against Kahn's acceptance of this doctrine.

hard to determine. Most scholars tend to think that it is very unlikely that Heraclitus thought of fire as an exclusive material principle in the same way as his predecessors, as we have it in Aristotle's interpretation. It is interesting, however, that Aristotle himself says in *De Anima* 405a25–27 that for Heraclitus the principle was soul (and not fire), which could lead us to think that the idea of fire in Heraclitus was connected to his conception of the soul and, perhaps, to his doctrine of a cosmic *logos* as well.

0.4.3. Unity in opposites

The idea that a unity or intrinsic connection is present in concepts or attributes that are opposite is without a doubt the most common image in the fragments.[20] In general terms, the theory of unity in opposites proposes that there is a unity, a natural connection, or a sort of complementarity between opposites, such as day and night, up and down, life and death, satiety and hunger. There is not a formal definition of the doctrine presented by Heraclitus, but unlike other doctrines we have a few fragments from which we can deduce a clearer idea of what Heraclitus was proposing. One of them is B67: 'The god is day night, winter summer, war peace, satiety hunger, and he alters just as <fire, which,> when it is mixed with spices, is named according to the aroma of each of them.'[21] This seems to indicate that a totality, the god, is composed of several couples of opposites: two parts of a process, which are one and the same thing but named as two different things. Another relevant fragment for the unity in opposites is B88, 'As the same thing in us are living and dead, walking and sleeping, young and old. For those things having changed around are those, and those in turn having changed around are these.'[22] This fragment, in turn, seems to point to a more psychological and epistemological argument: notions that are opposite but complementary, such as life and death, can only be understood together.

[20] Some articles that treat the topic of unity in opposites are Mourelatos (1973), 33–40; Mackenzie (1998); Hussey (1991) and (1999b); and Long (2007).
[21] Trans. TEGP with some modifications: ὁ θεὸς ἡμέρη εὐφρόνη, χειμὼν θέρος, πόλεμος εἰρήνη, κόρος λιμός [τἀναντία ἅπαντα. οὗτος ὁ νοῦς], ἀλλοιοῦται δὲ ὅκωσπερ <πῦρ, ὅ>, ὁπόταν συμμιγῆι θυώμασιν, ὀνομάζεται καθ᾽ ἡδονὴν ἑκάστου.
[22] Trans. TEGP: ταὐτό τ᾽ ἔνι ζῶν καὶ τεθνηκὸς καὶ ἐγρηγορὸς καὶ καθεῦδον καὶ νέον καὶ γηραιόν· τάδε γὰρ μεταπεσόντα ἐκεῖνά ἐστι κἀκεῖνα πάλιν μεταπεσόντα ταῦτα.

However, there are several interpretations of how this unity or connection of opposite concepts works.[23] A physicalist view understands that everything is made out of opposite elements at the same time (e.g. that fire and water are in things in different proportions). There is also the idea that opposite attributes or characteristics are present in the same thing at the same time, as for instance in fragment B60 ('A road up-down is one and the same.'[24]), in which the same road is at the same time going up and going down depending on which direction you are taking it. Additionally, we can interpret this doctrine as a physical process closely connected to the flux theory, and say that the oppositions are part of a process in which one quality cedes its place to another (e.g. that something cold warms up and something hot cools down in B126). Plato and Aristotle, who attribute this idea to Heraclitus, seem to take it as the harmony created by opposites present in the same object (Plato, *Symposium* 187a, and Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1155b4–6). Nevertheless, most of these different ways to understand the doctrine are not exclusive. The idea of the unity of opposites most likely works on many different levels of Heraclitus' philosophical thought, and is closely connected to his other doctrines, in particular to the ideas of the universal flux and the cosmic *logos*.

0.4.4. Cosmic *logos*

The *logos* doctrine states that there is a cosmic *logos*, i.e. a speech, account, measure or proportion, which is part of the cosmos or somehow involved in its organisation or governance.[25] There is some evidence in the fragments for the attribution of such a doctrine to Heraclitus. We know that there is a *logos* that is eternal, and in accordance to which everything happens (B1). It is also common to all and not private (B2), and when we listen not to Heraclitus but to it we might find important truths about the cosmos (B50). Nevertheless, what this *logos* exactly is and how it works was and still is debated. The attribution of this doctrine to Heraclitus seems to be later than Plato and Aristotle. Sextus Empiricus (*Adversus Mathematicos* 7.127–134) provides us with

[23] See for instance, Hussey (1999b), 93–98; McKirahan (2010), 131–134; and KRS (2007), 188–194, who propose different ways in which the unity of opposites can work.
[24] Greek text: ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω μία καὶ ὠυτή.
[25] On the problem of *logos*, see Adam (1911), Minar (1939), Glasson (1952), Molina (2006), Robinson (2013), Johnstone (2014), and Lebedev (2017).

the first known interpretation of *logos* as cosmic in Heraclitus. The theory seems to have had much more impact in later antiquity and it has created a significant debate among modern scholars. Some of them defend the idea that *logos* does not have any special connotation in the fragments and that in B1, B2, and B50 it is only referring to Heraclitus' own speech. However, the majority of modern scholars support the doctrine of a cosmic *logos* in some way. Fragment B115 proposes that the soul has a self-augmenting *logos*, and B45, that it has a deep *logos*, which could mean that the idea of a cosmic *logos* is also connected to the idea of soul.

0.4.5. Obscurity

The problem of Heraclitus' obscurity refers to two different ideas, of which only one could be considered a doctrine. First, there is the idea that his style was obscure and his writings were hard to understand. Second, there is the attribution of a doctrine of deliberate obscurity, according to which Heraclitus' obscurity was not only a stylistic characteristic of his writings but also a reflection and application of a theory of language. The first mention of the style of Heraclitus, if Diogenes' (2.22) testimony is accurate, is done by Socrates, who says that Heraclitus' book would require a Delian diver to be understood. Later, Plato says in his *Theaetetus* 179e1–180b3, that any Heraclitean, when questioned about their views, 'will pull out some little enigmatic phrase from his quiver and shoot it off at you; and if you try to make him give an account of what he has said, you will only get hit by another, full of strange turns of language.' Additionally, in the *Symposium* 187a3–b3 when discussing fragment B51 ('The one while being at variance with itself agrees with itself, just as the tuning of the bow and the lyre.'[26]), Eryximachus claims that at first sight the fragment seems absurd because of its meaning, but that it can be coherent and meaningful if interpreted correctly.

Aristotle also thinks Heraclitus is obscure but for a more particular reason. In *Rhetoric* 1407b14, he mentions Heraclitus' book and qualifies Heraclitus' writings as

[26] This is Plato's version of B51. The most accepted version is the one in Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* 9.9.2.

not easy to punctuate (*diastixai*).[27] A similar observation is made in the text *On Style* 191–192 attributed to Demetrius of Phalerum, where Heraclitus' texts are considered difficult because of the lack of conjunctions and other connectors. Diogenes (9.6) tells us that Timon calls Heraclitus enigmatic and obscure, and that Theophrastus thought that he had melancholy and wrote incomplete and particular texts for that reason.[28] The first mention of Heraclitus' nickname, 'the obscure', is in Pseudo-Aristotle's *De Mundo* 396b20.[29] There he is simply called *skoteinos*.[30] However, the author does not give us an explanation for the qualification. The same adjective is used by Strabo in his *Geography* (14.1.25), without any explanation whatsoever: '[Ephesus] produced eminent men: in early times Heraclitus called the Obscure, and Hermodorus.'[31] And Livy (23.39.3) says that he had *scotinus* as a nickname.

All those comments on Heraclitus' style led some thinkers to interpret his obscurity as something more than purely stylistic. Lucretius (1.635–644) says that he is famous for his 'obscure tongue' (*lingua obscura*) and that some people like to find hidden meaning in his words. Lucian (*Vitarum Auctio* 14) suggests for the first time the idea that Heraclitus' style could be related to Apollo and his oracles, an opinion that has had an important influence in modern scholarship.[32] The idea that Heraclitus' obscurity or ambiguity is a strategy to convey his philosophical message could also be implied by fragment B93, where he says: 'The lord, whose oracle is at Delphi, neither speaks out nor conceals but gives signs.'[33] As I will argue, the way in which the divine communicates its message plays a fundamental role in Heraclitus' ideas on language and in his epistemology.

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[27] Graham translates διαστίζω as 'to punctuate' but as he points out in (2010), 141 n. 1, there was not punctuation, understood as periods, commas, etc., in Greek texts of that time. But there was a certain order of the words that would let you know when a sentence ended or which words go with which.

[28] Greek text: τοῦτον δὲ καὶ ὁ Τίμων ὑπογράφει λέγων, τοῖς δ' ἔνι κοκκυστής, ὀχλολοίδορος Ἡράκλειτος, αἰνικτὴς ἀνόρουσε. Θεόφραστος δέ φησιν ὑπὸ μελαγχολίας τὰ μὲν ἡμιτελῆ, τὰ δ' ἄλλοτ' ἄλλως ἔχοντα γράψαι. Theophrastus' comment here seems to be related to the idea that Heraclitus was later known as 'the weeping philosopher'. This could also be relevant for understanding the form and style of his book.

[29] The date of *De Mundo* is not a clear matter, but it is generally thought to be late Hellenistic or imperial period. See Betegh and Gregoric (2014), 574.

[30] Greek text: Ταὐτὸ δὲ τοῦτο ἦν καὶ τὸ παρὰ τῶι σκοτεινῶι λεγόμενον Ἡρακλείτωι.

[31] Trans. TEGP with modifications, Greek text: ἄνδρες δ' ἀξιόλογοι γεγόνασιν ἐν αὐτῆι τῶν μὲν παλαιῶν Ἡράκλειτός τε ὁ σκοτεινὸς καλούμενος καὶ Ἑρμόδωρος.

[32] Especially ATH, and Mouraviev's interpretation in general and in particular see his (1996) and (2002).

[33] Greek text: ὁ ἄναξ, οὗ τὸ μαντεῖόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς, οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει.

0.4.6. Soul

Heraclitus talks about the soul in several of his fragments. The word *psychē* is regularly used by Heraclitus, and it seems that for him it still has some of its traditional characteristics, as found in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. For instance, he talks of the presence of souls in Hades (B98). However, Heraclitus radically changes the traditional conception of the soul by attributing new characteristics to it.[34] In regard to cosmology, he proposes that soul is also a material or an element that takes part in the cosmic elemental transformations (B36). Furthermore, and most importantly, he talks about the soul inside the body and suggests that it is closely connected to physiological and mental functions such as mobility and sense perception (B117, B107), and related to functions of language (B107) and knowledge (B118). It is likely that the concept of soul and its study saw an important change with Heraclitus. This aspect of the Heraclitean philosophy was perhaps ignored or underappreciated by early philosophers and ancient commentators of Heraclitus. As mentioned above, Aristotle says in *De Anima* 405a25–27 that for Heraclitus the material principle (or *archē*) was soul, instead of fire (or as well as fire). Modern scholars, in particular Nussbaum, have highlighted this idea in Heraclitus and shown that we have enough information in the fragments to know that Heraclitus had an original theory of soul, which probably helped in the later development of this concept in Greek philosophy.[35] Unfortunately, we do not have a clear account of its function and importance. However, the fact that Heraclitus mentions a relation between the soul and *logos*, and Aristotle's commentary of soul as material principle, lead us to think that the soul was an important concept in his cosmology and in his philosophy in general.

[34] For *psychē* in Heraclitus, see Nussbaum (1972), Claus (1981), Robinson (1986), Wilcox (1991), Schofield (1991), Laks (1999), Betegh (2007), and Mansfeld (2015).
[35] See Nussbaum (1972).

0.5. The problem of knowledge, language, and communication

Heraclitus had a particular interest in knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and epistemology.[36] Even though several of these topics were of interest for poets and philosophers before him, a general survey of the fragments shows that Heraclitus had plenty to say about this and especially against the way knowledge has been understood before him. However, the specific role that language and communication play in his epistemology is a topic that has not been treated as extensively as others in his philosophical doctrine. I owe to Havelock an important part of my interest in this topic in Heraclitus.[37] He says that 'At a minimum, forty-two of the surviving sayings are so worded as to concentrate on modes of human communication, and upon the consciousness expressed therein. The proportion to the total is striking, and has not hitherto received the attention it deserves.' In fact, the first thing that Heraclitus himself tells us is that we understand neither the *logos* nor his explanations of it. In what Aristotle tells us is the beginning of his book he says the following:[38]

> **B1**: τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ᾽ ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν ἐοίκασι, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῦμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὕδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται.
>
> Of this *logos* that is forever humans turn out to be uncomprehending, both before they hear and after they have heard it. Although everything happens according to this *logos*, they seem void of experience whenever they experience words and actions such as I describe when I distinguish each thing according to nature and declare how it is. As to other men, whatever they do when they are awake escapes their notice, just as they forget what they do when they are asleep.

[36] On epistemology and language in Heraclitus, see Disandro (1954), Fine (1979), Stuart (1982), Lesher (1983), Hussey (1982), Robinson (1991), and Graham (2009). I include in the bibliography a recent book by Tor (2017) on early Greek epistemology in Hesiod, Xenophanes, and Parmenides, which unfortunately came out too late for me to discuss it in this thesis.

[37] See Havelock (1983) and (1986).

[38] I follow Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 5, 1407b14), Sextus Empiricus (*Adversus Mathematicos* 7.132), and Hippolytus (*Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* 9.9.3) and agree with most modern scholars that B1 was the beginning of Heraclitus' book or speech.

As a later analysis will show, there are many details and possible interpretations to take into account in understanding this fragment. Nevertheless, it is clear that one of the main points Heraclitus wants to make is that people do not understand this truth, which he is explaining and communicating to others. This complaint is repeated in several other fragments. For instance, in B19, ἀκοῦσαι οὐκ ἐπιστάμενοι οὐδ᾽ εἰπεῖν. ['They do not know how to hear or speak.'], where he particularly criticises people's ability to communicate. Additionally, B34: ἀξύνετοι ἀκούσαντες κωφοῖσιν ἐοίκασι· φάτις αὐτοῖσιν μαρτυρεῖ παρεόντας ἀπεῖναι. ['Having heard without comprehension they are like the deaf to whom the story bears witness: present they are absent.'] This implies that even when there is a clear message and words are heard by people, they still fail to understand. Here Heraclitus seems to compare these people, who turn out to be uncomprehending of him and of the *logos* in B1, to a traditional saying or story about people who see or hear something but have to act as if they did not experience anything in any way.[39]

More importantly, not only many of the fragments point directly to the problem of knowledge and the possibility of its communication, but also most of his philosophical doctrines are related or later interpreted in connection to these same ideas. To take an important example, the flux theory is seen by Plato and Aristotle, among other things, as a problem for knowledge and communication. The idea that everything is in motion is seen in *Cratylus* as an essential limitation for knowledge. Near the end of the dialogue (440a2–b1) Plato concludes that,

> Indeed, it isn't even reasonable to say that there is such a thing as knowledge, Cratylus, if all things are passing on and none remain. For if that thing itself, knowledge, did not pass on from being knowledge, then knowledge would always remain, and there would *be* such thing as knowledge. On the other hand, if the very form of knowledge passed on

[39] Fragment B34 is probably related to a saying in antiquity that means 'to turn a deaf ear'. Marcovich (1967), 13, gives some examples. They probably refer back to this story in the Homeric hymn *To Hermes* 90–93, where an old man sees Hermes trying to steal some divine cattle in Pieria, and to persuade him not to tell on him he says: ὦ γέρον ὅς τε φυτὰ σκάπτεις ἐπικαμπύλος ὦμους/ ἦ πολυοινήσεις εὖτ᾽ ἂν τάδε πάντα φέρησι/ καί τε ἰδὼν μὴ ἰδὼν εἶναι καὶ κωφὸς ἀκούσας/ καὶ σιγᾶν, ὅτε μή τι καταβλάπτηι τὸ σὸν αὐτοῦ. ['Old sir with bent shoulders, digging your vines, you will indeed be well in wine when these all bear fruit, <provided you do as I say: keep your own counsel,> and don't see what you've seen, and don't hear what you've heard, and keep silent so long as it isn't harming your own affairs.' Trans. West (2003)]. People who hear the *logos* and Heraclitus without understanding behave in the same way the old man is asked to behave by Hermes in this story: absent even when present.

> from being knowledge, the instant it passed on into a different form than that of knowledge, there would be no knowledge.[40]

The flux theory is at its core an ontological problem. However, the main problem Plato sees in the fact that everything is changing is not about the actual nature of the existing things but an epistemological problem: how can we acquire knowledge of a reality that is constantly changing? Moreover, in *Theaetetus* 152e2–e7, this problem is also connected to language because of the fact that when we give a name or a characteristic to an object, we use the wrong terminology when referring to things that are changing in this manner: how are we to be able to name things correctly before they change into something else?

Aristotle understands the flux doctrine as a problem related to knowledge and language as well.[41] He sees Heraclitus' flux theory as an impediment for true statements about nature, which at the same time results in a violation of the law of non-contradiction.[42] He says, in *Metaphysics* 1010a7–10 and 1012a24–26 that,

> Further, since they [certain early thinkers who believed sensation was knowledge] observed that the whole of nature was in motion and were aware that no statement was true of what was changing, or at least about what was completely changing in every way, it was not possible to make true statements [...] It seems that the theory of Heraclitus, which maintains that all things are and are not, makes all statements true.[43]

For Aristotle, the problem in Heraclitus' theory of flux is that it makes knowledge impossible and language useless. If the flux theory is right, then everything we say is true and false at the same time.

The reception of the doctrine of the unity in opposites points in the same direction. Even though Plato and Aristotle see the theory in a good light in some contexts, their general appreciation is that it leads to uncertainty, subjectivity, and contradiction when it comes to the problem of knowledge. Plato plays with the idea of

[40] Trans. Levett and Burnyeat in Cooper (1997).
[41] Probably an interpretation inherited from Plato. See *Theaetetus* 183a1–b9, which is similar to Aristotle's comment on Cratylus' views on language in *Metaphysics* 1010a.
[42] The idea that Heraclitus violates the law of non-contradiction appears in different passages in Aristotle's works: *Topics* 159b30–33, *Physics* 185b19–25, and *Metaphysics* 1012a33–b23. In some contexts, it seems that the violation of the law of non-contradiction is a consequence of Heraclitus' doctrine of unity of opposites.
[43] Trans. TEGP with modifications.

unity of opposites in several dialogues, and usually relates it to the flux theory.[44] For instance, in *Theaetetus* (152d2–e2) he says the following:

> I'll tell you a story that's not half bad, how nothing is one thing all by itself, and you could not rightly call anything this or such, but if you call it big it will appear small, if heavy, light, and all thing are like this, for nothing is one single thing or has one determined character.[45]

Here the fact that things have opposite characteristics implies for Plato that we cannot call them either thing correctly, and in the end fail to address them as one. Therefore, it seems that if you try to say that something has a characteristic, then you will be proven wrong because it has the opposite in another way. Aristotle sees in this doctrine a potential threat to the law of non-contradiction, just as he does for the flux theory. He says, for instance, in *Topics 159b30–34*:

> It is for this reason too that those who bring in other people's opinions — for example, Heraclitus' statement that good and evil are the same thing — refuse to concede that it is impossible for contraries to belong to the same thing at the same time, not because this is not their view, but because, according to Heraclitus, they must say so.[46]

Additionally, the *logos* doctrine is closely connected to the problem of knowledge, language, and communication. My own view, as I will argue later, is that the *logos* represents a complete, best description of the universe and, as such, it is tantamount to divine and objective truth. Understanding it and grasping its meaning is what constitutes knowledge. The *logos* is both knowledge and the object of knowledge: the goal of human enquiry. But as we will see, different interpretations of *logos* also lead to a connection with the problem of language and communication. Even though the word *logos* means many things in different contexts and in different periods, whatever it may actually mean in Heraclitus, any meaning you choose for *logos* between Homer and the fifth century BC will necessarily be related to language and the act of communicating something to someone, be it, 'word', 'speech', 'report', or 'account'. From the fragments we know that Heraclitus gives to this *logos* special characteristics,

[44] For instance, see also *Phaedo* 70c4–72a5, *Symposium* 187a1–c6, *Philebus* 24d, and *Sophist* 242c7–243e7.
[45] Trans. TEGP.
[46] Trans. Forster (1960).

such as that it exists forever (B1), that everything happens according to it (B1), and that we can and should listen to it (B50). If we follow the most common opinion, that *logos* has a more specialised meaning than merely Heraclitus' speech, that it is cosmic *logos* that makes part and, perhaps, governs and directs the whole universe, we will probably find a close relation between this kind of *logos* and language.

Most of Heraclitus' philosophical doctrines are related, at least to a certain extent, to the problem of knowledge and of how we acquire it and communicate it to others. We do not find an explicit reference to the role of language or a theory about communication by Heraclitus, but we find many fragments and early interpretations of his doctrines that talk about this. My main objective, therefore, is to make these ideas explicit and to present an epistemological theory that is both coherent with the fragments and with Heraclitus' philosophical thought as a whole. I aim to address the following questions: how do we achieve knowledge? Is there an object of knowledge and what are its characteristics? What is the role of language in this process? And, can we communicate knowledge to others? What do we need to change in ourselves in order to understand it? Also, what is the role of Heraclitus in teaching others this knowledge?

0.6. General overview

The main objective of the first chapter is to define and understand the object of knowledge in Heraclitus' epistemology: the concept of the *logos*. The goal of the first section is to provide the background and a context of the concept of *logos* in Heraclitus: how the word was used before and in his time, its occurrences in Heraclitus' fragments and the problem of its interpretation in fragments B1, B2, and B50, and the different interpretations of the *logos*-doctrine by modern scholars. The second section is devoted to finding the most important characteristics of the *logos* and its definition. I side with those who interpret *logos* in Heraclitus as cosmic and argue that the *logos* of which Heraclitus speaks in fragments B1, B2, and B50, given what is said in those fragments and some other remarks by ancient authors, has the following characteristics: ontologically, the *logos* is independent of Heraclitus (and of any other speaker), is eternal and divine, and is cosmic, i.e. it exists as a part or feature of the universe. It is,

however, a *logos*, which means it is speech or some sort of linguistic entity, an account or a description. I propose that, in Heraclitus' epistemology, it is a perfect, best and unique description of the universe, which is tantamount to true knowledge. The *logos* is speech (even if internal speech or thought) and, as such, it possesses meaning. What it says is the truth. It is the divine and perfect description of the universe as a whole. I argue that it can be understood in three ways, which are not mutually exclusive: first, as an informative description, similar to the *logos* spoken by the world-soul in Plato's *Timaeus*. Secondly, as a prescriptive description, which not only describes what the universe is at any time, but also its regular behaviour and future configuration. A third idea, inspired by Borges' *La Biblioteca de Babel*, states that the *logos* represents an abstraction and extrapolation of our imperfect human *logoi*: just as some human descriptions are correct, there must be a description of the whole cosmos that is the correct one. In the third section, I argue that, as such, the *logos* cannot be communicated to other people directly. This is supported by the context and heritage of Heraclitus, where not only a divine truth is out of reach for human beings but also where the way in which we communicate and understand is put in doubt (Xenophanes B34). This is supported as well by the fragments themselves, and is one of the reasons why Heraclitus says that people fail to understand him and the *logos*: the object of knowledge is too complex and great for us to communicate in the same manner as any other speech.

The second chapter deals with the problem of language in Heraclitus' epistemology, with the role it plays in the understanding of the *logos*, and whether language is useful for teaching this kind of truth to others. In the first section I propose that Heraclitus' own theory of naming and correct language is hard to define but an approximate idea can be suggested based on the fragments and testimonies. Additionally, the context in which Heraclitus operates (his probable knowledge of Xenophanes' B34 and his connection to Cratylus) shows that there was an interest in the problem of the relation between names and things, and in the problem of whether knowledge can be defined as using correct language to describe reality. I argue that some of his fragments indicate similarities with the theory of correct naming attributed to Cratylus by Plato. The second section deals with Heraclitus' reception in antiquity as an obscure and ambiguous philosopher, which has been an important topic both in

ancient and modern Heraclitean studies. I propose to approach this problem based on a differentiation of three categories. 1) Unintentional ambiguity or obscurity, which includes misunderstandings in the interpretation of the fragments for doxographical, palaeographical, textual, contextual, and other accidental reasons. 2) Following Kahn, intentional ambiguity or obscurity, which refers to fragments where we perceive that the author deliberately wanted to convey a second or more meanings in addition to the literal one.[47] 3) The concealment of a true message. This means that a hidden account or picture, which is different from the literal message or meaning and can be decoded or deciphered from it, is the true message of the words, sentences or fragments of Heraclitus. In the third section, I propose two ways in which language and style work and communicate for Heraclitus. The first one is to communicate information without understanding, which is the way in which traditional poets and other authors mislead and indoctrinate people into false knowledge. The second way in which language is useful is by communicating the *logos* indirectly, this is by telling people what is not the *logos*, by telling them how to reach after and prepare themselves to acquire the *logos,* and by making people aware of their ignorance, usually by shocking them out of their wrong prejudices and suppositions. This last function of language has an important role in Heraclitus' philosophical views: the wise man must direct and steer other people towards the understanding of this *logos*. This idea is similar to *Meno* 79e9–80b7 when Socrates is accused of being like the torpedo fish: making people doubt their previously acquired opinions, leading them to an *aporia* and then to pursuing the truth.

The third chapter is devoted to the last step in Heraclitus' epistemology: people, and their personal souls and *logoi*. In the first section I explain the background and the context of the concept of soul before and in Heraclitus' time. Then I argue why Heraclitus' concept of the soul is very innovative and significant for his time. Even though the soul is still connected to our biological life and may represent death in the afterlife, many other characteristics are attributed to it, which transform this new idea of the soul into an antecedent of the idea of the mind. The soul is now a proper part of the cosmos, as an element, but most importantly, it is responsible for many

[47] ATH, 89.

psychological and physiological activities during life, including sense perception and understanding. In the second section I argue that, for Heraclitus, the only way in which we can gain access to knowledge is by ourselves through sense perception, which is a necessary but not sufficient condition for understanding. One of the other requirements is having a 'non-barbarian' soul; our senses are capable of reporting truthful information about the world but we need to re-educate and attune our souls in order for this process to work correctly. In the last section, I propose that a major part of this adjustment of our souls is done by exploring and knowing ourselves (perhaps in the same way as the Delphic maxim and the tradition suggested self-knowledge). When we have cleaned our soul of previous interpretations of the world (wrong *logoi*) and explore the world ourselves, we finally begin to understand the *logos*.

Chapter 1: *Logos* in Heraclitus' philosophical doctrine

The main purpose of the present chapter is to analyse the concept of *logos* in Heraclitus' philosophy in general and in his epistemology in particular. The problem of the interpretation of *logos* has been addressed by many scholars, and it is closely related to the problem of communication, language, and knowledge in his philosophical doctrine, particularly because Heraclitus seems to present this *logos* to us both as knowledge and as an object; it is that which you need to grasp in order to truly achieve understanding of the cosmos and its events. *Logos* is a difficult subject in Heraclitus' doctrine, and one that has opened a great variety of interpretations both in ancient and modern times. Since the *logos* is potentially a part of the core of Heraclitus' epistemology and closely related to his ontology, it is necessary to define it and take a position in its interpretation.

For this purpose, the chapter will be divided in the following sections. First, there will be an introduction to the concept of *logos* and its usage before and in Heraclitus' time, and about the use attributed to it in his extant fragments. In the second section, I will take a position in the interpretation of *logos* in Heraclitus' doctrine and will argue that the *logos*, especially in fragments B1, B2 and B50, is 1) independent from Heraclitus and not the same as his words or speech, 2) that it is eternal and divine, and 3) that it is cosmic. Although several scholars interpret Heraclitus' *logos* in a analogous way, I will advance the argument that the concept of *logos* in Heraclitus should be understood similarly to the *logos* present in the world-soul in Plato's *Timaeus*, a similarity that was first proposed by Robinson and one that in my view can help solve some of the problems of the two most common interpretations of *logos* in Heraclitus.[1] Following this last interpretation and other scholars, the *logos* will be presented as a cosmic characteristic or feature, which represents a complete and perfect, unique best description of the universe. In the last section, I argue that if the *logos* is such and

[1] Robinson (2013), 325.

Heraclitus sees a problem in communicating it to others, even after explaining how things really are, then the *logos* cannot be directly communicated to others.

1.1. The concept of *logos*

Even though the word *logos* has been interpreted as a central concept in Heraclitus' philosophical doctrine, the meaning of the word is very difficult to establish in the contexts where Heraclitus uses it.[2] This is mainly because, before Heraclitus' time (late sixth to early fifth century BC), it was not as widely used as it was in the Classical period. Therefore, there are not many occurrences that can be compared in order to easily understand Heraclitus' use of the word. There are somewhere over a dozen registered occurrences of *logos* in Homer, Hesiod, and early Greek philosophers close to Heraclitus' time.[3] In all of them the word can be translated as 'story' or 'words', with the general meaning of 'things said' or 'things meant'. In this period, I believe Nussbaum is right in pointing out that 'the Homeric picture of language presents similar features: ἔπεα, frequently mentioned, are a series of unordered units' while *logos*, by contrast, implies a certain 'order or connection'.[4] However, there are two points to notice. First, that in *Theogony* 229, *Logoi* are presented to us as divinities, sons of strife, *eris*.[5] Moreover, it is worth noticing that in Parmenides' *Poem* (B8.50–51) the trustworthy *logos* (πιστὸς λόγος) of the goddess is contrasted to human opinions (δόξαι βροτείαι). These two points do not substantially change the meaning of the word but can give it overtones that involve a relation to the divine.

In Herodotus (active c. 450–420 BC), the meaning of *logos* does not change extensively, but we find some more specialised uses, perhaps caused, too, by an increase in the number of occurrences (447). Powell's *Lexicon to Herodotus* gives us the following definitions: (1) 'word'; (2) 'thing said'; (3) 'talk'; (4) 'account', 'report';

[2] For clarity, most of the time I will just transliterate the word *logos* instead of offering a translation. And I will refer to 'the *logos*' as the cosmic entity, in opposition to 'a *logos'* or '*logoi'* as 'speech' or 'accounts'.
[3] Homer, *Iliad* 15.393 and *Odyssey* 1.56. Hesiod, *Theogony* 229 and 890; *Works and Days* 78, 106, and 789. Xenophanes, *Poem* B1.14, B7. Parmenides, *Poem* B1.15, B7, B8.50.
[4] Nussbaum (1972), 3.
[5] *Theogony* 225–231: Πόνον ἀλγινόεντα/Λήθην τε Λιμόν τε καὶ Ἄλγεα δακρυόεντα/ Ὑσμίνας τε Μάχας τε Φόνους τ' Ἀνδροκτασίας τε /Νείκεά τε Ψεύδεά τε Λόγους τ' Ἀμφιλλογίας τε /Δυσνομίην τ' Ἄτην τε, συνήθεας ἀλλήλησιν/ Ὅρκόν. It is perhaps unrelated but maybe Heraclitus saw a connection between his concepts of *logos* and *eris* based on Hesiod's mythological explanation.

(5) ‘estimation’; (6) ‘condition’; (7) ‘debate’; (8) ‘discourse’; (9) expressions for ‘truth’; (10) other idioms; and (11) other expressions, including *kata ton logon* as ‘proportionately’, ‘naturally’ and ‘in the same way’.[6] It is clear, though, that the general meaning of the word did not change much from what we can find in the poets and early Presocratics. Most of the meanings fit into the category of ‘things said’, except for (9), (10), and perhaps (11).

1.1.1. *Logos* in the fragments

Given that before and after Heraclitus’ time the word *logos* has a meaning related to verbal expressions, it is not surprising that in most cases he did not use the word in a substantially new way.[7] In his fragments we find the word *logos* 11 times, in fragments B31, B39, B87, B108, B45, B115, B1, B2, B50, and B72. In the first four (B31, B39, B87, and B108) the meaning of *logos* follows the expected use: it means ‘speech’, ‘account’, or the like. Fragments B45 and B115 present us with a context in which the meaning of *logos* seems to stray away slightly from the usual usage but still consistent with the period. However, in four fragments, B1, B2, B50, and B72, the word is not very easy to interpret.[8] These fragments are the main reason why Heraclitus is said to have a *logos* doctrine, mostly because none of the expected meanings of the word *logos* make much sense when translated as ‘account’ or ‘speech’.

Let us examine all of them starting with fragment B1. As mentioned above, in fragment B1 Heraclitus introduces his *logos* in a quite strange way: τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ’ ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι. This means that in the first occurrence of *logos*, Heraclitus is saying either that this *logos* exists forever (ἐόντος αἰεὶ) or that

[6] Powell (1938), s.v. λόγος.
[7] As it did happen with the use of *logos* in Plato and Aristotle. Guthrie makes an analysis of the term *logos* in the fifth century BC, in which he includes some other and more specialised meanings later used by Plato and Aristotle. See Guthrie (1962), 419–424.
[8] I follow most scholars in that the main fragments that posit a problem to understanding *logos* in the usual way are B1, B2, and B50. See Johnstone (2014), 3, and Robinson (2009), 94–97. However, I do not fully agree with the interpretation of *logos* as ‘measure’ in B45 and B115. I discuss these two fragments in section 3.1.3. Regarding fragment B72, since it seems to repeat or summarise some ideas of fragments B1 and B2, most scholars consider it a Stoic (Marcus Aurelius’) interpretation of Heraclitus’ doctrine, but not Heraclitean properly. See Marcovich (1967), 18. He says that ‘λόγωι–διοικοῦντι are an explanation of Marcus himself’. Kirk (1954), 44, thinks similarly. TEGP, 142–143, seems to take the whole fragment as spurious.

humans are always unable to understand it (αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται).[9] Either way, its translation into 'account' or 'things said' in general does not seem to be the best choice. Why would a speech or words exist forever? And how could there be an account which people are always unable to understand? A second mention of the word in B1 tells us that everything happens in accordance to this *logos* (γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε). If we use the regular translations of *logos*, we would get as a result that everything happens in accordance to the things that someone or Heraclitus said, which does not seem absurd at all in a conversation; and yet it does if we take γινομένων γὰρ πάντων literally, as 'everything that happens in the cosmos'. Therefore, in both cases it would not feel particularly right to take *logos* as 'things said'. It could mean, however, that we are dealing with a special kind of 'account' or 'speech'. It is important to mention again here that, according to Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1407b14), Sextus Empiricus (*Adversus Mathematicos* 7.132), and Hippolytus (*Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* 9.9.3), this fragment was the beginning of the book attributed to Heraclitus. If their testimony is true, this *logos* would be the first thing mentioned by Heraclitus in his book or speech, without a previous explanation of what he is referring to.[10]

We find ourselves in a similar situation when trying to translate *logos* in fragment B2:

> **B2**: διὸ δεῖ ἕπεσθαι τῶι ξυνῶι (τουτέστι τῶι κοινῶι· ξυνὸς γὰρ ὁ κοινός). τοῦ λόγου δ' ἐόντος ξυνοῦ ζώουσιν οἱ πολλοὶ ὡς ἰδίαν ἔχοντες φρόνησιν.

Because this fragment most likely followed B1, it would be reasonable to conclude that both fragments are referring to the same *logos*.[11] From other fragments we know

[9] I will discuss the problem of the position of the *aiei* in section 1.2.2. Regarding the interpretation of the first fragment, I do not think Heraclitus meant to show a difference between *einai* and *gignomai*. Apparently, this idea was first proposed by Gigon (1935). See *contra* Kirk (1954), 40–41: 'Whether the contrast between εἶναι and γίνεσθαι was one which Heraclitus deliberately made, and one which was instrumental in the further shaping of his ideas, is extremely doubtful.' In this regard see also Tarán (1986), 9. Furthermore, it has been proposed that the first genitive can be interpreted as genitive absolute. However, I believe that semantically it makes no difference, since what is heard and not understood is in both interpretations the *logos*. There would be a slight difference in the concessive force of the genitive absolute but the change would not be semantically meaningful.

[10] Most modern scholars agree with this supposition, however see Mouraviev's reconstruction of the book (2011), who understands B1 as the opening of the doctrinal section, after a proem in which *logos* is previously mentioned.

[11] According to Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* 7.133, fragment B2 came right after B1. Marcovich makes a good case, however, when he argues that B114 and B2 are part of the same saying. See Marcovich (1967), 91–97.

that, for Heraclitus, there is a contrast between what is common and what is private; between these two what is common is more desirable.[12] We are told that *logos* is common and should be followed. However, with this information, it is not easy to assign a meaning to the word *logos* in B2. An account and a speech can be followed indeed, but you would not say that they are common in an absolute sense, i.e. not only common to a few people. Again, we have to consider that *logos* here could represent something different.

The same is the case for fragment B50:

> **B50**: οὐκ ἐμοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστιν ἓν πάντα εἶναι.

The most striking feature of the use of the word *logos* here is that it suggests to us the meaning of 'account', 'speech', or 'things said' because of the natural relation between a speech and the verb 'to hear', *akouō*, but, at the same, it seems to deny that this *logos* belongs to Heraclitus or to somebody else. It invites us to listen to a *logos* that would make us agree to an important truth about the universe. Heraclitus could be saying that we should not listen to him but to what he says. However, this is an idea that, as a later analysis will show, seems hard to understand form the wording and the Greek of his time.

Those three fragments have driven scholars to adopt different positions regarding the interpretation of the word *logos* in particular, and regarding the interpretation of Heraclitus' philosophical doctrine in general. There are two main interpretations. One view is that *logos* is some sort of cosmic entity, independent of Heraclitus' pronunciations, which governs and stirs all things in the universe.[13] On the

[12] See fragments B114, B103, B113, and B17. That which is common is usually related to mental abilities, but in B103 it is related to the unity of opposites, i.e. the beginning and ending of a circle.

[13] E.g. Marcovich (1967), 92: 'Reason or intelligence spread all over the world as the air.' Kirk (1954), 39: 'What we are trying to summarize is an idea like "the organized way in which (as Heraclitus had discovered) all things work"; "plan" (in a non-theological sense), "rule", even "law" (as in "the laws of force") are possible summaries.' Kirk proposes that the best translation could be 'formula of things'. See also KRS (1983), 187: '[*Logos*] is perhaps to be interpreted as the unifying formula or proportionate method of arrangement of things, what might almost be termed their structural plan both individual and in sum.' TEGP, 188, goes a little bit farther and states that fragments B108, B41, and B50, 'hint that there is a wise being which orders all things, in such a way that they make up a unity. The content of the Word [*logos*] (introduced in F1-2), the objectively accessible message, is precisely the unity of all things. At this point we glimpse metaphysical claims that go beyond the usual physical theories of the Ionians.'

other hand, we have the idea that Heraclitus always used *logos* within the regular meanings of the word, and that in B1, B2, and B50 he is only referring to his own speech or book.[14] However, these two interpretations do not necessarily contradict each other: the matter is not black and white, and there are some interpretations that understand that *logos* is somehow both a cosmic entity that guides the cosmos and Heraclitus' speech, which corresponds with the former.[15]

There are three main arguments against accepting *logos* as a cosmic entity and in favour of taking it just as Heraclitus' speech. First, that there are no other mentions of the word *logos* meaning anything similar to a cosmic entity before or in Heraclitus' time. Second, — an argument from silence — that had Heraclitus wanted to state a new meaning for the word and had his doctrine of the *logos* been of major importance, Plato and Aristotle would have said something about it or reacted to it in some way. And third, had all that been the case, it is strange that Heraclitus never explained that he was talking about a different kind of *logos* anywhere, especially in the beginning of his book.[16] Additionally, it is important to notice that even when most authors think that this *logos* is cosmic, its definition and its characteristics seem to differ from one interpretation to another. Consequently, for Kirk and Marcovich, for instance, it is some sort of entity that moves and controls everything, whilst for Molina, Minar, and

[14] See mainly Burnet (1930), 133 n. 1: 'The "*logos*" is primarily the discourse of Heraclitus himself; though, as he is a prophet, we may call it his "Word".' Also Barnes (1982), 59: 'A *logos* or "account" is what a man *legei* or says […] the noun *logos* picks up, in an ordinary and metaphysically unexciting way, the verb *legei*.'

[15] For instance, Guthrie (1962), 434: 'To sum this up, it is first of all the everlasting truth to which he is giving verbal expression, but which is independent of his utterance of it (frr. 1, 50). Next, it is the subject of that truth, the One which is everything (fr. 50). And this One is at the same time the divine, intelligent principle which surrounds us and causes the ordering of the cosmos, and that within us to which we owe whatever intelligence we possess. In us it is adulterated with lower elements and therefore with foolishness. At the same time it is fire, the hot and dry, and what corrupts it in us is its encounter with moisture and cold.' Also ATH, 22: 'The *logos* which is at once the discourse of Heraclitus, the nature of language itself, the structure of the *psychē* and the universal principle in accordance with which all things come to pass.' And Minar (1939), 340–41: 'The *logos* is first of all Heraclitus' story, his explanation, and perhaps even his book. This appears from frag. 1. But the word carries also the implication that it is a true account; it is the "meaning" of things. And since it is considered, in a sense, as itself a thing, it carries definite implications also as to the content of this true report.'

[16] See Glasson (1952), 236: 'It should also be observed that Plato in his treatment of the Heraclitean school does not mention the *Logos*. Nor does Aristotle in his account of Heraclitus. This would be most surprising if it really were the case that the doctrine of the *Logos* was his central message. Again, it is highly significant that no instances can be quoted of the use of *Logos* as cosmic principle in the period which lies between Heraclitus and the Stoics.' As it will be argued in section 1.2.3, there was at least one instance of *logos* as a cosmic principle in that period, i.e. the *logos* in the world-soul in *Timaeus* 36d–37c.

Johnstone it is closer to something that describes or speaks to us about the order of the universe without having an active influence in its behaviour and processes.[17]

1.2. Characteristics of the *logos*

1.2.1. The *logos* is independent of Heraclitus

The first problem I want to approach is that of the status of this *logos*, whether Heraclitus is referring to his own speech, or perhaps to the book attributed to him, or to an entity different from what he says. Another option is that there is an entity outside Heraclitus and that his speech coincides with it. I will argue that the *logos* is independent of Heraclitus, that it exists on its own as part of the cosmos, and that it is not the same thing as what Heraclitus says nor does it correspond to the book attributed to him in antiquity. For this purpose, I will consider fragment B50 in particular:

> **B50**: οὐκ ἐμοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστιν ἓν πάντα εἶναι.
>
> Having listened not to me but to the *logos*, it is wise to agree that everything is one.

A first reading of the fragment shows sufficiently that there is a personification of the *logos*. Kirk is the first one to point this out, but he says this due to his overall interpretation of the *logos* as a cosmic entity and not just based on what the fragment itself says. [18] Different translations of this fragment reflect, in turn, different

[17] Molina (2006), 68: 'Sería quizás ésta la primera intuición del mundo como lenguaje, pues todo lo conocido en el cosmos, toda razón, todo pensamiento, todo sentimiento está contenido en el lenguaje. Heráclito nos indica que no existe nada fuera del *Logos*, fuera de la palabra, pues nada existe si no puede ser nombrado, todo está mediado necesariamente para el hombre por la palabra.' Minar (1939), 333: '[Snell] points out that λέγειν can frequently be translated "to signify" and holds that this connotation passes into the verbal noun *logos*. Thus *logos* has the double sense of meaningful human speech and the meaning which lies in things. Things speak to us, as it were.' Johnstone (2014), 23: 'Heraclitus understood the cosmic *logos* as something that can be understood by us in much the way that a written text or spoken account can be understood by us.' See also Lebedev (2017), who proposes that *logos* in Heraclitus is a metaphor for the *liber naturae*: 'The phrase λόγος ὅδε at least in two fragments of Heraclitus (fr. 1–2 Leb./DK 22 B 1, B 50) is a metaphor which on the iconic (metaphorical) level of meaning retains the semantics of a "spoken word" that can be "heard" and interpreted, but on the referential level denotes the Universe, τὸ πᾶν.' Lebedev (2017), 235.

[18] Kirk noticed about the beginning of B50, οὐκ ἐμοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου, that it is an expression that implies to a certain degree a personification of *logos*, since, 'the *Logos* is present in all things, it is obvious, it "speaks its presence".' Kirk (1954), 67. Also agreeing with this position is Marcovich (1967),

interpretations. For instance, Burnet renders it, 'It is wise to harken, not to me but to **my** word.'[19] And Graham proposes, 'Having harkened not to me but to the Word, you should agree that wisdom is knowing that all things are one.'[20] Hence, Burnet and Barnes do not think that the text of the fragment implies a personification of the *logos*, but just an uncommon way to refer to one's own speech.[21] Graham's translation, 'Word', on the other hand, shows that he understands *logos* differently, as having 'rich religious overtones, including implications of a transcendent truth.'[22] However, is there anything in the fragment that could guide us in order to decide whether with this *logos* Heraclitus is referring to his own speech or to something else?

According to the standard use for the verb *akouō*, the thing heard is indicated by the accusative case as a direct object, and the person from whom it is heard takes the genitive case or sometimes can be introduced by a preposition.[23] What is surprising is that in the fragment Heraclitus uses the genitive case for both himself and the *logos*. This would literally mean 'pay attention or listen not "from" me but "from" the *logos*', i.e. as if the *logos* was the speaker itself and not what is heard from the speaker. Moreover, as some scholars have pointed out, if he wanted to say 'listen not to me but to **my** speech', first, he would have used a possessive adjective and, second, he would have used the accusative case for *logos*.[24] However, there are some exceptions for this rule of the use of *akouō*. Homer uses *kluō* and *akouō* regularly. The former is mostly used in direct speech to get the attention of the audience or the interlocutor, 'Listen to me', 'Heed my words' (for instance κέκλυτέ μευ Τρῶες καὶ ἐϋκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοί in *Iliad* 3.86), and the latter is used as general listening (as in ἀλλ' ἄγε δεῦρο, ἄναξ, ἵν' ἔπος καὶ μῦθον ἀκούσηις/ ἡμέτερον in *Odyssey* 11.561–2).

Homer and Hesiod regularly use a genitive of person and an accusative of object when using *akouō*. It even seems that the expression μῦθον ἄκουσε (sometimes in a

113: 'It becomes clear that *Logos* has an objective existence, not depending on Heraclitus himself, i.e. that it is a universal Law operating in all things around us.'

[19] Burnet (1930), 133. My emphasis.

[20] TEGP, 149.

[21] See Burnet (1930), 133 n. 1, and Barnes (1982), 59.

[22] TEGP, 187. The 'Word' is meant to evoke the Christian *logos* doctrine.

[23] LSJ, s.v. ἀκούω.

[24] For instance, Robinson (2013), 321: 'Had Heraclitus wanted to say "My account", he could have said it with great clarity by saying *tou logou mou*. But he simply said *tou logou*.' And Johnstone (2014), 7: 'Heraclitus never refers to "my" *logos* (as we might expect).'

different tense, mood, and person for *akouō*) is an ending formula with at least twenty occurrences. This shows that the object of the verb, what is heard, is most of the times in the accusative case. Although in most of the instances the verb is used in relation to a word that indicates speech (*mythos*, *phthongos*, *epos*), there are a couple of cases in which the object is in the genitive case (e.g. *Od.* 21.292–3: αὐτὰρ ἀκούεις/ μύθων ἡμετέρων καὶ ῥήσιος). This one example threatens to make the general rule invalid. Nevertheless, in the few places where the genitive is used for the object of *akouō* there is always a possessive adjective or a pronoun indicating to whom those words belong (ἡμετέρων in *Od.* 21.292–3). This means that before Heraclitus there is not one occurrence of the object of the verb in genitive and without a possessive indicating to whom the speech belongs, which is the case for fragment B50. Thus, if the object is never in genitive on its own, it seems that someone who listened to or read fragment B50 would not have thought Heraclitus was speaking about his own speech. Therefore, if Heraclitus used the genitive case for *logos* and opposed it to him, he most likely wanted us to listen not 'from' him but 'from' the *logos*, and this implies that this *logos* is personified as something that speaks for itself.

I also agree with Heidegger's idea that the positioning of the οὔκ ἐμοῦ at the beginning of B50 is meaningful.[25] This 'not to me' is emphatic, and it opposes the regular and traditional way to address a crowd.[26] The verb *akouō* means 'hear sounds' as well as 'obey', like in 'heed my words'. So there is a paradox in not listening to Heraclitus: if we do decide not to listen to him but to the *logos*, we would be, at the same time, following his advice about listening to the *logos*.[27] Although I agree with

[25] Heidegger (1975), 76: 'The saying begins οὔκ ἐμοῦ... it begins with a strict, prohibiting "not..." It refers to the saying and talking of Heraclitus himself. It concerns the hearing of mortals. "Not to me," i.e. not to this one who is talking; you are not to heed the vocalization of his talk. You never hear properly so long as your ears hang upon the sound and flow of a human voice in order to snatch up for yourselves a manner of speaking. Heraclitus begins the saying with a rejection of hearing as nothing but the passion of the ears. But this rejection is founded on a reference to proper hearing.' I do not agree with Heidegger, however, on relating it to the basic meaning of *legō* as 'to pick up'; rather, I follow LSJ in that *logos* only takes the later meanings of *legō*. See Heidegger (1975), 59–64, and LSJ, s.v. λόγος. Nussbaum (1979), 11, suggests a similar approach of a different kind of listening/understanding for a different kind of message: 'Men are misled by their atomistic conception of language. Fragment 1 shows us that men's ears are bad witnesses so long as they remain on the level of ἔπεα and fail to grasp the λόγος.'

[26] Homer and Hesiod frequently use *kluō* with the personal pronoun when someone is addressing a crowd. It is a formula for the beginning of the verse that can vary from κλῦθί μευ, κέκλυτέ μευ, and κλῦτέ μευ, depending on the metric necessities.

[27] In a strict logical sense, it is impossible not to obey someone who says to us 'do not obey me'.

Kirk's opinion that 'οὐκ ἐμοῦ should not of course be taken as prohibiting men from listening to Heraclitus', I do not agree with what he says next, that 'rather it implies that his words have an absolute authority from outside'.[28] I think Heraclitus is in fact saying that it is better to listen to the *logos* and not to him, which of course implies that the *logos* is something different from Heraclitus' speech. Heraclitus, in this picture, plays the role of a messenger of the *logos*, but Heraclitus' speech, his own *logos*, is not equal to the cosmic *logos* but, as I will argue, directs people to it so that they can hear it themselves.

The second part of fragment B50 points, as well, to an interpretation in which *logos* is of a different kind, whose existence does not depend or is related to Heraclitus or his own *logos*. The verb *homologeō* is chosen by Heraclitus most likely because its etymology suggests a relation to the word *logos*.[29] So, what is wise, after having heard the *logos*, is to come to the same *logos* (or a common *logos* as in fragment B2), *homo-logein*, or agree, that everything is one. This, in turn, means that there is only one *logos* with which we should all agree, and which encompasses everything in the cosmos, as other fragments suggest.[30] Thus, it seems that understanding, not Heraclitus, but this *logos*, is tantamount to understanding other important features of the cosmos: that everything is one and, possibly, that there is a unity in opposites. Whether Heraclitus knows this *logos* or is able to express it is not clear yet. However, the way he refers to it and its relation to other of his theories about the cosmos indicate that he thought of this *logos* not as his own speech and ideas but as something independent and greater than himself.

1.2.2. The *logos* is eternal and divine

In this next section, I will argue that the *logos* is eternal and divine by focusing mainly on the analysis of fragment B1. It is important to clarify that when I say 'divine' I do not mean that the *logos* was necessarily related to the traditional gods and divinities, or connected to any particular religious practices. By 'divine' I mean an entity that is

[28] Kirk (1954), 67.
[29] I agree with Marcovich (1967), 115, that the word 'was chosen by Heraclitus for the sake of the word-play ὁ λόγος : ὁμολογεῖν […] implying "not being at variance with the universal *Logos* both in philosophical theory and in life-practice".' See also Robinson (1987), 114–115.
[30] Cf. fragments B1, B2, B41, B30, B33, and B64.

a part of something bigger and more powerful than human nature, which in ancient Greece usually includes but is not reduced to natural phenomena.

As previously mentioned, most of the occurrences of the word *logos* before Heraclitus refer to the result of the act of speaking, and, hence, they mean 'things said', 'tale', or 'account'. This is a strong premise for the argument used by those who argue that Heraclitus could not have meant *logos* as a cosmic and metaphysical entity, since he would be using the same word in a significantly different way from his ancestors and contemporaries. However, there are some examples in antiquity of the word *logos* being used in this different way. As previously mentioned, in Hesiod's *Theogony* 223–231, *Logoi* are included in the genealogy of the gods, as sons of Strife. Of course, this apparently isolated mention should not lead us to conclude that *logoi* were in fact considered as divinities; just in the same way as 'Quarrels and Lies', mentioned in the same passage, were not gods of cult, as far are we are aware. Most of the entities mentioned by Hesiod in this passage were considered some sort of natural divinity, but this is not the same as understanding *logos* as a cosmic and divine entity. However, the fact that these *logoi* are mentioned as divine in the *Theogony,* one of the most influential pieces of literature of the time, at the very least could have influenced the later reception of the idea of such a *logos*. From this passage we can infer two important points about the concept of *logos* in that time. First, that one of the first mentions of the word is connected to the divinity. This implies that the divinity of *logoi* was not something unheard of. Secondly, we have an example in which the word means something different from 'things said', even if in a personification of verbal entities.

However, the most important argument in favour of an eternal and divine *logos* is in Heraclitus' first fragment. As mentioned above, ancient sources put B1 at the beginning of Heraclitus' book or speech.[31] Those comments seem sufficient evidence that the first thing that he mentions is our mysterious *logos*. However, neither they nor Heraclitus seem to be concerned with explaining what *logos* means in the passage. As mentioned above, Aristotle comments on the ambiguity of the passage but does not say anything about *logos*, in *Rhetoric* 1407b11–18:

[31] Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1407b17–18), Sextus Empiricus (*Adversus mathematicos* 7.132.), and Hippolytus (*Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* 9.9.3).

> ὅλως δὲ δεῖ εὐανάγνωστον εἶναι τὸ γεγραμμένον καὶ εὔφραστον, ἔστιν δὲ τὸ αὐτό· ὅπερ οἱ πολλοὶ σύνδεσμοι οὐκ ἔχουσιν οὐδ' ἃ μὴ ῥάιδιον διαστίξαι, ὥσπερ τὰ Ἡρακλείτου. τὰ γὰρ Ἡρακλείτου διαστίξαι ἔργον διὰ τὸ ἄδηλον εἶναι ποτέρωι πρόσκειται, τῶι ὕστερον ἢ τῶι πρότερον, οἷον ἐν τῆι ἀρχῆι αὐτῆι τοῦ συγγράμματος· φησὶ γὰρ **τοῦ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος ἀεὶ ἀξύνετοι ἄνθρωποι γίγνονται**· ἄδηλον γὰρ τὸ ἀεί, πρὸς ποτέρωι <δεῖ> διαστίξαι.
>
> In general writing should be easy to read and to phrase. These are manifestations of the same quality — one which is lost when words make too many connections and are difficult to punctuate, as in the writings of Heraclitus. For it is difficult to punctuate his text because it is unclear whether a word goes with what follows or what precedes. For instance, in the beginning of his treatise, he says, **Of this Word's being forever do men prove to be uncomprehending [F1].** It is unclear which phrase 'forever' <should> go with.[32]

Aristotle's point is not fully clear to us modern readers, since texts in that period did not have punctuation marks.[33] However, his concern about the position of the word *aei* is clear: *aei* could go either with the first part of the sentence, referring to *eontos*, or with the second part, referring to *axunetoi*, which would lead to two different meanings of the whole sentence. If we assume that it goes with the first part of the sentence (ἐόντος ἀεὶ), this would mean that *logos* exists forever, which in turn would imply or at least strengthen the case for an eternal and cosmic *logos*. On the other hand, if we take *aei* to go with the second part of the sentence (ἀεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίγνονται), then the sentence would mean that people always fail to understand this *logos*, but the *logos* would not necessarily be eternal.

Modern scholars are divided in the interpretation of the *aei*, regardless of their position in the general interpretation of *logos*.[34] For instance, Burnet seems to take it with *eontos* but understand *logos* as Heraclitus' words. For him, what Heraclitus says

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[32] Trans. TEGP.

[33] As TEGP, 141 n.1., points out. Tarán (1986), 7 n. 30, suggests that 'Aristotle seems to mean some sort of dot or stop to be made at appropriate places of a text in order to facilitate the reading of it.' The verb διαστίζω here should mean something like 'to tell apart', 'to distinguish between two', or 'to clarify which of two'. See Epictetus' *Dissertationes ab Arriano digestae* 1.17.5–6: ἀλλ' ἄν μοι λέγηις ὅτι 'οὐκ οἶδα πότερον ἀληθῶς ἢ ψευδῶς διαλέγει', κἄν τι κατ' ἀμφίβολον φωνὴν εἴπω καὶ λέγηις μοι 'διάστιξον', οὐκ ἔτι ἀνέξομαί σου, ἀλλ' ἐρῶ σοι 'ἀλλ' ἐπείγει μᾶλλον'. And Arianus Didymus *In Stobaeus' Anthologium* 2.7.3c4–6: Ἀλλ' οὗτος μὲν δημοτελὲς εἰσήγαγε τὸ τέλος, Πλάτων δὲ διέστιξε πρῶτος τὸ κατ' ἄνδρα καὶ βίον ἰδιάζον ἔν τε τῶι Τιμαίωι κἀν τῶι Πρωταγόραι.

[34] I follow Tarán's interpretation, in particular, regarding the problem of the position of the *aei*, that it goes with *eontos* and not with *axunetoi*. See Tarán (1986), 4–7.

is true forever.[35] Kirk and Marcovich take it with *axunetoi* but understand *logos* as a cosmic entity; which means that humans are never able to understand the *logos*.[36] Kahn takes it with both *aei* and *axunetoi,* and *logos* is both a cosmic entity and Heraclitus' words.[37] Graham takes it with both and for him *logos* is cosmic.[38]

The first argument in favour of taking the *aei* with the participle is that, although Aristotle himself does not suggest a solution, Hippolytus and Sextus Empiricus, who are the other sources of the fragment, take the *aei* to go with *eontos*.[39] A second argument, posited by some scholars, is that if we take it to go with the second part, Heraclitus would be making an emphasis that is not useful or necessary. The fragment already says that people fail to understand before and after they have heard (καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον), and adding the *aei*, so that they always fail to do so, would not add any significant meaning, since we know from the wording that they fail to do so in any case.

An additional argument in favour of Heraclitus' *logos* existing forever takes us back to Homer and Hesiod. Let us begin by considering a quotation of Xenophon that could have the exact same ambiguity as Heraclitus' B1. In *Hiero* 4.11, he says: ὥσπερ γὰρ πολέμου ὄντος ἀεὶ ἀναγκάζονται στράτευμα τρέφειν ἢ ἀπολωλέναι. This sentence has the same ambiguity in the position of an *aei* after a participle. I would render it, 'since, as it were, there is always war, they are forced to maintain an army, or they die.'[40] The same problem that Aristotle sees in Heraclitus' first fragment could be applied to this passage of Xenophon; we can take *aei* with *ontos*, 'since there is always war, then they are forced…' or we can take *aei* with *anankazontai*, 'since there is war, then they are forever forced…' However, in this passage it seems more natural to take the *aei* with *ontos*. Why? I believe it is because of the expression 'as it were' (ὥσπερ). In this case, it is introduced to indicate that what follows should not be taken literally,

[35] Burnet (1928), 58.
[36] Kirk (1954), 34–35. Marcovich (1967), 9.
[37] ATH, 97.
[38] TEGP, 187.
[39] Hippolytus uses the following words to introduce Heraclitus' quotation in *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* 9.9.3: ὅτι δὲ λόγος ἐστὶν ἀεὶ τὸ πᾶν διὰ παντὸς ὤν ['that the *logos* exists forever being everything and through everything']. Sextus, perhaps influenced by the Stoics, takes *logos* as a divine entity, in which case it could not mean the words of Heraclitus in the first fragment. *Adversus mathematicos* 7.129. However, the *aei* is omitted in our version of Sextus' manuscript.
[40] It is taken in the same way in other translations. E.g. 'Living, as it were, in a perpetual state of war, they are forced to maintain an army or perish.' Trans. Marchant and Bowersock (1925).

precisely the expression πολέμου ὄντος ἀεὶ.[41] Additionally, it should not be taken literally because it is a reference to the way in which Homer and Hesiod describe the gods (θεοὶ αἰὲν ἐόντες), as for instance in εἰνάετες δὲ θεῶν ἀπαμείρεται αἰὲν ἐόντων (*Theogony* 801). Since Xenophon is not talking about a god in the proper sense (not Ares but war), he uses 'as it were' to say that war exists forever (as if war were a god).

Even though Heraclitus does not use the 'as it were', I believe the expression *aei eontos* plays the same role in fragment B1 as in Xenophon's passage. The combination of the words *aien* (Homeric for *aei*) and the present participle of *eimi* is used, in that order, fourteen times in Homer and six times in Hesiod and, what is most important, in all those twenty occurrences it is only used to refer to the gods.[42] It is an epithet for the gods and an ending formula for the verse; no matter which case the participle takes, the two words in that order always make up a dactyl (¯ ˘ ˘) in the fifth foot and a spondee (¯ ¯) or a trochee (¯ ˘) in the sixth foot.[43] This remark about the metre is important because for Homer and Hesiod the words could not have been put together at the end of a verse in a different order, as *eontos aien* would be harder, if not impossible, to fit in the verse. In support of this point, many other writers who refer to this expression keep the same order as the poets: first *aei* and then *eontos*. For instance, Aristophanes in *Birds*, 688–692 says:

> προσέχετε τὸν νοῦν τοῖς ἀθανάτοις ἡμῖν, τοῖς αἰὲν ἐοῦσιν, /τοῖς αἰθερίοις, τοῖσιν ἀγήρως, τοῖς ἄφθιτα μηδομένοισιν, /ἵν᾽ ἀκούσαντες πάντα παρ᾽ ἡμῶν ὀρθῶς περὶ τῶν μετεώρων, /φύσιν οἰωνῶν γένεσίν τε θεῶν ποταμῶν τ᾽ Ἐρέβους τε Χάους τε /εἰδότες ὀρθῶς, Προδίκωι παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ κλάειν εἴπητε τὸ λοιπόν.
>
> Pay attention to us, the immortals, the everlasting, the ethereal, the ageless, whose counsels are imperishable; once you hear from us an accurate account of all celestial phenomena, and know correctly the nature of birds and the genesis of gods, rivers, Erebus, and Chaos, thenceforth you'll be able to tell Prodicus from me to go to hell![44]

[41] LSJ, s.v. ὥσπερ II.
[42] *Iliad* 1.290, 1.494, 21.518, and 24.99; *Odyssey* 1.263, 1.378, 2.143, 3.147, 4.583, 5.7, 8.306, 8.365, 12.371, and 12.377; *Theogony* 21, 33, 105, and 801; *Works and days* 718; Fragment 296.2.
[43] Though the last syllable is usually understood as irrelevant or always long.
[44] Text and translation by Henderson (2000).

In this passage of *Birds*, Aristophanes makes fun of the solemn tone of Hesiod's *Work and Days*. He uses the same dialect (*aien* and *eousin* instead of *aei* and *ousin*) and fits the two words at the end of the verse and in the same order because of metric constrains.[45] In the context of the play it is easy to understand that it is a reference to the traditional religion as portrayed by Homer and Hesiod.

Xenophon uses the same epic formula when talking about the gods in two other passages: θεοὶ δέ, ὦ παῖ, αἰεὶ ὄντες (*Cyropaedia*, 1.6.46) and ἀλλὰ θεούς γε τοὺς ἀεὶ ὄντας (*Cyropaedia*, 8.7.22). In both cases he keeps the traditional order but, as we saw, he changes the order in *Hiero* 4.11. Nevertheless, the fact that the expression is generally used in some order does not mean that in the first passage Xenophon is changing the meaning of the statement or that the *aei* could be interpreted in a different way.[46]

I believe that in ὥσπερ γὰρ πολέμου ὄντος ἀεὶ ἀναγκάζονται στράτευμα τρέφειν ἢ ἀπολωλέναι it would be hard to argue that the *aei* goes with the second part of the sentence (or with both parts of it for that matter), even though syntactically and semantically the phrase could make sense that way. That is because the expression is a traditional way of referring to the gods. Most likely, at first, the word order was kept as in Homer and Hesiod because of tradition and metrical constraints, but when prose gained more popularity, the order did not matter to understand the reference. I think Heraclitus used *eontos aei* in fragment B1 referring to this same expression related to the divinity in Homer and Hesiod, hence understanding that the *aei* only goes with the *eontos*. Consequently, I will assume that when he uses the expression *aei eontos* he is perhaps not quoting Homer and Hesiod and agreeing with their views on divinity, but making a reference and establishing some kind of relation between what he is saying and what they said.[47] One would be tempted to think that if the gods are described and

[45] He needs to end the anapestic tetrameter with ˘ ˘ – –, which would not be possible if he inverts the word order.

[46] Other examples with the opposite word order are Thucydides 3.12.3; Plato, *Philebus* 59a7, 61e3; and *Timaeus* 50c5, 59c7.

[47] This interpretation is strangely rejected by Marcovich, who is the first to notice a similarity between *aei eontos* in the epic formula and fragment B1. He says that it would be a *lectio facilior* to understand a reference to the epic poets in B1. However, as Tarán says, that is a misuse of a principle for textual criticism. Tarán (1986), 6: 'This is really a misapplication of a valid principle of textual criticism. There a variant reading is considered to be a *lectio facilior* when it can be explained as an intentional change from a reading that is more difficult to understand.' I completely agree with Tarán's argument, he continues: 'In the present case, however, it is most improbable that Heraclitus placed αἰεὶ next to ἐόντος

perhaps defined as ‘always existing’ in the traditional poems, and since *logos* is mentioned in Hesiod as a minor divinity, then Heraclitus could be just talking about one of these gods who ‘are forever’. However, his position towards Homer and Hesiod in particular, and towards divinity in general, makes it hard to think that he is agreeing with their views on gods and religion.[48]

One last argument supporting the divinity of the *logos* depends on the idea that fragment B1 was the beginning of Heraclitus’ speech or of the book attributed to him.[49] Since the times of Homer and Hesiod it was customary to invoke or call upon the gods or a muse for inspiration and help. This invocation usually had the following characteristics: it appeared right at the beginning of the poem, the divinity was urged to tell the poet a story that the poet was about to recite or the divinity was urged to come and help the poet tell the story correctly. Homer and Hesiod always use it thus in their major poems. It was so common that Plato in *Timaeus* 27c1–d5 shows how important it is to invoke the divinity before starting a discussion, even more when talking about the universe:

> Timaeus: That I will, Socrates. Surely anyone with any sense at all will always call upon a god before setting out on any venture, whatever its importance. In our case, we are about to make speeches about the universe — whether it has an origin or even if it does not — and so if we’re not to go completely astray we have no choice but to call upon the gods and goddesses, and pray that they above all will approve of all we have to say, and that in consequence we will, too. Let this, then, be our appeal to the gods; to ourselves we must appeal to make sure that you learn as easily as possible, and that I instruct you in the subject matter before us in the way that best conveys my intent.[50]

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without intending his readers and/or hearers to recall the formula of immortality applied to the gods of traditional Greek mythology.’

[48] For Heraclitus’ views on religion and divinities see Adoménas (1999); Trépanier (2010), 282–288; Most (2013). Additionally, Heraclitus mentions Xenophanes in B40. He accuses him of not having understanding, but it would be natural to suppose that Heraclitus was aware of Xenophanes’ critique of the traditional divinities and religion. See next section and section 2.3, for further analysis of these topics.

[49] As mentioned above, this is what we find in the doxography, and most scholars agree with this theory. Some even propose that B1 was written as an introduction or proem, e.g. KRS (1983), 184, and ATH, 7. However, in Mouraviev’s reconstruction of Heraclitus’ book, he places a proem before B1. See Mouraviev (2011), 1, and 43–44.

[50] Trans. Zeyl in Cooper (1997).

What is most interesting about this invocation is that some philosophers used it as well, and not just the poets. Parmenides not only invokes the divinity at the beginning of his *Poem*, but also the goddess is the one who is actually explaining Parmenides' views, and not Parmenides himself.[51] Empedocles asks for the help of the muse as well.[52] Consequently, Heraclitus in fragment B1 is talking about an independent *logos* that exists forever, and if said fragment is the beginning of his book or of a speech of some sort, then is it possible that he is invoking this *logos* as muse or a divinity?

I believe Heraclitus is implicitly referring to Homer and Hesiod or to the traditional way of calling upon the divinities at the beginning of a poem, but the formula is not exactly the same. What Heraclitus does is in a way similar to what Aristophanes does in the passage of *Birds* quoted above. There Aristophanes is clearly following the tradition, but he is not completely agreeing with what the traditional meanings attributed to the invocation of the gods. He uses the same serious tone, but ends it with a joke. It is clear that, in doing so, he is not trying to convince people that what he says is true or better because it comes from the divinity, but he is using the tradition of calling upon the gods in an ironic way. The case of Heraclitus, I think, is different. He, just as Aristophanes, seems to use it as a reference to tradition, imitating the structure of the prayer, but not completely agreeing with what invoking the divinity means for the tradition. In most of the examples, quoting the divinity implies the following. First, that the gods know more than us, and therefore what they say is better or truer than what a mere human says. Second, there is the idea that the writer or poet communicates with the divinity, emphasising that they have been somehow chosen by the gods; the gods or muses answer their callings and tell them the divine version of a

[51] Parmenides B1.1–3: Ἵπποι ταί με φέρουσιν, ὅσον τ´ ἐπὶ θυμὸς ἱκάνοι, πέμπον, ἐπεί μ´ ἐς ὁδὸν βῆσαν πολύφημον ἄγουσαι δαίμονος, ἣ κατὰ πάντ´ ἄστη φέρει εἰδότα φῶτα. ['The mares which bear me as far as my desires might reach were conveying me, when they led me into the many-voiced way of the deity, who leads the knowing mortal straight on through all things.' Trans. TEGP].

[52] Empedocles B3.1–5: ἀλλά θεοὶ τῶν μὲν μανίην ἀποτρέψατε γλώσσης,/ ἐκ δ' ὁσίων στομάτων καθαρὴν ὀχετεύσατε πηγήν./ καὶ σέ, πολυμνήστη λευκώλενε παρθένε Μοῦσα,/ ἄντομαι, ὧν θέμις ἐστὶν ἐφημερίοισιν ἀκούειν,/ πέμπε παρ' Εὐσεβίης ἐλάουσ' εὐήνιον ἅρμα. ['But you gods, turn away from my tongue their madness,/ and from holy mouths channel a pure fountain./ And you, Muse, white-armed memorious maiden,/ I implore: what things are fit for creatures of a day to hear,/ send, driving your complaint chariot from the house of Reverence.' Trans. TEGP.]

story, or at the very least they inspire or possess the interpreter, using them as a mouthpiece, in order to convey their message directly in their words.[53]

In the case of Heraclitus I believe we do not have the exact same format, although it is a similar kind of implicit invocation. That the *logos* is truer and better than people's opinions and stories, and that divinity is better than humans can be read in the fragments. B78 ('Human disposition does not have (sound) judgements but divine disposition does.'), B83 ('The wisest person seems like an ape in front of a god in regard to wisdom, beauty, and everything else.'), and B79 ('A man sounds silly to a divinity, just as a kid to a man.'), for instance, show us that the divinity is better than humans in almost every respect, including wisdom and understanding.[54] Additionally, fragment B2 points in the same direction. It states that 'That is why one must follow *to xunon* (that is, the common. For the *xunos* is the common). Although this *logos* is common, the many live as if they had private understanding.'[55] One thing is that which each individual believes, their 'private understanding', some sort of subjective or personal truth, and another is the *logos*, which is common to all and should be followed.[56] The mention of a common *logos*, which is above all or universal, in opposition to personal opinions or private understanding, means that this *logos* is some sort of truth above mortals. In Heraclitus' context, such a conception of truth most likely implies some involvement with the divine.[57]

Thus, it seems that for Heraclitus it is true that the gods (his divine *logos*) know more than us, and their understanding is better than the personal opinions of mortals. However, that Heraclitus communicates with the divine or is inspired by it does not seem that clear. Some scholars say that Heraclitus is some sort of prophet of the divinity, and that he speaks the *logos*.[58] What he does is not exactly the same as

[53] See Plato, *Timaeus* 27c1–d5 quoted above. Other ways of divine inspiration are discussed, for instance, in Plato, *Ion* 533d–536d. For poetic inspiration in Plato, see Murray (1997), 1–33, 235–238.
[54] B78: ἦθος γὰρ ἀνθρώπειον μὲν οὐκ ἔχει γνώμας, θεῖον δὲ ἔχει. B83: ἀνθρώπων ὁ σοφώτατος πρὸς θεὸν πίθηκος φανεῖται καὶ σοφίαι καὶ κάλλει καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσιν. B79: ἀνὴρ νήπιος ἤκουσε πρὸς δαίμονος ὅκωσπερ παῖς πρὸς ἀνδρός.
[55] Trans. TEGP with modifications. Greek text: διὸ δεῖ ἕπεσθαι τῶι ξυνῶι (τουτέστι τῶι κοινῶι· ξυνὸς γὰρ ὁ κοινός). τοῦ λόγου δ' ἐόντος ξυνοῦ ζώουσιν οἱ πολλοὶ ὡς ἰδίαν ἔχοντες φρόνησιν.
[56] I agree with TEGP, 187, that 'Heraclitus makes something like the modern distinction between objective truth and subjective interpretation here. The Word is out there for those who can grasp it.' Curd (2010), 3 n. 9, offers a similar conception of *logos*.
[57] See Most (1999), 332–348, for the inheritance from epic poetry in early Presocratic epistemology.
[58] Namely, those who defend that *logos* is simply Heraclitus' speech or book. Burnet (1930), 133 n. 1, and Barnes (1982), 59.

speaking for the gods or that the gods speak through him, or even that he speaks a divine message or the *logos* itself.[59] However, it is clear that this *logos* is eternal and divine, and he wants us to understand it; he thinks people should know this *logos*. Consequently, if we take B50 into account, it would be safe to say that Heraclitus himself is not speaking the divine message to us, but the *logos* itself speaks to us or is available to all of us, and, even though Heraclitus is not directly telling us the truth by divine revelation or inspiration, he wants to teach us how to listen to the *logos*, he is telling us where we can find it and pointing us to this eternal and divine truth, which does not correspond to the traditional idea of divinity but fulfils a similar role.

1.2.3. The *logos* is cosmic

I have argued, and followed the scholars that argue, that the *logos* is independent of Heraclitus, eternal and divine. This means that in my interpretation Heraclitus is not referring to his own speech but to something greater than him in some of his mentions of the word *logos*. However, there are still a few questions that need to be considered about this definition of *logos*. First of all, if this *logos* is not Heraclitus' speech, then what is it and where does it exist? Also, why did other philosophers before the Stoics not react to this idea or explain it as part of Heraclitus' theory? And, why would Heraclitus use the word *logos* in such a novel way without any apparent explanation? I will try to provide a solution for these questions by arguing for a cosmic *logos*. By 'cosmic' I mean that the *logos* is a thing essential to the composition of the cosmos and one that, possibly, has a fundamental part in its processes and functioning, which seems to be the general interpretation of Heraclitus' *logos* doctrine made by the Stoics.[60] My analysis in this chapter, however, will not deal with the problem whether the Stoics misinterpreted Heraclitus, or attributed to him more than what he actually said. This part will rather focus on why there seems to be an absence of reaction to this idea in the period between Heraclitus and the Stoics.

[59] See e.g. Burnet (1928), 58. For a more detailed analysis of this idea, see Hussey (1982), 53: 'Heraclitus differs from the average prophet in the important respect that he does not rely on an essentially private revelation.'
[60] See Long (2001), 20 n. 42.

The idea of an entity or a part of the cosmos that guides, governs or steers the universe is not uncommon in the Presocratics.[61] Before Heraclitus, we find in Xenophanes (c. 570–c. 475 BC) the idea of a single and great god that is not like mortals (B23), that has a different level of perception and thought (B24), and that moves everything with his mind (B25). In Parmenides (most likely a contemporary of Heraclitus), Being resembles a cosmic *logos* in several ways.[62] Indeed, the goddess distinguishes between her true *logos*, which refers to her description of the path of Being, and mortal opinions (B8.50–51). Additionally, in fragment B12, Parmenides tells us of a goddess that steers all things (ἐν δὲ μέσωι τούτων δαίμων ἣ πάντα κυβερνᾶι).[63] In Anaxagoras (c. 510–c. 428 BC), the concept of *nous* in fragment B12 presents us with a similar idea of an organisation of the cosmos, guided by some sort of intelligent and divine agent. Diogenes of Apollonia (fifth century BC) talks about a similar idea in his fragment B5: 'For this very thing seems to me to be God, and to reach everywhere, to arrange all things, and to be present in everything.'[64] All these examples show that there was the idea of a cosmic entity or a feature of the cosmos, which controls and is present in everything. However, the idea of a *logos* with these properties is not as clear before Plato.[65]

[61] This entity usually has divine aspects. See Trépanier (2010) for context on divinities. See Adomenas (1999) and Most (2013) for Heraclitus' views in particular.

[62] For the chronology of Heraclitus and Parmenides see Graham (2002).

[63] About this governing goddess in Parmenides B12, Aetius identifies her as Dike (see Parmenides A37), and TEGP, 240, says: 'The goddess who governs generation exercises a creative force over the world. This is the first time something like a force is distinguished form a natural body, and it prefigures Empedocles' Love (and Love's contrary Strife) an more remotely Anaxagoras' Mind.'

[64] Trans. TEGP, Greek text: αὐτὸ γάρ μοι τοῦτο θεὸς δοκεῖ εἶναι καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶν ἀφῖχθαι καὶ πάντα διατιθέναι καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἐνεῖναι.

[65] In his *Stromata*, Clement of Alexandria (AD 150–215) quotes a very interesting passage about *logos* in the ancient times. He attributes it to Epicharmus, a writer of comedy active in the early fifth century-late sixth century BC (Diogenes Laertius 8.78), to whom Plato refers as the 'king of comedy' in *Theaetetus* 152e. The passage taken from Kassel and Austin (2001), 139, reads: ὁ λόγος ἀνθρώπους κυβερνᾶι κατὰ τρόπον σώιζει τ' ἀει./ ἔστιν ἀνθρώπωι λογισμός, ἔστι καὶ θεῖος λόγος./ ὁ δέ γε τἀνθρώπου πέφυκε ἀπό γε τοῦ θείου λόγου,/ [καὶ] φέρει [πόρους ἑκάστοι] περὶ βίου καὶ τᾶς τροφᾶς./ ὁ δέ γε ταῖς τέχναις ἁπάσαις συνέπεται θεῖος λόγος,/ ἐκδιδάσκων αὐτὸς αὐτοὺς, ὅ τι ποιεῖν δεῖ συμφέρον./ Οὐ γὰρ ἄνθρώπος τέχναν τιν' εὗρεν, ὁ δὲ θεὸς τὸ πᾶν. ['The *logos* governs humans appropriately and preserves always. A man has calculation, and there is the divine *logos*. But the one of humans was born from the divine *logos*, and it gives to each man the means of life and nourishment. And the divine *logos* attends all the arts, thoroughly teaching itself to them that it is necessary to do what is good for oneself. For no man discovered any art, but god discovered all of them.'] The similarity to Heraclitus' *logos* is striking. However, the authorship and date of the passage are uncertain. See Miller (1965) for more details on dates, originality of the passage, and its possible relation to Heraclitus' *logos*.

Robinson proposes that there is a similarity between Heraclitus' idea of a cosmic *logos* and the description of the world-soul in Plato's *Timaeus*. He argues that 36d–37c sounds 'remarkably Heraclitean, and evinces a much more accurate understanding of what Heraclitus was after by his use of the word *logos* in what we know as fragments 1, 2 and 50 than anything achieved by the Stoics, or by Hippolytus.'[66] I quote here a longer passage of the *Timaeus* (36d–37c) in order to provide a better understanding of the context in which Plato uses such a concept of *logos*:

> When the complete composition of the soul came to be according to the mind for the creator, after that, all that is corporeal was created within it, and joining centre to centre he fitted the two together. The soul was woven together with the body throughout the heavens every way from the centre to the extremity, and covered it all around on the outside. And revolving within itself, began a divine beginning of unceasing and intelligent life for all time. And while the body of the heavens came to be visible, the soul was invisible, taking part in reason and harmony, since it came into existence by the agency of the best of things intelligible and ever-existing, as the best of things generated.
> Because the soul is a mixture of these three components, the nature of the Same and of the Different, and Being; and it is divided and bound proportionately, and it revolves around itself, whenever it passes through something that has scattered or undivided being, it, while moving through its whole self, says [*legei*] what that thing is the same as and what it is different from, additionally and, most importantly, it says in what manner, how and when it happens that each thing exists and comes to be in relation to what becomes and according to itself, or according to what is always the same. And when this *logos*, which is true about the different and the same in the same way, brought upon itself within the mover without utterance or sound, on one hand becomes about perceptible things, and the circle of the Different going straight proclaims it to its whole soul, firm and true opinions and convictions result. When, on the other hand, it [the *logos*] is about an object of reasoning and the circle of the Same running well proclaims it, understanding and knowledge are produced by necessity. And if anyone should ever call that in which these two arise, not soul but something else, what they say will be anything but true.

There are many parts of this passage that show a striking similarity to the idea of the *logos* expressed in Heraclitus' fragments. First of all, I believe that it is manifest that this *logos* spoken out by the world-soul is an essential feature of the cosmos. It is a *logos* that does not depend on the speech of any human in particular; it exists in the

[66] Robinson (2013), 325.

world-soul and is a part of the configuration of the cosmos. This means that Plato not only was familiar with this idea of a cosmic *logos* but actually used this idea, perhaps not as an actual doctrine (if we take the introduction of this dialogue into account) but at least as some probable story.[67]

It is equally clear, however, that not everything that Plato says in this part of the *Timaeus* is similar or can be attributed to Heraclitus' doctrine, in particular when he refers to ideas such as the forms and the demiurge. We do not have enough evidence to argue that Plato is talking about a Heraclitean doctrine. That Plato uses an idea similar to the *logos* doctrine attributed to Heraclitus does not mean either that this interpretation is necessarily correct. It means, however, that such interpretation is independent of later Stoic influence.

Nevertheless, the characteristics of the *logos* described by Heraclitus in his fragments and by Plato in his *Timaeus* are the same. First of all, in both theories the *logos* is immortal. Plato does not say it explicitly, and in his creation story the cosmos and everything else could be understood as everlasting but not eternal, unlike in Heraclitus' cosmology, where the cosmos was not created and has always existed (B30). However, Plato does say that the world-soul is immortal, because with its revolving begins 'a divine beginning of unceasing and intelligent life for all time'. This means that after the creation, Plato's cosmos and its corresponding *logos* are immortal and, perhaps arguably, divine as well.

It is worth pointing out that the idea of *logos* presented by Plato in this passage fits many of the problematic characteristics given by Heraclitus to his *logos* in fragments B1, B2 and, perhaps, B50. First of all, Plato's *logos* describes how all things are, just as Heraclitus says in B1 about his description of the *logos*. Furthermore, that everything in the cosmos happens according to the *logos* is equally true for Plato and Heraclitus. In B2 we are told that the *logos* is common, as opposed to private knowledge. The fact that Plato in this passage relates knowledge and true opinions with this *logos* could make us think that what his *logos* describes is true for everyone; thus implying an idea similar to the common *logos* of B2. Furthermore, Plato claims that the world-soul 'says [*legei*] what that thing is the same as and what it is different

[67] See Burnyeat (2005), on the *eikōs mythos* in Plato's *Timaeus*.

from, additionally and, most importantly, it says in what manner, how and when it happens that each thing exists and comes to be in relation to what becomes and according to itself, or according to what is always the same.' This idea and the vocabulary used in the passage echo Heraclitus' description of himself explaining the *logos* in the second part of B1: 'Although everything happens according to this *logos*, they seem void of experience whenever they experience words and actions such as I describe when I distinguish each thing according to nature and declare how it is'. Both conceptions of *logos* present us with the idea of describing, in the most exact and precise way, how things really are. Therefore, it seems that Plato was familiar with such a notion of a cosmic *logos*.

Lastly, this same passage of the *Timaeus* provides us with an argument against the idea that the word *logos* was inexplicably used in a very novel way by Heraclitus. For Plato the word *logos* not only represents a cosmic feature or an entity that is part of the cosmos; it also represents a speech or a description: *logos* keeps the regular and mundane meaning of 'things said', 'speech', etc., while at the same time representing a fundamental cosmic characteristic. That is why he says that this *logos* was 'brought upon itself within the mover without utterance or sound.' Because while it is a speech or an account, it is at the same time a special kind of *logos* (in the same way that in Plato the world-soul and the human soul are similar in nature but different in kind), and, unlike human speech, it is produced and kept alive in a different way. Nevertheless, in both cases it is the same concept of a speech or an account but in a cosmic and divine scale.

To sum up, the idea of an all-governing entity, present in the cosmos, was common in the Presocratics and, therefore, familiar to Heraclitus. However, it is true that we do not have any example before Heraclitus of somebody who talks of a *logos* that organises everything, which was one of the counterarguments for understanding *logos* as something different from 'speech' or 'things said' in fragments B1, B2, and B50. Nevertheless, Plato's *Timaeus* gives us a quite clear example of a use of the word *logos* in which it represents a divine part of the cosmos, before the Stoics interpreted Heraclitus' doctrine in that way. We can draw two conclusions from this analogy to Plato. First, that Heraclitus probably used the word *logos* just as Plato did in the *Timaeus* (or, perhaps, that Plato used the word as Heraclitus did). Secondly, this *logos*

can be understood both as a *logos*, that is, as an account, speech, or 'things said', and as cosmic at the same time.

1.2.4. The *logos* is the eternal, unique, and best description of the universe

This last idea, that Heraclitus' *logos* is similar to the *logos* of the world-soul in the *Timaeus*, opens up a range of possibilities for the interpretation of *logos* as a part of the cosmos. When considering the meaning of the expression γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε in fragment B1, it is usually thought that *logos* somehow guides or steers everything, like the thunderbolt in B64, or that it moves the cosmos like the ever-living fire in B30.[68] Nevertheless, if we take Plato's passage into consideration, could Heraclitus mean that everything happens just as is spoken (or thought) in the *logos*? Could the *logos* be not the actual cosmic force that moves everything or the source of this motion but just a divine and exact account of the universe? As mentioned above, defining and finding a good translation for the Heraclitean *logos* is not an easy task. However, we now have some of its main characteristics and an example of a similar *logos* in a cosmological context. Therefore, I shall now aim to suggest a translation of *logos* that is coherent both with the standard uses of the word by Heraclitus (fragments B31, B39, B87, B108, B45, B115) and that can express the idea of a cosmic *logos*, and thereafter I will proceed to define more specifically this cosmic *logos*.

There are several proposals for the translation of the word *logos* in Heraclitus: from a simple 'word' to a more complex idea such as a 'formula of things'.[69] For me, as I will argue, the best way to understand it in general is as 'description', and the cosmic *logos* in particular as the unique and best description.[70] In the *Theatetus* 201c5–

[68] B64: τὰ δὲ πάντα οἰακίζει Κεραυνός. B30: κόσμον τόνδε, τὸν αὐτὸν ἁπάντων, οὔτε τις θεῶν οὔτε ἀνθρώπων ἐποίησεν, ἀλλ᾽ ἦν ἀεὶ καὶ ἔστιν καὶ ἔσται πῦρ ἀείζωον ἁπτόμενον μέτρα καὶ ἀποσβεννύμενον μέτρα.

[69] TEGP, 187, as mentioned above, translates *logos* for 'Word' because 'the latter term shares some of the former's multivocity, and partly because of the term's rich religious overtones, including implications of transcendent truth.' See the discussion in Kirk (1954), 33–47. He suggests that the 'less ambiguous' translation for *logos* in B1, B2, and B50 is 'formula of things'. Marcovich (1967), 6–9, chooses to translate it 'Truth'. ATH, 97, translates it 'account'. See, for instance, Robinson (1987), 114: 'One does not "listen to" patterns, or structures […] one listens to persons, and the things they say.' He argues, however, that Heraclitus here is distinguishing between himself and his argument, with which I do not agree, as I have argued before in this chapter. See also Johnstone (2014), 20–25.

[70] I prefer 'description' over 'account' mainly because a description includes simpler and more basic expressions, hence corresponding more to the basic meaning of 'things said', while an account implies

210b1, when considering the argument that knowledge is true judgement with a *logos*, Plato proceeds to define what *logos* means. He considers three definitions of the word. Thus, in *Theatetus* 206d1–4: 'The first would be, making one's thought apparent vocally by means of words and verbal expressions — when a man impresses an image of his judgement upon the stream of speech, like reflections upon water or in a mirror.'[71] This idea is perhaps the most general way of referring to speaking: an image or reflection in words of what is in your mind, i.e. a judgment or opinion about something else, internal or external. The second option, when asked about something, is that the *logos* of a thing is a 'reference to its elements' (207a1–2: τὴν ἀπόκρισιν διὰ τῶν στοιχείων). This seems to be a list of its most important or composing parts, as Plato explains later in 207a3–7: 'As for example, what Hesiod is doing when he says, "One hundred are the timbers of a wagon." Now I couldn't say what they are; and I don't suppose you could either. If you and I were asked what a wagon is, we should be satisfied if we could answer "wheels, axle, body, rails, yoke".'[72] Finally, the third possible meaning is 'being able to tell some mark by which the object you are asked about differs from all other things' in 208c6–9.[73] As for example in 208d1–3: 'Well, take the sun, if you like. You would be satisfied, I imagine, with the answer that it is the brightest of the bodies that move round the earth in the heavens.'[74] This last one could be described as a definition, closer perhaps to Aristotle's idea of definition by *genus* and *differentia* in *Metaphysics* 10.

It is important to make a few remarks about this discussion in the *Theaetetus*. The first one is that, even though Plato himself uses the word *logos* in many more different ways throughout his dialogues, when it comes to determining a proper

more complexity and connection than 'things said'. That is, all accounts are descriptions but not all descriptions are accounts, and simple sentences, such as 'Socrates is mortal', for instance, which sometimes are meant by the word *logos*, are not necessarily accounts but are descriptions in some way.

[71] Trans. Levett and Burnyeat in Cooper (1997). Greek text: τὸ μὲν πρῶτον εἴη ἂν τὸ τὴν αὐτοῦ διάνοιαν ἐμφανῆ ποιεῖν διὰ φωνῆς μετὰ ῥημάτων τε καὶ ὀνομάτων, ὥσπερ εἰς κάτοπτρον ἢ ὕδωρ τὴν δόξαν ἐκτυπούμενον εἰς τὴν διὰ τοῦ στόματος ῥοήν.

[72] Trans. Levett and Burnyeat in Cooper (1997): οἷον καὶ Ἡσίοδος περὶ ἁμάξης λέγει τὸ 'ἑκατὸν δέ τε δούραθ' ἁμάξης.' ἃ ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην εἰπεῖν, οἶμαι δὲ οὐδὲ σύ: ἀλλ' ἀγαπῶιμεν ἂν ἐρωτηθέντες ὅτι ἐστὶν ἅμαξα, εἰ ἔχοιμεν εἰπεῖν τροχοί, ἄξων, ὑπερτερία, ἄντυγες, ζυγόν.

[73] Trans. Levett and Burnyeat in Cooper (1997): τὸ ἔχειν τι σημεῖον εἰπεῖν ὧι τῶν ἁπάντων διαφέρει τὸ ἐρωτηθέν.

[74] Trans. Levett and Burnyeat in Cooper (1997): οἷον, εἰ βούλει, ἡλίου πέρι ἱκανὸν οἶμαί σοι εἶναι ἀποδέξασθαι, ὅτι τὸ λαμπρότατόν ἐστι τῶν κατὰ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἰόντων περὶ γῆν.

definition of the term, those three options seem to be sufficient for him.[75] This lack of options could be explained by the context in which the definition is required in the dialogue. Those three options need to be considered when *logos* is part of the question whether knowledge is true judgment with a *logos*. However, it seems that Plato is aiming to define a more general idea of *logos* here, since he makes the connection with the verb *legein*.[76] In any case, what is relevant to the case of *logos* in Heraclitus is that all three possible definitions are some sort of description, some more specific and accurate than others, but descriptions nonetheless. I do not mean to argue that every time Heraclitus uses the word *logos* we should rendered it as 'description' in English, but that the idea of describing something can be understood as a root for all of its occurrences.

This would allow us to posit a *logos* theory in which the word *logos* has something in common in most of its uses, especially in the fragments where the word is considered difficult to understand. If the cosmic *logos* is a description of the universe, other mentions of the word by Heraclitus would make sense as descriptions of some sort as well. For instance, in fragment B108 ('Of all those *logoi* I have heard, not one has achieved to know that the wise is separate from everything else.'[77]), those who have *logoi*, which could be understood as theories or views, could be seen as having descriptions of the universe or of particular phenomena. Hence, the term could be understood in the same way in most fragments. Even the *logos* that the soul is said to have in fragments B45 and B115, could be understood similarly.[78]

However, understanding the word *logos* as some sort of description does not provide us with a solution to the problem of determining what the cosmic *logos* is in Heraclitus. Even though it is a first step in its understanding, there are still some unanswered questions about the nature and characteristics of this *logos*. First of all, what kind of description is it? The passage in *Theaetetus* shows that a *logos* or a description can be understood in different ways, as we can see, as well, in the many

[75] On *logos* in the *Theaetetus* see Fine (1979).
[76] *Theaetetus* 206d3–6: 'Don't you think this kind of thing is a *logos*? Theaetetus: Yes, I do. At least, a man who does this is said to be giving an account (*legein*).' Trans. Levett and Burnyeat in Cooper (1997) with some modifications.
[77] Greek text: ὁκόσων λόγους ἤκουσα, οὐδεὶς ἀφικνεῖται ἐς τοῦτο, ὥστε γινώσκειν ὅτι σοφόν ἐστι πάντων κεχωρισμένον.
[78] See section 3.1.3 for a further analysis of these fragments.

interpretations offered by modern and ancient scholars. I follow the previous comparison between the Heraclitean *logos* and the *logos* in *Timaeus* 36d–37c, as well as the different definitions of *logos* in *Theaetetus* to propose that the cosmic *logos* in Heraclitus' theory is the best, that is complete and divine, description of the universe. However, how the *logos* describes the universe can be understood in three ways. It could describe things as they are and be just an informative description; it could also describe how things should be and how they will behave in the future, and be some sort of prescriptive description; additionally, in an ontological level, it could be some sort of extrapolation of our human descriptions and be an abstract description.

The first option, the informative description, is the one that the *logos* in *Timaeus* 36d–37c seems to be more close to. In this case, the universe is already set in motion and constructed when the world-soul says (without speaking) its *logos*. The cosmos is formed with the elemental geometrical figures as material, the forms serve as the model, and the soul as the force that makes it move. This means that the *logos* in the *Timaeus* is not a material or formal cause of the universe.[79] Neither does it seem to guide or steer the universe in any way. Consequently, its purpose seems to be descriptive or informative; alongside the universe there is a perfect and accurate description of it. In Plato this description is itself contained in the soul of the universe, so it exists forever and, somewhat, objectively. In my interpretation of this passage of the *Timaeus*, the idea of this *logos* is connected to an epistemological problem in Plato, to the possibility of a correct and objective knowledge of the cosmos. Since there is a correct description that does not depend on human perspective, in a way, we could compare our views to that one in order to confirm whether ours is correct or not. Heraclitus' *logos* could be defined in this same way: an ideal description that does not have any actual influence in the cosmos' functioning but that allows us to understand the cosmos when we grasp it.

The second option, adopted by many scholars, is that the *logos* is a prescriptive description of the universe: it does not only describe what the universe is but also has a more active role in the cosmic processes, that it is an actual force or at least that it

[79] As some scholars think about Heraclitus' *logos*. For instance, Guthrie (1962), 434, and ATH, 22. They think that *logos* encompasses not only a description or order of things but sometimes plays the role of fire or other components of the universe.

acts as a guide or blueprint for the movement of the universe.[80] Most scholars propose an interpretation of the cosmic *logos* along those lines, in which *logos* has a more active role in the cosmos. Most of them tend to incline for the idea of a guide or blueprint and few for the idea of an active principle.[81] That *logos* is an active principle I do not find it very persuasive because just as in Plato's case, in Heraclitus' theory there are other concepts or elements that could perform this or a similar role in the cosmos: strife, war, fire, soul, and nature (*physis*) could perform the function of properly moving. However, the idea of a *logos* in charge of guiding, steering, and ordering the cosmos is still an interesting one. It is true that the analogy with *Timaeus*' *logos* favours the idea of a descriptive and more passive *logos*. Nevertheless, even when in *Timaeus* Plato does not explicitly say that the *logos* steers or governs the cosmos but just that it describes everything as it is, when Plato talks about the relation of *logoi* and the human soul in other dialogues, he reaches the opposite conclusion: *logoi* have a great influence in the soul and, then, in people's behaviour.[82] It would be reasonable to argue, therefore, that *logos* in Heraclitus' theory has a similar function.

The third and last option is an abstraction of the possibility of a perfect description. In his short story *La Biblioteca de Babel*, Jorge Luis Borges describes an infinite library that contains every possible book we can imagine:

> From those incontrovertible premises, the librarian deduced that the Library is 'total' — perfect, complete, and whole — and that its bookshelves contain all possible combinations of the twenty-two orthographic symbols (a number which, though unimaginable vast, is not

[80] For instance, Kirk's 'formula of things' implies this idea. See Kirk (1954), 39: 'What we are trying to summarize is an idea like "the organized way in which (as Heraclitus had discovered) all things work"; "plan" (in a non-teleological sense), "rule", even "law" (as in "the law of force") are possible summaries.'

[81] See section 1.1.

[82] *Phaedrus* 270e3–9: ἀλλὰ δῆλον ὡς, ἄν τώι τις τέχνηι λόγους διδῶι, τὴν οὐσίαν δείξει ἀκριβῶς τῆς φύσεως τούτου πρὸς ὃ τοὺς λόγους προσοίσει: ἔσται δέ που ψυχὴ τοῦτο. ['It is clear that someone who teaches another to make speeches as an art will demonstrate precisely the essential nature of that to which speeches are to be applied. And that, surely, is the soul.' Trans. Nehamas and Woodruff in Cooper (1997)]. *Phaedrus* 271c9: ἐπειδὴ λόγου δύναμις τυγχάνει ψυχαγωγία οὖσα. ['Since the nature of speech is in fact to direct the soul.' Trans. Nehamas and Woodruff in Cooper (1997)]. *Gorgias* 504d8: οὐκοῦν πρὸς ταῦτα βλέπων ὁ ῥήτωρ ἐκεῖνος, ὁ τεχνικός τε καὶ ἀγαθός, καὶ τοὺς λόγους προσοίσει ταῖς ψυχαῖς οὓς ἂν λέγηι, καὶ τὰς πράξεις ἁπάσας. ['So this is what that skilled and good orator will look to when he applies to people's souls whatever speeches he makes as well as all of his actions.' Trans. Zeyl in Cooper (1997)]. *Republic* 345b3–6: καὶ πῶς, ἔφη, σὲ πείσω; εἰ γὰρ οἷς νυνδὴ ἔλεγον μὴ πέπεισαι, τί σοι ἔτι ποιήσω; ἢ εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν φέρων ἐνθῶ τὸν λόγον. ['And how am I to persuade you, if you aren't persuaded by what I said just now? What more can I do? Am I to take my argument and pour it into your very soul?' Trans. Grube and Reeve in Cooper (1997)].

> infinite) — that is, all that is available to be expressed, in every language. *All* — the detailed history of the future, the faithful catalogue of the Library, thousands and thousands of false catalogues, the proof of the falsity of those catalogues, a proof of the falsity of the *true* catalogue, the gnostic gospel of Basilides, the commentary upon that gospel, the commentary on the commentary on that gospel, the true story of your death, the translation of every book into every language, the interpolations of every book into all books, the treatise Bede could have written (but did not) on the mythology of the Saxon people, the lost books of Tacitus.[83]

If we follow Borges' idea, there must inevitably be one book in this library that contains the actual and true description of the universe and its explanation. According to Borges' story, there would not be any causal relation between this description and the cosmos, but only chance. What I want to suggest is that the idea of the cosmic *logos* in Heraclitus could be understood in the same way as the perfect book in this library. Mainly because of what I will argue next: that we know there is a *logos*, a description which is perfect and complete, but we do not know its specific contents, we just know that in potency there is such a description. In this case, the idea of a perfect description comes from an abstraction, or an extrapolation of a regular, human (not divine) description. If we consider that the cosmos is there, that words are able to describe things that are part of the cosmos, and that some of those descriptions are right and others are wrong, then we can easily infer that there has to be one description of the whole universe that is the correct one as a whole. This works in the same way as in Borges' library in which we know that there are all the possibilities of combinations of letters. One combination must have the actual and correct description of the universe, even when we do not know the actual contents, form, or purpose of this description. In Borges' story, the combination is lost in one or some books in the

[83] Trans. Hurley (1998), 115, original text: 'De esas premisas incontrovertibles dedujo que la Biblioteca es total y que sus anaqueles registran todas las posibles combinaciones de los veintitantos símbolos ortográficos (número, aunque vastísimo, no infinito) o sea todo lo que es dable expresar: en todos los idiomas. Todo: la historia minuciosa del porvenir, las autobiografías de los arcángeles, el catálogo fiel de la Biblioteca, miles y miles de catálogos falsos, la demostración de la falacia de esos catálogos, la demostración de la falacia del catálogo verdadero, el evangelio gnóstico de Basilides, el comentario de ese evangelio, el comentario del comentario de ese evangelio, la relación verídica de tu muerte, la versión de cada libro a todas las lenguas, las interpolaciones de cada libro en todos los libros, el tratado que Beda pudo escribir (y no escribió) sobre la mitología de los sajones, los libros perdidos de Tácito.'

library, but in Heraclitus perhaps the *logos* is a deification of this abstraction held in the divine realm and known only by the gods.[84]

Given that in Heraclitus' doctrine the *logos* is divine, eternal, cosmic, and similar to *Timaeus' logos*, I tend to incline for the first option, i.e. that the *logos*' function in the cosmos is only descriptive. However, I consider that the most likely possibility is that *logos* is a combination of elements of the three ideas. We do not have enough evidence in Heraclitus in order to fully understand the *logos* and to describe it in detail. My interpretation takes it as an eternal and complete description of the universe, not only of its parts and whole, but also of its processes in the present time and in the future (in this way it is prescriptive). It is not spoken out nor composed by sounds, but, as I will argue later, it shows itself to us, and we can 'hear' it in a certain way and understand it.

1.3. The *logos* cannot be directly communicated to others

The characteristics of this unique and best *logos* that describes the universe, its immenseness and completeness, lead us to ask about the possibility of its comprehension and of its communication. Heraclitus is very pessimistic about the amount of people who have understood it and who would be able to understand it eventually. However, his general attitude and what we can read in some fragments (B116, B113, B50, B35, and B18) indicate that people have the potential to reach it.[85] We can safely assume that at least one person, Heraclitus himself, has grasped the *logos* or has some understanding of it.[86] But if Heraclitus knows the *logos*, why are people unable to understand it when he clearly explains it to them? I will propose that one of the causes of this failure in understanding is that the *logos* cannot be communicated directly to other people. I use three arguments to support this claim. In the first section, I will show that the idea of the impossibility of communication was

[84] See Xenophanes B34. I argue in the next section that Heraclitus shares with Xenophanes the idea of a divine truth, which humans cannon access directly through language.
[85] Those fragments indicate that Heraclitus has some hope in human knowledge. The fact that he is encouraging people to look for the *logos*, telling them that they are not correct and showing them the correct way, means that he believes some people can understand it eventually.
[86] Some gods or divine entities most likely have this kind of knowledge as well. Cf. B102, B32, B78, and B83.

present in Heraclitus' time, and theories about the relation between words and things started developing in this time. One significant example of this idea is Xenophanes B34, where we are told that if a mortal by chance correctly stated the truth, they would not have understanding of it. In the second part, I will argue that the idea that *logos* is a complete and divine description of the universe works as a reminder that, for Heraclitus, divinity still plays a significant role in our access to the truth, just as in the traditional theology. However, in his new philosophical model of divinity, this communication of the truth is not as simple as it was before. In the last section, I will propose an interpretation of the fragments in the light of the problem of the impossibility of a direct communication of the *logos*.

1.3.1. Saying and understanding a divine truth

The idea of a divine account that is true (or that at least carries more authority) and of mortals who have a restricted access to it is not particularly novel. When it comes to the picture shown to us in ancient Greek literature, it was a common assumption that the gods had better knowledge and sometimes, as explained above, they would disclose some of it into chosen mortals, who by themselves had a poor or basic knowledge if any at all.[87] The actual process by which the gods disclosed divine knowledge into the human world was not very troubling for the poets. In Homer, communication coming from the divinities was usually not a complicated matter. However, for Hesiod sometimes the muses could tell lies that resemble the truth (*Theogony* 27–28) and there were some words or voices 'only for the gods to understand.'[88] Nevertheless, usually in Hesiod's world when the gods send a message to mortals, they are able to understand it, even when false. We could say that in the world as pictured by the poets truth was in some way a divine *logos* too: it was an account brought form the divine realm or at least inspired by someone there.

[87] This is clear in *Iliad* 2.484–487: ἔσπετε νῦν μοι Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ᾽ ἔχουσαι/ ὑμεῖς γὰρ θεαί ἐστε πάρεστέ τε ἴστέ τε πάντα,/ ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος οἷον ἀκούομεν οὐδέ τι ἴδμεν. And the same idea is implied in *Theogony* 25–28: Μοῦσαι Ὀλυμπιάδες, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο:/ ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι, κάκ᾽ ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἶον,/ ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,/ ἴδμεν δ᾽, εὖτ᾽ ἐθέλωμεν, ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι.

[88] As previously mentioned, in *Theogony* (829–835) he says that the voice of one of the one-hundred heads of the Typhoeus is only for the gods to understand. This probably only means that gods have better understanding but not that they have a better or different language.

However, this notion started to change with the first philosophers, and particularly with Xenophanes' critique of traditional theology. The gods as portrayed by Homer and Hesiod were very human, in particular when it comes to language and the way they communicated among them and with humans. Even when defined as the opposite of human and as far superior in strength and wisdom, the gods had mouths and spoke Greek. Consequently, when Xenophanes criticises their human appearance (B14, B15, B16, B17,) behaviour (B11, B12), and thought (B23), he not only causes a change in the conception of what a god is, but at the same time he questions the nature of this divine message and the way in which it could be communicated to humans and understood by them. This divine communication was not yet problematised in the traditional understanding of anthropomorphic gods. The reason is that in that context the validation of the message and the messenger, in epic poetry for instance, was done by the fact that it came from the divinity. Then in this process it was presupposed that the message would be understood by humans. However, this necessarily has to change with a new idea of gods that are nothing like mortals. Consequently, in fragment B34 Xenophanes says:

> Now the plain truth no man has seen nor will any know concerning the gods and what I have said concerning all things. For even if he should completely succeed in describing things as they come to pass, nonetheless he himself does not know: opinion is wrought over [or: comes to] all.[89]

In this fragment we can see that no human has or will ever have access to this kind of divine truth. Xenophanes himself does not tell us who knows this, but presumably his main god and perhaps the plural gods do.[90] The idea of a truth held by the gods is common in the tradition, and that human beings ignore it is usual as well. However, what the fragment says afterwards is a new idea: not only does divinity have the truth and humans ignore it but human kind will never understand this kind or level of truth, even if they were able to state it. The reason seems to be that understanding, language,

[89] Trans. TEGP. Brackets in original. Greek text: καὶ τὸ μὲν οὖν σαφὲς οὔτις ἀνήρ ἴδεν οὐδέ τις ἔσται/ εἰδὼς ἀμφὶ θεῶν τε καὶ ἅσσα λέγω περὶ πάντων./ εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα τύχοι τετελεσμένον εἰπών,/ αὐτὸς ὅμως οὐκ οἶδε. δόκος δ'ἐπὶ πᾶσι τέτυκται.

[90] See Xenophanes B18, B23, B24. Also, on the characteristics of the one god see Trépanier (2010), 280. On cognition in the Presocratics, see Lesher (1994), and on Xenophanes, Lesher (2001). For divine knowledge in Xenophanes and Heraclitus, see Curd (2013). TEGP, 132–133, gives a good overview of epistemology in Xenophanes' fragments. See also KRS (2007), 179–180.

and communication are not equivalent for human and divinities anymore. For even if someone managed to describe or say how these things really are, that would not mean they have knowledge of it. For Xenophanes, the cause of this impossibility seems to be that mortals can only produce opinions and not truth.[91]

Xenophanes' critique of the anthropomorphic gods provides Heraclitus with many problems not only about the nature of the divine but about epistemology. One problem is very clear in Xenophanes' B34: the object of knowledge, what we aim to grasp or understand is no longer a simple account; the gods have changed and so has the nature of their truth. Other problems, which deal with different parts of the epistemology and which will be treated in their respective chapters, are implicit: if the gods are not like mortals anymore, does that mean that humans do not have a common language and cannot communicate with them? And, could humans learn a divine language in order to understand this truth?

1.3.2. Divine and human knowledge

The *logos* is divine, and for Heraclitus the true knowledge of the universe still belongs to the divine realm. Just as Xenophanes, he is critical of traditional religion.[92] However, Heraclitus is still far from a clean separation between nature and divinity, i.e. for him nature is divine and ordered by divine powers.[93] Several fragments show this, as for example:[94]

> **B41**: ἓν τὸ σοφόν, ἐπίστασθαι γνώμην, ὁτέη ἐκυβέρνησε πάντα διὰ πάντων.
>
> There is one wise thing: to know the theory that steers all things through all.

> **B78**: ἦθος γὰρ ἀνθρώπειον μὲν οὐκ ἔχει γνώμας, θεῖον δὲ ἔχει.

[91] Xenophanes' fragment B34 has been object of many interpretations since antiquity. Here I just take the idea of the divine and of the description of things. For a deeper analysis of the fragment see Lesher (1978).
[92] See Adomenas (1999) and Most (2013) for Heraclitus' views on traditional religion. For the philosophical context of the views on nature and divinity, see Trépanier (2010).
[93] Perhaps the closest we can get to this separation in the Presocratics is the atomists. See Trépanier (2010), 308–317. See also Lesher (1983), and Hussey (1982).
[94] Fragments B114 and B102 imply this idea as well.

> Human disposition does not have (sound) judgements but divine disposition does.[95]

Heraclitus' view of traditional divinities is not easy to interpret, even though it is clear in the fragments that he wants to talk about things that belong to the divine realm.[96] I believe that his attitude and treatment of the divine show that he is aware that the relation with the divine has to change, that their truth is very hard to come by, even when he describes it correctly, as in Xenophanes.

Frankel shows that Heraclitus uses a particular device in order to get his message through.[97] He calls it a 'thought pattern', and it is similar to the use of proportions in geometry to compare lengths of the sides of triangles sharing a common angle, or to a rule of three in maths. He says, referring to B79 ('A man sounds silly to a divinity, just as a kid to a man.'),[98] 'For the sake of convenience, we call this pattern by the name of the geometrical mean and transcribe it by formulae such as God/man = man/boy, or else A/B = B/C, using mathematical language rather loosely and disclaiming mathematical strictness.'[99]

This form of comparison is present in many fragments and, as Frankel points out, is usually related to the gods. Just as with the adult-child comparison, many other

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[95] LSJ, s.v. γνώμη A.II.1. says that *gnōmēn echein* can mean 'to understand'. Compare with Herodotus' use, in Powell (1938), where it usually means 'to have the opinion' (3.82.5, 7.47.1, 7.236.3), 'to have a theory' (2.27, 2.56.1, 4.31.1, 7.18.3). Cf. the meaning and the attitude towards true knowledge with *Phaedrus* 278d3–6: Τὸ μὲν σοφόν, ὦ Φαῖδρε, καλεῖν ἔμοιγε μέγα εἶναι δοκεῖ καὶ θεῶι μόνῶι πρέπειν· τὸ δὲ ἢ φιλόσοφον ἢ τοιοῦτόν τι μᾶλλόν τε ἂν αὐτῶι καὶ ἁρμόττοι καὶ ἐμμελεστέρως ἔχοι. ['To call him wise, Phaedrus, seems to me too much, and proper only for a god. To call him wisdom's lover — a philosopher — or something similar would fit him better and more seemly.' Trans. Nehamas and Woodruff in Cooper (1997)]. For *ēthos* here see Marcovich (1967), 478. Guthrie (1962), 398, and ATH, 172–173, suggest 'nature'. I follow KRS (2007), 191 n. 1, in rendering it 'disposition'. Cf. with a man's *ēthos* in B119.

[96] See Adomenas (1999); Trépanier (2010), 282–288; Most (2013). Heraclitus mentions some of the gods of the tradition by name (B15, B32, B92, B94, B120?) and refers to Apollo indirectly (B93), but he also mentions a one and greater god. His unclear position is reflected in B32: 'One being, the only wise one, wants and does not want to be called by the name of Zeus/life.' I agree with Trépanier (2010), 288, that Heraclitus still fits in the idea of one big god and many lesser ones, he says: 'His scheme of greatest and lesser gods, on the other hand, is reminiscent of Xenophanes, except that both the one, wise god and the lesser mortal gods are explicit parts of the furniture of the physical cosmos [...]' Additionally, the way in which Herodotus refers to the divinities suggests an influence of the philosophers, as Scullion (2006), 202, proposes: 'Perhaps we might adapt Heraclitus' phrase (VS 22 B 32, above) and say that Herodotus, like many of the philosophers and sophists, is both uncomfortable and comfortable with Greek polytheism as a matter of nomos, but is really only comfortable with "the divine" conceptually.'

[97] Frankel (1938b).

[98] Greek text: ἀνὴρ νήπιος ἤκουσε πρὸς δαίμονος ὅκωσπερ παῖς πρὸς ἀνδρός.

[99] Frankel (1938b), 314.

comparisons make more sense when we understand them to refer to an analogy of the divine realm and the human realm.[100] We have comparisons about children and adults (B52, B56, B73-74, B117, B121), sleep and waking (B1, B21(?), B26(?), B73-74, B75(?), B89), and private and common (B2, B89, B114). However, in most of the cases the final purpose of these analogies is not explaining the mortal side of the comparison, but the divine. Let us consider some examples. B83: 'The wisest person seems like an ape in front of a god in regard to wisdom, beauty, and everything else,'[101] or B79 above. Both fragments have three kind of components or represent different realms or levels: the god represents the divine level, a human the intermediate human level, and the child and the ape represent a level below the human. Indeed, these fragments tell us something about the human condition in general, but their main focus is the divine realm. Heraclitus' audience know that adults are smarter than children and humans more beautiful than apes. The message Heraclitus wants to get across is that the divine truth is much farther and much better than tradition has supposed. Therefore, the fragments are showing us how to understand this divine realm in comparison to the human realm and something below it. Frankel explains it as follows, where A=God, B=human, and C=child/ape: 'The equation [A/B=B/C] may be rewritten, on this view, with an x instead of an A: x/B= BC. What is God? God is that compared to which the most perfect man will appear as an infant or as a hideous and ridiculous ape.'[102] We are familiar with humans, children, and animals, and know the difference between them. We do not know, however, what the divinity is like, at least not by direct experience. The divine, the *logos*, cannot be so easily described. Consequently, Heraclitus' way to get around this problem is to infer what that divine is in comparison to us humans, in the same way as something lower than us is in comparison to us.

[100] I am using the expression 'divine realm' and 'human realm' loosely. I do not think they are ontologically separate for Heraclitus. The divine part represents the real, and perhaps objective, understanding of the cosmos, while the human part is just our own and private opinions about the cosmos. I agree with TEGP, 187, that Heraclitus makes a sort of division between objective truth and subjective interpretation.

[101] Greek text: ἀνθρώπων ὸ σοφώτατος πρὸς θεὸν πίθηκος φανεῖται καὶ σοφίαι καὶ κάλλει καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσιν. I agree with TEGP, 178–179, that B82 ('The fairest of apes is ugly in comparison with the human race') and B83 go together. However, the example here works without putting them together.

[102] Frankel (1938b), 318. My brackets.

I propose that the motivation for this particular usage of analogies, or his 'thought pattern', is that this new idea of the divine cannot be transmitted to others directly. The reason is that, as Xenophanes noticed before, we do not know what a god's eye view of reality is really like, and describing it with our language is not enough to understand it. Heraclitus can only tell us how this realm is by an analogy with our human world.[103] In this sense, giving information about the divinity to a human would be the same as giving information to an ape or to a toddler about the most complex matters of humanity; they would not understand it. In that same way, we would not understand (or it is hard for us to do so without the proper training at least) information about the divine *logos*. Reality is more difficult to grasp than the poets thought; Heraclitus cannot tell us directly what the world is really like, but only refer to it by comparison with the human world.

1.3.3. Reinterpreting fragment B1

Let us go back to the fragments in which Heraclitus talks about the *logos* and put them in this context, having in mind the idea that it is very hard to access this divine truth, which cannot be easily described and directly transmitted by language. Heraclitus' main point and complaint in B1 is that people fail to understand the *logos*. I believe this failure is to some extent fault of the people, to another extent fault of the process of communication and language, and to another extent it is also caused by the object being communicated, the *logos* itself. Just as Xenophanes thought that the truth cannot be understood by humans, even when accidentally described by them, Heraclitus thought that the *logos* cannot be communicated to others directly.

Fragment B1 is divided in three parts, all of which point to the problem of communicating the *logos*.[104] The first idea is that people fail to understand the *logos* before and after they have heard it. What needs to be stressed here is the 'after having

[103] For the use of analogy in early Greek thought, see Lloyd (1966).

[104] Fragment B1 with the three divisions I mention in this section: '**1)** Of this *logos* that is forever humans turn out to be uncomprehending, both before they hear and after they have heard it. **2)** Although everything happens according to this *logos*, they seem void of experience whenever they experience words and actions such as I describe when I distinguish each thing according to nature and declare how it is. **3)** As to other men, whatever they do when they are awake escapes their notice, just as they forget what they do when they are asleep.'

heard it', and not so much the 'before hearing it'.[105] For Heraclitus, this truth, the *logos*, is right there in front of your eyes, and it is showing itself to us and, if we were keener, we would be able to understand it.[106] This is why Heraclitus expects people to understand the *logos* before hearing it from him. The puzzle here is why people fail to understand it after having heard it from him. People usually understand and follow other things, especially when it comes to the incorrect *logoi* of other philosophers, poets, and historians.[107] Then, why do they fail to understand Heraclitus' correct description? This is what Heraclitus is actually asking himself and his audience in this first part. To a certain extent, part of the answer is that Heraclitus thought everyone else was not as smart or as connected/attuned to the divine as he was. This is how it was understood by Diogenes (9.1–2) and others in antiquity.[108] However, as I argue here, the object of knowledge, the *logos*, plays an important part in this failure as well.

This idea is emphasised in the second part of fragment B1. The main point is that the *logos*, to which people have access and which is in front of them all the time, is carefully and correctly put in words by Heraclitus, but people who experience his words are somehow unaffected by them, they seem to experience without experiencing (ἀπείροισιν ἐοίκασι πειρώμενοι). This means that the message does not get through, even when Heraclitus describes (διηγεῦμαι) each thing by properly distinguishing them (διαιρέων κατὰ φύσιν)[109] and indicating how they are (φράζων ὅκως ἔχει). The wording and emphasis of the second part of the fragment indicate that Heraclitus is doing everything in his power to make people understand the *logos*.[110] This failure in understanding is usually explained by Heraclitus' conception of people as dumb and ignorant, and, therefore, unable to understand in general. Indeed, there is some truth to this idea; not only Diogenes Laertius says in 9.1–3 that Heraclitus was arrogant and a

[105] I agree with Marcovich (1967), 8. ATH, 97–98, suggests we should focus on the 'before hearing it' but reaches the same conclusion: that this is because the *logos* is showing itself to us all the time.
[106] Self-knowledge and not having a barbarian soul seem to be the requirements to understand. See section 3.2.
[107] This is a common compliant by Heraclitus. See section 2.3.1.
[108] ATH, 99, suggests something similar.
[109] This is a very early use of the expression κατὰ φύσιν, so it is doubtful that it had the later meaning of 'according to nature'. I follow Tarán (1986), 12, in that it means something like 'correctly', 'properly'. See also Marcovich (1967), 10. Cf. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.11.11.3: πολὺ διαφέρει τὸ κατὰ φύσιν τε καὶ ὀρθῶς ἀνθρώπωι προσφέρεσθαι.
[110] As I mentioned above, the wording of the second part of B1 is very similar to how the *logos* describes the cosmos in the world-soul in *Timaeus* 36d–37c. They both seem to mean that it is a thorough and complete description.

misanthrope, but also in some of the fragments we can see or infer that this is what Heraclitus meant. He considered that at least some people were not very bright or did not make an effort to understand (B17, B19, B87, B34), or that they took the words of others for granted (B87, B57, B104).

However, in the case of B1, those people who are simply hopeless when it comes to wisdom and knowledge are not those mentioned in the first and second parts of the fragment, they surely are those people mentioned in the third part of the fragment: 'As to other men, whatever they do when they are awake escapes their notice, just as they forget what they do when they are asleep.' The sentence starts with 'As to other men', which indicates that Heraclitus is not talking about the same people who fail to understand the *logos* as described by him. These other people are sleepwalking through life, and it would not be surprising if they fail to understand.[111] Heraclitus must have produced his books, or aphorisms, with a particular audience in mind.[112] Therefore, the people who fail to understand the *logos* even when carefully described by Heraclitus are people who have a chance in understanding it, not the ignorant sleepwalkers. The fragment is telling us that the *logos*, even when being in front of us in the cosmos, and being described to us by Heraclitus, cannot be directly communicated. Just as the divine truth in Xenophanes, we cannot tell our (intelligent) neighbours the *logos* and expect them to understand it. If I may propose a rough paraphrase of fragment B1, it would be the following:

> 1) There is a divine and always present perfect description of the cosmos, people should know it because it is out there all the time, but they do not know it. However, people do not understand even after hearing it from me. 2) I describe things as they are described in the *logos*, which is the same way they are happening in reality. But even after all this, people hear me and do not understand, they seem untouched by my words, as if they did not have an experience of them or of the things I carefully described.

[111] I disagree with ATH, 99, and Kirk (1954), 43–44, in that τοὺς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους refers to the majority of people in opposition to Heraclitus. Had Heraclitus wanted to say that everyone but him is a sleepwalker, he would not have used the ἄλλους but simply say τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, like he does in the first part. This phrase talks about the majority of people, perhaps, but as opposed to the people he mentions before in the first two parts of B1.

[112] Heraclitus was probably expecting an audience of cultivated, educated people, and he probably felt his message would not be understood by or meant for the general public. On Heraclitus' expected audience, see Gemelli Marciano (2002), 103–104. TEGP, 195, '[…] to all appearances Heraclitus' language was meant to, and did, limit his readership to the *cognoscenti*.'

> 3) There are some people who do not understand anything at all ever. I am not talking about them.

People listen to Heraclitus. They hear his detailed description of things, which is in accordance to the *logos*. However, they are void of experience when they experience his words. They do not experience themselves those things that he describes. It seems that they lack that direct experience. If this was the introduction of Heraclitus' book or speech, then it was probably describing the problem of communicating the *logos* to people. Heraclitus' conclusion is very similar to Xenophanes': even when correctly described, the *logos* cannot be communicated to others directly, in part because people are not receptive to it, but in particular because of the nature of this *logos*. That is why in B50 he urges us to listen not to him but to the *logos*, because he cannot tell us the *logos*. This divine *logos* cannot be simply told to other people, as the tradition understood it; only the *logos* itself can convey its meaning.

1.4. Conclusion

The objective of the present chapter was to analyse the concept of *logos* in Heraclitus' philosophical doctrine, which represents the object of knowledge in his epistemology, and to suggest my preferred way of understanding it. When Heraclitus uses the word *logos*, especially in fragments B1, B2, and B50, he is not referring to his speech but to something different and independent of him. This is mainly supported by the exhortation in B50 to listen to the *logos* and not to Heraclitus. Additionally, an analysis of fragment B1, in particular of the words *aei* and *eontos* in the first line, and of *Timaeus* 27c1–d5 shows that Heraclitus is alluding to the epic formula for the immortality of the gods and to the traditional invocation of the divinity. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude, too, that the *logos* is eternal and divine. Furthermore, the similarity between Heraclitus' description of the *logos* in the fragments and the *logos* in the world-soul in Plato's *Timaeus* 36d–37c suggests that the idea of a cosmic *logos* was not unheard of in Heraclitus' time. A similar idea was probably used by him when thinking of his *logos*. Finally, based on the previous characteristics and an analysis of the word *logos* in *Theaetetus* 206d1–208d3, I propose that the *logos* is an eternal, divine, perfect, unique and best description of the universe. This description can be

understood as a combination of three ideas: a descriptive description, a prescriptive description, and an abstract description.

Given that the *logos* has such characteristics, it cannot be communicated directly to others using language. The idea of the impossibility of communication of a divine truth was present in the time of Heraclitus. It was present in a way in the epic poets. For Xenophanes, the access to this kind of truth was completely closed for humans, even if they by chance managed to describe it correctly. Heraclitus most likely had a position similar to that of his predecessors and contemporaries regarding the problem of communication of the divine message. For him there is a difference between two realms: the divine and the mundane. The truth we seek in order to achieve knowledge is part of the divine realm and it is so immense and complex that Heraclitus cannot communicate it directly. The nature of the object of knowledge, that which we want to reach in order to achieve understanding of the cosmos, is by itself one of the obstacles in the achievement of true knowledge.

Chapter 2: The limits of language and communication

The *logos* is the divine, complete, and best description of the universe, which represents the truth that is common to all and could be tantamount to the modern notion of objective truth. One of the problems for achieving knowledge and understanding is that the *logos*' divine nature, its comprehensiveness and greatness, seems to impede Heraclitus to communicate it directly to others. This implies that language plays an equally important part in Heraclitean epistemology. If the *logos* describes reality, a proper use of language is implied in the process of understanding the *logos* and knowing the universe that it describes. Additionally, language is relevant if we consider that communicating this *logos* must have been part of Heraclitus' philosophical project.

In this chapter we will discuss the topic of language and its relation to knowledge and the communication of the *logos* in the following way. First, I provide a general context for this problem and show what other people said about it before and after Heraclitus' time. Then I address the problem of the doctrine of correct naming in Plato's *Cratylus*, and whether we have evidence in the fragments to attribute such a doctrine to Heraclitus. The second section of this chapter deals with the problem of Heraclitus' obscurity, namely, whether it was unintentional or intentional, and whether he used a writing technique, such as allegorical writing, in order to hide a message in his texts. Additionally, I will consider the relation between this obscurity and fragment B93, which mentions Apollo, the lord of the oracle at Delphi, and has been usually taken as a stylistic example for Heraclitus. The third section proposes that if Heraclitus criticised most of his contemporaries for learning from the poets and other people who are wrongly considered wise, then communication is not completely useless and futile for Heraclitus. Even though we cannot transmit the truth directly, we can convey some other information about the *logos* indirectly. This information perhaps is not the truth itself but it is connected to it. With language we can communicate the idea that something is not the *logos* and whether people have correct knowledge of it, and we can also direct people towards the *logos*.

2.1. Heraclitus on language and communication

The language used by Heraclitus, his mode of expression, is an interesting and difficult topic. However, there is another important point here that has been left out of my account. Did Heraclitus have a theory or some ideas about the nature and purpose of language? And, if so, is there a relation between his ideas about language and communication, and the problem of knowledge? Many of Heraclitus' fragments mention listening, understanding, saying, and naming. However, the problem of Heraclitus' views on language is not easy at all because we do not have an explicit theory of language from Heraclitus; we only have fragments that mention activities and concepts related to those topics. Nevertheless, in the fragments, we can identify two main themes connected to language, communication, and knowledge. First, the problem of naming, i.e. the question of what kind of relation there is between words and things. Second, the role of language in communicating something to someone else. What is the procedure in which a speaker transmits information to a listener by using certain words?

To clarify how Heraclitus communicates his message, I proceed in the following way. First, I provide a summary of early Greek thinking about language and naming, in order to define problems that could have been close to Heraclitus and probable influences on him by other authors or by him on other authors. Afterwards, I look into the fragments for each topic and see where they fit in that context. I argue, first, that Heraclitus had a theory of language in which names and things were connected by nature, as in naturally suited for describing them, but not as strictly as in the theory of Cratylus in Plato's dialogue. Secondly, I argue that the truth about the cosmos, the correct and complete description of the *logos*, represents this idea of correctness of names. However, this language is not accessible by humans, and even if it were, using it would not mean an effective communication of the truth held in the *logos*.

2.1.1. Context

From the time of Homer and Hesiod Greeks were interested in language and in the problem of understanding and communication. In neither author do we find theorising about language, but we do find some episodes where an interest in these topics is

expressed. For example, Homer tells us the story of Bellerophon at *Iliad* 6.155–211. There, Anteia says to her husband, king Proteus, that he must either kill himself or kill Bellerophon. Proteus did not want to kill him himself, so he sent Bellerophon to his father-in-law with some symbols carved on a tablet. The symbols were a message indicating that Bellerophon should be killed. Bellerophon did not understand the symbols (he could not read) and delivered the message ordering his own death. This story shows how knowledge of a particular language can prove useful in avoiding being deceived and killed. A similar story, where language is used to trick someone, is when Odysseus deceives Polyphemus, by means of wordplay and use of puns in *Odyssey* 9.364–367. Polyphemus fails to understand the similarity between the fake name *Outis* (Οὖτις)/Odysseus and the indefinite pronoun *outis* (οὔτις), 'nobody'. When Odysseus and his men attack Polyphemus, leaving him blind, the cyclops calls for help. But he fails to get help from other Cyclopes because, when they ask him what is wrong, he replies that 'nobody' (Οὖτις/οὔτις) is hurting him. Additionally, we find another meaningful pun with a similar motif as the previous one. The other Cyclopes reply to Polyphemus that there is nothing they can do to help if 'nobody' is hurting him. In this case, the expression *mē tis* (μή τίς), 'nobody', is identical to the word *mētis* (μῆτις), 'craft', but with a different accent. So, what reads 'If nobody is hurting you' could be understood as 'If craft is hurting you', a punning reference to Odysseus, since he is given the epithet *polymētis* (πολύμητις), 'of many crafts' (*Il.* 1.311 etc. and *Od.* 2.173 etc.). This episode and the wordplay used in it seem to imply that one of the abilities that made Odysseus a clever person was his crafty use of language. As for Polyphemus, he ends up being defeated because he did not use language correctly or did not have a better understanding of it.

In Hesiod's *Theogony* 829–835 there is a passage, previously mentioned, that shows a similar idea, in which there are sounds, in another language perhaps, which we are not able to understand. Hesiod is describing a son of Earth and Tartarus, Typhoeus, a monster with a hundred snake heads. Each of the heads makes sounds of different animals, but sometimes it produces sounds for the gods to understand (ἄλλοτε μὲν γὰρ φθέγγονθ' ὥστε θεοῖσι συνιέμεν). This expression seems to suggest that those sounds are unintelligible and do not resemble any sounds understandable by mortals. If so, this might be one of the first places where it is implied that the gods have a

different language, as they could understand some message in a different language that mortals cannot understand.[1] This idea emphasises the gap between the divine truth and human understanding, but giving an important role to language.

Later, several philosophers explicitly treat the problem of language. Gorgias (c. 485–c. 380 BC) presents us with a shocking idea about language, communication, and knowledge in his *On What Is Not*. He proposes that that which exists cannot be communicated, and that, even if it could, we would not be able to understand it. It is hard to know whether Gorgias himself held the doctrines presented in this text, or whether they were just exercises to train his students in debating a paradoxical position.[2] In his treatise he uses different arguments to prove the impossibility of communication. The first argument proposes that the objects that we want to communicate are different from what we really communicate when we talk to others. For, when we communicate, we transmit words, speech, descriptions of the objects but not the objects themselves, i.e. their physical properties: shape, colour, or sound.[3] For Gorgias, you cannot communicate reality to others, not because it is out of human reach, but simply because language does not work this way.[4] The other version of the text, in Pseudo-Aristotle's *Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias*, adds two arguments: the argument of sameness and the argument of perspective. He says in 980b7–18:

> [1] But even if it is possible to know and to speak what one knows, how can the hearer get the same thing in his mind? For it is not possible for the same thing to be at the same time in several separate beings. For then one thing would be two. [2] But if it were possible, he says, for the same thing to be in many beings, nothing would prevent it from appearing to be unlike to them, if they are not completely alike and in the same place; if they were in the same place they would be one and not two. But the same person clearly does not even perceive the same things at the same time, but different things by hearing and by sight, and different things at different times. So one person would hardly perceive the same as someone else.[5]

[1] Another similar case is the plant called *mōly* (μῶλυ) by the gods in *Odyssey* 10.305.
[2] See TEGP, 725. There are two versions of the text, none of them considered original but paraphrases. See TEGP, 782–785. See Ariza (2014).
[3] Sextus' report in 7.84 says: οὐκ ἄρα τὰ ὄντα μηνύομεν τοῖς πέλας ἀλλὰ λόγον, ὃς ἕτερος ἐστι τῶν ὑποκειμένων. ['We do not communicate to our neighbours the existing things, but speech, which is different from the subsisting things.'] Text and trans. TEGP.
[4] For the problem of language in Gorgias, see Segal (1962) and Mourelatos (1987).
[5] Trans. TEGP, my brackets. Greek text: εἰ δὲ καὶ ἐνδέχεται γιγνώσκειν τε καὶ ἃ ἂν γιγνώσκηι λέγειν, ἀλλὰ πῶς ὁ ἀκούων ταὐτὸ ἐννοήσει; οὐ γὰρ οἷόν τε ταὐτὸ ἅμα ἐν πλείοσι καὶ χωρὶς οὖσιν εἶναι. δύο

The argument of sameness seems to rely on the supposition that, in order to successfully communicate something, the thing that is being communicated has to transfer itself from one mind to another. For, if the object that the speaker conveys in the message is different from that of the listener, there is no accurate communication since the two objects are not the same thing. The perspective argument just adds that even if one thing can be in two minds at the same time, i.e. if it is effectively communicated, the fact that it is in different minds and 'seen' (or thought) by different people would make it a different thing in any case.[6] For Gorgias, regular and mundane communication was impossible just because language does not transmit things from one person's mind to another's. This means that the effectiveness of the medium by which we communicate was questioned near Heraclitus' time.

Let us now turn to Plato and his *Cratylus*. Plato deals with several problems about language and tackles many of them in different dialogues.[7] He himself makes a connection between these problems and Heraclitus in his *Cratylus*, and Aristotle tells us that not only Cratylus was a Heraclitean but also that Plato himself was a pupil of Cratylus.[8] There are two issues concerning naming in the *Cratylus* in which I am interested with respect to Heraclitus. First, the correctness of names, this is, that names and the things they name have a natural connection.[9] Second, that falsehoods cannot be stated.[10] The correctness of names is the main topic of Plato's *Cratylus*, and it is introduced in 383a4–b1 as follows: 'Cratylus says, Socrates, that there is a correctness of name for each thing, one that belongs to it by nature. A thing's name isn't whatever people agree to call it […] but there is a natural correctness of names, which is the

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γὰρ ἂν εἴη τὸ ἕν. εἰ δὲ καῖ εἴη, φησιν, ἐν πλείοσι καὶ ταὐτόν, οὐδὲν κωλύει μὴ ὅμοιον φαίνεσθαι αύτοῖς, μὴ πάντηι ὁμοίοις ἐκείνοις οὖσιν καὶ ἐν τῶι αὐτῶι. εἰ γὰρ ἐν τῶι αὐτῶι εἴη, εἷς ἂν ἀλλ'ἕτερα τῆι ἀκοῆι καὶ τῆι ὄψει, καὶ νῦν τε καὶ πάλαι διαφόρος. ὥστε σχολῆι ἄλλωι γ'ἂν ταὐτὸ αἴσθοιτό τις.

[6] See Caston (2008), section 3, who attributes the first concern about intentionality to Parmenides' *Poem*, when the goddess forbids us to think or say what is not.

[7] For a complete analysis of this problem in Plato and Aristotle, see Denyer (1991).

[8] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1078b9 and 1010a7. For a critique of this position, see Kirk (1951). Additionally, there seems to be a connection between Heraclitus and Cratylus in their interest in correct naming and etymologies. See Sedley (1998b), 145–146, where he plays with the idea that Plato changed his name because of the influence of Cratylus and his theory of correct naming.

[9] Some modern discussions on Cratylus' theory of names, see Ademollo (2011); Barney (2001); Sedley (1998a), (1998b), and (2003); Ackrill (1997); and Williams (1982).

[10] This idea was defended also, in different ways, by Parmenides and Protagoras. In Parmenides' *Poem* B2 the goddess forbids us to take the path of what is not or even to pronounce it. Protagoras' theory of man as measure (B1) could be interpreted as that nothing can be false, since anything someone says is true for them.

same for everyone, Greek or foreigner.'[11] This means that objects in the world have a name (or names?) that is naturally correct.[12] In modern terminology, we can say, first, that a sign refers to a particular object, and it describes it somehow or agrees with it by nature. This sign is not arbitrary or purely conventional nor can it be changed by its users. The sign and the sound do not seem to be distinguished, i.e. sound and sign are the same thing, words or names; their connection is intrinsic to them and does not happen in the mind of the speakers, as is understood in modern linguistics.[13]

The second problem is a consequence of adopting such a theory of naming. Since things can only have natural names, incorrect names would mean nothing and be just empty sounds. Plato says in 429e2–430a4:

> Cratylus: In my view, one can neither speak nor say anything falsely.
> Socrates: What about announcing something falsely or addressing someone falsely? For example, suppose you were in a foreign country and someone meeting you took your hand and said, 'Greetings! Hermogenes, son of Smicrion, visitor from Athens,' would he be speaking, saying, announcing or addressing these words not to you but to Hermogenes — or to no one?
> Cratylus: In my view, Socrates, he is not articulating them as he should.
> Socrates: Well, that's a welcome answer. But are the words he articulates true or false, or partly true and partly false? If you tell me that I'll be satisfied.
> Cratylus: For my part, I'd say he's just making noise and acting pointlessly, as if he were banging a brass pot.[14]

Cratylus seems to be proposing a theory of language in which names only make sense when used correctly. This implies that when you state a falsehood, e.g. attribute wrong characteristics to an object, your statement is not wrong or describing its object incorrectly; rather, you are using language incorrectly by not referring to anything at all. This, in turn, implies that whenever language is used correctly, there is truth in what is being said. The reason for this is that, for Cratylus, names and things are

[11] Trans. Reeve in Cooper (1997).
[12] It is not completely clear or explicitly treated in the dialogue whether in Cratylus' theory false names may refer in some other way to their objects, and whether there could be cases in which two names describe correctly one object. See Ademollo (2011) 23–32.
[13] As for instance, Saussure (1986), 66: 'A linguistic sign is not a link between a thing and a name, but between a concept and a sound pattern. The sound pattern is not actually sound; for sound is something physical. A sound pattern is the hearer's psychological impression of a sound, as given to him by the evidence of his senses […] the linguistic sign is, then, a two-sided psychological entity.'
[14] Trans. Reeve in Cooper (1997).

connected by nature and independently of humans; the connection that they have is not psychological, as we understand it nowadays.[15] Objects have names already assigned to them, which describe them correctly, and it seems that if someone manages to use language correctly and say those names, they will *ipso facto* understand and know the objects themselves.

2.1.2. Names and things

The relation between Gorgias' and Cratylus' theories on language and Heraclitus' is a difficult topic, and a full exploration is out of the scope of the present study. However, we know that Heraclitus was concerned with this problem. Many fragments talk about language and communication, as pointed out above, and in particular a few of them treat the problem of naming. It is fair to assume that Heraclitus believes that he uses language correctly. As McKirahan points out, the fact that Heraclitus says in B1, 'I describe things as they are', suggests that 'Heraclitus believed that when properly used, language mirrors reality: the correct description or account of *X* accords with *X*'s nature and says how *X* is, in that the account itself reflects the nature of *X*.'[16] I believe, as previously argued, that the correct and complete description is found in the divine *logos*. The problem is that even when this *logos* is described correctly by Heraclitus, it is not understood by people. This means that even if Heraclitus used language correctly, this would not mean that such a language would be sufficient in transmitting the truth to others. But what evidence do we have of all this in the fragments?

> **B48**: τῶι οὖν τόξωι ὄνομα ΒΙΟΣ, ἔργον δὲ θάνατος.
>
> The name of the bow is life but its work is death.

Most scholars agree on the interpretation of fragment B48. For them, the fragment is an indication that for Heraclitus names have a real connection with the thing they name. The word *bios* means 'life' if accented on the iota (βίος), and 'bow' if accented on the omicron (βιός). The same word, when ignoring the accents, can mean 'life' or 'bow', but the bow is used to bring death. Since life and death are present in the same object,

[15] See Saussure (1986), above.
[16] McKirahan (1994), 133. Graham (2009), 79, agrees that the language of Heraclitus 'imitates the structural complexity of the world.'

this could be an exemplification of the doctrine of unity in opposition.[17] One exception of this interpretation is Poster, who argues that the fragment is a critique of the epic language of the poets.[18] Her approach is interesting when we take into consideration that Heraclitus shows certain disdain towards his predecessors and his contemporaries. Homer, Hesiod, Pythagoras, Xenophanes, Hecataeus, and Archilochus are all targets of his criticisms.[19] However, Poster's two main arguments seem somewhat problematic.[20] The main reason is that it is hard to know whether Cratylus was actually a disciple of Heraclitus.[21] And, even if he was, we do not know for sure they both had the same theory of naming. On the other hand, it is very dubious that Heraclitus would have seen a contradiction, i.e. that something is not right, in that life and death are present in the same object.[22] Heraclitus himself does not seem to have a problem with opposites being present in the same object, as for instance in B88: 'As the same thing in us are living and dead, walking and sleeping, young and old. For those things having changed around are those, and those in turn having changed around are these.'[23]

Rather, fragment B48 shows that there is a connection between names and the things they name. Moreover, *bios* seems to be a name that describes its object well. But where does that leave *toxon*? The fact that Heraclitus uses it in the fragment means

[17] ATH, 201; Marcovich (1967), 161; Guthrie (1962), 420. Marcovich (1967), 192 says on B48 that 'Heraclitus shared the Greek belief that *name* reveals a great deal of the true φύσις of its object'. Kirk (1954), 116–122 agrees that the fragment is example of the doctrine of opposites, and that names have a real connection with things. ATH, 201 says: 'We find a comparable interest in Parmenides, though with a different philosophic bias. In the Eleatic conception of language, names typically express a false or mistaken view of reality.' Robinson (1987), 111: 'The fragment serves also as a striking instance of how names can indicate the reality (or an aspect of the reality) of a thing'. TEGP, 191 says that the fragment is 'an insight based on a pun'.

[18] Poster (2006), 12: 'The critique of the epic "*biós*" in DK22b48 thus addresses two issues simultaneously, first whether the poets are using the wrong word (as *biós* [bow] has the wrong connotation due to its similarity in sound to *bíos* [life]) and second whether the epic misuse of the term is indicative of a misunderstanding of the thing in particular and the nature of weapons and strife in general.'

[19] Cf. fragments B40, B42, B56, B57, B81, B104, and B129, where some of them are accused of not having understanding (νόος), intelligence (φρήν), or of having a wrong kind of wisdom (πολυμαθίη). See section 2.3.1.

[20] Poster (2006) proposes (1) that since Cratylus was a follower of Heraclitus, then Heraclitus must have advocated a Cratylian-type theory of correctness of names. This means (2) that the name *bios* is not a correct name for the bow because its name indicates something contrary to its function.

[21] Kirk (1954), 118–19 opposes to this idea.

[22] Kirk (1954), 116–122, uses this argument as well in his analysis of fragment B48. An additional argument is that Homer and Hesiod use both names, and not just βιός, depending on the position in the verse.

[23] Trans. TEGP: ταὐτό τ' ἔνι ζῶν καὶ τεθνηκὸς καὶ ἐγρηγορὸς καὶ καθεῦδον καὶ νέον καὶ γηραιόν· τάδε γὰρ μεταπεσόντα ἐκεῖνά ἐστι κἀκεῖνα πάλιν μεταπεσόντα ταῦτα.

that *toxon* is a functional and meaningful name, otherwise he could have avoided it. The presence of two names for the same object shows that to a certain extent Heraclitus did not subscribe to correct naming as Cratylus, at least not to the most extreme version of it. However, could each different name of the bow show different aspects of it in Heraclitus' theory? In my view, *bios* is a better name than *toxon* because it reveals more about the object and about the nature of the universe as well: life and death are the same process and a *bios* that humans use to kill, either enemies or prey, in order to survive helps us understand this complex idea.

Another fragment in which we find a reference to naming is B23:

> **B23**: Δίκης ὄνομα οὐκ ἂν ἤιδεσαν, εἰ ταῦτα μὴ ἦν.
>
> If those things did not exist, they would not know the name of Justice.

Most scholars agree that *tauta* refers to acts of injustice and, therefore, the idea of the fragment is that we know that there is justice from the presence of its opposite, injustice.[24] However, there is a question that needs to be asked: why did Heraclitus add the word *onoma*? Why do they know the 'name' of Justice and not Justice directly? Kahn proposes that 'the thought is expressed not in terms of concepts but in terms of the name by which Justice is known. If there were no judgments and penalties, men could not know or understand the word *dikē* that denotes them. But then they would not know the name of Justice.'[25] Under this interpretation, this mention of *onoma* could mean that things only have a name, or an understandable name, if they exist, or that we can only understand names that denote something.[26] In this fragment, as well as in all others in which Heraclitus talks about naming, he relates this idea with his doctrine of unity in opposites. Just as with life and death above, justice and injustice are two sides of the same coin: we could not understand the existence of one without the other. Without acts of injustice there would not be Justice, therefore, there would not be anything to name at all. Heraclitus talks about human understanding of unjust

[24] TEGP, 191; Marcovich (1967), 229–30; ATH, 185; Kirk (1954), 129.
[25] ATH, 185. Kirk (1954), 129 says: 'What we are concerned with here is the human view of Dike rather than its abstract essence. This is shown by the word ὄνομα.' I am not sure the distinction of 'abstract essence' vs 'human view' could be easily applied to Heraclitus' thought. I see it more as an example of a division between the language and knowledge of human and divine.
[26] Cf. the path of what is not in Parmenides' *Poem* B6 and B7.

and just things in fragment B102: τῶι μὲν θεῶι καλὰ πάντα καὶ ἀγαθὰ καὶ δίκαια, ἄνθρωποι δὲ ἃ μὲν ἄδικα ὑπειλήφασιν ἃ δὲ δίκαια. ['For the god all things are beautiful, good, and just, but humans suppose that some are unjust, and some are just.'] As previously argued, for Heraclitus divine understanding is superior to human knowledge.[27] Does this mean that there are no injustices in reality, and they are just invented by humans? If so, why do we have a name for them? I believe that in this fragment we are seeing one of the results of the theory of unity in opposition: both opposites are one and the same thing, as parts of a process or elements of a complete whole.[28] This wholeness is their reality, it is both opposites taken together at the same time, but not each one in particular taken separately. Naming one alone may refer to something in our human understanding of the world, but it is not correct in the view of a god (or in the perfect description of the *logos*), who can see above the world of change.[29]

This same idea is present in fragment B67:

> **B67**: ὁ θεὸς ἡμέρη εὐφρόνη, χειμὼν θέρος, πόλεμος εἰρήνη, κόρος λιμός [τἀναντία ἅπαντα. οὗτος ὁ νοῦς], ἀλλοιοῦται δὲ ὅκωσπερ <πῦρ, ὅ>, ὁπόταν συμμιγῆι θυώμασιν, ὀνομάζεται καθ᾽ ἡδονὴν ἑκάστου.[30]
>
> The god is day night, winter summer, war peace, satiety hunger, and he alters just as <fire, which,> when it is mixed with spices, is named according to the aroma of each of them.[31]

Although the Greek text presents some problems and could be read in different ways, the general idea of the fragment is clear: the god represents each pair of opposites, which change into one another but are one and the same thing. I believe it is meaningful that there is neither a conjunction between each opposite nor between all of them at all: the god is not one opposite and the other as a sum of different (separate) entities, but both opposites are part of one more complex process, which represents their real

[27] Cf. B78, B79, B82, and B83. See sections 1.3.1 and 1.3.2.
[28] Cf. B57, where day and night are one.
[29] For the cosmological and metaphysical implications of the unity of opposites, see Mourelatos (1973), 33–40.
[30] I use Graham's version of the text, which is Marcovich's originally. The manuscript does not include the word πῦρ and the text is not corrupt. Most authors add 'fire' or something else, but I follow ATH, 276–281, in that there is no need to correct the text. Since it is not part of my argument, I will not defend my position here. On fragment B67 see Frankel (1938a), Marcovich (1986), 347, and (1967), 413–17.
[31] Trans. TEGP, with some modifications.

nature and refers to their correct name. Just as fire (or the fiery part of smoke) is named according to the scent of the spice balm it is burning, instead of being named (properly) as what it is: fire. Kirk says that 'just as the differentiation of the scent of burnt offerings depends upon a common element in them all, and one which is usually left unspecified, so all differentiation in the world is dependent upon the underlying connection, and all the pairs of opposites and all the extremes in these pairs are ultimately but facets of the underlying unity, whether it be called god or the *Logos* (or even perhaps fire).'[32] If there is an underlying unity and we just name one of its parts (night, winter, war or hunger) instead of calling it *god* (or the name that the totality has), does that mean that there is a whole that we divide, and name each part differently depending on the part of it that we see, when in reality it is just one thing for which we should have one name, which is correct?[33]

Heraclitus himself seems to offer an answer to the question of the name of the totality in fragment B32:

> **B32**: ἓν τὸ σοφὸν μοῦνον λέγεσθαι οὐκ ἐθέλει καὶ ἐθέλει Ζηνὸς ὄνομα.
>
> The only one wise thing wants and does not want to be called by the name of Zeus.

However, the answer appears to be more problematic than the question.[34] We can infer from B50 that this one wise thing is this totality.[35] The fact that it wants and does not want to be called by the name of Zeus indicates the idea of correct naming again; calling it 'Zeus' may be correct in a way, as the highest divinity, but perhaps not enough to describe it in its wholeness. Kahn also makes a connection of this fragment

[32] Kirk (1954), 201.
[33] Cf. with Parmenides' *Poem* B8.50–59: 'Here I cease from faithful account (*logos*) and thought/ about truth; from this point on learn mortal opinions,/ hearing the deceptive order of my words./ For they made up their minds **to name two forms**,/ of which it is not right to name one — this is where they have gone stray — / and they distinguished **contraries** in body and **set signs**/ **apart from each other**: to this form the ethereal fire of flame, being gentle, very light, everywhere the same as itself,/ not the same as the other; but also that one by itself/ contrarily unintelligent night, a dense body and heavy.' Trans. TEGP, my emphasis.
[34] The fact that Heraclitus does not use the most common genitive form for Zeus, *Dios*, but the poetic variation, *Zēnos*, might imply that he had in mind a wordplay with the concept of life (*zōē*). See TEGP, 194. Guthrie (1962), 463. *Contra* Kirk (1954), 392, who thinks *Zēnos* was a normal alternative, and one that does not imply anything else. Marcovich (1967), 445–446, thinks similarly to Kirk.
[35] B50: οὐκ ἐμοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστιν ἓν πάντα εἶναι. [Having listened not to me but to the *logos*, it is wise to agree that everything is one.]

with B67 and says: 'This wisdom will not accept any one name as uniquely appropriate, for it may equally well be called "Fire", "War", "Justice", or "Attunement" (*harmoniē*). Indeed, it may be "named according to the pleasure of each one".'[36]

I follow Kirk in that there is a connection between names and things, and when something is named just in part and not as whole, the description would not be false but incomplete, since it at least describes some of its elements.[37] And this is the case in particular when referring to the divine: the name of Dike, of the god, and of Zeus seem to depend on the understanding of a connection between opposites. Therefore, names and things are connected, and some names are better than others in describing the things they name. However, they do not do that as in the doctrine of Cratylus, where there is one correct name for one thing.[38] Most likely, the correct description of the *logos* uses the correct names, but it seems that our human language (or our understanding of it) is not good enough to convey the most complex features of the cosmos, in particular when dealing with the divine realm. Additionally, even if that were the case, using the correct names and describing correctly is not sufficient to communicate the truth to others, as is stated in fragment B1.[39]

2.2. The obscure and oracular

When it comes to Heraclitus' doctrines about language and divine communication no other fragment seems to be more pertinent than the one where he mentions how Apollo communicates his message:

> **B93**: ὁ ἄναξ, οὗ τὸ μαντεῖόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς, οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει.
>
> The lord, whose oracle is at Delphi, neither speaks out nor conceals but gives signs.

It is standardly argued that Heraclitus follows the style of the oracle: he does not state, straightforwardly, what he means, nor conceals it, but rather gives signs pointing to

[36] ATH, 267.
[37] Kirk (1954), 118.
[38] Otherwise, in B32 the name of Zeus would be either correct or incorrect.
[39] See section 1.3.3.

his real message. Many modern scholars agree with this interpretation, or at least that Heraclitus has certain oracular characteristics.[40] Therefore, this proposed similarity in style to the oracle is frequently used to advocate in favour of Heraclitus being deliberately obscure or hiding a truer message: since he needs a different language and nature is hidden (B123: φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ.[41]), he follows the ambiguous style of the oracle at Delphi.[42]

As previously mentioned, Heraclitus was known in antiquity as 'the obscure'. This could indicate that his views on the divine message of Apollo are coherent with an obscure use of language. This idea is certainly very important to the problem of the role of language in the communication of the *logos*. If the *logos* cannot be communicated directly, not even with a correct description, then perhaps Heraclitus seeks to show this *logos* indirectly by referring to it but not naming it or by hiding his real message in his obscure words. Nevertheless, this interesting and potentially useful idea has to be analysed carefully. This is mainly because 'obscurity' is not a clear concept and when he is called obscure it is not evident what that means in regard to his style. Sometimes it is related to particular formal aspects of his writing, sometimes to his philosophical ideas, and, at times, the obscurity attributed to him seems to be related to anecdotes of his personal life.

In this section I propose a differentiation between three kinds of obscurity: 1) unintentional obscurity or ambiguity, 2) intentional obscurity or ambiguity, and 3) hiding a message under the literal meaning of a text. I analyse the possibly and the

[40] In addition to those mentioned afterwards, see Warren (2007), 59; Hölscher (1974), 229–233. Guthrie (1962), 414, says: 'Just this imagery and double meaning were a mark of Heraclitus' own style, and he was evidently following the oracle's example.' Kahn (1979), 123, agrees with 'Delphic elements'. See also Tor (2016). There could be another relation between Heraclitus and the oracle at Delphi, namely, that some fragments of Heraclitus (B101, B116) resemble the famous saying 'know thyself', see Wilkins (1979), 12–13.

[41] I follow Graham (2003) for the translation of this fragment. His main point is that φιλεῖ with the infinitive does not mean 'loves to' but it states a general rule or principle. This is a very early mention of the term *physis*. I agree with TEGP, 191: 'Here we are presumably dealing with individual natures of things rather than with nature as a whole (*rerum natura*), a later conception.'

[42] KRS (1983), 210, says: 'The method adopted by Apollo in his Delphic pronouncements is praised in 244 [B 93], because a sign may accord better than a misleading explicit statement with the nature of the underlying truth, that of the *logos*. Probably Heraclitus intended by this kind of parallel to justify his own oracular and obscure style.' Additionally, TEGP, 194, proposes something similar: 'Heraclitus admires the Delphic Oracle's ability to provide a symbol that admits of multiple interpretations and dimensions of meaning; his sayings are built on this model.'

meaning of each of these ideas in Heraclitus. Finally, in the last part I examine the relation between Heraclitus' obscure style and the Delphic Oracle in fragment B93.

2.2.1. Unintentional obscurity or ambiguity

The dividing line between unintentional and intentional obscurity or ambiguity is, of course, very blurry, and for some fragments it is a difficult task to decide which kind of ambiguity we are dealing with, or whether we are dealing with both. However, in most cases it is clear to which side of this line the obscurity belongs.

We can classify in the category 'unintentional obscurity or ambiguity' most of the comments from antiquity that refer to Heraclitus' writing style. In particular, those comments that say that he was not easy to understand because of external and contextual problems with the text or lack of context. In particular, when the obscurity seems to represent more of a subjective perception, interpretation or opinion of the reader. In this regard, reports such as Plato's *Theaetetus* 179e1–180b3 and *Symposium* 187a3–b3, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* 1407b11–18, as well as most opinions in antiquity, that state that Heraclitus was simply obscure, not clear or hard to understand, belong to this section.[43] It is significant that Diogenes (9.7) notices that 'sometimes, in his writings, he [Heraclitus] expresses himself with great brilliancy and clearness; so that even the most stupid man may easily understand him and receive an elevation of soul from him. Additionally, the brevity and weightiness of his exposition are incomparable.'[44] This implies two points: first, not all of his book or fragments are obscure and, second, some of this obscurity is subjective and depends on the reader's understanding.

Another important part of this type of obscurity comes from fragments that are difficult to understand because of textual problems, i.e. the manuscript is corrupt or perhaps the scribe skipped a word, as for instance the word apparently missing in fragment B67, which most authors supply with 'fire'.[45] This happens too when the original context of the quotation is not clear for semantic or syntactic reasons. For

[43] See section 0.4.5.

[44] Trans. Yonge (1853), 378, with some modifications. Greek text: λαμπρῶς τ᾽ ἐνίοτε ἐν τῶι συγγράμματι καὶ σαφῶς ἐκβάλλει, ὥστε καὶ τὸν νωθέστατον ῥαιδίως γνῶναι καὶ δίαρμα ψυχῆς λαβεῖν: ἥ τε βραχύτης καὶ τὸ βάρος τῆς ἑρμηνείας ἀσύγκριτον.

[45] B67: ὁ θεὸς ἡμέρη εὐφρόνη, χειμὼν θέρος, πόλεμος εἰρήνη, κόρος λιμός [τἀναντία ἅπαντα. οὗτος ὁ νοῦς], ἀλλοιοῦται δὲ ὅκωσπερ <πῦρ, ὅ>, ὁπόταν συμμιγῆι θυώμασιν, ὀνομάζεται καθ᾽ ἡδονὴν ἑκάστου.

instance B23 (Δίκης ὄνομα οὐκ ἂν ἤιδεσαν, εἰ ταῦτα μὴ ἦν.) where, as we saw, the reference of the *tauta* is not clear. In all such cases the obscurity is not intentional, and was not planned by Heraclitus, and therefore, does not represent or necessarily imply a philosophical position regarding the problem of language and communication of the *logos*.

For several fragments it is not easy to decide whether they contain an ambiguity planned by Heraclitus and are obscure intentionally. In this case, it is up to the interpreter of the fragment. For instance, as I argued above, for me there is no intentional ambiguity in the position of the word *aiei* in fragment B1. This is because I do not think Heraclitus put the word there in order to show two possible readings of the sentence, but just wanted to express the divine and eternal aspect of the *logos*.[46] However, some scholars believe that that was the case, and that there is intentional ambiguity.

2.2.2. Intentional obscurity or ambiguity

On the other side of this categorisation we find reports that tell us that Heraclitus was obscure, ambiguous or hard to understand intentionally. Here too, we can classify fragments that clearly have two meanings by themselves, or in which a word has two meanings, or in which we notice that there is the intention of Heraclitus to shows us something more than the literal meaning of the words in the fragments.

Most likely the first example of such interpretation in antiquity is Diogenes. He proposes that Heraclitus intentionally wrote obscurely so that only the most intelligent people could understand the book. In 9.6 he says:

> ἀνέθηκε δ᾽ αὐτὸ εἰς τὸ τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος ἱερόν, ὡς μέν τινες, ἐπιτηδεύσας ἀσαφέστερον γράψαι, ὅπως οἱ δυνάμενοι <μόνοι> προσίοιεν αὐτῶι καὶ μὴ ἐκ τοῦ δημώδους εὐκαταφρόνητον ἦι.
>
> And he deposited it [the book] in the temple of Artemis, and as some say, he wrote it deliberately in the most obscure way, in order that <only> those

[46] See section 1.2.2.

> who were able could have access to it, and that it would not be easily ridiculed by common people.[47]

In modern scholarship, this intentional ambiguity is best defended by Kahn, who views this idea as one of his principles in his approach to Heraclitus, i.e. the principle of linguistic density: 'By *Linguistic density* I mean the phenomenon by which a multiplicity of ideas are expressed in a single word or phrase.'[48] This does not mean, for Kahn, that any given meaning or interpretation of a word or fragment is valid but that we should take into account possible double meanings, puns, and wordplay, when interpreting the fragments. It could mean, though, that Heraclitus had the idea of a double interpretation of his fragments in mind. Regarding this principle, he says:

> It will always be convenient to speak of *deliberate* or *intentional* ambiguity. I think these expressions are harmless and justified, as long as it is clearly understood that there is no external biographical evidence for imputing such intentions to Heraclitus. For these expressions simply reflect the fact that we can construe an ambiguity in the texts as meaningful only if *we* perceive it as a sign of the author's intention to communicate to us some complex thought.[49]

However, the line between intentionality in Heraclitus' obscurity is not a clear and precise one, but there are many fragments in which we can see that Heraclitus was saying one thing and at the same time referring, implicitly or explicitly, to another. This includes all the fragments in which he uses figures of speech, puns and different analogies, metaphors, similes, etc.

Some examples are the following. As mentioned above, we have the word *bios*, which explicitly means 'life' and 'bow' in B48, and the verb *homologeō* in B50, which not only means 'agree' but also refers to its etymology: to come to the 'same *logos*'.[50] Fragment B117 presents us with a metaphor where the child guiding the drunk man is

[47] Barnes (1983), 108 n. 28, proposes a different interpretation for this passage. He says that 'the "having planned...obscurely" is parenthetical: Diogenes means that Heraclitus placed the book in the temple so that only those in power should get at it; he does not mean (as most scholars suppose) that he wrote it obscurely so that only the nobs should understand it.' *Contra* TEGP, 195: 'Lucretius criticizes him for pandering to the crowd through his language, although to all appearances Heraclitus' language was meant to, and did, limit his readership to the *cognoscenti*.' See also Hussey (1999a), 361, who argues that the author of the Derveni Papyrus 'has plenty of contempt for the lack of intelligence and enlightenment of "the many", of "people".'

[48] ATH, 89.

[49] ATH, 89.

[50] See section 2.1.2 for B48, and section 1.2.1 for B50.

not necessarily an actual child but it may mean that a drunk person acts as if a child was guiding them.[51] There is also intentional ambiguity when there is a change in syntax that means something else. For instance, as shown above for B67, in some fragments that deal with the unity of opposites, Heraclitus does not use a proper conjunction between the words that refer to the opposites but just juxtaposes the terms.[52] This same omission of a conjunction happens also in fragment B60: ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω μία καὶ ωὐτή. In my interpretation, this omission of a conjunction between opposite concepts and the decision to simply juxtapose them should be read as intentional in Heraclitus. It means that these concepts should be understood together and not as separate characteristics.[53] We can include here as well most of the analogies and comparisons, word play, puns, and the like, as for instance the comparisons where Heraclitus uses the mathematical rule of three to refer to the divine realm in relation to the human realm and a lower level.[54]

2.2.3. A hidden message

Another difficult boundary is that between a hidden message and the previous idea of intentional ambiguity. The first passage that suggests such an interpretation of Heraclitus is by Lucretius. He does not call Heraclitus 'obscure' directly, but his speech is qualified by the adjective *obscurus*, and he gives us some reasons for doing so. He says in 1.635–644:

> Quapropter qui materiem rerum esse putarunt
> ignem atque ex igni summam consistere solo,
> magno opere a vera lapsi ratione videntur.
> Heraclitus init quorum dux proelia primus,
> clarus ob obscuram linguam magis inter inanis
> quam de gravis inter Graios, qui vera requirunt;
> omnia enim stolidi magis admirantur amantque,
> inversis quae sub verbis latitantia cernunt,
> veraque constituunt quae belle tangere possunt

[51] See section 3.1.2 for my interpretation of B117.
[52] B67: ὁ θεὸς ἡμέρη εὐφρόνη, χειμὼν θέρος, πόλεμος εἰρήνη, κόρος λιμός [τἀναντία ἅπαντα. οὗτος ὁ νοῦς], ἀλλοιοῦται δὲ ὅκωσπερ <πῦρ, ὅ>, ὁπόταν συμμιγῆι θυώμασιν, ὀνομάζεται καθ᾽ ἡδονὴν ἑκάστου. See section 2.1.2.
[53] See my analysis of B67 in section 2.1.2.
[54] See section 1.3.2, where I discuss this idea proposed in Frankel (1938b).

auris et lepido quae sunt fucata sonore.[55]

> This is why those who thought that the principle of things was
> Fire, and that out of fire alone the whole is made of,
> Seem to fall away from true reason by a great deal.
> Of whom Heraclitus, as chief leader, began the battle,
> Famous for dark speech more among the silly
> Than among the serious Greeks, who search for true things.
> For the stupid admire and love more all those things
> Which they can discern hidden beneath ambiguous words,
> And they consider true whatever they can prettily grasp
> With their ears and is painted with polished sound.

For Lucretius, Heraclitus is admired for his obscurity by people who like to find hidden meaning 'under his twisted words' (*inversis sub verbis*) an expression that indicates double meaning and ambiguity in general.[56] However, in this context Lucretius' comment is most likely related to the phenomenon of allegorical interpretation, the art of finding the hidden and true meaning of a text. This interpretation of Heraclitus' obscurity was supported a century later by Heraclitus Homericus (24.5), who says that Heraclitus of Ephesus wrote allegorically.[57]

The best modern exponent of this more extreme position is Mouraviev. For instance, when speaking of fragment B22, χρυσὸν γὰρ οἱ διζήμενοι γῆν πολλὴν ὀρύσσουσι καὶ εὑρίσκουσιν ὀλίγον. ['Those looking for gold, dig much earth but find little.'], he says:

> This fragment [B22], though it looks like an innocent riddle rather easy to solve, is in fact a *paradigm* used by Heraclitus not only to tell us plainly that finding a grain of *truth* (gold is too transparent an image for us to have any doubts about its metaphorical meaning) requires a lot of work, a lot of digging but also to show us the object and the method of this work: the

[55] *Stolidi* on line 641 is usually taken as a reference to the Stoics (*Stoici*). Cf. the idea of nice sounds on line 644 with B92, where the Sibyl is said to reach a thousand years despite uttering unperfumed and unadorned sayings.

[56] *Inversis sub versis* can have different interpretations, but the expression is usually thought to be a reference to the Stoics as well. See Atherton (2008), for background. See Montarese (2012), 201–8: 'I am inclined to think that ambiguity and double meanings were the main reference in *inversis sub verbis*.' Sedley (1998a), 13–14: 'Contrast between, on the one hand, the clear, rational and unambiguous assertions of the pluralists, and, on the other, the Delphic ambiguities so characteristic of Heraclitus.' Ernout (1925), 137: '*Inversa verba* are antithesis, opposites.'

[57] Whether Lucretius thought Heraclitus or the Stoics were allegorizing, see Montarese (2012), 206. On ancient allegory see Boys-Stones (2003).

> thing to dig is the *text* — Heraclitus' text or *the text of reality* — and the things to be dug out and *deciphered* are the hidden patterns it contains.[58]

Both Lucretius and Heraclitus Homericus, as well as Mouraviev, seem to propose that Heraclitus' book contains a message that is more meaningful but hidden, which must be extracted from the text or solved as a puzzle or a riddle. This is an idea with which I do not agree. The main reason is that, in antiquity, we only find the idea of a hidden message in texts of allegorical interpretation. It is true that we have some possible examples of allegorical interpretation in the time of Heraclitus; Theagenes of Rhegium (late sixth century BC) and others were already proposing by then some allegorical interpretations of Homer.[59] However, the idea of purposely hiding a message when writing is not present in the early Greek tradition. Obbink says:

> The idea that allegory is one trope among others, for example, a kind of extended metaphor, is a later tradition. This development, which will inform a notion of allegory that is more domesticated and functional than we find in the classical period, will await the rhetorical critics of the late Hellenistic period. Nor do we find in the earliest period an idea of allegory as a self-conscious or distinct literary procedure of composing personification fictions, in which characters are correlated to abstract ideas in a one-to-one correspondence.[60]

Heraclitus uses word-play, puns, metaphors, and other literary devices in order to convey a figurative meaning distinct from the literal meaning of the text (which we could call 'allegory', as 'saying something else' in general but not in the proper way of the later allegorical tradition). However, this does not mean that Heraclitus is hiding a message in a deeper layer of meaning. Unfortunately, we do not have any example close to Heraclitus' time of a text written so that it has as a whole a deeper level of meaning, which is its true meaning, or even of hiding a message in a plain and meaningful text — unless of course, we count Homer and Hesiod's readings and the results of later allegorical interpretations.[61] The closest we can find to a text in which

[58] Mouraviev (1996), 152. For a more extensive explanation of his theory and its application, see the third part of Mouraviev (2002), 213–386.
[59] See Most (1999), 339–340 and Obbink (2010), 18.
[60] Obbink (2010), 15–16. See additionally Hersman (1906), 7, who presents the birth of allegorical interpretation as a way of including traditional religious beliefs in a changing philosophical context.
[61] Perhaps such texts could be found in mystery religion and initiation cults, where the true message of a text was kept from non-believers, but I have not come across anything like this.

we discover something that is suggested but not present in the text in that period is riddles, wordplay, and paradoxes, and all those examples that I described as intentional ambiguity. However, is this sort of ambiguity the same as hiding the true meaning of a sentence for the readers to find?

As mentioned above, the dividing line is not clear. It is true that in a way you find a kind of hidden message in a fragment when you understand the reference of a pun or an allegory. However, I do not think that is the same as the proposals of Lucretius, Heraclitus Homericus, and Mouraviev.

Heraclitus points to something else in many of his fragments and the reason is that his main message, the *logos*, cannot be communicated directly. In my interpretation, even though we have a cosmos that shows itself to us but the nature of which is hidden (B123), this does not mean that if we solve Heraclitus' puzzle or decipher his code, we will understand the *logos*.[62] There are two important arguments for this. First, as argued above, the *logos* is too complex and cannot be communicated this way, as a written message. And, second, as I will argue later, getting to understand the *logos* is a more complex process that requires a more active participation of a person and their soul: it cannot be just passed on as a description or a message.

2.2.4. The oracle at Delphi

The idea of comparing the style of Heraclitus with the Delphic Oracle comes considerably later in antiquity. The relation is only suggested by Lucian (second century AD), whose main character is in a dialogue with Heraclitus and, after making references to several fragments of Heraclitus, says in *Vitarum Auctio* 14: αἰνίγματα λέγεις, ὦ οὗτος, ἢ γρίφους συντίθης; ἀτεχνῶς γὰρ ὥσπερ ὁ Λοξίας οὐδὲν ἀποσαφεῖς. ['Oh you, do you speak riddles or frame intricate things? For you simply make nothing

[62] See for instance Hölscher (1974), 233, who says: 'His language, too, must be one of paradox, simile, and riddle, precisely insofar as it seeks to proclaim the essence of what is.' ATH, 124, says: 'And this parallel between Heraclitus' style and the obscurity of the nature of things, between the difficulty of understanding him and the difficulty in human perception, is not arbitrary: to speak plainly about such a subject would be to falsify it in the telling, for no genuine understanding would be communicated. The only hope of "getting through" to the audience is to puzzle and provoke them into reflection. Hence the only appropriate mode of explanation is allusive and indirect: Heraclitus is consciously and unavoidably "obscure".'

clear, as Loxias (Apollo).'] However, two arguments are presented against this interpretation of fragment B93 as a model for Heraclitus' style.[63] Barnes says:

> Many modern scholars, it is true, implicitly endorse it; for they find a reference to such deliberate obscurity in [B 93] [...] Is not Heraclitus here acknowledging, and justifying, his oracular style? But that interpretation of B 93 is supported neither by the words of the text itself nor by any doxographical comment.[64]

Barnes is right to point out that the fragment itself does not imply that Heraclitus likes the style of the oracle or that it is obscure in the same way they thought Heraclitus was obscure in antiquity. Additionally, it is meaningful that Plutarch (second century AD), who is the source of the fragment and who was himself a priest at Delphi, does not understand fragment B93 in that way.[65] We do not find any other mention of Apollo or the Delphic Oracle in the fragments. Nevertheless, Heraclitus does mention the Sybil. The Sybil is related to Delphic Apollo, and performs a similar role as the Pythia in the Delphic Oracle but not exactly the same.[66] However, Heraclitus does not seem to praise the voice of the Sybil. Thus, he says in B92: Σίβυλλα δὲ μαινομένωι στόματι ἀγέλαστα καὶ ἀκαλλώπιστα καὶ ἀμύριστα φθεγγομένη χιλίων ἐτῶν ἐξικνεῖται τῆι φωνῆι διὰ τὸν θεόν. ['The Sybil with frenzied mouth, uttering mirthless, unadorned, unperfumed sayings, reaches a thousand years with her voice because of the god.'[67]] Both the voice of the Pythia (or of the oracle at Delphi in general) and the voice of the Sybil come from Apollo. Why, then, would Heraclitus acknowledge and follow the

[63] Additionally, Marcovich (1967), 51, says it is a narrow interpretation.
[64] Barnes (1983), 101.
[65] Plutarch, *De Pythiae Oraculis* 404D2–E7: 'Indeed, if we contemplate the shining constellations, there is nothing that shows greater similarity in form, or which, as an instrument, is by nature more obedient in use than the moon. Receiving as it does from the sun its brilliant light and intense heat, it sends them away to us, not in the state in which they arrived, but, after being merged with it, they change their colour and also acquire a different potency. The heat is gone, and the light becomes faint because of weakness. I imagine that you are familiar with the saying found in Heraclitus, **[B93]**. Add to these words, which are so well said, the thought that the god of this place employs the prophetic priestess for men's ears just as the sun employs the moon for men's eyes. For he makes known and reveals his own thoughts, but he makes them known through the associated medium of a mortal body and a soul that is unable to keep quiet, or, as it yields itself to the One that moves it, to remain of itself unmoved and tranquil, but, as though tossed amid and enmeshed in the stirrings and emotions within itself, it makes itself more and more restless.' Trans. Cole Babbitt (1936), my emphasis and brackets.
[66] See Fontenrose (1978), 160–62.
[67] Trans. TEGP, with modifications. Cf. Lucretius 1.644 above: *lepido quae sunt fucata sonore*.

style of the Pythia and not the Sybil, whose message is also divine and reaches a thousand years?

The second argument states that in Heraclitus' time the oracle was not ambiguous or, at least, ambiguity was not its most important characteristic. Fontenrose posits this problem and refers to the fact that Plutarch does not understand the fragment in that way either:

> It was not a reputation for ambiguity that Delphic Apollo had, but for truth-telling. Quintus Cicero, as speaker in Marcus Cicero's dialogue on divination, lauds Delphi's record for truth over the centuries, and says nothing about ambiguities. The famous dictum of Herakleitos [B 93] [...] has strangely been taken to refer to the Delphic god's ambiguities, without regard to the context in which Plutarch quotes Herakleitos. His Theon is making the point that the Pythia reflects Apollo's voice as the moon reflects sunlight. It is her voice that consultants hear; the god does not speak to them, but makes his thoughts and intentions known through the Pythia's body and soul: that is, through her he indicates his meaning.[68]

Most scholars agree that the historical oracle in general was not ambiguous, or at least say that this was not its most important characteristic, and that its fame for ambiguity came later in antiquity.[69] But if they are correct and it was the case that ambiguity was not a representative characteristic of the Delphic Oracle in Heraclitus' time, the hypothesis that he followed its obscure and ambiguous style would be wrong.[70]

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[68] Fontenrose (1978), 238.

[69] Price (1985), 148: 'The meaning of an oracle was not necessarily obvious [...] This is not to say that all oracles were bafflingly obscure or ambiguous, but that it was the responsibility of the recipient to ensure that he had interpreted correctly. Failure to do so could lead to disaster.' Bowden (2005), 49: 'While some answers may not be instantly comprehensible, none of them is deliberately ambiguous.' Morgan (1990), 156: 'Ambiguity is undoubtedly one of the most celebrated traits of the Delphic oracle, and even though its extent and significance have been greatly exaggerated, disputes or uncertainties about the interpretation of responses, as recorded in ancient sources, are too frequent to allow us to dismiss it altogether […] Undoubtedly the majority of responses were straightforward, and, as Joseph Fontenrose has stressed, the oracle's reputation for ambiguity was always overshadowed by its reputation for truth, and was anyway a late development.'

[70] Some scholars do not think this is the case. See Maurizio (2001), 40 n. 14: 'Not all oracles are ambiguous. Of the roughly six hundred oracles attributed to Delphi whose style and content vary greatly — some contain straightforward instructions about ritual matters in simple prose, others are in hexameter — one-third can be labelled ambiguous. This variety of styles does not require us (*pace* Fontenrose) to cull "authentic" oracles from forgeries. First, the ancients accepted all of these oracles as authentic. Second, in a cogent analysis of Delphi's oracular style (*De Pyth. or.*), Plutarch explains that the generic features of ambiguity and verse while typical of the early Pythias' oracular style, evolved into less poetic and more prosaic responses.' Also Parker (1985), 301: 'The recent claim that Apollo always said simply "yes" when asked "is it advantageous for me to do x" is therefore psychologically implausible. One looks for more art from the most famous of oracular gods […] Often Apollo gave simple answers to simple questions. But if he did sometimes respond to delicate enquires

We have, nevertheless, the consultation of Croesus in Herodotus, which is famously ambiguous: 'Q: Should I make war on the Persians? And with what army should I ally myself? R: If you make war on the Persians [if you cross the Halys (verse form)] you will destroy a great realm. Find the strongest Hellenes and ally yourself with them (Herodotos).'[71] Here the ambiguity was that Croesus did not know which realm would be destroyed, his or the Persian, and he understood that he would destroy the Persian Empire, when actually the oracle meant that he would destroy his own empire.[72] Even regarding this case, which is the quintessential case for the oracle's ambiguity, Parke and Wormell say that maybe Herodotus was 'not pleased by the childish ambiguity attributed to Apollo.'[73] They continue saying: 'One cannot doubt that the oracle's reply was strongly favourable without the suspicious ambiguities which the later versions contained.'[74] In any case, whether Croesus' response was actually ambiguous or not, it is clear that the later reception of the Delphic Oracle in literature understood this and other responses of the oracle as intentionally ambiguous. Nevertheless, it seems hard to know for certain whether that was the case in the late sixth century BC. We know that in Aristotle's time (fourth century BC) the oracle was considered obscure, since he includes Croesus' case as one of his examples of ambiguity.[75] However, it is not clear whether Plato considered that the oracle was

with riddles, he was, like the Ifa diviner with his verses, forcing the client to construct by interpretation his own response.' See also Tor (2016), 100: 'Heraclitus' style and the challenges it generates for active, reflective and careful interpretation — his authorial rhetoric and pronounced use of dense and pregnant paradoxes, word plays, analogies, riddles and aphorisms — closely recall Apollo's oracles […] The trope of misinterpretation and mistaken inferences is of course central in the Delphic traditions.'

[71] Fontenrose (1978), 302.

[72] There is a second ambiguous response to a consultation. When Croesus asked if he would reign for long, the oracle replied that 'But when a mule shall have become king of the Medes, then, sot footed Lydian, flee by the pebbly Hermus, do not linger, nor feel shame at being a coward.' Trans. Parke and Wormell (1956), 134. Croesus thought the oracle meant that he would reign forever because a mule could never become a king. But the mule was Cyrus, who was of mixed background. Parke and Wormell (1956), 134–136, suggest that this was invented later.

[73] Parke and Wormell (1956), 133. Their reason for saying this is that Herodotus quotes most of the oracle's responses in their correct verse form, but the one about Croesus crossing the Halys he only paraphrases.

[74] Parke and Wormell (1956), 136. It is possible that Heraclitus took this ambiguous story (probably ambiguous in literature because of its impressive and dramatic power but not in real life) as representative of the style of the oracle, but it would be strange for Heraclitus to characterise the whole process of oracular soothsaying by one example, which seems to be an exception of the general rule.

[75] In *rhetoric* 3.1407a, Aristotle uses this as an example of either the second or the third rule of clarity, i.e. either using general instead of specific terms or of using ambiguous terms. It seems to me that the example would make more sense as using a general term, 'great kingdom' instead of specifying which kingdom. Additionally, 'kingdom' is not an ambiguous term in itself. I do not think it could be a 'genus-for-species' metaphor, as Maurizio (2001), 111, proposes, mainly because it is hardly a metaphor at all.

renowned for its ambiguity. It is true that Plato considers that the oracle sometimes is riddling.[76] However, I believe it is meaningful that in *Cratylus* 428c Socrates is said to 'speak oracles' (*chrēsmōidein*) when he describes his account about primary names, but the verb does not mean that he is speaking obscurely or in riddles but that what he says is truthful and divine.[77] It means that he is inspired by some divinity.[78] Additionally, similar episodes in the classical period seem to indicate that the oracle was characterized by its ability to being always correct and predicting the future, even when people thought at some point that it did not.[79]

Consequently, if ambiguity does not seem to be the most characteristic feature of the oracle for Plato, then it probably was not so for Heraclitus either. But then, to what was Heraclitus referring in fragment B93 when he says that the lord of Delphi does not speak nor conceals but gives signs (*sēmainein*) if not to his ambiguity? In order to propose my answer to this question, there is an important distinction that needs to be explained in respect to the process of the consultation of the oracle. A passage in Plato's *Timaeus*, and the language he uses when describing how divination works, suggests that there is another part of the process of the consultation of the oracle that can be understood as obscure or ambiguous, and in which we find sings that need an interpretation. In 71e3–72b5 he says:

[76] Most of the times Plato mentions Delphi, and oracles in general, he refers to its inspired and divine nature. However, in *Apology* 20e–21b and *Charmides* 164e9, he characterises a response, that Socrates is the wisest person, and the inscription 'know yourself' as riddling, respectively.

[77] It is important to point out here that Plato introduces Cratylus as a disciple of Heraclitus. This could give some extra force to the argument that for Heraclitus the oracle was not obscure but divine, since his disciple did not take it as obscure. However, as mentioned in section 2.1, the relation between Heraclitus and Cratylus is complicated.

[78] After Socrates' exposition Cratylus says to Socrates in 428c: 'Your oracular utterances — whether inspired by Euthyphro or by some other muse who has long inhabited your own mind without you knowing about it — seem to be pretty much spoken after *my* own mind.' Trans. Reeve in Cooper (1997). Greek text: καὶ ἐμοὶ σύ, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἐπιεικῶς φαίνηι κατὰ νοῦν χρησμωιδεῖν, εἴτε παρ᾽ Εὐθύφρονος ἐπίπνους γενόμενος, εἴτε καὶ ἄλλη τις Μοῦσα πάλαι σε ἐνοῦσα ἐλελήθει.

[79] See Griffin (2006), 51–52, about including prophesies of the Oracle as a literary device in tragedy and Herodotus, he says: 'All these supernatural devices, both in tragedy and in Herodotus, have a two-fold function. On the one hand, they establish the actions depicted as significant: not just something that happened, they were predicted, dreaded, evaded, and in the event came ineluctably to pass. Secondly, they show the interest of the divine and illuminate its workings.' Following this idea, people did not think the oracle was wrong when Croesus was defeated, since in truth the oracle had been misinterpreted. The same can be said in other cases. For instance, Oedipus thought the oracle was wrong and he would not kill his father and marry his mother, when in reality he had misinterpreted the oracle because he did not know who his real parents were.

> It comes as a sign that the god gave divination to human folly. For no one in their right mind has inspired and truthful divination, but only when they have altered their power of understanding having been bound in a dream or through sickness, or by some divine inspiration. However, it belongs to someone in their senses to understand and remember the things said by the state of divination and possession, whether in sleep or while awake. As well as to analyse all the visions that are seen in account of what and for whom they are a sign (*sēmainein*) of a future, past or present good or evil. But it is not the task of the one who was, and continues to be, mad to judge the things seen and heard by themselves. But as it was well said long ago, to conduct their own affairs and to know themselves belongs only to someone sound of mind. For this reason, it is customary to set a class of interpreters (*prophētai*) as judges in the inspired divinations. They are called 'diviners' (*manteis*) by some people who are completely ignorant of the fact that they are interpreters (*prophētai*) of completely enigmatic words and visions, and should not be called 'diviners' but most correctly 'interpreters of things divined'.[80]

As reconstructed by Parke and Wormell, and registered in other works, the standard procedure for the consultation of the oracle was the following:[81] the priest would read the question of the enquirer to the Pythia, then she would enter her trance and describe the prophetic images and words to the priest.[82] He would interpret her words and give a response to the enquirer. In Plato's passage, the 'completely enigmatic words and visions' are those of the inspired person, i.e. the Pythia in the case of the Delphic Oracle. Then, what is ambiguous or obscure is not the final message, the response in verse to the enquirer, but the signs produced and described by the Pythia that need to be interpreted by the priest in order to give that response to the enquirer. The same is the case for divination with birds, or ornithomancy: there are some markings in the

[80] Trans. Zeyl in Cooper (1997) with modifications. See an analysis of this passage in Nagy (1989), 24–29. For madness in this process, see *Phaedrus* 244b1–d5.

[81] See Parke and Wormell (1956), 33, for the description of this part of the consultation, and 17–45 for the entire process. The role of the interpreter is mentioned as well in Euripides, *Ion* 100, 369, and 413. Plutarch (*De Pythiae Oraculis* 397c), however, says that 'as a matter of fact, the voice is not that of the god, nor the utterance of it, nor the diction, nor the meter, but all these are the woman's.' (οὐ γὰρ ἔστι θεοῦ ἡ γῆρυς οὐδ᾽ ὁ φθόγγος οὐδ᾽ ἡ λέξις οὐδὲ τὸ μέτρον ἀλλὰ τῆς γυναικός). This could be understood as a change in the procedure in Plutarch's time.

[82] The terminology and parts of the procedure changed over time. Nagy (1989), 27, says that this is the case in particular in the diction of poetry, 'where the prophecy of the *mantis* and the poetry formulated by the *prophētēs* are as yet one: there are instances where the word *prophētēs* designates the poet as the one who declares the voice of the muse […] A particularly striking example is Pindar fr. 150: "be a *mantis*, Muse, and I shall be a *prophētēs*."'

livers of birds, which are obscure and confusing signs for regular people but not for the experienced interpreter, as Plato himself says after the passage quoted above.[83]

Nagy explains this process very clearly and relates it to fragment B93 and *Timaeus* 71e3–72b5. He says:

> As Heraclitus declares, the god at Delphi neither *legei*, 'speaks, nor *kruptei*, 'conceals': rather, he *sēmainei*, 'indicates'. The verb *sēmainō* is derived from the noun *sēma*, which means 'sign' or 'signal' and which in turn derives from a concept of inner vision. Correspondingly, as we have seen the word *theōros* means literally 'he who sees (root *hor-*) a vision (*thea*)'. Thus the god Apollo of the Oracle at Delphi, when he 'indicates', is conferring an inner vision upon the *theōros*, the one who consults him. Both the encoder and the decoder are supposedly operating on the basis of an inner vision. Greek usage makes it clear that the *prophētēs*, who communicates the words of Apollo to those who consult the god, likewise *sēmainei*, 'indicates' (cf. Herodotus 8.37.2).
> In Greek usage, someone *sēmainei*, 'indicates', that is, 'makes a *sēma*', when he or she speaks from a superior vantage point, as when a scout goes to the top a hill and then comes back down to indicate what can be seen from there (Herodotus 7.192.1, 7.219.1). By extension, someone 'makes a *sēma*' when he or she speaks from a metaphorically superior vantage point, as when an authoritative person makes a pronouncement that arbitrates between contending points of view (Herodotus 1.5.3). But the ultimate voice of authority belongs to the god of the Oracle at Delphi, whose supreme vantage point confers upon him the knowledge of all things, even the precise number of all grains of sand in the universe (Herodotus 1.47.3).[84]

Plato's passage and Nagy's point to the same idea: in fragment B93 Heraclitus is referring to the process in which the god Apollo communicates a message to the Pythia, not to the responses given to people consulting the oracle. The subject of fragment B93 is the lord at Delphi, not the oracle or the Pythia; it speaks about the actions of the god when he communicates a message and not, necessarily, about the message that the

[83] *Timaeus* 72 b5–72c1: 'This then explains why the liver's nature is what it is, and why it is situated in the region we say — it is for the purpose of divination. Now while each creature is still alive, an organ of this sort will display marks (σημεῖα) that are fairly clear, but once its life has gone, the organ turns blind and its divinations are too faint to display any clear marks (σημαίνειν).' Trans. Zeyl in Cooper (1997) with modifications. Greek text: ἡ μὲν οὖν φύσις ἥπατος διὰ ταῦτα τοιαύτη τε καὶ ἐν τόπωι ὧι λέγομεν πέφυκε, χάριν μαντικῆς: καὶ ἔτι μὲν δὴ ζῶντος ἑκάστου τὸ τοιοῦτον σημεῖα ἐναργέστερα ἔχει, στερηθὲν δὲ τοῦ ζῆν γέγονε τυφλὸν καὶ τὰ μαντεῖα ἀμυδρότερα ἔσχεν τοῦ τι σαφὲς σημαίνειν.
[84] Nagy (1989), 27–28.

Pythia or the priest interpret as a response (unlike fragment B92, where the subject is the Sybil and her voice).

Plutarch, who is the source of both B92 and B93, sees the matter in the same way. First, Apollo does not speak through the Pythia, as in possessing her and speaking with her mouth or voice (*De Defectu Oraculorum* 414e); the god does not compose the message, but the voice, utterance, meter, and 'handwriting' are of the Pythia (*De Pythiae Oraculis* 397b). Second, the god sends his message, an inner vision, which presumably has a divine form or format, through a medium, which distorts the message or adapts it to the human realm (to 'men's ears' *De Pythiae Oraculis* 404d), in the same way that the moon distorts and adapts the light of the sun (404d), and in the same way whirlpools move in circles while keeping afloat objects that would naturally sink (404f). Third, the resulting message can only be expressed in what the nature of the medium allows (404f).

In sum, when examining the meaning of fragment B93, we need to acknowledge that Heraclitus may be referring to three different messages or stages of a message. 1) The divine (Apollo's) message, which knows everything and is precise in its foretelling. 2) The visions and sounds experienced and expressed by the Pythia, which represent the result of putting a message, which is originally in a divine format, through a human medium. 3) The interpretation of those visions and sounds rendered into Greek and (before Plutarch) in verse, which correspond to the response given to the enquirer.

The original message of the god is perfect in itself, but when it goes through the Pythia it takes a human form, which results in the images that the priest has to interpret.[85] Indeed, what she says requires interpretation, hence the need of a *prophētēs*, but the signs and the *sēmainei* do not refer to the final response in verse, as we have it in Croesus' tale, but to the message that the Pythia speaks out and the priest, the *prophētēs*, has to interpret.[86]

[85] In a more modern analogy, the message of the god is like a PDF file that you open using the Notepad. You get some strange text that does not make much sense; you can never see the original format but with practise many of its parts could be read by someone experienced in this kind of texts.
[86] See Nagy (1989), 24–29, for the different roles of the *mantis, prophētēs, and theōros* in the consultation process.

In my interpretation of Heraclitus, and regarding B93 in particular, this can be understood as the difference between a divine language (the perfectly correct language of the *logos* if you will) and a human language. The *logos* corresponds to the original message of Apollo: the truth about the cosmos. The lord at Delphi does not tell this message to us in Greek or human language but uses the medium of the Pythia (or a bird's liver in other cases) to 'make a *sēma*'. The result of this message in the human realm depends on the nature of the medium; for the Pythia it is some noises and visions, and for the liver are other markings that are in accordance to the liver's nature. The use of the verb *sēmainein*, means that the message requires interpretation because the god does not *legei* (he does not pronounce the *logos* of the message), he does not describe in Greek, or human language.[87] The *logos* cannot be simply described, and this feature is what Heraclitus follows of B93; he agrees with the idea that the divine message from Apollo cannot be described (*legein*), and that the only way we can refer to it is indirectly. Heraclitus does not follow the Pythia or the priests at Delphi, he follows the idea that the divine message cannot be put directly in human language, and the idea that the divine (the *logos*) sends signs that tell the truth about the cosmos (be it in the form of the Pythia's visions or the bird's liver) to a properly trained ear or eye.

2.3. What can be communicated?

Aristotle tells us in *Metaphysics* 1010a11–13 that Cratylus took Heraclitus' flux theory so far that the only way he could refer to physical things was not by using their names but by pointing his finger at them (*sēmainein*?). Our language was not good enough to describe a world that is constantly changing. As Plato and Aristotle noticed, one of the main problems of Heraclitus' theory of flux is not the fact that things are constantly changing *per se* but that our language and knowledge do not work correctly when this happens.[88] If Heraclitus thought that the *logos* could not be communicated to others and his alleged follower, Cratylus, as well as Plato and Aristotle, thought that the flux theory implied impossibility of communication through language, does that mean that

[87] In this regard, the response of the oracle, even when obscure as in Croesus examples, always *legei*, describes a message. Perhaps the meaning requires interpretation but it is not the same as proper signs in a bird's liver or in the strange visions and noises of the Pythia.
[88] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1010a7–15. Plato, *Theaetetus* 152d2–e8, 183a4–8. See section 0.5.

Heraclitus thought that language was useless altogether? In this section I propose that for Heraclitus language has two principal functions. The first one is to lead people astray and indoctrinate them into false knowledge. The second function is to direct people towards the *logos*, first by making them recognise that they do not have correct understanding and, second, by showing them the correct way.

2.3.1. *Polymathiē* vs *nous*

The complexity of the *logos* and the limitations of human language are not the only reasons people fail to understand the *logos*. One important cause of this failure is people themselves.[89] Heraclitus complains that they blindly follow the poets and other people considered wise, who in reality are not wise and do not understand the truth either. This is stated clearly by Heraclitus in B104: 'What intelligence or understanding do they have? They follow popular bards and treat the crowd as their instructor, not realizing that the many are base, while few are noble.'[90] The historian Polybius tells us in 4.40.2–3 (=Heraclitus A23) that the reason Heraclitus' criticises the poets is that they lead people into 'taking unreliable sources as authorities for controversial questions.'[91] This means, among other things, that the poets and other authors managed to communicate what they thought to other people. Of course, they did not communicate to others the *logos* or true knowledge but something else, which may not be worth communicating at all. However, the fact that they influenced or persuaded them into believing what they themselves believed means that it is possible to transmit some sort of information using language.

The difference between what is worth knowing and what is not seems to be represented by the words *polymathiē* and *nous*.[92] Heraclitus puts together many poets, philosophers, and historians, in that they all have the incorrect kind of knowledge: they have *polymathiē*, when what we are supposed to acquire is *nous*. He says in B40:

> **B40**: πολυμαθίη νόον οὐ διδάσκει· Ἡσίοδον γὰρ ἂν ἐδίδαξε καὶ Πυθαγόρην, αὖτίς τε Ξενοφάνεά τε καὶ Ἑκαταῖον.

[89] The role of people and their souls will be treated in chapter 3.
[90] Trans. TEGP, Greek text: τίς αὐτῶν νόος ἢ φρήν; δήμων ἀοιδοῖσιν ἔπονται καὶ διδασκάλωι χρείωνται ὁμίλωι οὐκ εἰδότες ὅτι οἱ πολλοὶ κακοί, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἀγαθοί.
[91] Trans. TEGP.
[92] For an analysis of these two concepts and fragments B40 and B129, see Granger (2004b) and Huffman (2008). Also, see Lesher (1994), for the philosophical context of the problem of cognition.

> Learning many things does not teach understanding. Else it would have taught Hesiod and Pythagoras, as well as Xenophanes and Hecataeus.[93]

The full range of the word *polymathiē* is not clear. However, at a first glance, Heraclitus seems to be telling us that the knowledge of many things does not bring with it the possession of understanding (*nous*). Pythagoras was the best representative of this kind of approach to knowledge. In B81 he is called the 'chief of all impostors', and B129 provides us with more details about the meaning of *polymathiē*: 'Pythagoras, son of Mnesarchus, practiced inquiry more than all men, and making a selection of others' writings, he invented his own brand of wisdom: information-gathering, fraud!'[94] Nevertheless, the principal error of Pythagoras was not enquiring into many things, but gathering information and copying theories from others.[95]

We can communicate some kind of knowledge, which we could understand as 'facts' or 'raw information' perhaps, but in order to acquire a true understanding of how this facts work we cannot blindly listen to the theories of others; we need to investigate them ourselves. Xenophanes had a similar view about the kind of knowledge his fellow Greeks learned from the poets and from the tradition in general, and accuses Homer and Hesiod of having taught false things about the gods to people (Xenophanes B10, B11, and B12).[96] For Heraclitus, there is an important connection that others fail to understand, and which is related to the unity of opposites. This is explicitly stated in B57, where he says: 'The teacher of the multitude is Hesiod; they

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[93] Trans. TEGP.

[94] Trans. TEGP, and Greek text: Πυθαγόρης Μνησάρχου ἱστορίην ἤσκησεν ἀνθρώπων μάλιστα πάντων καὶ ἐκλεξάμενος ταύτας τὰς συγγραφὰς ἐποιήσατο ἑωυτοῦ σοφίην, πολυμαθίην, κακοτεχνίην.

[95] On fragments B129 and B40 see Marcovich (1969), 61–70; Huffman (2008); and TEGP, 187. I agree with Marcovich that the people mentioned here fail to understand because they have not achieved understanding of the true *logos*, and with TEGP, 187, that Pythagoras' false knowledge is the result of 'a kind of copy-and-paste job, without originality.' However, I think the main point, as I will argue, is that you cannot acquire this kind of knowledge from other people at all, not even from Heraclitus himself; you need to reach out and find it yourself by experiencing the world. For Heraclitus, enquiry (*historiē*) is a good practise, as it befits people who are interested in wisdom (*philosophoi*) in B35. See *contra* Granger (2004b), 249. Some scholars take B35 as ironic, for instance Guthrie (1962), 417. For enquiry as personal experience/sense perception, see section 3.2.1.

[96] Even though there are many similarities in their approach to the problems of communication, true knowledge, and divinity, Heraclitus still includes Xenophanes in those who did not understand. I would conjecture that Xenophanes' scepticism about divine knowledge and his views on divinity were seen by Heraclitus as lack of understanding. TEGP, 187, says: 'It is surprising to see Heraclitus attack Xenophanes, who likewise expresses a hostility to mythological accounts and who participates in the Ionian project — and shares a contempt for Pythagoras and Homeric ideas. Perhaps it is his popular literary efforts Heraclitus despises.'

believe he has the greatest knowledge — who did not comprehend day and night: for they are one.'[97] For Heraclitus, Hesiod is spreading incorrect information and theories about the day and the night. This is because he treats them as separate and opposite events, when in Heraclitus' view day and night are one totality:[98] two sides of the same coin. Even though they are never present at the same time, they should be understood together.[99]

Additionally, those things that we learn without understanding are only appearance, they seem to be (*dokein*) that which they are not. Heraclitus shows us that appearance is what most famous people can present to us in B28a: 'The most illustrious man knows and maintains illusions.'[100] All these false wise people are expert teachers of falsehoods. They raise us and teach us many things that appear to be truth but are not. The main problem of this transmission of wrong knowledge is that it happens without our awareness: for Heraclitus, we are being indoctrinated with incorrect beliefs without knowing it. That is the main idea in fragment B56:

> **B56**: ἐξηπάτηνται οἱ ἄνθρωποι πρὸς τὴν γνῶσιν τῶν φανερῶν παραπλησίως Ὁμήρωι, ὃς ἐγένετο τῶν Ἑλλήνων σοφώτερος πάντων. ἐκεῖνόν τε γὰρ παῖδες φθεῖρας κατακτείνοντες ἐξηπάτησαν εἰπόντες· ὅσα εἴδομεν καὶ ἐλάβομεν, ταῦτα ἀπολείπομεν, ὅσα δὲ οὔτε εἴδομεν οὔτ᾽ ἐλάβομεν, ταῦτα φέρομεν.
>
> Men are deceived into wisdom about appearances, similarly to Homer, who was considered the wisest of all Greeks. For children who had killed some lice deceived him with a riddle: What we saw and caught, we leave; what we did not see and catch, we carry with us.[101]

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[97] Trans. TEGP, and Greek text: διδάσκαλος δὲ πλείστων Ἡσίοδος· τοῦτον ἐπίστανται πλεῖστα εἰδέναι, ὅστις ἡμέρην καὶ εὐφρόνην οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν· ἔστι γὰρ ἕν.

[98] See Mourelatos (1973), 34. Also Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* 1235a25–29 (=Heraclitus A22**),** characterises similarly Heraclitus' critique of Homer, as a failure in understanding the unity in opposites: 'Heraclitus criticizes the poet who said, "would that strife might perish from among gods and men" [Homer *Iliad* 18.107]; for there would not be harmony without high and low notes, nor living things without female and male, which are contraries.' Trans. TEGP, his brackets.

[99] See my analysis of the doctrine of unity of opposites in fragment B67 and B88 in section 2.1.2.

[100] Trans. TEGP, and Greek text: δοκέοντα ὁ δοκιμώτατος γινώσκει φυλάσσειν. Heraclitus here plays with the root *dok-*. In *dokimōtatos* it means 'reputed', 'famous', but in *dokeonta* it implies subjectivity, what appears to others or their opinion. He is most likely referring to the poets and other famous wise people of the time.

[101] Trans. TEGP, with modifications. I follow Graham and Marcovich (1967), 82, in that Homer was only considered wise but was not truly wise, because B42 indicates that for Heraclitus Homer should not be taught and is not a good educator. Then, in B56 Homer is not the wisest, but only considered the wisest by some people, just as Hesiod in B57. *Contra* see Long (2007), 10–13, who says that we do not

Under the idea that we are indoctrinated by other people with incorrect or incomplete knowledge, we can understand this riddle as follows: everyone, even people considered wise, like Homer, are tricked into believing things which seem true but are not. This works just in the same way as the children killing lice. On one hand, all the incorrect knowledge that we find in ourselves, the lice we catch, we get rid of and we stop considering true: we do not carry that pest with us. On the other hand, the incorrect knowledge that we do not see in our minds represents the lice that we do not catch and that we carry with us: we carry that pest with us. Everyone is deceived into believing wisdom about appearances because we carry this false wisdom without even knowing we do. It has been there with us since we were taught about it.

With language and communication comes the power of indoctrination, but also of education. This is central for Heraclitus' critique of the tradition and of his contemporaries. All those bad teachers are one of the main causes people fail to understand the *logos*. As we will see in the last chapter, the main problem with tradition is not only that it provides us with wrong knowledge about the divine and the cosmos but also that it stops us from looking for the true *logos*.

2.3.2. The functions of language

We turn now to the problem of how Heraclitus understands and uses language. I start by recalling that Heraclitus knew that he could not tell others the *logos* directly. If language cannot transmit the *logos* and the truth about the world, and its only function is seemingly instructing people into believing false theories, then what is the use of language in Heraclitus' philosophical doctrine? What does it communicate? Additionally, why does he speak about the *logos* and try to tell people how to understand it, when they will always fail to understand it from him? Heraclitus

have anything that indicates that the adjective is being predicated in an ironic or dialectical way. In addition, Heraclitus seems to agree with Homer in B29 ('The best choose one thing above all, the everlasting fame of mortals; the many gorge themselves like cattle.' Trans. TEGP). Additionally, *exapataō* + *pros* is not a common construction but Hippolytus (source of B56) uses it again in *De Consummatione Mundi* 24.3: καὶ ταῦτα πάντα ποιεῖ ὕπουλος ὢν καὶ δόλιος καὶ πάντας θέλων ἐξαπατῆσαι πρὸς τὸ ποιῆσαι αὐτὸν βασιλέα. 'And [he] makes everything such by being putrid and deceitful, and wishing to deceive everyone into making him king.' I assume, then, that Heraclitus means something like 'deceiving people into believing something which appears to be but is not correct': wisdom about appearances. See B54 (ἁρμονίη ἀφανὴς φανερῆς κρείσσων.) where the same word, *phaneros*, is used to indicate an apparent but worse structure, in opposition to another not evident but better.

considered that his predecessors and most wise people of the time used language to indoctrinate, and hence drove people away from the true *logos*. But is there any other way to use language, even when it cannot communicate the *logos* to others directly? I think we can safely assume that Heraclitus thought that he did not indoctrinate people into false knowledge, and that his usage of language did not lead to indoctrination into falsehood. I want to suggest that there are other ways in which language can be used, and recognize three main uses in Heraclitus. First, language can be used to show what the *logos* is not. Second, it can communicate or indicate the right way to the *logos*. And third, language can have a shocking effect, i.e. it can be used to surprise and shock us out of our complacency.[102]

1) Language can show us what is not, what does not exist or is not true. In Heraclitus this mentioning of the inexistent takes two forms. A very concrete one, namely, he tells us what views are wrong and should not be followed. As we saw in the previous section, many of the fragments are devoted to communicating the idea that the traditional ways of understanding wisdom and knowledge are not correct. This simple idea, that what someone else says is not correct is perhaps the first message we need to get from him. What others have taught us needs to be contradicted and identified in ourselves as an incorrect belief, otherwise we will not have the motivation to look for the true knowledge. We need to catch the lice that we have not caught and stop carrying them with us. Additionally, in a less concrete way, saying that something is not the *logos* in the end tells something about the true *logos*. By saying what the *logos* is not, by denying that it has certain characteristics, Heraclitus is indirectly telling us what the *logos* is.

2) Language is useful, as well, for the purpose of showing the correct path or the way to the *logos*. Heraclitus realized that he could not tell people the *logos* directly, but he developed an indirect way of showing it. This does not mean that he is hiding it as message in his fragments.[103] This *logos* cannot be described but you can direct people to it, you can show them the way they have to travel in order to get at the *logos*.

[102] See Lloyd (1966) on different modes of expression in ancient Greek philosophy, and Lloyd (1966) 90–102, for Heraclitus in particular.

[103] As argued in section 2.2.3., some scholars propose that Heraclitus hides his true message and that we can decipher it in a way similar to an allegoric interpretation. See Mouraviev (1996) and third part of Mouraviev (2002).

Marcus Aurelius (4.46=B71) reports that Heraclitus said that 'One should also bear in mind the man who forgets where the road leads.' You cannot travel the road for someone else, you cannot replace them in the journey yourself. They have to achieve the goal themselves. Just as Heraclitus cannot tell people the *logos* directly but can show them how to get knowledge and understanding of it. He provides training and guidance for people interested in finding it. The first and clearer way to show the way towards the *logos* is fragment B50, where he invites people not to listen to him but to the *logos*. There are several fragments dedicated to give advice to people on how to get to this knowledge. For instance, fragments B35 and B55 invite people who are curious to investigate into many things and to experience them by themselves with their own eyes and ears (and sense perception in general). We find as well in the fragments some indications about adapting their souls in accordance to the *logos*.[104] Additionally, just as in the negative method of the first case, by telling us not to go in one direction, Heraclitus is showing us indirectly the correct path.

There is another technique with which Heraclitus shows us the way: by using intentional ambiguity. As argued above, the use of allegory, word play, figures of speech and other particular uses of syntax and grammar, as well as what Frankel calls Heraclitus' 'thought pattern', play the role of pointing to the truth or the *logos* indirectly.[105] This kind of language, familiar to the poets and to the tradition, is useful when trying to describe something that cannot be described directly. While the first form of showing the way is more related to the kind of training and preparation that someone needs to undertake to understand the *logos*, this other form directs the mind of the person towards this understanding, it tells them what to expect of the divine and the *logos*, using analogies as a way to compare them to more mundane and day to day experiences.

3) The third way in which language is functional is the use of paradoxes, and shocking statements and arguments in general. The objective of these is to make people doubt their current beliefs, and make them look for a new solution to the questions that the previous beliefs solved. I think Robinson' expression for describing this

[104] This is the topic of chapter 3.
[105] See sections 1.3.2 and 2.2.2, where I discuss this idea proposed in Frankel (1938b).

characteristic of Heraclitus is perfect: 'philosophical shock-treatment'.[106] As the Sophists noticed later — *contra* Gorgias —, language does not only transmit information and persuade people into believing arguments, it can also influence and change people behaviour without the need to transmit information or anything else whatsoever. I believe Heraclitus uses this technique as well. He probably told people they were wrong many times unsuccessfully. However, perhaps when presented with what he says in some fragments, their reaction was more interesting.

Let us for instance take a look again at fragment B48, 'The name of the bow is Life, but its work is death.'[107] As a previous analysis shows, the first thing to notice is the wordplay in the word *bios*, which can mean 'bow' or 'life'. However, the 'shocking' part of the fragment is that the opposition of life and death is present in the same object. I agree with Robinson that Heraclitus is showing in a way a feature of reality, namely the unity in opposition. However, what was most important was the effect on the listener rather than the contents of the fragments itself. Someone used to the traditional epics would see a clear division between the concepts of life and death. Fragment B48 forces the hearer to think how these two opposite qualities are present in the image of a bow: in general a bow can be used to hunt where it kills an animal to procure food for a person's survival, or, for war, where it kills an enemy to avoid its owner's death. In either case, in order to save or keep life it has to produce death.[108] The same object is cause for life and death.[109] Perhaps a pun with the name of the object is not enough to argue there is a unity of opposites in the bow itself, but the fragment forces the listener to question their idea of life and death as separate and unrelated concepts, and, by shocking them out of the status quo, invites them to look for a more general understanding of the unity in opposites.[110]

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[106] Robinson (1991), 485: 'As I understand him, Heraclitus has it as part of his goal to use philosophical shock-treatment to get across to a sceptical public the notion that the world's essential unity and changelessness are of greater moment than its real though inconsequential multiplicity and changeability. One way of doing this is to overstate, after the manner of extravagant advertising, features of the real that might lead the reader to this conclusion.'

[107] Trans. TEGP, and Greek text: τῶι οὖν τόξωι ὄνομα ΒΙΟΣ, ἔργον δὲ θάνατος.

[108] For the use of polarity in early Greek thought in general see Lloyd (1966), and in particular for the use of polar expressions in Heraclitus see Lloyd (1966), 98–101. For the concept of the bow in Heraclitus' thought and style, see Vieira (2013).

[109] On the opposition of life and death, see Hussey (1991).

[110] On the use of paradoxes in Heraclitus, see Mackenzie (1988).

In *Meno* 79e9–80b7, Plato presents us with a very similar image when Meno describes Socrates as a torpedo fish:

> Meno: Socrates, before I even met you I used to hear that you are always in a state of perplexity and that you bring others to the same state, and now I think you are bewitching me and beguiling me, simply putting me under a spell, so that I am quite perplexed. Indeed, if a joke is in order, you seem, in appearance and in every other way, to be like the broad torpedo fish, for it too makes anyone who comes close and touches it feel numb, and you now seem to have had that kind of effect on me, for both my mind and my tongue are numb, and I have no answer to give you. Yet I have made many speeches about virtue before large audiences on a thousand occasions, very good speeches as I thought, but now I cannot even say what it is.[111]

In this analogy, Socrates does not convince people of his truth but uses language to make them question their own knowledge, so that they afterwards can look and try to find a proper solution to the questions they thought they had an answer for.[112] I believe Heraclitus in the same way used paradoxes and other methods to shock people out of their traditional ideas, just as other early philosophers and sophist did, for instance Zeno. Perhaps this is what Heraclitus meant with fragment B11, 'every four-footed beast is driven to pasture by blows.'[113] Even though eating grass is necessary and pleasurable for them, you do not drive your herd to pasture by telling them how convenient this is for them, because they do not understand the whole concept.[114] You move them there by force and other means and once they get there they understand

[111] Trans. Grube in Cooper (1997). For an analysis of this passage in Plato see Scott (2006), 69–74.
[112] Plato explains the purpose or the good result about the torpedo fish's shock in *Meno* 84b5–c9:
'Socrates: Have we done him any harm by making him perplexed and numb as the torpedo fish does?
Meno: I do not think so.
Socrates: Indeed, we have probably achieved something relevant to finding out how matters stand, for now, as he does not know, he would be glad to find out, whereas before he thought he could easily make many fine speeches to large audiences about the square of double size and said that it must have a base twice as long.
Meno: So it seems.
Socrates: Do you think that before he would have tried to find out that which he thought he knew though he did not, before he fell into perplexity and realized he did not know and longed to know?
Meno: I do not think so, Socrates.
Socrates: Has he then benefitted from being numbed?
Meno: I think so.
Socrates: Look then how he will come out of his perplexity while searching along with me.' Trans. Grube in Cooper (1997).
[113] Trans. TEGP, Greek text: πᾶν γὰρ ἑρπετὸν πληγῆι νέμεται.
[114] This idea is supported by fragment B29, where Heraclitus compares the many with cattle. 'The best choose one thing above all, the everlasting fame of mortals; the many gorge themselves like cattle.' Trans. TEGP.

about the grass and its benefits. In the same way, people who are unable to directly understand the *logos* have to be driven to it by intellectual blows.

Nevertheless, there is an important difference in the reasons for doing this in Socrates and in Heraclitus. The former shocks people because he genuinely does not have an answer to the question, and wishes to free others from having the wrong answer. He says later in 80c2–80d1: '[Soc.:] Now if the torpedo fish is itself numb and so makes others numb, then I resemble it, but not otherwise, for I myself do not have the answer when I perplex others, but I am more perplexed than anyone when I cause perplexity in others.'[115] Heraclitus, on the other hand, has the correct answer himself. He cannot tell them the truth, or the *logos*, because they do not understand it, and language and the characteristics of the *logos* make this impossible. In a practical sense, however, they both serve the same purpose; they force people to question their beliefs and, as we will see in the next chapter, to look for answers themselves without blindly relying on traditional sources of knowledge.

2.4. Conclusion

Heraclitus inherited some concerns about language from other poets and philosophers. The most important one might be that, even though the gods attain it, truth is of a different nature and perhaps unreachable by us. Cratylus suggests that correct language is also important when it comes to knowing and understanding nature. The exact relation between Cratylus and Heraclitus is not clear. However, in the fragments we can see that Heraclitus is concerned with the problem of naming and of the correctness of names in general. This concern about language is also present in his own writing style. Heraclitus was obscure, sometimes accidentally, but many times intentionally and with a particular objective in mind: he wanted to show us something else. In my interpretation this does not mean, however, that he hid his true message or the *logos*, in the same way as we have it in the Homeric allegorists of the time. Heraclitus criticised his predecessors and contemporaries because they taught people false things. Given that *polymathiē* can be transmitted but not *nous*, and by listening to others we might by indoctrinated into falsehoods, with language and communication comes the

[115] Trans. Grube in Cooper (1997).

power of education. The *logos* itself is perhaps not susceptible to be taught in this same way, but there are other ways in which language and communication are useful for Heraclitus' doctrine. First, language can be used to show us what the correct *logos* is not. Second, by analogy and guiding, it can indicate the way to the *logos*. And third, by the use of paradox and different figures of speech, language can have a shocking effect and move people to question their 'private understanding' (B2).

Chapter 3: Soul, sense perception, and understanding

In previous chapters I argued that true knowledge is achieved by understanding the *logos*. However, this *logos* cannot be communicated to others directly, but only indirectly, and it has to be reached by each person individually. Examining the role of the soul and sense perception in understanding the *logos* will be the main purpose of this chapter. As previously mentioned, the word *psychē* is present in several of the fragments, but how we are supposed to understand it is not an easy question, and one that has been debated by several scholars. What we can be certain of is that the soul has a new and central role in Heraclitus' philosophical doctrine.[1]

In the first section, I outline the new concept of soul that can be found in Heraclitus' doctrine and deduced from his fragments, which I argue suggests three main characteristics: 1) that soul is an element or stuff in the cosmos, 2) that soul is a central faculty attributed with functions inside the body, and 3) that in our souls is where our personal *logoi*, as I will call them, are found. In the second section, we will approach the problem of sense perception, how it works in Heraclitus' doctrine, the role of the soul in the correct functioning of this process, and its importance. I argue that sense perception is how Heraclitus sees us acquiring understanding of the *logos*. However, we can only comprehend this *logos* after investigating ourselves and ridding ourselves of mistaken *logoi*, and by approaching the world though with a soul having been freed from false descriptions of the world.

3.1. A new concept of soul

Before Heraclitus, in the literary picture found in the early epic poetry, there are two ideas connected to the word *psychē*.[2] First, it is mainly that without which one ceases

[1] For this purpose, I take into consideration the modern commentaries on Heraclitus in general, but in particular for *psychē* in Heraclitus, see Nussbaum (1972), Claus (1981), Robinson (1986), Wilcox (1991), Schofield (1991), Laks (1999), Betegh (2007), and Mansfeld (2015).
[2] For *psychē* in Homer, see Onians (1951), Darcus-Sullivan (1979), Bremmer (1983), Clarke (1999), Cairns (2003), and *psychē* entry by Cairns in Finkelberg (2011).

to have life. And, second, *psychē* is an image of the deceased in episodes when we hear about the souls that dwell in the house of Hades, and when the living have contact with dead relatives or friends.[3] However, as pointed out by Nussbaum, this conception of the soul differs from later ideas in two ways.[4] First, the life-giving characteristic is only mentioned when the soul is said to leave the body at the moment of death or when there is an imminent risk of death.[5] Second, the soul is not considered a central organ that has control over different functions of the body, but just one among several other organs (*thymos*, *kēr*, *frēn*, *noos*).[6] Consequently, the Homeric soul is never described as having any specific functions within the body.[7] Soul, then, in the epics is primarily a condition for life, of which we only hear in negative contexts, i.e. of which we only know that its absence means death, and that it represents an image of dead people.[8]

In early Presocratic philosophy, some mentions of the word *psychē* indicate a development towards the later concept of internal soul, and later reports also suggest that from Thales onwards soul started to be a philosophical concern.[9] Perhaps the most meaningful one is a comment regarding Pythagoras' theory of the reincarnation of the soul. According to Xenophanes' fragment B7: 'And once when he [Pythagoras] was passing a puppy being beaten they say he took pity and said this word: "Cease beating

[3] These episodes are found in the *nekyia* in *Odyssey* 11, in the 'second *nekyia*' in *Odyssey* 24, some remarks of Circe in *Odyssey* 10, and in *Iliad* 23.65–107, when the soul of Patroclus comes to Achilles in a dream. On the authenticity of the second Nekyia, see Clarke (1999), 225–228.

[4] See Nussbaum (1972), 1–3; Schofield (1991), 22.

[5] For instance, *Iliad* 16.505: τοῖο δ' ἅμα ψυχήν τε καὶ ἔγχεος ἐξέρυσ' αἰχμήν ['And at the one moment he drew forth the spear-point and the soul of Sarpedon.' Trans. Murray (1924)]. Also *Iliad* 14.518–519: ψυχὴ δὲ κατ' οὐταμένην ὠτειλὴν ἔσσυτ' ἐπειγομένη ['And his soul sped hastening through the stricken wound.' Trans. Murray (1924)]. And Achilles puts his soul at risk in *Iliad* 9.322: οὐδέ τί μοι περίκειται, ἐπεὶ πάθον ἄλγεα θυμῶι αἰεὶ ἐμὴν ψυχὴν παραβαλλόμενος πολεμίζειν. ['Neither have I aught of profit herein, that I suffered woes at heart, ever staking my life in fight.' Trans. Murray (1924)]. The soul leaving the body can sometimes represent, most likely metaphorically, states of unconsciousness. See Cairns. (2003), 46 and n. 23.

[6] On these organs see Onians (1951), 23–25, and Clarke (1999), 53–55. It is important to note that *thymos* plays a role similar to *psychē*, in that its departure from the body means the death of a person (*Iliad* 13.653–655). However, it is never said that *thymos* goes to Hades. And unlike *psychē*, the gods are credited with *thymos* (*Iliad* 21.417). On *thymos* and its relation to *psychē*, see Onians (1951), 43–50 and 94–96, respectively.

[7] See Cairns (2003), 50: 'It remains true that ψυχή is credited with no active function in the living person, and that it engages the poet's attention only when its loss is threatened.' See also the *psychē* entry by Cairns in Finkelberg (2011).

[8] In Hesiod, most of the allusions to *psychē* are similar to those in Homer. Cf. *Works and Days* 686; *Scutum* 151, 173, 254; and fragments 76.7, 204.100, and 204.139.

[9] See Aristotle's comment on Thales (A22), in *De Anima* 405a19–21: 'It appears from what is recounted of him that Thales too understood the soul to be a source of motion, since he said the loadstone has a soul because it moves iron.' Trans. TEGP. See also Aetius 1.3.4 about soul in Anaximenes. See Schofield (1991), 22–26.

him; for surely it is the soul of a friend which I recognized when I heard it howling!"'[10] As Schofield rightly points out, this fragment shows that *psychē* was understood as the self, if Pythagoras' friend himself is thought to be in the dog.[11]

Heraclitus, as previously mentioned, provides us with a novel theory of the soul. He most likely agrees with some of the traditional views about the soul. However, most importantly, he provides the soul with several new characteristics that directly contradict earlier conceptions. I shall argue that in Heraclitean thought there are three main new ideas about the concept of soul. First, soul is part of the cosmos as a material stuff or element and takes part in elemental transformations. Second, the soul performs specific functions inside the body and these functions work better or worse in accordance to the characteristics of each particular soul. And third, the soul is the place in our bodies where our *logoi* are and, most likely, where the processes of learning and understanding take place.

3.1.1. Soul's place in the cosmos

As previously mentioned, Heraclitus inherited much of his cosmology from the Milesian philosophers.[12] For Heraclitus, the cosmos was not created (B30), everything in it is composed by some basic elements, which transform into each other (B31, B36, B62, B67, B76, B84a, B125, and B126), and of which fire has a preeminent role (B30, B64, B66, and B90).[13] It is within this picture that we can best make sense of fragment B36:

> **B36**: ψυχῆισι γὰρ θάνατος ὕδωρ γενέσθαι, ὕδατι δὲ θάνατος γῆν γενέσθαι, ἐκ γῆς δὲ ὕδωρ γίνεται, ἐξ ὕδατος δὲ ψυχή.
>
> For souls it is death to become water, for water death to become earth, but from earth water is born, and from water soul.

[10] Trans. TEGP, Greek text: καί ποτέ μιν στυφελιζομένου σκύλακος παριόντα φασὶν ἐποικτῖραι καὶ τόδε φάσθαι ἔπος: 'παῦσαι μηδὲ ῥάπιζ', ἐπεὶ ἦ φίλου ἀνέρος ἐστὶ ψυχή, τὴν ἔγνων φθεγξαμένης ἀΐων. On soul in Pythagoreanism, see Huffman (2009).
[11] Schofield (1991), 26–27. Xenophanes' testimony was based on the idea that Pythagoras believed in the doctrine of soul transmigration, for which we have compelling evidence. See KRS (2007), 235–238 and TEGP, 928–929.
[12] See section 0.4.1.
[13] For cosmology in Heraclitus, see KRS (2007), 197–203; Kirk (1954); and Lebedev (1985).

Fragment B36 situates the soul within the cycle of elemental changes: souls become water, water becomes earth, earth becomes water, and water becomes soul. The cycle of elemental transformation is not surprising in itself, given the background of a Milesian cosmology. Nevertheless, Heraclitus takes the traditional idea of the soul and seems to integrate it in the cosmological theories of the Milesians. The idea that soul is a stuff, a material, which takes part in elemental transformations, was probably new in the eyes of a reader contemporary to Heraclitus. However, the most shocking feature of this fragment is the description of how the first transformation takes place: 'it is death for souls', i.e. that souls can die.

As mentioned above, the traditional picture of soul is a condition of life and an image of the dead. Therefore, the image of souls dying in B36 goes not only against the traditional idea of *psychē* in epic poetry, but also against later representations of the soul as the self.[14] However, in fragment B85, Heraclitus shows us that he still thinks the soul is that without which you are not alive.[15] Additionally, in B98 we hear that 'Souls use a sense of smell in Hades.'[16] Does this mention of souls in Hades mean that he believed in an afterlife in Hades as pictured in the epics? It is not very likely. Heraclitus does not seem to fully agree with traditional religious practices.[17] Additionally, the death of the souls in B36 implies that souls would not reside in Hades indefinitely.[18] Nussbaum goes so far as to propose that for Heraclitus there was no afterlife, and that fragment B98 'mocks the absurdity of the typical conception of a world of shades.'[19] Nevertheless, the afterlife cannot altogether be excluded in Heraclitus. Other than this obscure mention of Hades, he says in B27 that 'For men who die there await things they do not expect or anticipate.'[20] Perhaps the afterlife is

[14] As Schofield (1991), 26–27, suggests, the target of Heraclitus' critique when saying that souls die is, most likely, Pythagoras' theory of the reincarnation of the soul.
[15] B85: θυμῶι μάχεσθαι χαλεπόν· ὅ τι γὰρ ἂν θέλῃ, ψυχῆς ὠνεῖται. ['It is hard to fight with the heart's desire; for whatever it wishes it buys at the price of soul.' Trans. Marcovich (1969)]. Cf. *Iliad* 9.401–2: οὐ γὰρ ἐμοὶ ψυχῆς ἀντάξιον οὐδ' ὅσα φασὶν /Ἴλιον ἐκτῆσθαι. ['For in my eyes not of like worth with life is even all that wealth that men say Ilios possessed.' Trans. Murray (1924)]. See Reinhardt (1916), 196 n. 2; Marcovich (1967), 387.
[16] Trans. TEGP, Greek text: αἱ ψυχαὶ ὀσμῶνται καθ' Ἅιδην. On fragment B98 and the sense of smell in Heraclitus, see Osborne (2009), 425–428.
[17] Cf. B67, B32, and B15 for Heraclitus opinions on traditional religion. For Heraclitus' views on religion and divinities see Adomenas (1999); Trépanier (2010), 282–288; Most (2013).
[18] On the possibility of an afterlife in Heraclitus, see Mansfeld (2015), 85–90.
[19] Nussbaum (1972), 156.
[20] Greek text: ἀνθρώπους μένει ἀποθανόντας, ἅσσα οὐκ ἔλπονται οὐδὲ δοκέουσιν.

not as humans have supposed, but it seems that something awaits them after death regardless. I assume that if souls die and become water, the identity of a person is not preserved indefinitely, and this afterlife would not be the same as the traditional one in Hades. However, since we do not know when the process of transformation of soul into water takes place, some sort of afterlife as shades in Hades is still possible for Heraclitus.[21]

With regard to cosmology, the implications of fragment B36 are as follows. Our souls are made of a material called 'soul' in the fragment. This material takes part in the elemental transformations that other elements in the cosmos have, i.e. it turns into some elements, and other elements turn into it. That these elemental transformations take place following a measure, a proportion or a balance, is shown by the use of the opposite concepts of death and birth in the fragment (*thanatos* and *gignomai*): when an amount of material dies an equal amount is born.[22] However, this is not a representation of all elements and all their possible changes. The fragment shows a particular cycle of elements, a process that is part of the whole but not a complete and all-encompassing cosmic cycle. I think that B36 does not need to represent a full cycle of all the elemental changes, in the same way that B31 ('The turnings of fire: first sea, and of sea half is earth, half fireburst […] <Earth> is liquefied as sea and measured into the same proportion it had before it became earth.'[23]) does not represent all of them either. Neither in B31 nor in B36 does Heraclitus mention all elements. Consequently, soul does not need to be identified with any other element in B36, as many scholars propose.[24] Similarly, as Schofield and Betegh note, in B36 the change from 'souls' in the plural to 'soul' in the singular is a meaningful one.[25] I agree that

[21] Fragment B25 (μόροι γὰρ μέζονες μέζονας μοίρας λαγχάνουσι. ['For deaths that are greater greater portions gain.' Trans. TEGP]) could also imply an afterlife different from the traditional one.
[22] Cf. B30, B31, B76b, and B76c. This idea follows the general principle of the unity of opposites, as explained in section 2.1.2: most people see separately, for instance, the death of water and the birth of earth, when in reality both phenomena are part of one balanced process that unifies them. On the problem of the death and birth of the souls in B36, see Betegh (2013), 251–254.
[23] Trans. TEGP, Greek text: πυρὸς τροπαὶ πρῶτον θάλασσα, θαλάσσης δὲ τὸ μὲν ἥμισυ γῆ, τὸ δὲ ἥμισυ πρηστήρ […] <γῆ> θάλασσα διαχέεται καὶ μετρέεται εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον, ὁκοῖος πρόσθεν ἦν ἢ γενέσθαι γῆ
[24] Kirk (1954), 340–41; Marcovich (1967), 361; and TEGP, 192, say that soul represents fire in the elemental cycle of B36. ATH, 239, says it represents air. Betegh (2007), 22, follows Aristotle's interpretation in *De Anima* 405a25–27 to argue that soul is 'all states of matter covered by exhalations from the lowest level of atmospheric air to the uppermost layer of celestial fire.'
[25] Betegh, following Schofield, argues that the change from the plural (ψυχῆισιν) to the singular (ψυχή) is meaningful, and that the first one is used as 'singular count noun', indicating every singular soul, and

this change implies that souls in the plural represent personal and embodied souls (closer in meaning to 'the self'), while *psychē* in the singular represents the cosmic material of which such souls are made. However, I think that since the private soul is responsible for many bodily and mental functions, and provides life to us, it dies as a whole after the separation from the body has taken place, and not in parts when inside the body, as suggested by several scholars.[26]

However, the most important aspect of B36 for our present investigation is that it suggests a connection between the external or cosmic soul and the internal soul. As a material 'stuff', the soul is a part of the cosmic elemental cycle. At the same time, this means that our souls as material inside our bodies change as well, and the newly acquired functions of the soul probably could be explained in physical terms.

3.1.2. Soul in the body

> **B117**: ἀνὴρ ὁκόταν μεθυσθῆι, ἄγεται ὑπὸ παιδὸς ἀνήβου σφαλλόμενος οὐκ ἐπαΐων ὅκη βαίνει, ὑγρὴν τὴν ψυχὴν ἔχων.
>
> When a man is drunk he is led by an immature child, stumbling, not perceiving where he goes, with a wet soul.[27]

> **B118**: αὔη ψυχὴ σοφωτάτη καὶ ἀρίστη.
>
> A dry soul is wisest and best.[28]

> **B67a**: Sicut aranea stans in medio telae sentit quam cito musca aliquem filum suum corrumpit itaque illuc celeriter currit quasi de fili persectione dolens, sic hominis anima aliqua parte corporis laesa illuc festine meat

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the second as a 'mass term', which indicates the cosmic substance/element soul. See Schofield (1991), 25 and Betegh (2007), 6–13.

[26] From the idea that souls become wet in B117 Marcovich proposes that when the soul of the drunk man gets wet some of its parts become water and die. And this death is the process described in B36, as a parallel with the way in which the elements work in the cosmos. See Marcovich (1967), 361–62. However, my interpretation is closer to that of Kirk (1954), 339–342: that the death of the person coincides with the death of the soul, i.e. the soul becomes water (or fire) not inside the body but shortly after the person dies. The main reason for supporting this argument is that being wet or moist because of contact with alcohol in B117 and the soul dying to become water in B36 are two different things. On *hygros* in B117 see Schofield (1991), 21. Perhaps B77, ψυχῆισι τέρψιν (μὴ θάνατον) ὑγρῆισι γενέσθαι. ['It is joy (not death) for souls to become wet.' Trans. TEGP], is making this point.

[27] Trans. TEGP.

[28] Trans. TEGP.

> quasi impatiens laesionis corporis, cui firme et proportionaliter iuncta est.[29]
>
> As a spider standing on the middle of its web feels as soon as a fly breaks any of its threads, so that towards that place it quickly runs as if it felt pain from the cut of the thread. In the same way, when any part of the body is hurt, the soul of a person hastily goes there as if it did not tolerate the wounding of the body, to which is firmly and proportionally connected.

These three fragments have a common feature: we can see that Heraclitus is attributing characteristics to soul acting inside the body. *Psychē* is related not only to the material and cosmic plane as an element, but also, as a private soul, *psychē* affects how we interact with the world.

Fragment B117 would seem almost trivial without the Homeric context. Maybe Heraclitus is just stating the fact that when we are drunk we cannot walk and perceive properly, like a child, and our mind is confused and drowned in alcohol.[30] But the implications of the fragment go much further. Heraclitus is saying something new about the concept of soul (especially if contrasted with B118), i.e. that the embodied soul can change its composition or state: it can be either wet or dry. This means that, unlike Homeric soul, for Heraclitus souls can be modified by external physical factors. The consequences of making soul an element, which participates in elemental transformations, is that the human soul has to become an element as well and, accordingly, be affected by material and elemental constraints.

Additionally, these material modifications affect the bodily and mental functions of the person whose soul has changed. If we take B118 into consideration, we can say that some material compositions of the soul are better than others in that they perform those functions correctly: a wet soul does not function properly, because it gives its owner the same abilities as a toddler, but, presumably, a dry soul would provide a person with better bodily and mental abilities. The abilities connected to the soul in B117 are sense perception and motion, but if we think of this fragment as an exemplary case, it is likely that Heraclitus associated many other functions with the physical composition of the soul. At the very least we could argue that this is the case for those mental and bodily functions that are impaired by drunkenness. Marcovich suggests,

[29] Fragment B67a is rejected by many. See discussion below.
[30] Cf. Kahn (1979), 244.

for instance, that in B117 the wetness of the soul also causes loss of memory and attention, since the drunk man represented in the fragment also forgets where he is going.[31]

One interpretation would have Heraclitus say that whenever someone is drunk they are carried by a child or in the same situation as being carried by a child. But this is not very likely. In my interpretation, fragment B117 presents us with a metaphor that explains an aspect of the body-soul relation. The mention of the child is meaningful, and it is probably hinting at a relation with the divinity.[32] There are different levels of perfection for the soul, and the soul of someone who is drunk is equivalent to that of a child, which is as low as a human soul would be in comparison to a divinity.[33] Thus, the child in B117 is the drunk man himself, who by effects of material changes rendered his soul worse, and now his soul (and he himself) is like a child with regard to most mental and physical functions.[34] These differences are caused by the composition and material changes of his soul.

Regarding the simile that the spider is to the spider-web as the soul is to the body in B67a, Kahn follows Marcovich in observing that there is nothing from Heraclitus in the quotation.[35] For many reasons, it would be hard to argue that the fragment is original. First off, we do not have the Greek text, so we cannot judge the composition, syntax, word choice, dialect, etc. Second, because the wording and clarity of the fragment do not resemble the usual Heraclitean style, i.e. there are no oppositions, comparisons with divinities, or extrapolations. And third, because it is not common for Heraclitus to use an analogy and clearly explain every part of it (with the exception perhaps of B5 and B114, which are not that clear in reality). Nevertheless, the general idea of the fragment is consistent with other fragments that mention the soul in Heraclitus. The soul plays an important role in bodily and mental functions, such as sight, movement, memory, and, as we will see, in hearing and other abilities. The

[31] Marcovich (1967), 381.
[32] As was argued in section 1.3.2. See Frankel (1938b), 309–337. Also as Marcovich (1967), 382, notices, the opposition child-adult is recurrent in Heraclitus. Cf. fragments B56, B121, B79, and B52.
[33] If we follow the argument of Frankel (1938b), this fragment could imply that there is a divine soul (perhaps a world-soul?), which moves the body of the cosmos, perceives, understands, etc. better than the soul of an adult human being, in the same way that the soul of an adult human being moves the body, perceives, and understands better than the soul of a child. See section 1.3.2.
[34] *Contra* Robinson (1986), 306–307, who proposes a more literal reading.
[35] ATH, 433; Marcovich (1967), 577 and (1966), 26–27.

fragment is most likely a paraphrase or interpretation of an original saying. I would conjecture that Heraclitus said something such as 'The soul is like a spider in its web, stretched out, contracted in, it reaches everywhere.' And in B67a we find an explanation or a paraphrase of the main point of a different phrase.[36] I would not support my arguments based on the interpretation of this fragment. However, it is meaningful that a fragment about specific characteristics of the soul-body relation has been attributed to Heraclitus. This implies that he was later recognised as one of those who proposed that the soul was a central faculty that unifies and controls the body.[37]

3.1.3. The *logos* inside the soul

> **B115**: ψυχῆς ἐστι λόγος ἑωυτὸν αὔξων.
>
> Soul has a *logos* that increases itself.

> **B45**: ψυχῆς πείρατα [ἰὼν]
> οὐκ ἂν ἐξεύροι
> ὁ πᾶσαν ἐπιπορευόμενος ὁδόν·
> οὕτω βαθὺν λόγον ἔχει.
>
> He who travels every road will not find out the limits of the soul [as he goes], so deep a *logos* does it/he have. [38]

Fragment B115 is considered spurious by some scholars, among other reasons because its source, Stobaeus 3.1.180a, attributes it to Socrates.[39] However, from fragment B45 we know that soul has a *logos*. Consequently, the only problem with accepting this fragment as original would reside in the self-augmentation (ἑωυτὸν αὔξων) of the *logos* inside the soul. The acceptance of this idea would be dependent on how we understand soul and *logos* here. Heraclitus may be talking about the cosmic *logos* inside a cosmic soul, or about a *logos* inside a particular soul, or about both of them,

[36] Most likely a Stoic gloss: see Marcovich (1967), 578–579. However, it does not mean that there is nothing Heraclitean to it. Many of the passages Marcovich quotes there to show that B67a is Stoic are Stoic comments on Plato's *Timaeus*, and, as I said in section 1.2.3, some ideas, in particular those about the cosmic *logos* in the *Timaeus*, are very Heraclitean. See Robinson (2013), 325.
[37] See Schofield (1991), 22–23.
[38] Text and tr. after Betegh (2009), 404.
[39] Some discussions about its authenticity: Marcovich (1967), 569–79 and (1966), 29–30; and ATH, 237.

i.e. about *logoi* in souls in general. In accordance with my interpretation of the word *logos* in Heraclitus, I understand *logos* in B115 as 'description' or 'account', not as 'measure' or 'proportion'.[40] But I refrain from understanding this fragment as a reference to the cosmic *logos*, because if the *logos* is just as we understood it before (a complete and divine description of the cosmos), it would not need to increase itself in any way. Therefore, I think this fragment must refer to our personal *logos* or *logoi*, which I assume can vary in scope and correctness. These can be augmented and perfected, until at some point they finally come to agree with the universal *logos*, or *homo-logein* (B50).

We know that soul is a natural place to find *logoi* according to Plato, for whom *logos* may mean 'discourse', 'account', or, when not expressed by anyone, 'thought'.[41] So *Philebus* 39a1–7: 'If memory and perceptions concur with other impressions on a particular occasion, then they seem to me to inscribe words [*logoi*] in our soul, as it were. And if what is written is true, then we form a true judgement and a true account [*logos*] of the matter.'[42] This passage provides us with a close parallel to Heraclitus' views on the *logos* inside the soul. Plato suggest that sense perception creates *logoi* in our souls, and our opinions and thoughts about the matter are some sort of *logos* as well. Heraclitus should not hold an opinion all too different than this, since we know that sense perception is the source of a *logos* we can understand in our souls.

At *Theaetetus* 189e–190a, Plato tells us something which resonates with a previous analysis of the cosmic *logos*:

> It seems to me that when the soul thinks, it is simply carrying on a discussion [*logos*] in which it asks itself questions and answers, affirming and denying. And when it arrives at something definite, either by a gradual process or a sudden leap, when it affirms one thing consistently and without divided counsel, we call this its judgement. So, in my view, to

[40] For the reasons of my interpretation of *logos* as 'description', see section 1.2.4. Marcovich (1966), 29–30, disregards this fragment because 'the measure [*logos*] implies something constant, and a "measure which increases itself" is unlikely to me.' However, this is only a problem if we understand *logos* to mean 'measure', which does not seem like the best option here. It is true that *logos* has the idea of proportion in B31, but there we find the expression εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον. And I believe that is not a sufficient reason, or that we do not have enough evidence, to argue that *logos* means 'measure' or 'proportion' by itself in Heraclitus. Cf. Powell (1938), s.v. λόγος (11), where it only means 'proportion' when in a particular expression but not on its own.

[41] See also *Sophist* 263e2–6 and *Timaeus* 36d–37c (quoted in section 1.2.3). For an analysis of this and other similar passages related to thought and internal dialogue in Plato, see A.G. Long (2013), 109–116.

[42] Trans. Frede in Cooper (1997).

> judge is to make a statement, and a judgement is a statement [*logos*] which is not addressed to another person or spoken aloud, but silently addressed to oneself.[43]

This second passage relates *logos* in the soul to thought and personal judgement. For Plato there are *logoi* that are not addressed to anyone but silent. There is another passage in which Plato talks about a silent *logos* within the soul, as I mentioned above.[44] At *Timaeus* 36d–37c, he says that the world-soul speaks out a *logos*, though a *logos* without a sound, describing in detail how everything is disposed in the cosmos. I argued that this *logos* Plato speaks of is strongly related to the cosmic *logos* in Heraclitus. Then, for Plato *logoi*, understood as some silent description, are present inside both the world-soul and the individual souls.[45] This does not mean, of course, that Plato is necessarily commenting on Heraclitean theories, but it shows that these ideas were current at that time, perhaps influenced by Heraclitus or other Heraclitean thinkers. So then, so far as our fragment is concerned, it was not strange for Heraclitus to think of *logos* as something that resides in the soul and that represents a description, an account or a theory.

However, if fragment B115 talks about the personal *logoi* in individual souls, what is the meaning of this self-augmentation? We said that if the cosmic *logos* is the complete description of the cosmos, then it would not need to augment itself in any way. However, if we take this to refer to our personal *logoi*, in our souls, the fragment has a clearer meaning. Our *logoi* are not complete, whereas the cosmic *logos* is; they can always be augmented by our personal experience of the world. I shall follow Nussbaum's interpretation of this fragment, i.e. that it refers to the soul's 'capacity for learning'.[46] When you experience new things, your *logos*, your description or account of the universe, grows.[47]

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[43] Trans. Levett and Burnyeat in Cooper (1997).
[44] See section 1.2.3.
[45] See also *Phaedrus* 276a.
[46] Nussbaum (1972), 15.
[47] Owen (1979–1980), 10, proposes an interesting interpretation, referring to Plato's *Phaedrus* 276e9–277a2: 'Discourse capable of helping itself as well as the man who planted it, which is not barren but produces a seed from which more discourse grows in the character of others.' He calls it a 'perpetual self-renewing discourse.' Also, cf. Empedocles B17.14 and B110, where there is the same idea of cultivating something inside you, which can be understood as learning.

I turn now to fragment B45. The fragment posits a similar problem as that of B115. We can understand soul and *logos* in two ways: as our *logos* in our personal soul, and as the cosmic *logos* in a cosmic soul.[48] Then, the expression ψυχῆς πείρατα could be understood either as the internal limits of one's soul or as the limits of the soul as a stuff in the world. Some scholars, following Aristotle's interpretation of Heraclitus as a material monist, and soul as the first principle, defend the first interpretation. For instance, Kahn argues that *peirata* is a concept related to Anaximander's *apeiron*.[49] This means that, in his interpretation, soul is like the *apeiron*: it is everywhere and in everything, and somehow endless, more or less like the world-soul in Plato's *Timaeus*.[50] Correspondingly, in Kahn's interpretation the search for the limits of the soul is an outer search, which implies an actual physical travelling around the world. The result of his interpretation is that *logos*, as a characteristic of this soul, is everywhere as well.

Marcovich further proposes that there is a contraposition of a horizontal dimension, represented by *hodos*, and a vertical dimension, represented by *bathys*.[51] If so, the fragment suggests that you can actually find the limits of the soul, but not in the traditional way of looking, over the earth's surface, but inside ourselves, because the limits are inside the human organism.[52] I think Marcovich is right in that the idea of looking outside in the world is implied in the wording of the fragment. However, the vertical-horizontal contraposition, which shows the idea of an impossible search

[48] Snell (1960), 17–18, takes the fragment as referring to internal processes. As well as Nussbaum (1972), 15 and TEGP, 192. Marcovich (1967), 366–370, says that the limits cannot be found outside because they are inside the human body, in its blood. Some others point out that the fragment can refer to either or both realms but do not defend any particular position. See Robinson (1987), 110; McKirahan (1994), 147; and ATH, 128–129, however, he says that B45 suggests an external search. See also Curd (2013), 238–244.

[49] ATH, 126–130. Robinson (1986), 305, makes a similar suggestion.

[50] Do we have enough evidence to argue that Heraclitus thought of a world-soul as well? As Betegh (2009), 410–411, suggests, 'the *logos* of the cosmic soul may well be the universal *logos* that each of us should listen.' We know that soul can be everywhere as an element (B36). We also know that for Heraclitus the cosmos is somehow organised and steered by this *logos*, which describes everything as it is (B1). And in B30 he could be indicating that the cosmos or its order is a living being (πῦρ ἀείζωον). It seems that the ever-living fire is showing us the idea that an order that has ever existed is, at least, some sort of living being that moves and has measures for its movements. According to Hussey (1999a), 319, the author of the *Dereveni Papyrus* could be suggesting a similar interpretation of Heraclitus' doctrine.

[51] Marcovich (1967), 366.

[52] Marcovich (1967), 367: 'The *beginning* and *end* of soul (its "bonds" or πείρατα) are actually in the blood.'

because you are not looking in the right place, does not work correctly.[53] First, because roads can go up and down (B60: ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω μία καὶ ωὐτή. ['A road up-down is one and the same.']) and, as I will show, the word *bathys* does not, of necessity, imply a vertical dimension.

My interpretation of the fragment takes the first part as Betegh does, i.e. ψυχῆς πείρατα [ἰὼν] οὐκ ἂν ἐξεύροι ὁ πᾶσαν ἐπιπορευόμενος ὁδόν as 'He who travels every road will not find out the limits of the soul [as he goes]'.[54] I agree with Marcovich that souls have physical or material limits, because they are an element and still part of, and confined by, the physical world, or with Betegh that souls have extension.[55] However, even when we exhaust or go through (even 'walk through') all of a soul's material aspect, there is still a deep *logos* that we do not see, an aspect of the soul that we miss by physically examining it, i.e. if we limit ourselves to its physical aspect.

As for the second part of the fragment, the question about the meaning of this 'deep *logos*' is not easy to answer.[56] If, as I mentioned above, this *logos* is an account or a description in the soul, and not a proportion or measure, then this assumption proves useful now, as it would be much harder to explain how a proportion or a measure can be deep.[57] The general meanings of the word *bathys* tend to imply that something is 'spacious', such as a ship or a courtyard, both of which are deep in this way. In most cases, it is used to describe something that has the following characteristics: 1) an inner space, usually large; 2) an outer surface; 3) what is contained on the inside is not seen from the outside, or at least not clearly.[58] It does not require one to go down still further in a vertical direction, but the idea of being on

[53] Betegh (2009), 407, suggests, among other possibilities, that *bathys* could mean 'high' and the limits be interpreted in a vertical dimension.
[54] Betegh (2009), 404.
[55] Marcovich (1967), 366–67. Betegh (2009), 406.
[56] Regarding the authenticity of the second part of the fragment, I believe Betegh (2009), 403–404, provides strong arguments in its favour.
[57] ATH, 129, says: 'On first reading, *logon echei* should mean something like "it has something to say", "it has the right (or the capacity) to speak".' I believe this approach is correct in that *logos* here means something related to speech and not 'proportion' or 'measure', in particular because the 'barbarian souls' in B107 imply a relation between soul and language or speech. Kirk (1954), 39, says that *logos* means 'measure'. I find this very difficult to accept, mainly because a 'deep measure' does not make much sense, i.e. that expression could not have meant 'big size', 'large quantity', or the like.
[58] Powell (1938) and LSJ, s.v. βαθύς. Homer uses *bathys* to describe a forest (ὕλη, *Od*. 17.316), a crop/cornfield (λήϊον, *Il*. 2,147), a ship (ναῦς, *Od*. 9.144), a courtyard (ἀυλή, *Il*. 5.587) , whirlpool (δίνη, *Od*. 6.116), and sea (ἅλα, *Il*. 1.532; ἠιών, *Il*. 2.93), bay (κόλπος, *Il*. 2.560), sand (ἄμαθος, *Il*. 5.587), pit (βέρεθρον, *Il*. 8.14). The only mention in Hesiod refers to a 'crop, cornfield' in *Scutum* 288.

the inside, of being somewhere difficult to reach, and unknown, is enough to be *bathys*. The general use of the word shows us that the idea of a vertical plane as opposed to a horizontal plane, as has been proposed by Marcovich, may not be correct, since we find depth in woods and cornfields not because of going further down, but across, in a horizontal fashion. But what does it mean for a *logos* to be deep in this way?

When describing internal entities of the body or mind, *bathys* can be used, perhaps metaphorically, to talk about the inner realm of a person.[59] Homer uses 'deep' once with this meaning at *Iliad* 19.125: ὣς φάτο, τὸν δ᾽ ἄχος ὀξὺ κατὰ φρένα τύψε βαθεῖαν. ['So she spoke, and sharp pain smote him in his deep heart.'] In this passage the expression φρένα βαθεῖαν does not mean 'spacious heart' nor 'big heart', but something like 'deep inside himself', 'in his most inner core'. Similarly, Aeschylus uses this metaphorical meaning in the two following passages:

> Deep thought is certainly needed to save us: the eye, like that of a diver, must scan right to the bottom — a clear-sighted eye, not one unduly fogged by wine (*Suppliants* 407–9).[60]

> So the prophet spoke, wielding calmly his shield all of bronze. On its circle there was no image; for he desires not the appearance of excellence but the reality, harvesting a deep furrow in his mind from which good counsels grow (*Seven against Thebes* 590–94).[61]

These examples are enough to show us that the use of *bathys* to describe metaphorically the internal 'world' of a person is close to Heraclitus. I follow Snell's idea that here we are talking about a different realm, 'that it has its own dimension,

[59] Snell (1960), 17, suggests that the lyric poets were the first ones to use 'deep' in this sense.

[60] Trans. Sommerstein (2009). Greek text: δεῖ τοι βαθείας φροντίδος σωτηρίου/ δίκην κολυμβητῆρος εἰς βύθον μολεῖν/ δεδορκὸς ὄμμα μηδ᾽ ἄγαν ὠινωμένον. Cf. with the metaphor of a diver needed to find something in deep waters as when you try to understand something difficult, which is the same Socrates, according to Diogenes, uses to describe Heraclitus' book. Diogenes Laertius 2.22: φασὶ δ᾽ Εὐριπίδην αὐτῶι δόντα τὸ Ἡρακλείτου σύγγραμμα ἐρέσθαι, 'τί δοκεῖ;' τὸν δὲ φάναι, 'ἃ μὲν συνῆκα, γενναῖα: οἶμαι δὲ καὶ ἃ μὴ συνῆκα: πλὴν Δηλίου γέ τινος δεῖται κολυμβητοῦ. ['They say Euripides gave him [Socrates] Heraclitus' treatise and asked, "What do you think?" He replied, "What I understand is excellent; what I don't understand probably is too, but it would take a Delian diver to recover it."' Trans. TEGP] It is interesting to notice, too, that this passage agrees with other ideas present in Heraclitus' fragments, in particular unreliable sense perception in B107, and the effects of drunkenness in B117.

[61] Trans. Sommerstein (2009). Greek text: τοιαῦθ᾽ ὁ μάντις ἀσπίδ᾽ εὔκηλος νέμων/ πάγχαλκον ηὔδα. σῆμα δ᾽ οὐκ ἐπῆν κύκλωι·/ οὐ γὰρ δοκεῖν ἄριστος ἀλλ᾽ εἶναι θέλει,/ βαθεῖαν ἄλοκα διὰ φρενὸς καρπούμενος,/ ἐξ ἧς τὰ κεδνὰ βλαστάνει βουλεύματα.

that it is not extended in space.'[62] Souls, as part of the materials that constitute the cosmos, have a physical extension, but it does not seem to work alike for the *logoi* inscribed in them. These *logoi* render the soul much more extensive, or extensive in a different way. They give their souls some additional content or information that is not accessible directly through their physical realm.[63] This, however, does not mean that *logoi* are metaphysical entities.[64] Just in the same way as a book has a physical extension that can be easily measured by our senses, but inside it there is a *logos*, a description, a story, which requires a different kind of perception in order to be understood; so we can say that there is a whole new world inside a book. In that same way, the cosmos has a *logos* that describes how it is, and our souls have *logoi* that describe, correctly or not, how things are. We can travel the world and see everything in it, but miss the *logos* that it contains. In the same way, our souls have a physical delimitation, but their true limits we can only access when we try to read and understand the *logoi* that are inside them.

To sum up, we can say that the soul for Heraclitus has the following characteristics. The soul is now integrated to the physical realm. This idea is what causes the main changes in the idea of soul in Heraclitus, compared to the traditional views; soul is a stuff and it is bound to the rules of elemental transformation and other physical constraints. Additionally, Heraclitus explicitly attributes physiological and psychological functions to the embodied soul, which may vary from soul to soul depending on their state and quality (dry-wet), among other physical changes. These changes play a role in the correct functioning of sense perception, self-motion, and memory. Much is still vague but the proper functionality of these abilities is affected by the soul's dryness or wetness. Lastly, the soul is where we have our personal *logoi*.

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[62] Snell (1960), 17. See also TEGP, 188, who says that 'Heraclitus seems to recognize an inner world which can reflect the outer world, if we are not sleepwalking through life.'

[63] The expression οὕτω ἔχει, present in B45, is used by Herodotus and Plato to say something like 'that is how it is/stands' (Cf. Herodotus 1.126.5, 7.161.2, 8.125.2, and 9.9.2. And Plato, *Statesman* 271c1; *Laws* 716d4; *Gorgias* 450a9; *Euthydemus* 190c9; *Philebus* 19c2, 36e9; *Parmenides* 146c8. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.2.18, and 7.1.8. Sophocles, *Antigone* 38 and *Electra* 938). Could οὕτω βαθὺν λόγον ἔχει be taken as an impersonal expression, meaning 'the deep *logos* is as such/that is how the deep *logos* works'? Or, if soul is the subject of ἔχει, could οὕτω be modifying ἔχει? Then the expression would mean 'it has a deep *logos* in such a way/in that way'.

[64] However, I like to see fragment B45 as a metaphor to express an insight about metaphysics. I agree with Curd (2010), 14, who thinks that in Heraclitus the cosmic *logos* is somehow immaterial and that 'in struggling to explain his new idea of *logos*, Heraclitus certainly moves towards, and I think embraces, the notion of the non-corporeal.'

Our *logoi* can be augmented and become more extensive, complete, and precise, and agree with the cosmic *logos*. Additionally, the fact that *logoi* reside inside the soul means that, even though souls have a physical extension, there is some portion or aspect of them that we miss when we only consider their physical part and not their *logoi*.

3.2. Sense perception, soul, and *logoi*

We turn now to the problem of sense perception and its relation to knowledge in Heraclitus. In antiquity, both Plato and Sextus suggest that Heraclitus considered sense perception an unreliable means of acquiring knowledge. For Plato (*Theaetetus* 152d), Heraclitus' theory of flux, in which nothing can be stable, would prevent our senses from grasping anything correctly. According to Sextus (*Adversus Mathematicos* 126), the criterion of truth for Heraclitus is not sense perception but the *logos*. In one sense, at least, they are both correct. As we will see, Heraclitus thinks that your senses can deceive you, and that for this reason you should not trust in them exclusively. However, the fact that the senses can often deceive you does not imply that they do not play an important role in the process of knowledge. For this process to work correctly there must be a particular connection between soul, the *logos*, and the senses. I shall argue, in agreement with several other scholars, that sense perception for Heraclitus is not a sufficient cause but a necessary cause for understanding the *logos*.

There are two important caveats when approaching the topics of soul and sense perception in Heraclitus, both rightly pointed out by Laks.[65] First, even though the fragments of Heraclitus show an interest in psychology and a development of the concept of soul, Heraclitus does not appear to have a theory of sense perception, i.e. a theory in which the exact mechanisms of the acquisition of knowledge through the senses are explained in physical terms.[66] And, second, it is unclear to what extent Heraclitus distinguished between perception and thought.[67] This implies, also, that it is uncertain whether Heraclitus identified organs that perceive and organs or faculties that interpret things perceived as two separate things. My analysis does not intend to

[65] Laks (1999).
[66] Laks (1999), 254.
[67] Laks (1999), 255–262.

solve either of these problems but to identify the role that Heraclitus attributes to sense experience in the acquisition of knowledge.

3.2.1. Sense perception

The *logos* itself cannot be communicated to others directly, as we have seen, and it is the guidance of Heraclitus that directs us to the *logos* and helps us achieve an eventual understanding of this *logos*. But in the end we have to listen to it and understand it ourselves. A common theme in the fragments, itself one of the keys for understanding the *logos* (B1 and B50), is personal experience. We are able, at least potentially, to correctly understand the world that surrounds us. Some of the suggestions for accomplishing this can be found in the following fragments:

> **B35**: χρὴ εὖ μάλα πολλῶν ἵστορας φιλοσόφους ἄνδρας εἶναι.[68]
>
> Men who are eager for wisdom should enquire into many things.

> **B55**: ὅσων ὄψις ἀκοὴ μάθησις, ταῦτα ἐγὼ προτιμέω.
>
> Things of which there is sight, hearing, experience, these I prefer.

> **B101a**: ὀφθαλμοὶ γὰρ τῶν ὤτων ἀκριβέστεροι μάρτυρες.
>
> The eyes are better witnesses than the ears.

Regarding B35, the word *histōr* and its cognates, usually meaning ‘enquirer’, may imply three things in this context. First, that we should experience the world with our senses as much as we can, second, that we should do this in regard to many different topics, and third, that we should gather information from as many sources as possible.[69] In Heraclitus, it should not mean gathering theories from other people. As we saw above, this last idea, enquiring from others, is actually harshly criticised by Heraclitus in several fragments, but in particular in B129, where he criticises Pythagoras for practising *historiē* to collect or copy knowledge from others.[70] Therefore, it seems that

[68] For a discussion about the authenticity of fragment B35 and the use of the word φιλόσοφος, see Marcovich (1967), 26–27, and Casadesús Bordoy (2015).
[69] Powell (1938) and LSJ, s.v. ἱστορέω.
[70] See section 2.3.1.

this enquiring is recommended when you enquire into many things by yourself but not when you gather many things from other people. Consequently, in B35 the kind of enquiring he is suggesting refers to personal experience. Nevertheless, personal sense perception in itself is not the only requirement in understanding the world. As some scholars have pointed out, for Heraclitus, collecting this kind of information from sense experience is a necessary but not sufficient condition for understanding.[71] As I shall argue, there are other important requirements in this process. However, what fragment B35 clearly states is that Heraclitus considers sense experience (i.e. as much as enquiring implies sense experience) an important and necessary part of understanding or at least of being on the correct way to understanding.

Fragment B55 proposes something similar, and perhaps in clearer terms. There are two points to analyse here. First, what is that over which Heraclitus prefers those things that you can see, hear, and experience? Or, in other words, what are those things of which there is no sight, hearing, and experience? And, second, what does the word *mathēsis* imply in the fragment? I follow Marcovich's analysis of the latter in order to answer the former. The word *mathēsis* in fragment B55 means 'perception', 'apprehension', 'one's own experience'.[72] I do not think that Heraclitus is making an ontological claim here, a claim that only physical things or things that can be perceived by the senses should be taken into consideration as making up reality, i.e. one must not assume that Heraclitus is a crude empiricist. Instead, he is indicating that the things you experience yourself are preferable to those you do not. I believe that those things over which experiential things are preferable are things told to you by other people, that is, things of which you have indirect experience, and of which you yourself think. Therefore, I shall risk making a differentiation between the sense of hearing in B55 (*akoē*) and the ears as witnesses in B101a. Both fragments mention sight and hearing,

[71] See Marcovich (1967), 27–28; ATH, 106-110; TEGP, 188: 'Wisdom apparently starts in sense experience and inquiry based on such experience.' Also Robinson (1987), 119: 'Experiential knowledge is important to the conscientious investigator into the real.'

[72] Marcovich (1967), 21. This is the only mention of *mathēsis* in the fragments, but Heraclitus uses a participle of the verb *manthanein* clearly meaning 'sense perception' or 'experience' in fragment B17: οὐ γὰρ φρονέουσι τοιαῦτα πολλοί, ὁκόσοι ἐγκυρεῦσιν, οὐδὲ μαθόντες γινώσκουσιν, ἑωυτοῖσι δὲ δοκέουσι. ['Most people do not understand those things which they encounter, and they do not know them after having experienced them, but they think they do.'] The word *mathēsis* is not found in Herodotus but he sometimes uses *manthanein* as 'perceiving'. Powell (1938), s.v. μανθάνω IV, and LSJ, s.v. μανθάνω III.

though in B35 the mention not of organs but of senses and above all *mathēsis* indicate that Heraclitus is referring to things that can produce sounds and images, and that these can be experienced in such ways.[73]

Fragment B101a suggests a similar idea: the evidence of the senses and one's own experience are preferable to second hand stories and indirect experience. This was a common saying after Heraclitus.[74] Marcovich says that 'it *could* mean the following: "between the two ways for men to reach the *Logos*, by themselves or instructed by Heraclitus, the first has preference; because, as traditional wisdom has it: eyes are more accurate witnesses than ears."'[75] I agree that people should look for the *logos* by themselves and, as I said, that they should personally experience many things. Both the fragment and the saying are talking about a different kind of hearing than fragment B55, as mentioned above. Heraclitus is not saying that it is better to *see* a dog in the distance than it is to *hear* it barking in the distance, because that would be a bit too obvious and not worth to make into a proverb or saying. The word *martys* implies in either case, seeing or hearing, that there is a testimony, a certain message reported to us by the senses. In the case of hearing, presumably it is not just a sound made by the dog but a report of this dog and of its barking on the part of someone else. Hence I take the fragment to state the following: 'It is better for your understanding to see something yourself than to hear it from somebody else'. This reading is supported by Heraclitus' critique of popular authorities, since people wrongly trust in what the poets and the multitude say, when most of them are bad and just a few are good (B104), and Heraclitus has heard other *logoi* which fail to understand the main principles of the cosmos (B108).[76]

Consequently, fragments B35, B55, and B101a indicate the opposite of what Plato and Sextus make of Heraclitus' views on sense perception. Heraclitus prefers things you can directly perceive, not the information brought forth by other people, not reports and second-hand experience. This is one of his suggestions for people looking to understand the *logos*. He encourages people interested in wisdom

[73] I follow ATH, 106, who states that B55 'expresses not so much an epistemic ranking of the senses as the reliance upon direct experience rather than upon hearsay.' This idea is also conveyed by fragments B40 and B129. See Granger (2004b), 246–252.
[74] See Marcovich (1967), 23 and n. 1.
[75] Marcovich (1967), 24.
[76] Cf. fragments B40, B57, B129, B56, and A23. See section 2.3.1.

(philosophers?) to experience the world by themselves as much as they can. This preference for empirical experience and not for reports and *logoi* from others is consistent with Heraclitus' critique of his predecessors and contemporaries, and also with the fact that *logos* cannot be communicated directly to others. You can achieve understanding of the *logos* by experiencing and understanding the world but not by listening to what others have to say about it. This idea represents Heraclitus' suggestion to people interested in knowledge and also explains the role that each person has in acquiring knowledge. As argued above, our souls hold *logoi* that may agree with the cosmic *logos* and result in its understanding. Those *logoi* in ourselves we can obtain and expand with our experience of the world. However, as I shall argue next, sense experience is not the only condition for understanding; as Plato and Sextus suggest, Heraclitus assumes that your senses can (and usually do) deceive you.

3.2.2. Barbarian souls

Sense perception by itself is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for understanding the *logos*. As argued above, Heraclitus' concept of soul is different than that of the epic tradition. One of the most important changes in the conception of soul is that its physical composition affects the proper functioning of some bodily and mental functions. This happens, for instance, in B117 when someone is drunk and has a wet soul. Now, since sense perception is one of the functions governed by the soul, its proper functionality is affected in the same way by changes in the soul. This means that the message received by the senses can be more or less precise, or rather right or wrong, depending on others characteristics of the soul. In fact, Heraclitus tells us about those cases in which sense perception is not reliable in the two following fragments:

> **B17**: οὐ γὰρ φρονέουσι τοιαῦτα πολλοί, ὁκόσοι ἐγκυρεῦσιν, οὐδὲ μαθόντες γινώσκουσιν, ἑωυτοῖσι δὲ δοκέουσι.
>
> Most people do not understand those things which they encounter, and they do not know them after having experienced them, but they think they do.

> **B107**: κακοὶ μάρτυρες ἀνθρώποισιν ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ ὦτα βαρβάρους ψυχὰς ἐχόντων.

Eyes and ears are bad witnesses for people when they have barbarian souls.

We previously saw that for Heraclitus what you experience yourself is better than what you experience through others, and that in this way seeing is better than hearing. However, these two fragments show us that experience is not itself a guarantee of understanding. In B17 we find that coming into contact with things does not mean we understand them when perceiving them. The term *mathēsis*, which Heraclitus prefers in fragment B55, seems to be insufficient because most people fail to understand when they experience (*mathontes*). However, the most important part of fragment B17 is not the failure to understand or to know the things they experience. What is most interesting is that people think they do. People have the physical experience, they use their senses and perceive what is in front of them, but the result is the same or worse than if they had not experienced it at all. This same idea is present in other fragments discussed in previous sections; sometimes people do not know how to hear (B19), or they hear but do not understand like the deaf (B34).[77] But, how do we know whether our senses are deceiving us? We know that the soul plays an important role in several physical and psychological functions. From fragment B117 it is possible to infer that sense perception would be deceiving or unreliable to that same drunk person who is unable to walk properly. It is clear that sense perception is deceptive when somebody is drunk, but Heraclitus is making a much stronger point in B17: even when people are sober and, so to say, in their right minds, whenever they go out to the world and experience things, there is a failure somewhere in the process of sense perception that prevents them from understanding correctly.[78]

Fragment B107 points to the soul, too, as the thing responsible for this malfunctioning in the process of sense perception. Still, it is quite unlikely that a

[77] For my interpretation of fragment B34, see section 0.5. As I argue in section 1.3.3, this lack of understanding what they experience, including Heraclitus' words, is one of the main points Heraclitus wants to get through in the second part of fragment B1 (ἀπείροισιν ἐοίκασι πειρώμενοι). Perhaps fragments B40, B22, and B18, are pointing in a similar direction.

[78] This failure could be understood as 'they see, but do not understand', i.e. their eyes and ears work well but not their minds/souls. However, as mentioned above, it is not clear whether Heraclitus discriminates in the process of sense perception between organs that perceive and faculties that interpret what is perceived, such as reason/thought. See Laks (1999), 254-262. I agree with A.A. Long (2013) that Heraclitus presents some ideas that are heading towards identifying those faculties. Nevertheless, I think in the case of sense perception the fragments do not recognise any such faculty yet. For instance, people experience but seem like they do not (B1), they hear but are like deaf (B34), and their eyes and ears are bad witnesses (B107).

'barbarian soul' is the same as the wet soul of the drunk person in fragment B117. Consequently, it seems that a soul can differ in another way. Its state can vary so far as this is a barbarian or non-barbarian soul, and this modification also affects its functions. There is also a difference between a drunk man misperceiving something and someone not understanding their experience when sober: we are aware of the misperception of drunkenness, but we are not aware of this when we are sober and our souls are 'barbarian'. There is something else that affects our souls and makes some of its functions work incorrectly. But what exactly is this 'barbarity' that souls can have?

The first problem which we have to deal with here is that, if the fragment is not spurious, this is one of the first attested uses of the word *barbaros*.[79] 'Barbarian souls' could be interpreted in three ways: 1) taking the expression as a metonymy, i.e. as souls belonging to people who do not speak Greek. 2) If we take *barbaros* to mean 'brute', 'dumb', 'uncomprehending', the phrase would mean that if your soul is not intelligent, sense perception will deceive you.[80] 3) The last option is that the term means 'uncomprehending of language'.

I shall disregard the first option, since this is a very strange way to say that non-Greeks are unable to understand through the medium of sense perception.[81] As for the second option, the problem of understanding *barbaros* as 'uncomprehending' and souls as 'intellect' is that it would make the statement a tautology: 'If you have an intellect that does not understand, then you will not understand what you hear and see'. Scholars tend to go for a variation of the third option.[82] Nussbaum proposes an interesting option: that Heraclitus proposes 'that your senses will deceive you if you

[79] LSJ and TLG, s.v. βάρβαρος. Homer uses a similar word in the *Iliad*, βαρβαρόφωνος (2.867) meaning 'non-Greek-speaking people'.
[80] This is the interpretation of Wheelwright (1959), 26: it refers 'to men who can make only meaningless sounds like "bar bar," and so cannot communicate.' And Barnes (1979), 148. However, in the LSJ, the original, and also general, meaning of the word is 'non-Greek' when construed as an adjective, and 'non-Greek-speaking-person' when construed as a noun. Its pejorative meaning, i.e. 'uncivilised', 'rude', 'brutal', the one we often use nowadays, is not even found in Herodotus, so it is unlikely that Heraclitus used it with that meaning. Powell (1938), s.v. βάρβαρος.
[81] If Heraclitus wanted to say that, why would he have said 'barbarian soul' instead of 'barbarians' straight away? I concur with Barnes (1979), 148, who observes that 'Heraclitus is hardly advancing the chauvinist thesis that non-Greek speakers cannot attain knowledge.'
[82] Language of sense perception: Kirk (1954), 376; Marcovich (1967), 47–48. Language of *logos*: McKirahan (1994), 146. Both: ATH, 107; Robinson (1987), 151. See also TEGP, 188; Guthrie (1962), 429; KRS (1983), 188.

do not have an accurate understanding of your own language.'[83] The word *barbaros* is related to language in its most basic meaning, and I agree that this is the best way to understand it in the fragment, but should we go as far as Nussbaum and say that it means someone who does not understand their own language?

Considering the meaning of the fragment as a whole, the most shocking idea of fragment B107 is this: the image that each person acquires of the world from sense perception is mediated by something inside their soul, i.e., as Hussey puts it, our preconceptions affect how we perceive the world.[84] However, who are those that do not have a barbarian soul and can correctly understand what they perceive? There are very few choices, other than Heraclitus himself. Perhaps a good *prophētēs*, who is able to understand the divine message in the visions of the Pythia or in a bird's liver, could be an example of someone who has a non-barbarian soul.[85] We also hear of Bias in fragment B39: ἐν Πριήνηι Βίας ἐγένετο ὁ Τευτάμεω, οὗ πλείων λόγος ἢ τῶν ἄλλων. ['In Priene lived Bias, son of Teutames, whose *logos* is greater than the rest.'[86]] But neither a *prophētēs* nor Bias nor anybody is explicitly said to understand the *logos*. On the contrary, as previously mentioned, Heraclitus thinks that most people fail to understand the *logos*, which I believe in turn implies that most people fail to understand what they experience. Therefore, it seems that Heraclitus is not only saying that sense perception is deceptive sometimes, but that what people hear and see does not correspond to reality in most of the cases and most of the time. This same idea is represented by Heraclitus with the picture of the sleepwalkers.[87] Most people are like sleepwalkers, who are walking on earth but whose minds and senses are seeing something else as in a dream, or a personal realm which corresponds to their private understanding (B2). But if nobody understands what they experience, or the *logos*,

[83] Nussbaum (1972), 10.
[84] Hussey (1999b), 90: 'Heraclitus is aware that the testimony of the senses is already shaped by our preconceptions. This makes it easier for him to explain how people, paradoxically, can fail to see what is before their eyes and hear what is filling their ears.'
[85] A *prophētēs* is not deceived by sense perception because what others would see as a strange noise, as a vision or as a simple liver, the *prophētēs* sees them as what they actually are: a particular divine message. See section 2.2.4.
[86] As pointed out by Guthrie (1962), 420–421 and Marcovich (1967), 525, the expression πλείων λόγος was common in Ionic dialect to mean 'to have esteem' or 'to be esteemed'. Perhaps Heraclitus intends a pun in B39, meaning that Bias also has a *logos* better than the rest. This could imply that Bias was another person who understood the *logos*.
[87] Cf. B1, B21, B26(?), and B73–74.

correctly, should we conclude, then, that only Heraclitus has a non-barbarian soul? And is there a way for other people to, so to speak, de-barbarise their souls so that they can rely on the testimony of their senses?

3.2.3. Know thyself

The first epistemological suggestion of Heraclitus is that we can only understand the *logos* by going out and experiencing the world ourselves but without having a barbarian soul: by listening directly to the *logos* (B50).[88] The exact process of how sense perception works is not explained by Heraclitus.[89] However, the personal *logos* in our soul, the *logos* which represents our description of the world, can be increased through sense experience and compared with the cosmic logos: it can come to agree (*homologein* in B50) with the common *logos* (B2). Nevertheless, as was just proposed, most people have a barbarian soul and do not understand what they perceive. However, it seems that they have the capacity to do so, as 'Thinking is common to everyone.' (B113).[90] In my interpretation, when Heraclitus says that people have the ability to understand but usually do not, he is referring to the problem of indoctrination.[91] We have the ability to understand but because bad teachers have taught us wrong *logoi* about the world we cannot understand it. Moreover, Heraclitus says in B116 that we not only have the ability of thinking or understanding but also the ability of self-knowledge: 'All people have share in self-knowledge and sound thinking.'[92] As I shall argue next, the solution for the problem of the 'barbarian soul' might be found in another fragment connected to self-knowledge, fragment B101:

> **B101**: ἐδιζησάμην ἐμεωυτόν.
>
> I went in search for myself.

[88] Two other important suggestions regarding knowledge are fragments B18 ('If one does not hope for the unhoped for, one will not discover it, since it is undiscoverable and inaccessible.' Trans. TEGP) and B22 ('Those seeking gold dig much earth and find little.' Trans. TEGP).
[89] See Laks (1999), 254.
[90] See section 1.3.
[91] See sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2.
[92] Trans. TEGP, with modifications, Greek text: ἀνθρώποισι πᾶσι μέτεστι γινώσκειν ἑωυτοὺς καὶ σωφρονεῖν.

Our previous analysis of fragment B45 suggests that our souls are more extensive because of the *logoi* inside them, and that this idea implies that it is possible to look inside ourselves.[93] However, it is not clear what we achieve by investigating our own souls. We know that the way to the *logos* is through sense perception with a non-barbarian soul, but what role does self-knowledge play in the process of achieving correct knowledge? What is that which we should look for within ourselves that may help us comprehend or guide us to a better understanding of the world?

Regarding self-knowledge, Granger proposes that 'the only "journey" Heraclitus mentions as worth making is into one's soul, in search of oneself (B101).'[94] As we saw above, Heraclitus distinguishes himself from his predecessors by making a difference between true knowledge or understanding (*nous*) and an unconnected collection of knowledge (*polymathiē*) in B40.[95] This true knowledge of his, the knowledge of the *logos*, is not personal or private but the opposite: it is common and universal (B1, B2). As such, it is not likely that this knowledge comes solely from introspection. We need to see and investigate the world ourselves and 'listen' directly to the *logos*, and understand how everything is one (B50).[96] I shall argue that Heraclitus suggests introspection not because our souls are a place where we can find the cosmic *logos* but because it is the place where we can fix whatever is stopping us from understanding sense perception correctly.

When we read fragment B101 in the context of Heraclitus it is impossible not to think about the legendary maxim of the Delphic Oracle: γνῶθι σεαυτόν.[97] What was the exact relation between the saying of Heraclitus and the Delphic maxim is very hard to establish.[98] Whether the maxim was first said by someone else and then put at the

[93] See Nussbaum (1972), 15. TEGP, 192, agrees that B45 is connected to self-investigation, and self-increasing in B115 to the process of learning. *Contra* Marcovich (1967), 57, and 368, who takes *logos* as 'measure' and seems to take these fragments as describing only physical or cosmic processes. See section 3.1.3.
[94] Granger (2004b), 257.
[95] See section 2.3.1.
[96] Cf. with the two paths of enquiry, truth and opinions, in Parmenides B1 and B2. In particular the mention of a deaf and blind people who are an undiscerning tribe in Parmenides B6.
[97] Most sources and references to fragment B101 connect it to the Delphic maxim. See survey of sources in Marcovich (1967), 53–56.
[98] Wilkins (1979), 12–13, says that B116 was 'the earliest apparent reference' to the Delphic maxim, but dismisses their possible relation because 'however much self-examination the words ἐδιζησάμην ἐμεωυτόν may imply, there is no indication that in using them Heraclitus himself had γνῶθι σεαυτόν in mind.' For the origin of the Delphic maxim, I will follow Clarke and Wormell (1956), 389: 'The legendary picture was fully developed by the latter part of the fifth century BC and even though

entrance of the oracle or pronounced by the oracle first and then made more popular by wise people referring to it, we may safely assume that the idea of self-knowledge that it proposes was widely famous in that time. Therefore, when Heraclitus mentions a journey in search of the self, he was most likely referring to the idea expressed by this famous maxim.

However, it is important to notice that searching is not the same as knowing; as Marcovich points out, *dizēmai* in B101 is not equivalent to *gignōskō*. Unlike Marcovich, I do not believe this to show that the maxim and the fragment are not related, but, on the contrary, that using a different wording was actually Heraclitus' intention.[99] Heraclitus knows and understands the words of the famous maxim, and the importance of self-knowledge. Moreover, he proceeds to look for himself first in order to know himself.[100] Plato, who deals with this maxim in several dialogues, seems to take it this way as well.[101] In *Phaedrus* 229e9–230a9 he says:

> But I have not time for such things; and the reason, my friend, is this. I am still unable, as the Delphic inscription orders, to know myself; and it really seems to me ridiculous to look into other things before I have understood that. This is why I do not concern myself with them. I accept what is generally believed, and, as I was just saying, I look not into [*skopō*] them but into my own self: Am I a beast more complicated and savage than

Herodotus does not mention it explicitly, he seems already to know the Seven Sages and their typical sayings. The actual authorship of the three maxims set up on the Delphian temple may be left uncertain. Most likely they were popular proverbs, which tended later to be attributed to particular sages.'

[99] Marcovich (1967), 57, says that the fragment is not related to the Delphic maxim because 'neither δίζησθαι means the same as γινώσκειν, nor ἐμεωυτόν as ψυχή.' *Contra* Marcovich see Herodotus' use of *dizēmai*, Powell (1938) and LSJ, where it means 'look for', 'try to find out', as most scholars take it and not 'ask', 'enquire' as Marcovich does. And that *psychē* was used to refer to the self before Heraclitus, see Schofield (1991), 25–27.

[100] Most scholars interpret the fragment in relation to self-knowledge and the Delphic maxim. Kahn (1979), 116: 'This is as straightforward a paradox as any in Heraclitus. Normally one goes looking for someone else. How can I be the object of my own search? This will make sense only if my self is somehow absent, hidden, or difficult to find. Thus XXVIII [B101] states, or presupposes, what one might have thought was a distinctly modern reading of the Delphi *gnōthi sauton*: self-knowledge is difficult because a man is divided from himself; he presents a problem for himself to resolve. We are surprisingly close here to the modern or Christian idea that a person may be alienated from his own (true) self.' Guthrie (1962), 419, connects fragment B101 to the Delphic maxim too. And Robinson (1987), 147, and KRS (2007), 210–211, suggest a similar interpretation. *Contra* see Wilkins (1917), who shows that most of those interpretations of the Delphic maxim where done in Antiquity, mainly by Plato and Neo-Platonists.

[101] Plato discusses about 'know thyself' in *Alcibiades I, Philebus, Phaedrus, Protagoras,* and mentions it in *Charmides* and *Laws.* See Wilkins (1917).

> Typhon, or am I a tamer, simpler animal with a share in a divine and gentle nature?[102]

Plato uses *skopō* to convey something similar to Heraclitus' *dizēmai*: that you need to go and find or investigate yourself, before investigating other things.[103] Your own self has an impact upon knowledge and understanding of other things. In other passages Plato shows us that to know yourself is equivalent to knowing your soul, and the result of not doing so is that many people think they are wiser than they really are.[104] I believe that the thing inside yourself that you need to look for and change in order to come to a better understanding of the world is the same in Plato and in Heraclitus: your own and personal *logos*.[105]

Diogenes Laertius, who is a source of B101, gives us an interesting story about the life of Heraclitus, which perhaps is just a collection of tales and legends told before him. However, whatever its origin, I think it offers a good interpretation of Heraclitus' epistemology. He says the following in 9.5:

> And he [Heraclitus] became a marvellous person from boyhood, for even while young he used to say that he knew nothing, but when grown up, he used to affirm that he knew everything. And he was no one's pupil, but he used to say that he had 'investigated himself' [B101], and had learnt [*mathein*] everything by himself.[106]

In this context, saying that you do not know anything is not only a problem of ignorance but it is mainly about rejecting or questioning what you have been taught before, namely, popular tradition. It is certain that Heraclitus had been taught and we

[102] Trans. Nehamas and Woodruff in Cooper (1997).
[103] See Wilkins (1979), for a thorough analysis of the different interpretations in antiquity. The Delphic maxim had many interpretations in antiquity, one of the first ones was 'know your measure', and a common one was 'know your place (immortal vs mortal)'. It seems to be directed in general as a criticism to arrogance and people who do not know their place. Perhaps Heraclitus fragment B43 (ὕβριν χρὴ σβεννύναι μᾶλλον ἢ πυρκαϊήν. ['Arrogance needs to be extinguished more than a fire.]) points in the same direction.
[104] *Alcibiades* 130e8: ψυχὴν ἄρα ἡμᾶς κελεύει γνωρίσαι ὁ ἐπιτάττων γνῶναι ἑαυτόν. ['So the command that we should know ourselves means that we should know our souls.'] See also *Philebus* 48c9–49a6.
[105] If we compare again Heraclitus' intention to the simile of the torpedo fish in *Meno* 79e9–80b7 (see section 2.3.2.), there are three general stages of knowledge: 1) having a wrong *logos*, 2) *aporia* followed by not having a wrong *logos*, and 3) having a *logos* that agrees with the cosmic *logos*.
[106] Greek text: Γέγονε δὲ θαυμάσιος ἐκ παίδων, ὅτε καὶ νέος ὢν ἔφασκε μηδὲν εἰδέναι, τέλειος μέντοι γενόμενος πάντ᾽ ἐγνωκέναι. ἤκουσέ τ᾽ οὐδενός, ἀλλ᾽ αὑτὸν ἔφη διζήσασθαι καὶ μαθεῖν πάντα παρ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ. It is possible that the use of *manthanien* here implies that Heraclitus learned by himself through sense perception, see section 3.2.1. On self-teaching, *logos*, and Greek epistemology, see Burnyeat (2017), 44–54.

know that he knew some theories of other philosophers and poets. That is why you need to know yourself and go in search for yourself. To know yourself means here to know what you know and what you do not, and to know your mistakes, also to know what you have been taught and whether it is correct. As argued above, Heraclitus' critique of his predecessors and contemporaries, in fragments B40 and B129 in particular, points in this direction. It is a call against cultural indoctrination; against letting other people fill your soul with their incorrect *logoi*. This was the main problem with *polymathiē*; it is bad because it is a collection of opinions (*logoi*) from others.[107] When people blindly believe those opinions they will never be able to see and understand the world themselves because they would only see it through the eyes of those who indoctrinated them.

A barbarian soul is then a soul that has an incorrect opinion or *logos* about the world, and that soul sees the world from the perspective of someone else, which represents a private understanding and not the common *logos* (B2). Someone with an incorrect *logos* experiencing the world understands as much of it as someone who does not speak Greek understands a conversation with Greek-speaking people. This happens not because people are inherently uncomprehensive of the language but for the opposite reason, because they naturally have the ability to comprehend but were taught the wrong language.[108] Then, the first step in order to de-barbarise your soul is to seek and understand the incorrect *logos* that you already have inside yourself. Then, after you realise that you know nothing in reality, you can start seeing the world from an unbiased perspective, understanding what your unhindered sense perception reports to you: a true description of the universe that agrees with the divine and cosmic *logos*.

3.3. Conclusion

The soul for Heraclitus has the following characteristics. Even though soul keeps the function that the tradition attributed to it as a condition of life, Heraclitus includes soul as a material that takes part in the cosmic transformation of the elements. Since souls

[107] See section 2.3.1.

[108] I assume the wrong language depends on the context and not on the thought that Greek was a better language than others. However, it would be hard to push the analogy further than what I have said so far, especially because you can learn two or more languages at the same time but I do not think you can have two correct *logoi* but only the correct one.

transform into water, consequently they can die, an idea that contradicts the traditional views about the soul. Heraclitus also explicitly attributes particular physiological and psychological functions to the embodied soul, which may vary from soul to soul depending on their state and quality. The soul inside the body can become dry or wet, and be barbarian or non-barbarian. Additionally, soul is a material but it is special in that it can contain *logoi*. This means that even when we can 'reach' the physical limits of souls, the contents of their *logoi* make their limits impossible or very hard to reach. This idea implies, as well, that a *logos* and its depth make the soul to be a different sort of realm or space, through which you can travel or explore.

Finally, for Heraclitus sense perception is a requirement for the understanding of the *logos*. People need to explore and experiment the world by themselves in order to understand it. However, sense perception is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. People who have a 'barbarian soul', a soul that does not understand the language of the *logos* or of reality, do not see things as they really are. Nevertheless, it seems that this can be changed. That thing in your soul that you need to change in order to understand sense perception correctly is its private *logos*. Self-knowledge is a requirement for people who have been taught incorrect *logoi* by others; they must look into themselves, and identify and question their own wrong *logoi*. Once they are free from incorrect *logoi,* their souls will stop being barbarian and will be able to understand reality and, consequently, the true *logos* of the cosmos.

Conclusions

The objective of the first chapter was to examine the object of knowledge in Heraclitus' epistemology, the concept of *logos*. It was argued that when Heraclitus uses the word *logos*, particularly in fragments B1, B2, and B50, he is not referring to his own speech but to something different and independent of him. This is mainly supported by fragment B50, where he encourages us to listen to the *logos* and not to Heraclitus, in order to understand fundamental truths of the cosmos, such as that everything is one. Additionally, an analysis of fragment B1, in particular of the words *aei* and *eontos* in the first line, and of *Timaeus* 27c1–d5 shows that Heraclitus evokes the epic formula for the immortality of the gods, and the fact that he mentions *logos* in the first part of his speech most likely implies a reference to the traditional invocation of the divinity. Therefore, the *logos* is also eternal and divine. Moreover, the similarity between Heraclitus' description of the *logos* in the fragments and the *logos* in the world-soul in Plato's *Timaeus* 36d–37c suggests that a cosmic-*logos* theory can be plausibly attributed to Heraclitus. In consequence, it is likely that he used an analogous idea when considering his divine *logos*. Lastly, based on the previous characteristics and on an analysis of the word *logos* in *Theaetetus* 206d1–208d3, I propose that the *logos* is an eternal and perfect description of the universe. This description can be understood in three non-exclusive ways: a descriptive description, a prescriptive description, and an abstract description.

Moreover, since the *logos* has such characteristics, I proposed that it cannot be communicated directly to others using language. This idea, that the full divine truth is impossible to communicate to people was present in the time of Heraclitus, and we find it in a way in the traditional views of the epic poets. Also, for Xenophanes, the access to this kind of truth was completely out of bounds for humans, even if they by chance managed to describe it correctly. Heraclitus most likely had a position similar to that of his predecessors and contemporaries regarding the problem of communication. For him, just as for his predecessors, there is an important difference between two realms: the divine and the human. The truth we seek in order to achieve knowledge is part of the divine realm and for this same reason Heraclitus cannot communicate it directly to others. This characteristic of the *logos* implies that the

object of knowledge, that which we want to reach in order to achieve understanding of the cosmos, is by itself one of the obstacles that Heraclitus presents to us in his fragments.

In the second chapter I treat the problem of language, communication and their role in Heraclitean epistemology. The poets, philosophers, and other wise people inherited some concerns about language to Heraclitus. The most important one might be that the language of the gods, just as their truth, is of a different nature and perhaps inaccessible for humans. Cratylus suggests that a correct language is also necessary when it comes to knowing and understanding nature. The exact relation between Cratylus and Heraclitus is not clear. However, in the fragments we can see that Heraclitus is concerned with the problem of naming and of the correctness of names in general. This concern about language is also present in his own writing style. Heraclitus was obscure, sometimes accidentally, but many times intentionally and with a particular objective in mind: he wanted to show us something else. In my interpretation this does not mean, however, that he hid his true message or the *logos* itself in his book or fragments, in the same way as we have it in the allegorical interpretations of the time. Heraclitus criticised epic poets, historians, and philosophers because they taught people false things. Given that *polymathiē* can be transmitted but not *nous*, and by listening to others we might by indoctrinated into falsehoods, Heraclitus addresses the problem of education. The *logos* itself is perhaps not susceptible to be taught in this same way as any other personal *logos*, but there are other ways in which language and communication are useful for Heraclitus' doctrine. First, language can be used to show what the correct *logos* is not. Second, by metaphor, analogy, and other indirect figures of speech, language can indicate the right way to *logos*. And third, by the use of paradox and different figures of speech, language can have a shocking effect and move people to question their incorrect *logoi*.

The third element in Heraclitus' epistemological thought is the soul. For Heraclitus, the soul keeps some of the functions that the tradition attributed to it as a condition of life. However, unlike them, Heraclitus includes soul as a material that takes part in the cosmic transformation of the elements. Additionally, he explicitly attributes particular functions to the human soul, which may vary from soul to soul depending on their state and quality. The embodied soul can become dry or wet, and

be barbarian or non-barbarian. These changes in the soul affect many of its functions, including sense perception, hearing, sight, and mental processes, such as memory and understanding. Additionally, the soul is the place where we can find our personal *logoi*. Even when we can 'reach' the physical or material limits of souls, their *logoi* make their real limits impossible or very hard to reach. This idea implies, as well, that a *logos* makes the soul to be a different, new realm or space.

Finally, for Heraclitus sense perception is a requirement for understanding the *logos*. People need to experience the world in order to understand it. However, sense perception is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. People who have a soul that does not understand the language of the *logos* or of reality, a 'barbarian soul', do not see things as they really are. Nevertheless, it seems that souls can change and become better. In order to understand sense perception correctly, people need to change their personal, incorrect *logoi*. Self-knowledge is the first step for people who have been taught incorrect *logoi*; they must look into themselves, and identify and question their own wrong *logoi*. Once they are free from incorrect *logoi,* their souls will be able to understand reality through sense perception and, consequently, they will see the true *logos* of the cosmos.

Even though the interpretation of Heraclitus' doctrine presented here agrees and, in many cases, relies on arguments and points of view already defended by ancient and modern scholars, it is as a whole a new contribution to the problem of understanding Heraclitus. In particular I believe the following points represent original arguments that lead to new possibilities in the interpretation of his philosophical doctrine. First, the idea that the *logos* is a linguistic item that perfectly describes the whole cosmos in a prescriptive and descriptive way and that represents an abstraction or extrapolation of human *logoi*. Second, that this *logos* cannot be communicated directly to other people in the same way human speech is communicated and that Heraclitus was aware and explicit in his text about this impossibility. Third, that Heraclitus uses a particular language not because he is trying to hide his true message but because he wants to cause an impression in indoctrinated people: he encourages us to think by ourselves and directs us to understand the divine *logos*.

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