This exercise has had Heraclitus in its sights from the beginning, because in a new and unexpected sense Heraclitus is indeed entirely about time. It is not that Time is a theme in his words and works; there is no saying that mentions time by name (χρόνος) in what survives to us. Time is instead the field in which the whole of his writing and experience takes place. For him it is disclosure space itself, the invisibility in the visible to whose exposure he was the first to devote himself among the ancient Greeks. Like Parmenides, like *Timaeus*, like Plotinus, his thought moves between time and eternity. A claim like this needs some development from his texts.

3. *Time in Heraclitus: The circular joining of* αεὶ *and* αἰών.

In his wonderful assembly of *Studies in Heraclitus,* Roman Dilcher has given proper prominence to the text referred to as 'fragment' 1.[10] He is certainly not alone in seeing that it is an introduction to the lost book, but he has best brought out how deeply implicated it is methodologically in all the sayings.

Not only the longest of surviving texts from Heraclitus, Charles H. Kahn pointed out that Fr. 1 "is probably the longest piece of surviving Greek prose before the *Histories* of Herodotus,."[11] and gave it himself an especially important role as introduction to the collection of sayings produced as a book *On Nature*. Dilcher shares and builds upon Kahn's conviction that Heraclitus worked in writing—that the book was not a compilation of oral declamations—but he has a much more radical account of the role of the proem as key to the nature of that work. With one modification I will explain below, I shall adapt Dilcher's suggestions to our purposes here.

Let me place before us what is certainly not a 'fragment', but a complete and rigorously constructed introduction to what Heraclitus says he is doing as a philosopher, and how we are to read him philosophically. I add a provisional interlinear translation that leaves a number of important ambiguities about construing the text unresolved.[12]

Fragment 1 (I Kahn)

1 τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ᾽ ἐόντος αεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι
of the Logos the (one) being always uncomprehending become humans

2 καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον·
both before hearing it and hearing it at first

3 γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν ἐοίκασι
for although all things happen according to this Logos they seem untried/untested—

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10 Spudasmata 56, Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1995.

11 *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (1979), p. 96.

12 Greek text from Diels/Kranz 6th edition (1951ff); line numbers are *ad hoc* for convenience of reference within this discussion.

4 πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων ὁκοίων ἐγω διηγεῦμαι
those tried/tested by both such words and works as these such as I expound

5 κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔκει·
according to nature distinguishing each and showing how it holds/tends;

6 τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν
the other humans let slip away what they do awake

7 ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὕδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται.
just as what they do asleep escapes them.

The most famous ambiguity in this text is easily that of the adverb αεὶ, "always," in line 1, which can be taken with the preceding participle ἐόντος, yielding a claim that the Logos is "always being," or with the subsequent verb γίνονται, producing the statement that humans "always become uncomprehending" of it. Already Aristotle complained that this line is "not easy to punctuate," (μὴ ῥᾴδιον διαστίξαι, *Rhet.* Γ 5, 1407b) and he includes it in his list of affronts to Greek style (τὸ ἑλληνίζειν).[13] And sure enough, translators in the main join Aristotle in assuming that the line *must* be punctuated one way or the other. I am convinced that the ambiguity is intended by Heraclitus. It can be reproduced in English,[14] and I will argue below that it should be. But at least the issue in this line is very well known and amply discussed. In the line on which I wish to focus, it has not even been seen that there is an ambiguity.

In line 5, what is the antecedent of ἕκαστον, "each"?

Prior to Roman Dilcher, I know of no discussion in which the antecedent is not assumed to be line 3's πάντων, "everything." The traditional interpretation interacts with the way the phrase κατὰ φύσιν, "according to nature," is understood. Here Aristotelian assumptions come into play that are far more insidious than his constraints on punctuation: It is assumed that πάντων is everything in the sense of every *thing*, and that ἕκαστον is each in the sense of each *thing*. Hence, no matter which of the several verbs in the passage (expounding, distinguishing,

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13 The cited line is not "easy," Aristotle notes, but is "work" (ἔργον). It should be noted in passing here that the "punctuation" Aristotle is discussing is a matter of syntactical construction entirely and not of the employment of glyphs or marks in the graphics of writing. That is why the context is not writing but reading; specifically, that property of texts that makes reading on the level of recognition (εὐανάγνωστον) straightforward enough for fluent reading aloud (εὔφραστον). The two amount to the same thing, Aristotle tells us. It is precisely in the absence of represented punctuation that constructions that stop the flow of reading (not yet the flow of thought!) are so intrusive. They call for "work," a kind of preparation in advance of thought that for Aristotle threatens to impede the arrival of thought into language.

14 As Jonathan Barnes, alone to my discovery, makes clear; *Early Greek Philosophy* (1987), p. 101. Dilcher's argument that it is not ambiguous, but that αεὶ goes with the being of the λόγος is engaged below.

showing) is qualified as being carried out κατὰ φύσιν, the translation is expected to read "according to *its* nature," with the focus on individual things.

Consider a few of the most influential translations:

> Such words and works as I set forth, distinguishing each according to its nature and telling how it is.[15]

> such words and deeds as I explain, when I distinguish each thing according to its constitution and declare how it is.[16]

> the words and deeds which I expound as I divide up each thing according to its nature and say how it is.[17]

The assumption that the "all" are all *things*, so that it is "each" *of them* about which Heraclitus is speaking, is yet again the influence of the position Aristotle takes toward his predecessor φύσικοι in *Metaphysics* A, 3. He there surveys them with respect to their employment of the four 'causes' or patterns of explanation that together account for the being of the *thing:* the τόδε τι or ἑκάστον of book Zeta. The effect of this is to attribute to them the same interest in particulars that founds his physics. And in that connection, φύσις or 'nature' "in the primary and chief sense is the οὐσία of those things which have in them their own source of movement" (*Met.* Δ, 4, 1015a13-14) —which is precisely how the Heraclitan κατὰ φύσιν is being taken in the translation, "according to *its* nature."

Charles Kahn is so committed to the notion that Heraclitus inspects 'each thing' according to 'its nature' that it shapes his construal and translation of a related fragment:[18]

Fr. 112 (XXXII Kahn)[19]

> σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μεγίστη καὶ σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαΐοντας
> Thinking well is the greatest excellence and wisdom: to act and speak what is true, perceiving things according to their nature.

There are many difficulties with this saying, but I am content with Kahn's account of it—except for the final phrase, κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαΐοντας. Nothing in the Greek corresponds to the "things" that he supplies, and nothing other than a presupposition that 'nature' in Heraclitus means the nature of things suggests that the simple phrase "according to nature" should be read as "according to *their* nature."

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15 Kahn, p. 29.

16 Kirk, Raven, Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Second edition, 1983), **194**.

17 Barnes (1987), p. 101.

18 As he makes explicit, p. 121.

19 Trans. Kahn. DK punctuates with a comma after μεγίστη; Kahn reads it after σοφίη.

The verb ἐπαΐω means 'give ear to', 'hear', in the sense of perceive, understand. It is idiomatic for 'hear or follow with understanding' in a phrase like "not understand a barbarian language" (τὴν βάρβαρον γὰρ γλῶσσαν οὐκ ἐπαΐω, Sophocles, *Ajax* 1263), and also comes to mean the 'hearer' of a discipline as designating someone well acquainted with or expert in it (pervasive in Plato, cf. LSJ entry 4). By analogy, the phrase in Heraclitus should have the sense, "giving ear or paying attention according to nature," where nature should be understood globally, as the 'language' of the cosmos, so to speak—an intelligibility for which Heraclitus has trained his attention, but which "other humans" miss in their preoccupation with the obvious.

Return then to line 5 in Fragment 1, about which I raised the question of antecedent for the word "each." Not only on grounds of grammatical proximity, but from precisely the movement of thought itself within the text, it is far more natural to take line 5's "each" to refer to the "words and works" just mentioned in line 4 than to the "all" in line 3. But now the whole sense of the passage is transformed! The phrase "according to nature" now qualifies Heraclitus' own practice in his "words and works," instead of referring to "all that happens in accordance with the Logos." Here is the passage again, with the translation I propose:

4 πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων ὁκοίων ἐγω διηγεῦμαι
(those who) are tried/tested by such words and works as these that I elaborate

5 κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔκει·
in accordance with nature, choosing each with discrimination and exhibiting its tendencies.

Suddenly we hear Heraclitus describing the very features of his "words and works" with which the student of his Greek is massively familiar: the extreme deliberation and precision of his choice of words (διαιρέων ἕκαστον), and the craft and cunning of his play and maneuver with syntactical and semantical relations among them, forcing them to our attention (φράζων ὅκως ἔκει).

Roman Dilcher takes the 'each' as I do, first as part of his consistent opposition to the notion that Heraclitus has 'cosmological' interests alongside methodological and psychological ones.[20] He spends no time on the conventional view that its antecedent might be line 3's "all (things)," but turns directly to his interpretation of the ἔπεα καὶ ἔργα in line 4.

Recognizing it to be "an old formula, frequent in Epic literature as well as in Herodotus, that signifies the whole of human behavior," Dilcher translates naturally: "words and deeds."[21] But then, based on the idea that human activities in the broadest sense are in question, he makes the remarkable assumption that it is the doings of "the other humans" (line 6) about

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20 As in G. S. Kirk, *Heraclitus: The Cosmic Fragments* (Cambridge, 1954).

21 *Studies* p.16. In addition to the discussions of the phrase he cites in note 15, see also Christopherus Barck, *Wort und Tat bei Homer* [Spudasmata 34] (Hildesheim, New York, and Zürich: Georg Olms, 1976).

which Heraclitus expounds, discriminates, and demonstrates, so that it is *their* nature that is to be brought out.

> The second half of this sentence, therefore [line 5 in my notation], provides...the formal indication of content and method. It is these "words and deeds" in general which Heraclitus claims to explain. His logos investigates the very state of this uncomprehending behaviour.... Heraclitus' foremost concern, therefore, is human life and its self-understanding.[22]

I judge to the contrary that it is not the words and deeds of οἱ πολλοὶ to which Heraclitus addresses himself, but his *own*. In the first place, line 4's ἐγω διηγεῦμαι, "I expound," is emphatic and self-assertive in Greek, where the pronoun is grammatically unnecessary. And more to the point, it is precisely in regard to his own concrete discourse that he lodges his provocative complaint: humans are uncomprehending of the logos, even after they have heard it for the first time (lines 1-2). How have they heard it? Though they seem inexperienced, they *have* experienced his "words and works."

This juxtaposition of the logos with what Heraclitus is doing in his own discourse recurs in B50 (XXXVI Kahn):

> οὐκ ἐμοῦ ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας
> not to me but to the logos listening
>
> ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστιν ἓν πάντα εἶναι
> it is wise to acknowledge all to be one.

Here again Heraclitus inserts himself in the first person, as a factor in the situation How might we make the mistake of listening to him and missing the logos? Because it is his ἔπεα καὶ ἔργα that we experience immediately—which I translate "words and works" (like Latin *verba et opera*).

An argument of a kind that Dilcher himself makes in other contexts applies here. Of course the stock phrase "words and works" is familiar to Heraclitus' readers, and of course the Epic expectation that "works" means deeds and actions, as in battle, is in play. But the Heraclitan move is to confound expectations! His goal is to jolt us into recognizing configurations of *words* (ἔπεα) as themselves *works* (ἔργα)—to make writing itself a new kind of work, philosophical work.

Heraclitus' work is to make configurations of words be "in accordance with nature" in a very direct sense: they 'work' like nature does. They are a kind of performance art.

At the start of fragment 1, Heraclitus' sentence *performs*, at the meta-level, the double-dynamic that the text goes on to introduce, and that pervades his whole thought. Tilted toward what "ever happens" with men, the "always" evokes the pervasive λανθάνειν, slipping off into the obliviousness of the obvious and everyday, which is the dynamic Heraclitus wishes to

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22 *Studies*, pp. 16-17.

counter by startling us awake through "words and works" that cannot be taken at face value, that confuse or irritate us if we do. Tilted toward the ever-being of the Logos, on the other hand, the "always" evokes the ἀληθέα, truth as the *un*-slipped-away, the *Unverborgenheit* that Heidegger so stresses as fruit of a counter-exertion against the subsidence into oblivion.[23]

"Of this Logos the one being always uncomprehending become humans..."

The sentence is a kind of linguistic Nekker cube. This is the famous optical illusion discussed in the psychology of perception, in which a two-dimensional drawing of a wire-figure cube can be seen alternately with one face forward, or with that same face to the rear—but not both at once. By intentionally making a sentence that forces a 'double-take' upon us, Heraclitus launches our reading onto a meta-level.

Dilcher argues that the phrase τοῦδ' ἐόντος requires αεὶ to be understood with it, assuming that 'be' here is predicative, so that the clause is *not* ambiguous.[24] But even if correct, this doesn't speak against αεὶ *also* being required to make sense of line 2's "before having heard and hearing the first time." While one tilt to the sentence is in force, the other one is not disabled. They simply can't both be in force at the same time.

Or rather, αεὶ, always, is precisely the *time* in which they are both in force at once. Ever-being, αεὶ ὄν, will become in later writers the (fictitious) etymological meaning of αἰών, eternity. And taken with γίγνομαι, for those same writers αεὶ/always signifies the sensible motion in becoming. The term harbors in itself, therefore, the two-dimensionality we have stressed throughout this study. In Heraclitus, time is not named, but it is evoked, or more strongly, performed, by the αεὶ in this sentence. Time is what reaches from eternity into time. Time is arrival into itself as the disclosure space of sensible motion, in the intellectual motion by which it produces itself from eternity.

Time is what we find in Heraclitus. Yet in his extant texts we find no χρόνος but instead, at the very place where we might look for χρόνος, αἰών.

αἰών παῖς ἐστι παίζων, πεσσεύων· παιδὸς ἡ βασιληίη.[25]
Aion is a child playing, throwing dice.[26] Of the child is the kingship.

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[23] It can be noted that Heraclitus' use of *two* words from λανθάνω in his description of how "other men" conduct themselves, at the end of fragment 1, together with the ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαΐοντας, all but conclusively corroborates Heidegger's insistence that the alpha-privative sense of the word ἀληθής, 'true', is heard in early Greek writing. (Here and throughout I adopt the archaic spelling of the noun ἀληθέα that DK print.)

[24] *Studies,* p. 27.

[25] DK B 52, Kahn XCIV

[26] The precise nature of the game *pessos* remains conjectural. I am taking it to be a forerunner of backgammon, as does Kahn, following Marcovich. See Kahn's commentary *ad loc.*, *op. cit,* p. 227.