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HERACLITUS' BOW COMPOSITION

INTRODUCTION

This article aims to throw light on a recurrent structural feature of Heraclitus' style that, it will be argued, serves as a tool to enrich interpretation of his fragments. Named after the bow image used by the philosopher in B51, the 'bow composition' will be presented as a narrative technique developed by Heraclitus to reveal his conception of the world. In B51 we read: οὐ ξυνιᾶσιν ὅκως διαφερόμενον ἑωυτῶι ὁμολογέει· παλίντροπος ἁρμονίη ὅκωσπερ τόξου καὶ λύρης ('They don't understand how what is in variance agrees with itself, a reciprocal stretching harmony as in the bow and the lyre'). Following an assumption that will be defended later, I argue that Heraclitus attempts through his text to demonstrate how 'what is in variance agrees with itself'. One of his strategies to this end would be the bow composition, a way to structure his statements in which its first and last terms share the same root but have subtle suffix or prefix differences in order to depict that while being related (ὁμολογέει) they still maintain some difference (διαφερόμενον). By means of employing such structure to describe reality Heraclitus would imitate the world order in his word order by providing his audience with an analogy that once perceived in the text would teach them how to correctly interpret nature itself.

The analysis of the occurrences of these bow compositions in the fragments will constitute the central part of this article but before beginning I discuss briefly aspects of the poetic tradition and its critical use by the philosopher that will prove useful in the following analysis. I shall argue that the traditional techniques he had at hand could not only be used but also modified by him to reach the audience through the breaking of expectations.

After that comes an attempt to find a philosophical motivation for Heraclitus' stylistic choices based upon his '*logos*' fragments (B1, B2, B50). Heraclitus would speak 'according to nature' to show 'how the things are' (B1), that is, their nature. Thus, the relation between text and reality would be that of an imitation and, as 'nature loves to hide' (B123), Heraclitus would have chosen to speak in a cryptic style to convey a cryptic subject. Before analysing the structure of his text I shall present a model of Heraclitus' view of the world order, according to which the variance between the opposites that proves their union is not a cyclical movement always going in one direction but rather a rectilinear reciprocal one that allows the opposites to be in perpetual strife with one another.

Finally, I shall present bow composition as one of Heraclitus' discursive strategies in which the order of the text recapitulates the order of the world with the aim of conveying the reality that remains hidden. I shall examine the bow composition's general traits in light of three traditional narrative techniques: antithesis, chiasmus and ring composition. B36 will figure as the primordial example in which the reciprocal movement enacted between its first and last terms, ψυχαί and ψυχή, characterize a variation in agreement. I then divide the analysis of other possible occurrences into three groups of bow

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compositions, according to the predominance of a chiastic movement (B90, B126), an antithetic opposition (B20, B21) or their union in a chiastic antithesis (B25, B62).

A CRITICAL APPROACH TO THE USE OF TRADITION

Traditional narrative techniques constitute a repository of tools available to an author to draw upon in structuring his thought. These traditional techniques inform both the creation and interpretation of a given text. When an author chooses to use a traditional technique he knows that it will immediately be identified and even predicted by his audience.[1] On the other hand, there is nothing so rigid as rules therefore the author has licence to change it. He can consciously alter a traditional technique to deceive his audience's expectations, attempting to make a greater impression with his words.[2] Therefore, the use of a traditional narrative technique is an individual application of a general formula. It is always hard to coordinate the limits between the individual and general use, and even harder in the context of an oral culture in which rules have not yet been fully formalized nor is the concept of authorship well defined.[3]

The relation of Heraclitus to his text is particularly hard to determine because the body of his work was composed in the transition from an oral to a written culture. This is proved by identifiable wordplay in his fragments that can depend upon both oral and written presentation of his text. For instance B114 makes use of the sound consonance of the graphically distinct ξὺν νόωι, ξυνῶι ('with thought', 'common') to relate these terms, while B48 uses the graphic equality of the distinctly pronounced BIOΣ (βίος, 'life'/βιός, 'bow') to demonstrate their union. Moreover, Heraclitus' style can also be placed in the middle of another transition, that between poetry and prose. His extant fragments suggest that in composing he went beyond poetical conventions without however abandoning poetic *formulae*. He uses no metre and yet exploits several epic *formulae*, such as 'gods and men' or 'it was, is, and will be' in B30.[4] This twofold transitional situation furnished Heraclitus with an almost unrestricted use of language by which to structure and reveal his thought with such a personal style that he was frequently accused of obscurity.[5]

[1] If an antithesis is presented to a well-trained audience they will probably predict it. Cleobulus' maxim is an example. When he says εὐποροῦντα μὴ ὑπερήφανον εἶναι, ἀποροῦντα μὴ ταπεινοῦσθαι ('being lucky don't be arrogant, being unlucky don't be humble'), the second clause is predictable because it is constructed in opposition to the first (Cleobulus, *Apophthegmata ex collectione Demetrii Phalerei*, *ap.* Stob. 1.19).

[2] Solon's maxims give an example of breaking expectation. First he advises: ὃ ἂν <μὴ> ἴδηις, μὴ λέγε ('What you didn't see, don't say') and then, when people should expect a piece of advice exhorting them to 'say what you saw' he advises the contrary: εἰδὼς σίγα ('having seen keep quiet', Solon, *Apophthegmata* [n. 1], 2.17–18).

[3] For instance, maxims of the seven wise men have different forms attributed to different authors as well. A more predictable version of Solon's advice quoted above is attributed to Thales: Δεῖ τὰ μὲν εἰκότα λέγειν, τὰ δὲ ἀμήχανα σιωπᾶν ('You shall speak about the visible things, but keep quiet about the impossible ones', Thales, *Apophthegmata (ap. auctores diversos)* 5.4).

[4] More precisely the Greek text reads: οὔτε τις θεῶν οὔτε ἀνθρώπων ἐποίησεν, ἀλλ' ἦν ἀεὶ καὶ ἔστιν καὶ ἔσται ('neither gods nor men made it, but it always was, is and will be'). As will be seen, the fact that these *formulae* are used in an adapted way could confirm an attempt to make them fit with the description of the world sought by the author.

[5] The most ancient extant criticism of Heraclitus' style appears in Arist. *Rh*. 1407b14 where B1 is quoted as an example of an unclear text because of the ambiguity generated by an epic formula used in an inverted way. Heraclitus says ἐόντος ἀεὶ instead of ἀεὶ ἐόντος ('ever being') presenting a situation

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A REASON FOR OBSCURITY

Heraclitus' obscurity was hardly an accident of the transitional period in which he lived, but rather cultivated by him as most readers ancient and modern have recognized.[6] A reasonable motivation for this obscurity comes into sight when we analyse the content and the purpose of his text. The main obstacle to discovering Heraclitus' purpose while revealing his thought is his apparent contempt towards mankind, that is, his audience.[7] The critical attitude that pervades his fragments seems to reject the possibility that his text may have been written in the way it is with his readers in mind.[8] In B1 it is said that 'men become ignorant before and after hearing him', and that they 'act as having no experience while experiencing it'.[9] Among his criticisms, he identifies one of mankind's problems as a failure to realize that 'all things come into being in accordance with the *logos*'. Despite the negative tone adopted in B1, the failure of men described there entails also a possible solution which is presented by B2 in a more positive prescription. The fragment states that men must 'follow the *logos* common to all of them' instead of their deceptive 'particular comprehension'. Now, if people are ignorant because they do not understand their common *logos,* it is reasonable to suppose that his text was designed in part to provide a demonstration of how to follow this *logos*. And yet, if he wants to show them their own *logos* that until now most of them were not able to understand, he could not do it using the same kind of discourse (*logos*) that they are used to.

The pessimistic Heraclitus expects the majority of men to understand neither their *logos* nor his text, yet he knows that all of them have the common *logos* and thus are able to learn how to follow it. This approach fits the separation between the speaker

in which the 'ever' could be linked to 'being' or to the sequence of the fragment 'men becoming ignorant'.

[6] There are several explanations of Heraclitus' obscurity. Plato, for instance, offers one hypothesis when he says that 'the creation of another language is required by those who accept such thought [he is referring to the 'everything flows'] because now we have no words to describe their hypothesis' (Pl. *Tht*. 183a–b). Theophrastus attributed Heraclitus' obscure style to his melancholia (see Diog. Laert. 9.5). His style is personal enough to invite an ad hominem argument but, as will be seen, Plato's position seems more plausible. Heraclitus' style would be an attempt to express his presumably new world view in a new way.

[7] The philosopher attacks not only the majority of men as a group (B1, B2, B17, B29, B56, B57, B104) but also particular authors both from tradition and from among his contemporaries (B40: Hesiod, Pythagoras, Hecataeus and Xenophanes; B42: Homer and Archilochus; B56: Homer; and B57: Hesiod). B104, in saying that 'they are persuaded by popular singers and take the multitude as a teacher, not knowing that most of them are bad and only a few are good', serves as a paradigm for the circularity of a process in which the authors base their thoughts upon traditional opinions and then teach them to the majority of men (i.e. the reinforcement of tradition).

[8] Diog. Laert. 9.6 furnishes an example of such an attitude when he says: 'he (Heraclitus) deposited his book in the temple of Artemis and, according to some, he chose to make his writings the most obscure in such a way that only those capable enough would approach it'.

[9] This is a fragment as important as it is difficult. The Greek text is: τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος ἀεὶ 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. The partial translations I provide are almost paraphrases to convey the way that the text has been read. Together B1, B2 and B50 can be analysed as a group of fragments dealing with the *logos.* B2 reads: διὸ δεῖ ἕπεσθαι τῶι <ξυνῶι>, τουτέστι τῶι> κοινῶι· ξυνὸς γὰρ ὁ κοινός. <τοῦ λόγου δ' ἐόντος ξυνοῦ ζώουσιν οἱ πολλοὶ ὡς ἰδίαν ἔχοντες φρόνησιν; and B50: οὐκ ἐμοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστιν ἓν πάντα εἶναι.

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and the *logos* presented in B50, in which he exhorts people to listen not to him (a particular comprehension) but to the *logos* (of which his text would be but an example).[10] To understand how he manages to show the common *logos* through his text it is necessary to decipher the relation between his style and the content of his text.

In B1 Heraclitus criticizes humans because they 'fail to understand that all things come to be in accordance with this *logos*'. Thus, if his text aims to give people an understanding of their own common *logos*, as has been argued, it should show how things come to be. It is also said in B1 that he does it 'in accordance with nature'. Heraclitus would probably understand by the 'nature' of a thing something like its whole process of 'coming into being'.[11] If this interpretation is legitimate, it seems plausible to infer that his discourse not only demonstrates the coming into being of things (their nature), but also their doing this in accordance with nature (with their coming into being). Thus the relation between the text and its object would be that of an imitation.[12] B123 states that 'nature loves to hide' (φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ). This statement coordinates style (obscurity), content (the obscure subject) and the purpose (the aim) of Heraclitus' text. If a text is 'in accordance with nature' while talking about nature ('the coming into being of things', B1), which is cryptic (B123), it must be a cryptic text that, as his subject, will require some interpretation in order to be revealed. From this perspective a text with an obscure object could be nothing but obscure in such a way that the men who fail to understand nature because they do not follow their common *logos* will also fail to understand the text.

The analogy between dealing with nature and dealing with a text is reinforced by B107, where vision and hearing, senses through which men experience the world, are declared useless for those who have barbarian souls (κακοὶ μάρτυρες ἀνθρώποισιν ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ ὦτα βαρβάρους ψυχὰς ἐχόντων). In this case the adjective 'barbarian' (one who does not speak Greek) criticizes human incapacity to interpret experiences correctly, as if they were a text in a foreign language. The interpretative step required to understand nature would be the same as the step required to understand Heraclitus'

[10] Thus Heraclitus' text would claim the authority not of its author but of the common *logos.* For this reason his assertions could, and should, be verified by each person, following the common *logos.* Against this position, there are scholars who explain this separation through divine inspiration, of which Heraclitus would be just a vehicle; e.g. L. Miller, 'The logos of Heraclitus: updating the report', *HThR* 74.2 (1981), 161–176, at 170 writes: 'There is nothing to prevent Heraclitus from distinguishing his own discourse from the inspired and revelatory Truth vouchsafed to him. Likewise, the priestess at Delphi presumably could have distinguished her ordinary discourse from the prophetic words uttered through her by the inspiration of the oracle'. In spite of these beliefs common to his time, Heraclitus' relation to the discourse seems to be more conscious, as is shown in the next section.

[11] G. Naddaf, *The Greek Concept of Nature* (New York, 2005), 14–15 takes B1, which he calls 'the first Pre-Socratic occurrence of *phusis*', as an example of the fundamental meaning of nature: 'In this fragment (B1), the fundamental meaning of *phusis* – the nature of a thing as it is realized with all of its properties from beginning to end, or the whole process of growth of a thing from birth to maturity – is not in doubt.' Thus the nature of a thing is its coming to being in a sense that includes its generation, existence and its coming to an end.

[12] In the *Cratylus* Plato discusses several possibilities of an imitative relation between language and reality. In 439a Socrates, while arguing with Cratylus, a 'Heraclitean', says: 'if it is possible to learn from the things themselves or from their names, which would offer a better and clearer lesson? To learn from the image and the truth that it imitates, even if it is a good image, or to learn from the truth itself?' The defence of the imitation seems to be made by Socrates only to refute Cratylus, although it entails a purpose for an imitative text similar to the one I suppose to be that of Heraclitus. His text imitates nature in order to teach men how to see nature in a way that allows them to see nature directly once the lesson is learned.

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text, in such a way as to argue that if one learns how to interpret a text it will become immediately clear how to interpret reality.

Heraclitus' stylistic strategy and the analogy between the interpretation of sensory information and the interpretation of language points to the difference between his style and that of others. In Heraclitus' time, one common distinction stressed in the methods available to acquire information was that between direct and indirect experience. The distinction is epitomized in the difference between seeing something and hearing about it from someone else. A text or a speech is usually the main example of hearsay – an indirect and thus less trustworthy method of acquiring information.[13] B101a endorses this conception in saying that the 'eyes are more accurate witnesses than the ears' (ὀφθαλμοὶ τῶν ὤτων ἀκριβέστεροι μάρτυρες). But what Heraclitus seems to pursue in his strategy of revealing his thought through imitation is to provide his audience with a kind of direct information within the text. Thus, to understand the text, the hearer (or reader) will need to resort to the same non-barbarian soul (and common *logos*) used in the correct interpretations of the information he receives from vision. Willing to rescue men from their deceptive particular experiences, Heraclitus offers them the experience of a cryptic text that imitates his cryptic object, in the hope that in learning how to interpret one they will learn how to interpret the other. The aim of the text, to demonstrate the nature of things, is to be achieved through the imitation of the nature of things in such a way that those who learn how to interpret the text learn also how to interpret nature. This propaedeutic strategy seems appropriate to the way Heraclitus presents his ideas, namely not through the development of arguments but rather with analogies, similes and so on.

THE WORLD ORDER AS CHANGING OPPOSITES

Heraclitus' text is thus an attempt to show the nature of a thing, which entailed its process of coming into being, being and coming to an end. In Heraclitus' thought, this changing process seems reducible to one general formula, the so-called theory of the 'union of opposites', according to which each thing is in a process of change between opposites. That this tension between changing opposites is present in everything can be demonstrated in its indistinct application to various different types of ontological categories throughout his fragments, for example in B10 between day and night (phenomenon) and satiety and hunger (state), or in B126 between hot and cold (quality) and in B36 between water, earth and vapour (element).[14] Therefore the nature of all things (their changing between coming into being and coming to an end) explained through this unique process would represent the world order (cosmos). Unfortunately, this is exactly what men fail to realize because even if they identify the opposites they do

[13] This distinction is especially useful in historiographical investigation; e.g. Hdt. 1.183.3 makes a clear distinction between the situations that Herodotus saw and those he just heard about: 'I myself didn't see those things, but I say what was told to me by the Chaldeans'; likewise the episode between Candaules and Gyges (1.8), where the former does not think it enough to tell his servant how beautiful his wife is: he wants him to see her with his own eyes to present an enactment of this belief.

[14] The presentation of three elements shows that the relation between opposites is not limited to two. On the other hand, apart from the number of things in question, their relation seems to occur always between two opposites. There is vapour that changes to water, water that changes to earth and vice versa, always respecting the duality of the opposition. This situation will be treated more precisely later.

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not realize that they are part of the same process. In B51,[15] cited in the introduction, one can see the critique against men in Heraclitus' own words when he says that 'they don't understand how what is in variance agrees with itself, a reciprocal stretching harmony as in the bow and the lyre'.[16]

Once this world order has been established as a constant process of change between the things that constitute it, one might seek to define better how such a process occurs. The main possibilities for a definition are a cyclic or a rectilinear process of change whose movement can be either in one direction or reciprocal. For the most part Heraclitus' fragments show a rectilinear model of change from one thing to another ($A \leftrightarrow B$); this seems to be the more economic model for understanding a reciprocal movement between opposites.[17]

There are several indications in Heraclitus' fragments of a model of reciprocal rectilinear change; for instance, the way up and down that is one and the same in B60,[18] the lighting and quenching of fire in B30, the hot things becoming cold and the cold things becoming hot in B126. All of these present a rectilinear reciprocal model of the type $A \rightarrow B$, $B \rightarrow A$, in which the direction of movement is back and forth rather than only in one direction, as in $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow A$.[19]

[15] B51 has two disputed words that are relevant to the present investigation. Some versions have παλίντονος (reciprocal stretching), the Homeric epithet for the bow (cf. Hom. *Il.* 8.266), where others have παλίντροπος (reciprocal tuning) as in Parmenides B6.9. Both of them characterize reciprocity, while the first relates better to the bow and the second to the lyre. It is hard to find a reason to choose one or the other but the sense in both cases seems to be that of a metaphor for a reciprocal movement or tension. The other question is between ὁμολογέω (agree) and the correction συμφέρω (reunite). The correction is justified by the symmetry between διαφέρω (disunite) and συμφέρω that occurs in another fragment, B10. But as the agreement of opposites suffices for the understanding of B51, it seems better to keep the manuscript's reading. D.W. Graham, 'Representation and knowledge in a world of change', in E.H. Piccone (ed.), *Nuevos Ensayos Sobre Heráclito, Actas del Segundo Symposium Heracliteum* (Mexico City, 2009), 75–92, at 78 noticed that B51's word order represents its meaning: '"*heôutôi*" stands between the opposite terms, "being at variance" and "agrees" … It is an *apo koinou* expression that can be constructed with either. They share it, and it stands between them in a tug of war, or equally, a bond of unity.' The importance of the word order will be treated later.

[16] It is important to emphasize that this harmony does not constitute a homogeneous whole in which the opposition ceases to be. If that were the case, the change and/or tension between them would also cease, a situation that disagrees with the way that Heraclitus sees the cosmos. W.K.C. Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy I: The Earlier Presocratics and The Pythagoreans* (Cambridge, 1962), 437 offers a definition of Heraclitean harmony in opposition to the Pythagorean one that is the one accepted here: 'Heraclitus with his "stricter Muse" asserted that any harmony between contrasting elements necessarily and always involved a tension or strife between the opposites of which it was composed. The tension is never resolved.'

[17] The view of a reciprocal rectilinear movement defended here is in accordance with the interpretation of G.S. Kirk, 'Natural change in Heraclitus', *Mind* NS 60 (1951), 35–42, at 39: 'Indeed, if as he (Heraclitus) maintained there is a single *Logos* or formula of things, this *Logos* must explain meteorological and cosmological changes as well as the reciprocity between opposites in categories such as life-death and war-peace … The cosmos (in the sense of an ordered whole) is a fire which turns into sea and into earth and then back again. This is a reciprocal and not a cyclical movement.'

[18] An explicit relation of B60 to a cosmic model depends on consideration of what Diogenes Laertius (among several other ancient commentators) says: 'changing is the way up and down and the cosmos comes to be in accordance with it' (Diog. Laert. 9.1.8). For a more careful examination of B60 as a model for change in Heraclitus, see C. Vieira, 'Um modelo para mudança em Heráclito', *CODEX* 2.2 (2010), 118–36.

[19] On the other hand, there is one fragment that could be seen as defending a cyclical model: B103, saying that the beginning and the limit are the same on a circumference (ξυνὸν γὰρ ἀρχὴ καὶ πέρας ἐπὶ κύκλου περιφερείας), presents the connection between two points of a circle as a proof for the union of opposites. But this fragment could be stating (as Porphyry who quotes it suggests) that every point on a circumference can be a beginning or an end. Thus it would confirm the reading that follows,

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A rectilinear reciprocal model brings yet another advantage in understanding Heraclitus' view of the process of change. It allows the movement to stop and go back to an anterior point before the whole cycle is complete. Thus if the world is fire, lighting and quenching it does not need to reach a total quenching to restart lighting. Also the changing from water to earth to vapour can stop with the predominance of earth and go back to water without necessarily achieving the vapour state. This interpretation allows one to understand the relation of three or more elements[20] through double oppositions, as in A → B, B → C, C → B, B → A' and back again.

Motivated by this understanding of the world order as a series of reciprocal movements between opposites and the majority's incapacity to recognize this truth about reality, Heraclitus demonstrates this order throughout his text, both in the content and in the style, by adducing analogies of this relation. B36 is a good paradigm for viewing both his understanding of the world order and its representation in the order of his words.

THE WORLD ORDER IN THE ORDER OF WORDS

B36 offers Heraclitus' most complete and unanimously accepted exposition of a process of cosmic change. It says: ψυχῆισιν θάνατος ὕδωρ γενέσθαι, ὕδατι δὲ θάνατος γῆν γενέσθαι, ἐκ γῆς δὲ ὕδωρ γίνεται, ἐξ ὕδατος δὲ ψυχή ('For souls death [is] to become water, and for water [death is] to become earth, and from earth water comes to be, and from water soul [comes to be]'). In terms of style, three narrative techniques are readily identifiable:[21] antithesis (the opposition of contradictory ideas), as in 'death' and 'coming to be'; chiasmus (the presentation of terms with a reversal in the sequence), as in 'souls', 'water', 'water', 'earth' : 'earth', 'water', 'water' 'soul';[22] and ring composition (where the union of the fragment's beginning and ending is indicated by the repetition of the same word),[23] as is presumably the case in 'souls' and 'soul'.

What immediately calls for attention in B36 is the unexpected variation from the plural to the singular of its first and last terms: souls (ψυχαί) and soul (ψυχή). In

the point of which is to argue for a reciprocal change within limits but with no fixed point to begin or end, instead of unifying the beginning and the end in an homogenous harmony of the Pythagorean type.

[20] 'Element' here simply refers to a mass that takes part in the cosmic process; it does not imply an Aristotelian comprehension of it as an unchangeable element.

[21] While this formalization of rhetorical strategies post-dates Heraclitus and therefore must be used cautiously, as an observable aspect of the text it helps interpretation without obstructing an effort to understand its use in a less well-defined way. Dealing with oppositions already implies antithesis and, if there are changes between those oppositions, they can easily arouse a chiastic structure in which the first and the last term will necessarily be the same, as in ring composition. Thus the three techniques can occur together in a very incidental way, even though Heraclitus' use hardly seems to be unconscious.

[22] It is worth noting that the repetition of each element twice, presenting a structure A B, B C : C B, B A instead of only A B C : C B A, suggests the relation between the three elements to be one enacted in pairs in such a way as to allow them to enact the process of change between opposites that pervades all things.

[23] S.N. Mouraviev, *Heraclitea* III.3.A. Recensio: fragmenta. De sermone tenebrosi praefatio (Sankt Augustin, 2002), 417–421 provides the following definitions for the narrative techniques that are discussed in this article: 'Antithesis: A couple of terms with opposed meanings, coordinated or appearing in identical positions on grammatical or logical symmetric structures. Chiasmus: Symmetric scheme in the form of ABC … (D) … CBA. Minimal number of elements: two (ABA); central pivot: not obligatory (ABBA, ABCCBA). Ring composition: Scheme in the form A … – … A. Parallelism: Scheme in the form ABC … : ABC … Minimal number of' elements: two (AB : AB).'

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attempting to provide an explanation for this unexpected variation, Betegh supposes that the plural refers to the souls as individuated things in living men,[24] as a grouped plurality, while the singular refers to something like the stuff vapour, an uncountable mass.[25] Following this interpretation, the process of cosmic change presented in B36 would start with a dying human soul that becomes water that becomes earth that becomes water that becomes vapour. At this final point Betegh, despite the differentiation he sees between 'soul' and 'souls', understands the structure to be a ring composition according to which the vapour in the end would be linked to the souls in the beginning, constituting thus a cyclic change.[26]

However, the majority of Heraclitus' fragments seem to point to a world order in which the reciprocal movement between the opposites is rectilinear, not to mention the fact that a cyclical model in which beginning and end are united to form a homogeneous whole makes it hard to understand how the strife between the opposites required for the process of continuous change would be maintained. Now, if enough weight is given to this unexpected variation between the first and the last element of the process described in B36, one can understand this anomaly as an attempt to show how the traditional view of the world as a cyclical process should be corrected to agree with the truth.

The recurrence of ring composition in Greek literature allows one to suppose that Heraclitus' audience would be used to it. Therefore while reading or listening to Heraclitus' B36 people might well anticipate that the movement that started with souls would end where it started. But instead of satisfying their expectation the philosopher breaks the ring composition with a subtle alteration of number in the last element. Through this variation from plural to singular he indicates not only a variation between souls and vapour but also a break in the traditional ring composition to represent a rectilinear reciprocal change which is a better model for understanding nature. To show that men are mistaken, the philosopher builds a trap in which they will be led to have their expectation thwarted. They have used a cyclical model to understand the world that was represented in the language by ring composition but, in correcting the ring composition with the introduction of a subtle difference between its first and last terms, Heraclitus demonstrates why they are mistaken. The real model of the world might look like traditional belief but it is different in the way that its movement is in fact reciprocal and its terms opposed. Reciprocity is represented by chiasmus, while

[24] To confirm this interpretation it is worth noting that in B107 while dealing with the barbarian souls of men Heraclitus also uses a plural to refer to this group of individuated things.

[25] G. Betegh, 'On the physical aspect of Heraclitus' psychology', *Phronesis* 52 (2007), 3–32, at 9: 'The first phase refers to the process through which souls conceived as individuated things lose their identities and cease to exist as they dissolve in an unindividuated stuff, water. The second phase in contrast refers to a process in which some part of water is transformed into another stuff, earth. But what about the singular *psychê* with which the fragment ends? I would maintain that at the end of the sentence *psychê* is used as a mass term, much like water and earth, and not as a singular count noun standing for a class of things, souls.' Betegh accepts the variation as meaningful but he does not give the variation enough weight so as to alter a belief in the ring composition.

[26] C.H. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge, 2001), 238 also sees a ring composition: 'In another example of ring composition CII (B36) ends where it began, with the word *psychê*. The shift from the plural (*psychai*) to the singular prevents the repetition from being too mechanical … The plural form at the beginning suggests the soul or life-breath of individual men … But the singular form points to *psychê* as a constituent of the natural order, like earth or water.' As Kahn notes, the number variation not only avoids the prevention of a mechanical repetition but also entails a meaningful differentiation serious enough to break the ring composition.

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the difference between its first and last terms ensures that they do not compose a homogeneous whole. If chiasmus in its simplest form is ABBA, and ring composition is A … … A, every chiasmus would be a ring composition, even if not every ring composition is a chiasmus. However, in presenting some difference between the first and last terms of the chiasmus, as in A (plural) … … A (singular), Heraclitus breaks this necessity of reading ring composition in his chiasmus in such a way that it could represent a rectilinear rather than a cyclical movement. Thus B36 represents the movement from soul to water, water to earth, earth to water, water to vapour and back again from vapour to water, water to earth, earth to water and water to soul.[27]

The rectilinear tension between opposed pairs represented in Heraclitus' fragments is analogous to the image of the bow that he uses in B51, so it seems plausible to name this narrative technique a 'bow composition'. If there is a narrative technique developed by Heraclitus to represent his view of the world order that can be called a bow composition, it should recur in his fragments. And indeed we can find antithetical ideas exposed in a chiastic order in which the beginning and the end are not exactly the same throughout his corpus. In what follows, these cases will be examined. I divide them into three groups: chiasmus' predominance over antithesis, absence of chiasmus and their mixing in a chiastic antithesis.

CHIASMUS

Below I discuss the fragments united by displaying a chiastic structure which serves to emphasize the direction of movement according to which things change. B36, as analysed above, follows this pattern as well as B90 and B126 that will be analysed shortly. Although I do not discuss them here the fragments grouped as B76 should also be mentioned because two of its three versions, that cited by Plutarch (B76b) and Marcus Aurelius (B76c), employ chiasmus in representing the changing process of the cosmic elements.

B126 (Τὰ ψυχρὰ θέρεται θερμὰ ψύχεται, ὑγρὰ αὐαίνεται, καρφαλέα νοτίζεται[28]) falls into two halves with chiasmus in each. The first says 'cold things become hot and hot things become cold' and the second 'moist things become dry and parched things become wet'. The change here, unlike that in B36, occurs not between cosmic elements but between qualities, yet the reciprocal movement is the same. In the light of Heraclitus' unclear treatment of ontological categories such as substances and qualities the situation described above is understandable as a movement from one thing (quality,

[27] The mirrored presentation of the terms in B36 seems adequate to describe a relation of three processes of change. First, one in which the soul becomes water, water becomes earth and back again. Second, one in which, by analogy with the previous one, vapour becomes water, water becomes earth and back again. Thus the soul might suffer alterations in its temperature and material states without dying, that is, without becoming vapour (cf. the analysis of B126 which refers to B117–18) as the elements in the world might also suffer alteration without becoming an individualized soul. However, as souls and vapour are both part of the cosmos, they suffer a process of change not only within themselves but between themselves as well. So a third process of change arises in which the changing soul becomes a changing stuff, vapour. It will be argued below that this situation could be an example of the process described in B62 in which a mortal becoming immortal can become an immortal becoming mortal.

[28] The text of B126 with the four adjectives in the neuter without an article follows R. Dilcher, 'On the wording of Heraclitus, fragment 126', *CQ* NS 44.1 (1994), 276–7, who based his reading on the MS Cod. Cantabr.

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substance or whatever) to another. Thus, at least at first, it is claimed that the hot thing is perceived as a different thing from the cold one, just as the element water is different from earth.

It is not hard for the majority of men to differentiate in this way between water and earth and, at least in the case of hot to cold and wet to dry, it is also easy to understand these as a part of the same process. That is why Heraclitus provides this trivial example, to establish what he will maintain also to be valid for the more sophisticated ones, namely that upon close analysis each pair of opposites should be seen as belonging to one and the same process. Therefore, after agreeing with the trivial example, that is, that the cold and the hot are united in a thing that suffers a process of change, men should also be prepared to accept that earth changes into water, and water into souls.

In fact, if one compares the choice of words in B126 with that in the fragments that deal with the process of change in the souls (B117–18), the step from a trivial situation to a cosmic one becomes even more evident. We have ψυχὴ (B117–18) and ψυχρὰ (B126), αὐὴ (B118) and αὐαίνεται (B126) and also ὑγρὴν (B117) and ὑγρὰ (B126).[29] Therefore B126, in its content (from hot to cold, from moist to dry), in its style (chiastic structure) and in its choice of words, would provide a demonstration verifiable by anyone that the changing between opposites proves their union.[30]

The example presented in B126 reinforces once more the fact that change is reciprocal instead of cyclic, because the cold thing must go back the same way that it came to turn into a hot thing again, that is, the hot becomes cold and this cold in turn becomes hot. That is exactly what is represented in the text by the chiasmus AB : BA. Thus Heraclitus' text is not just giving an example by describing it indirectly, it is depicting the movement in a way that one who uses the common *logos* would see as a proof for the union of opposites.

Another interesting trait of B126 is the fact that in the second chiasmus the symmetry is subtly broken by the use of different terms to refer to what are arguably the same states. The 'wet' things become 'dry' and the 'parched' things become 'moist'. As was seen in a fragment that deals with the bow (ΒΙΟΣ in B48) the use of the same term to point to different referents was used by Heraclitus as a proof of the union of opposites. Now, the use of different terms for the same referents appears to accomplish the same task.[31] In using different words for the same referent Heraclitus demonstrates the importance of the structure. In these cases the place of the word is more important than the choice of an identical stem. Despite the variety of words that men use to name opposites, the order of the world entailed in their referents remains.[32]

[29] Because throughout this article the inflexion is considered to be an important trait, the citation maintains the cases in which the terms are presented.

[30] Heraclitus is using a qualitative change as an example of his general formula. His union of opposites does not depend on the distinction between different types of existence like qualities, elements, substances or anything else. Apart from that, the union is proven by the generalization of the fact that everything that exists in every manner is changing into its opposite.

[31] One can suppose a conscious variation in the vocabulary because the verb used, νοτίζω, generates the adjective νότιος, α, ον (moist). This would make possible a perfect, both morphological and semantic, chiasmus: νοτιὰ αὐαίνεται, αὐὰ νοτίζεται. G.S. Kirk, *Heraclitus: The Cosmic Fragments* (Cambridge, 1975), 152 makes a case for the symmetry of the first chiasmus but not the asymmetry of the second one: 'the retention of the same root, when noun is changed into verb and vice versa, in the first part of clauses if not in the last (where the variation must be purely artistic), shows that an exact balance between each side of the process was involved'.

[32] To stress the reading one can compare B67, ὁ θεὸς ἡμέρη εὐφρόνη χειμὼν θέρος πόλεμος εἰρήνη κόρος λιμός ἀλλοιοῦται δὲ ὅκωσπερ <πῦρ> <ὃ> ὁπόταν συμμιγῆι θυώμασιν ὀνομάζεται

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Whether within terms that apply to cosmic process like the changing of the souls or within basic terms to describe common states, the point is that everything is in a process of changing into its opposite.

B90 reads πυρός τε ἀνταμοιβὴ τὰ πάντα καὶ πῦρ ἁπάντων ὅκωσπερ χρυσοῦ χρήματα καὶ χρημάτων χρυσός where the final part of the fragment presents a chiasmus in describing the commercial trade of 'gold for goods and goods for gold'. This exchange serves as a simile for the opening where the cosmic organization through the exchange of 'fire for everything and from fire to everything' is presented. One notes that the fragment employs the same strategy that appears in B126 of using a common scenario to illuminate a cosmic process, but a difference between the two fragments is recognizable. Instead of two examples of chiasmus as is presented in B126, in B90 there is a parallelism of the type Ab : Ab ('fire for everything and from fire to everything') followed by a chiasmus of the type CD : DC ('gold for goods and goods for gold').

One might begin with the second part, the simile which illuminates the first, which complies with the pattern already observed. The change from gold to goods would represent a reciprocal movement in which those who buy something give gold and receive goods. Thus the exchange would be another practical and accessible example designed to guide men in understanding the hidden reality of things. The situation is even more prescribed because the amount of gold given is proportional to the goods that are acquired. Thus, even if once again the example is structured in a chiastic way to represent a reciprocal movement, this time a new characteristic is added, proportionality. That is to say, what one of the related opposites gains in the strife is exactly what the other one loses, since they are striving sides of the same process. He who gives more gold will have less gold and acquire more goods, just as the more heat one thing loses the colder that thing proportionally becomes. Since Heraclitus employs this image of exchange as an analogy for the cosmic process, proportionality would correspondingly also feature in the cosmic change. And indeed this seems to be the case in B30, in which a term like 'in measures' (μέτρα) is used in qualifying the lighting and quenching of fire meaning that the lighting is proportional to the quenching and vice versa, and in B31, in which the changing between the elements occurs a half for a half (ἥμισυ) in a process that can be measured according to the same measure (λόγος).[33] It therefore seems plausible to recognize proportionality as a feature of the process of change in Heraclitus' view of the world order.

Now, let us return to the first half of the fragment where Heraclitus seems to adopt another model to represent the process of change. How should we interpret the parallelism of the type Ab : Ab, used to present the cosmic exchanging of fire for everything? A comparison of the fragments that present cosmic changes brings to light a pattern that can help us to understand it. In those fragments the recurrent chiastic structure appears

καθ΄ ἡδονὴν ἑκάστου, in which after saying that 'god is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, profusion and famine', he says that 'each one names it according to his taste'.

[33] The fragments used are the following: 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 ('This world order, the same of all, no god nor human being has created but it ever was, is and will be an everlasting fire, lighting in measures and quenching in measures'); B31a πυρὸς τροπαὶ πρῶτον θάλασσα, θαλάσσης δὲ τὸ μὲν ἥμισυ γῆ, τὸ δὲ ἥμισυ πρηστήρ ('Formations of fire: first sea, and from sea a half of earth, and the other of burner'); B31b θάλασσα διαχέεται, καὶ μετρέεται εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον, ὁκοῖος πρόσθεν ἦν ('The sea is dissolved and measured in the same measure in which it was at first').

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only when the fire is not one of the parts involved in the process, as in B36 and the second part of B31. But whenever fire is present it assumes a leading role that is consistent with its position in the cosmic process, according to which all the cosmos can be reduced to fire, as in the first part of B31 and B90. It is also hardly a coincidence that these parts of the fragments that deal with fire are presented first. So parallelism would be the appropriate structure to represent this leading role of fire in the world by having it lead in the order of words. Thus Heraclitus structures his discourse in such a way as to place the main term, fire, always first, that is, in the most important position. Moreover, if one pays attention to the structure, one finds that, even if there is not a semantic chiasmus, there is at least a syntactic one, since the cases presented are genitive, nominative : nominative, genitive (πυρός, τὰ πάντα : πῦρ, ἀπάντων). Therefore, while presenting fire through a morphological parallelism B90 adapts the chiastic structure (maintained at the syntactic level) to emphasize that the main element, fire, is above the others because, like everything in the world, they can be reduced to or exchanged for it.[34]

ANTITHESIS

Heraclitus' fragments sometimes display a structure in which there is an identifiable opposition between the beginning and the end of the statement without the presence of chiasmus. In contrast to the previous cases the use of this direct opposition would not emphasize the ordering of the process of change, but would instead attempt to stress that what is usually perceived as contradictory is likewise united on a less apparent level. In the following cases Heraclitus attempts to overcome the common thought that opposites are separate by means of providing an unperceived relation between them. Paradigmatic examples are B20 and B21.[35]

B20 reads γενόμενοι ζώειν ἐθέλουσι μόρους τ' ἔχειν, [μᾶλλον δὲ ἀναπαύεσθαι], καὶ παῖδας καταλείπουσι μόρους γενέσθαι ('generated they want to live and have their destinies, yet to leave children is but death to generate'). The fragment presents in the beginning and the end the same word, γίγνομαι, with different inflexions, the participle and infinitive forms of the verb, in a way that may be seen as analogous to the variation of ψυχή/ψυχαί in B36. But in this fragment the coordination is even more complex because in the middle of this opposition there is yet another[36] using the same term, μόρος, in different meanings,[37] ambiguous in that it means both 'destiny' and

[34] This view of the cosmos reduces qualitative and substantial changes such as from hot to cold or water to earth to quantitative ones because on another level they are all fire formations differentiated by its lighting or quenching, which is what seems to be described in B30.

[35] There are other examples that will not be analysed here such as B5 (purify with blood), B19 (talk and listen), B58 (doctors and diseases), B79 (immature man and man) and B119 (habit and genius).

[36] In the first study of ring composition in Greece, W. van Otterlo demonstrated rings within the presence of rings in the *Iliad*. In doing the same with his bow composition Heraclitus once again uses a traditional formula in a particular way: see M. Douglas, *Thinking in Circles: An Essay on Ring Composition* (London, 2007), 18: 'Otterlo was interested in the variety of circular structures in the *Iliad*. The *Iliad* has rings with only one "member", and rings with two or three "members" … his classification of structures is chiefly concerned with the relations of the minor rings to the major ring in which they are enclosed'. In B20 the connection of the inner bow demonstrated through the ambiguity of the word elucidates the outer bow.

[37] This time there is no need to use a different inflexion of the same word to show the opposition between the referents since the context guides the reading.

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'death'.[38] This inner bow represents in a wordplay the connection between death and destiny while the outer bow assures us that what is necessarily entailed by being generated will be passed on to whatever that generated thing goes on to generate. Therefore from the coordination of the inner and outer bows the truth is revealed, that is, if destiny is death (for destiny is at once life and its end), then when someone generates a destiny by having a child (traditionally seen as a means of human immortality) it is in fact a death that she has generated. Thus in demonstrating that what is usually thought to be separate but in fact is united Heraclitus criticizes men who lay value in the μόροι that seem to transcend their individual μόρος without realizing that what they are generating is not immortality but death. In this case of two related antitheses demonstrating the union of opposites what is emphasized is not the movement from generation to death, which certainly occurs, but the fact that, since everything dies, every generation is already the generation of a death.[39] In this way Heraclitus attempts to enlighten the mind of humans who see only the positive side of destiny, as implied in the first occurrence of μόρος in the fragment, ignoring the fact that it not only can but certainly will turn into its opposite and less appealing side, the death alluded to in the second occurrence of the word.

B21 θάνατός ἐστιν ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ὁρέομεν, ὁκόσα δὲ εὕδοντες ὕπνος ('death is what we see when awake and what we see when asleep is sleep') is a particularly interesting case because its ending was even subjected to a correction in an attempt to satisfy the condition that it should be in opposition to its beginning. The manuscript attests 'death' (θάνατος) as the first word and 'sleep' (ὕπνος) as the last one, but this use of 'sleep' where one would expect to see 'life' in opposition to 'death' breaks the fragment's symmetry. Some scholars, probably acting as an audience conditioned to anticipate a conclusion from the fragment's beginning, have felt this broken symmetry awkward enough to justify substituting 'life' (ὕπαρ) for 'sleep'.[40] Such a substitution presupposes that the 'awkwardness' is not an intentional device used by Heraclitus to draw attention to a misconception, but we might wish to entertain the possibility that, in avoiding the expected 'life' as an opposition to 'death', Heraclitus could once again be setting a trap to demonstrate to his audience that reality is not quite how humans are accustomed to perceive it.

Any audience expecting to hear an opposition might anticipate 'life' as a conclusion after hearing 'death' at the beginning. If it were a possible reading, the unusual ὕπαρ for 'life' would be the *lectio difficilior*, since εὕδοντες could lead a copyist to misread the more common ὕπνος for ὕπαρ. But if the fragment was constructed in this way, it would mean that what we see when asleep is life. This would then best be construed in accord with the traditional belief that dreams tell humans truths about life.[41] One might, however, expect Heraclitus to be more critical (cf. n. 7), particularly when B1 uses the

[38] Cf. LSJ s.v. μόρος = μοίρα, I. fate, destiny, doom. II. doom, death.

[39] As a thought experiment one can apply this situation to the ones examined before – the change of water to vapour in the outer bow and the change of hot to cold in the inner one. If the water gets hot until it turns to vapour there is not generation of more heat but rather the death of water.

[40] e.g. M. Marcovich, *Heraclitus: Greek Text with Short Commentary* (Sankt Augustin, 2001), 248 writes: 'I suggest reading *hypar* in lieu of Clement's *hypnos* because (1) *hypnos* is semantically unsatisfactory … (2) elsewhere Clement is interested in the commonplace *hypnos-thanatos*.'

[41] See e.g. the dream passages in Homer, such as Penelope's dream that an eagle (Odysseus) slaughters twenty geese (the suitors) (*Od*. 19.535–55), or when Athena appears in dreams to tell Penelope about the condition of her son and of her husband (*Od*. 4.795–840), or to tell Nausicaa about her matrimonial situation (*Od*. 6.20–46).

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opposition between being awake and being asleep to criticize those who act as if they were asleep. Thus, it seems preferable not to assume that Heraclitus would support a conception in which dreams are maintaining and revealing some truth about reality.

On the other hand, this traditional conception that links dreams with reality supports the understanding of a connection between 'death' and 'sleep' in which sleep is a kind of death experienced in life.[42] In this case, 'death' and 'sleep' would be two nearly related terms in B21 like ψυχή in B36 and γίγνομαι and μόρος in B20.[43] B21 also presents an inner relation between two terms where there is another opposition, that between being 'awake' and being 'asleep'. We have seen that the union presented in the middle of B20 between 'destiny' and 'death' was used to demonstrate that men should see in every act of generation the generation of a death; thus, it would be legitimate to think that what a human sees when awake is death, as it is said in B20 (if we keep the words attested in the manuscript).

Heraclitus' critique of humans who act as if asleep (B1) also fits this reading, since those who insist on interpreting dreams in order to discover truths about life act as if asleep and miss both the obvious point that what they see when asleep is sleep and the not so obvious one that what they see when awake is death. Therefore, in changing the relation not only of 'life' and 'death', but also of 'life', 'sleep' and 'death', Heraclitus was trying to wake men from their dreams to life. The critique is complete. Awake, but acting as if asleep, men think they see life, not realizing that what they see is death. Asleep, they think they see dreams which relate to their life and their future, ignoring the fact that what they see seems to be reality but is only sleep. They also fail to recognize that if they want to see their future they should not turn to the interpretation of dreams but rather observe reality properly and realize that their future is nothing but death.[44] Thus, while following common beliefs, human beings live a permanent illusion because they fail to understand that life is a reciprocal alternation between seeing death and sleep as represented in B21 through the bow composition.

There, I would argue, lies the explanation of B21's unusual stylistic feature, where Heraclitus defies audience expectation by presenting as a pair of opposites 'death' and 'sleep' instead of 'death' and 'life'. Acting in this way, Heraclitus once more realizes what he says since, through the omission of the term 'life' (the expected opposite of 'death'), he demonstrates that the men who live the illusion of ignoring death and who believe in dreams see nothing but what the fragment attests, 'sleep', and assume wrongly that there is present what is in fact missing in the fragment, namely life.

CHIASTIC ANTITHESIS

I now turn to the structural pattern in which a chiastic ordering of antithetical terms emphasizes both their movement and their opposition. To illustrate this I analyse B25

[42] Cf. motive (2) given by Marcovich (n. 40) and also Pl. *Ap*. 40d where Socrates explains death with the analogy of sleep: 'if (in death) there is no perception at all, but it is like a dream in which the sleeper neither dreams nor sees anything, death would be an amazing gain'.

[43] At this point in the interpretation, 'death' and 'sleep' could even characterize a ring composition but, as will be seen, to Heraclitus they do not seem to make for a homogeneous whole.

[44] Heraclitus would be opposed to the conception featured in *Il*. 23.66–110, where the vision of Patroclus' soul (*psychê*) in a dream causes Achilles to believe that death is after all not the end. For Heraclitus death is the end of a soul, even if it survives as stuff; see below.

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and B62, fragments that develop themes common to those analysed in the two sections above as life and death and its interchanging process.

B25 reads: μόροι μέζονες μέζονας μοίρας λαγχάνουσι ('deaths that are bigger, bigger destinies receive'). Presented here is a recurrent chiastic structure AB : BA, entailing the notions of death and destiny. The fragment's first four words follow a chiastic structure with the first and the last words being once again two different but nearly related terms. Instead of using a single but ambiguous term μόρος as in B20, Heraclitus here uses different words to deal with the notions of death (μόρος) and destiny (μοίρα), which are themselves inherently related.[45] This choice makes the chiasmus similar to the ones previously analysed, where beginning and end present two nearly related but subtly different terms in a choice that would break ring composition. On the other hand the core, typically chiastic, consists of the same term repeated twice with the same meaning, 'bigger'. This repetition of a quantitative-qualitative term, 'bigger', like μέτρα in B30 and ἥμισυ in B31, points to a relation of proportionality in the fragment. As a bigger lighting of fire implies a bigger quenching of it, a bigger life would imply a bigger death.[46] In addition, the chiastic structure depicts some movement or change between a bigger death and a bigger destiny.

The order of the terms is once again very interesting. Death precedes destiny in word order, which in a way goes against the common belief that the bigger the death, the bigger the destiny will be. While it is possible to think of an afterlife to understand this situation, it is not necessary:[47] a great death allows a retrospective claim about the destiny of that man. One might attempt to define further this opinion which recurs in other fragments: the glory of a man will grow bigger not because he has a lot of children (B20), but because of his acts (B25), like dying on the battlefield (B24).

The use of the verb λαγχάνω ('to receive by lot') in a sense that is intimately connected with destiny at the end of the fragment breaks the symmetry of the chiasmus and seems to counter-stress the emphasis given to 'death', which appears in the prominent position. Through this counterbalance one could understand that, in a movement that questions predetermination, not only would a bigger death turn into a bigger destiny but also that a bigger destiny would turn into a bigger death. The bigger destiny should not imply the already dismissed predetermination, but it could be read as stating that what you make during your life will lead you to a death that is unavoidable but can be bigger.

B62 reads: ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον, τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες ('immortals mortals, mortals immortals: these living the death of those and those dying the life of these'[48]). This fragment's chiastic antithesis seems more contradictory than that of B25 because its opposition is represented by a construction in which the antithesis is present at the morphological level. The two words

[45] Cf. the definition in LSJ (n. 38).

[46] Probably 'bigger' is qualitative rather than quantitative, since B24 suggests that death in battle is more worthy.

[47] As will be seen on B62 the possibility of a conscious afterlife for the soul does not seem to be represented in Heraclitus' thought. Yet a bigger destiny for a soul can be that of becoming fire, the primordial element. If, after dying in battle (B24), a man has a hot soul (B136), this can mean that it will become fire sooner than a moist soul of a death by disease. Thus a bigger death would entail a bigger destiny also in the afterlife but not in the way men expected it (B27). But this reading depends on a few unstated assumptions as a careful examination of the fragments indicated in brackets reveals. This examination is beyong the scope of this article.

[48] The Greek word order has 'dying' as the last term.

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repeated in the beginning ἀθάνατοι and θνητοί share of course the same root θν- (mort-), and are differentiated from one another by the negation of a privative alpha. These terms repeated in a chiastic order form the laconic statement: 'immortals mortals mortals immortals'. The first thing to be determined is how many referents the first four words have. It was argued that Heraclitus' model for the process of universal change in the cosmos was that it occurred in pairs. Thus the first four words of B62 could depict a movement from mortal to immortal and from immortal to mortal, or from a mortal-immortal to mortal-immortal. Both cases argue for two referents, the first enacting a movement of the same type as that of a hot thing that becomes cold and a cold thing that becomes hot (B126), while the second presents a qualified variation : a bigger death that entails a bigger destiny (B25). However, these two options are not contradictory and could be read as complementary: one might think that mortal-immortal is the term for a mortal that becomes immortal and that immortal-mortal signifies an immortal that becomes mortal, yet that these qualified terms also partake in a reciprocal movement from the mortal-immortal to the immortal-mortal.

B62's sequence presents a less laconic description that seems to offer help in understanding the intricate relation of the first part. It speaks of 'these living the death of those and those dying the life of these.' Once again Heraclitus defies the audience's expectation: in saying that someone lives the death, not the life, and dies the life, not the death, he inverts the traditional accusative of internal object, in which the object was supposed to repeat the verb.[49] This inversion implies that the rising of something depends on the perishing of another thing. Such a situation is coherent with an immortal becoming mortal, living the death and dying the life of a mortal – which could be termed an immortal-mortal – and a mortal becoming immortal, dying the life and living the death of an immortal – a mortal-immortal. Therefore, the chiasmus would describe the movement from an immortal-becoming-mortal to a mortal-becoming-immortal and back again. It makes sense but without determining the referents of the immortal-mortal and the mortal-immortal the solution remains excessively abstract. To help assist in this identification, we might turn to B36.

It was seen that the ψυχή variation from plural to singular represented a changing from 'souls' in an individuated man to a general state such as 'vapour' as an element. This process entails the relation between the changing microcosm, a man in whom the soul resides, and the changing macrocosm, the world order in which the elements are in a situation that seems to be adequate with the relation between mortality and immortality described in B62 and its apparent tension between an immortal-mortal becoming a mortal-immortal[50] and back again. The ψυχή as a soul in a man is as mortal as he is but as vapour it is immortal as a cosmic element. Therefore, when a man, a mortal, dies, his soul starts the process of becoming vapour, an immortal element.[51] This change can be described as an immortal living the death of a mortal. On the other

[49] Cf. H. Smyth, *Greek Grammar for Colleges* (New York, 1920), 354, §1554: '[internal object] here the object is already contained (or implied) in the verb … The object stands in apposition to the result of the verbal action'.

[50] To reinforce the probability of a reference to the soul in B62 there is the spurious B77b, a fragment of almost identical content to B62, ζῆν ἡμᾶς τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον καὶ ζῆν ἐκείνας τὸν ἡμέτερον θάνατον ('we live their [souls in B77a?] death and they live our death') which Porphyry quotes to illuminate the soul as described in B77a.

[51] If one believes in *ekpyrôsis* (the world ending consumed by fire), as a Heraclitean theory it can be argued that vapour as an element will also die. But the fact that the death of vapour is nothing but a quantitative change of fire is enough to prove vapour to be a 'mortal' living the death of an 'immortal',

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hand, while a man is living he has in his soul a part that after his death will rejoin the vapour, so the mortal is dying the life of the immortal. By implication the contrary may also be true. When a man is born it is expected that some amount of the stuff 'vapour' will be extracted to constitute his soul. Thus a mortal would be living the death of an immortal. As the vapour will give a part of its mass to constitute a human soul the immortal dies the mortal's life. That could be why the referents in the second part of the fragment are hard to determine. Being indeterminable allows both of them to apply to the two states of the first part, the immortal-mortals and also the mortal-immortals, in a way that would depict with more accuracy the world order according to Heraclitus' view, the unity of opposites.

CONCLUSION

This article has sought to demonstrate a pervasive compositional structure in the extant fragments of Heraclitus which I have called a bow composition. I take its name from the image of a bow presented in fragment B51 to illuminate Heraclitus' view of the world order as a unity of opposites in a continuous strife, because that was the idea that this compositional structure would intend to represent. Best described as an adaptation of ring composition, but more specifically most often chiastic in its organization, the bow composition's most general feature is that its beginning and end are related oppositions (instead of being the same, as in ring composition). Often employing a word with the same root but with subtle differences (B20, B36, B62, B90 and B126's second parts), or sometimes presenting a relation on the semantic level (B21, B25), the similarity assures that the terms are related while the difference gives to each of them an independent existence necessary to maintain the strife between them. This structural pattern, I argue, presents a model in which the movement is not cyclic, where the beginning and the end are the same, but rather rectilinear, in which they are united, but not identical, through a process of reciprocal exchange. The most recurrent way to represent this changing process between related opposites is the chiasmus. Through a sequential order of words the text represents the ever-changing world order as A to B from B to A^1 and then back again (A^1 to B and B to A). Sometimes the chiasmus is a laconic stream of *onomata* but, most often, more complex syntactical structures are employed. In addition, if the relevance of one term over another is to be emphasized, a parallelism of the type Ab : Ab would represent, as I have argued, the changing from A to b and to A from b (see the first part of B90), in which case the chiasmus occurs at the level of syntax.

A fragment displaying an overarching bow composition structure may also be built from syntactical units that themselves likewise employ the bow composition whether in chiasmus or in parallelism. In these cases Heraclitus could manipulate the relation of the syntactical units, putting the one that is clearer first to illuminate the second by analogy (B20, B126) or, by contrast, perplexing the reader by placing the more obscure first and allowing the second to provide the solution (B21, B62, B90). These and other variations make it unlikely that for Heraclitus there was such a thing as the idea of a formalized bow composition, but nevertheless the recurrence and similarities are sufficient to establish his conscious use of a flexible structure. In a text that uses analogy as a form of

fire. Thus the above explanation is still valid with only one difference, the decreasing of one level until the basic constituent of the world is reached – fire, as the immortal-mortal.

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argument on all discursive levels (semantic, syntactical and morphological), these structural features in what I have called bow composition may provide a useful hermeneutic to further illuminate Heraclitus' obscure thought.[52]

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