

HERACLITUS' ANTHROPOLOGY AND SCEPTICISM

Heraclitus's anthropology is not uninfluenced by the evermoving flow of his cosmology¹. The «man of the world» never stops moving from darkness to light, from superstition to knowledge. He moves with the freedom of nature that surrounds him and challenges him to fight² its elements. He lives in the era of the spiritual existence and, as an awake by-stander, stirs the secrets of life, conquers fire as the essence of life in the material world. The flame that burns or revivifies the universe awakes the consciousness of the rational being and enlightens its concern for the secret natural movements³. However, this blaring explosion of the intellect is combined with a simultaneous opening, revealing the natural laws, and is founded by the dialectical annexing of several elements, at the beging of history.

The history of the world and, hence of man begins with motion. As the beginning of daily life is represented by the biological movement-from non existence to existence-in the intellectuality existence structly connected to the very old spiritual bounds. Heraclitus' man moves spiritually towards history; stirs his pasta and gets ready for the future. His route is the era of the highest mobility to the present and the future: «Ὁ Θεὸς ἡμέρη εὐφρόνη, χειμῶν θέρος, πόλεμος εἰρήνη, κόρος λιμός· ἀλλοιοῦται δὲ ὅκωσπερ (πῦρ) ὁπότεν συμμιγῇ θυώμασιν, ὀνομάζεται καθ' ἡδονὴν ἐκάστου⁴». The last expression of the cited fragment strikes up Protagoras words «πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἄνθρωπος». The individual nourishing is the awareness and the criteria for every occuring contrast. Up to here all the generalized contrasts and self-reactions give the whole image of the destruction of the world burning itself. It is obvious that such a tactic leads to a systematic expression of doubt. However, the anxiety for the maintenance and reasoning of the world gave birth to an exact and stable movement and anti-movement into Heraclitus' philosophy. This counterbalancing healthy force of maintenance removes the dead-end and decreases the doubt. Harmony, obvious or not, is the answer to objections and contrasts. «Οὐ ξυνιᾶσιν ὅκως διαφερόμενον ἑαυτῷ συμφέρεται· παλίντονος ἁρμονίη ὅκωσπερ τόξου καὶ λύρης⁵». The force that gives birth to certainty and stops once and for all the desintegration is called harmony and reason. This eternal law which absorbs all the different elements, is found in every phenomenon and yet, remains unknown for many people.

Heraclitus understands this law, presents, describes and analyses it. People have to listen. On the contrary those who are awoken or not ignore this law - distrust and personal doubt spoils the absolute knowledge-the reason of course exists but it is unseen: «Τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἑόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ

1. HERACL., fr. 215 (D.-K.), πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει.

2. IDEM, fr. 233 (D.-K.), ἄνθρωπος ἐν εὐφρόνῃ φάος ἄπτεται ἑαυτῷ.

3. IDEM, fr. 217 (D.-K.), πῦρ ἀπτόμενον μέτρα καὶ ἀποσβεσνύμενον μέτρα.

4. IDEM, fr. 67 (D.-K.).

5. IDEM, fr. 10 (D.-K.).



πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσιν, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔχει. τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὐδόντες ἐπιλανθάνονται⁶».

Under those circumstances of the non-stop movement Heraclitus' restlessness enters informally into (or states the revolution of) the history of philosophy which represents the later movement of scepticism. Heraclitus is a scepticist because he doubts the apparent truth, the established culture and the mythical stability. His anxiety and doubt is moving towards superficial knowledge and erudition, which he considers chanceful when revealed, and the passive acceptance of phenomena that doesn't allow the perception of reasoning and essence. Such a «natural» doubt is founded on the natural phenomena in order to explain them and drag the truth out of them⁷. This is why Heraclitus' scepticism is odd and doesn't identify with the absolute scepticism. The truth of the world the life of the reason are connected to the fluidity of the changing stability and their forever existence. The removal and the challenge of the phenomenon cedes to the imposing presence and to the affirmation of the essence. Physics and metaphysics follow the scepticism of Heraclitus' philosophy.

The purest form of that aspect is attributed to Cratylus who, as Aristotle⁸ said, wouldn't answer but moved his finger and blamed Heraklitus for believing that one can't get into the same river, twice; Cratylus believed that one can't get into the river once. Of course if someone tries to follow Heraclitus' anxiety, the reason of the dark philosopher seems to lead with all the continuous refutations, to endless deadness. War, father of people and gods is found in the nature of beings in order to split them, in every personal reason, and moves every phenomenon of life in order to vanquish and neutralize it: «εἰδέναι χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔοντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίχην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεών⁹». Heraclitus' concern goes through a field of deterioration and integral happening with the prospect of light and that is why it is converted to fire. We could claim that Heraclitus' doubt crucially comes from philosophy's secret certainty, μεθοδεύει the continuous application of strong metaphysics which authenticity is maintained by God. The παλίντονος harmony, the unity of contrasts, all the natural phenomena that he considers uncertain, are maintained by Gods. Everything in this world gives evidence to its essence ὁ Θεὸς ἡμέρη εὐφρόνη, χειμὼν θέρος, πόλεμος εἰρήνη, κόρος λιμός· ἀλλοιοῦται δὲ ὅκωσπερ (πῦρ) ὅποτεν συμμιγῇ θνώμασιν, ὀνομάζεται καθ' ἡδονὴν ἑκάστου¹⁰.

God is not the world; it's the power that moves it, so when Heraclitus twines the world he tends to the absolute appearance and supports his strong and eternal faith to God. The transparency of fire that endlessly feeds the contrasts and transformations evertains hesitation and confines it to its aesthetical sphere. Reason is far from aesthetical knowledge; it degrades and confines to the duration of time. It runs up unconditionally to the paths of theology to derive religious authority and mystical power.

Harmony and the inborn annexing of contrasts is the reason and the result of the aesthetical doubt. Sense, denial of aesthetics or doubt is the bound of mortal material and immortal essence. It is changed to positive certainty and to a genuine reliability were reason changes the outer elements from meaningless to meaningful for the being. It is obvious that Heraclitus' Scepticism is turned into a message of optimistic metaphysical faith with infinite tenderness

6. HERACL., fr. 1 (D.-K.).

7. «Ἀγχιβατεῖν».

8. ARIST., *Metaph.*, Γ5 1010 a.

9. HERACL., fr. 80 (D.-K.).

10. IDEM, fr. 10 (D.-K.).

for man, with uncurable love for the duration of the mysteries and, helped by fire, escapes the danger of death and goes towards the greatness of life. It identifies with God, the force that unites all things into one.¹¹

The answer to the reason under the meaning of fire is war, movement, and harmony which is a metaphysical answer. If we reject the absolute metaphysics of quality we are obliged to attribute to it the corresponding metaphysical and spiritual implications. Doubt and movement are described in a firm condition; life is in every doubtful show. Life agrees with the reason and goes with the contest, curing it with multiplicity, repetition and endurance.

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11. HERACL., fr. 11 (D.-K.).