

TWO

Logos
(Heraclitus, Fragment B 50)



The path most needed for our thinking stretches far ahead. It leads to that simple matter which, under the name λόγος, remains for thinking. Yet there are only a few signs to point out the way.

By means of free reflection along the guidelines of a saying of Heraclitus (B 50), the following essay attempts to take a few steps along that path. Perhaps they can carry us to the point where at least this one saying will speak to us in a more question-worthy way:

οὐκ ἐμοῦ ἀλλὰ τοῦ Λόγου ἀκούσαντας
ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστίν· Ἐν Πάντα.

One among the virtually identical translations reads:

When you have listened not to me but to the Meaning,
it is wise within the same Meaning to say: *One is All.*
(Snell)

The saying speaks of ἀκούειν, hearing and having heard, of ὁμολογεῖν, to say the same, of Λόγος, what is said and the saying, of ἐγώ, the thinker himself as λέγων, the one who is talking. Heraclitus here considers a hearing and a saying. He expresses what the Λόγος says: Ἐν Πάντα, all is One. The saying of Heraclitus seems comprehensible in every respect. Nevertheless, everything about it is worthy of question. Most question-worthy is what is most self-evident, namely, our presupposition that whatever Heraclitus says ought to

become immediately obvious to our contemporary everyday understanding. This demand was probably never met even for Heraclitus' contemporaries.

In the meantime, we would correspond sooner to his thinking if we conceded that several riddles remain, neither for the first time with us, nor only for the ancients, but rather in the very matter thought. We will get closer to these riddles if we step back before them. That done, it becomes clear that in order to observe the riddle as a riddle we must clarify before all else what λόγος and λέγειν mean.

Since antiquity the Λόγος of Heraclitus has been interpreted in various ways: as *Ratio*, as *Verbum*, as cosmic law, as the logical, as necessity in thought, as meaning and as reason. Again and again a call rings out for reason to be the standard for deeds and omissions. Yet what can reason do when, along with the irrational and the antirational all on the same level, it perseveres in the same neglect, forgetting to meditate on the essential origin of reason and to let itself into its advent? What can logic, λογική (ἐπιστήμη) of any sort, do if we never begin to pay heed to the Λόγος and follow its initial unfolding?

What λόγος is we gather from λέγειν. What does λέγειν mean? Everyone familiar with the language knows that λέγειν means talking and saying; λόγος means λέγειν as a saying aloud, and λεγόμενον as that which is said.

Who would want to deny that in the language of the Greeks from early on λέγειν means to talk, say, or tell? However, just as early and even more originally—and therefore already in the previously cited meaning—it means what our similarly sounding *legen* means: to lay down and lay before. In *legen* a "bringing together" prevails, the Latin *legere* understood as *lesen*, in the sense of collecting and bringing together. Λέγειν properly means the laying-down and laying-before which gathers itself and others. The middle voice, λέγεσθαι, means to lay oneself down in the gathering of rest; λέχος is the resting place; λόχος is a place of ambush [or a place for lying in wait] where something is laid away and deposited. (The old word ἀλέγω (*ἀ copulativum*), archaic after Aeschylus and Pindar, should be recalled here: something "lies upon me," it oppresses and troubles me.)

All the same it remains incontestable that λέγειν means, predom-

inately if not exclusively, saying and talking. Must we therefore, in deference to this preponderant and customary meaning of λέγειν, which assumes multiple forms, simply toss the genuine meaning of the word, λέγειν as laying, to the winds? Dare we ever do such a thing? Or is it not finally time to engage ourselves with a question which probably decides many things? The question asks: How does the proper sense of λέγειν, to lay, come to mean saying and talking?

In order to find the foothold for an answer, we need to reflect on what actually lies in λέγειν as laying. To lay means to bring to lie. Thus, to lay is at the same time to place one thing beside another, to lay them together. To lay is to gather [lesen]. The *lesen* better known to us, namely, the *reading* of something written, remains but one sort of gathering, in the sense of bringing-together-into-lying-before, although it is indeed the predominant sort. The gleaning at harvest time gathers fruit from the soil. The gathering of the vintage involves picking grapes from the vine. Picking and gleaning are followed by the bringing together of the fruit. So long as we persist in the usual appearances we are inclined to take this bringing together as the gathering itself or even its termination. But gathering is more than mere amassing. To gathering belongs a collecting which brings under shelter. Accommodation governs the sheltering; accommodation is in turn governed by safekeeping. That "something extra" which makes gathering more than a jumbling together that snatches things up is not something only added afterward. Even less is it the conclusion of the gathering, coming last. The safekeeping that brings something in has already determined the first steps of the gathering and arranged everything that follows. If we are blind to everything but the sequence of steps, then the collecting follows the picking and gleaning, the bringing under shelter follows the collecting, until finally everything is accommodated in bins and storage rooms. This gives rise to the illusion that preservation and safekeeping have nothing to do with gathering. Yet what would become of a vintage [*eine Lese*] which has not been gathered with an eye to the fundamental matter of its being sheltered? The sheltering [*Bergen*] comes first in the essential formation of the vintage.

However, the sheltering does not secure just any thing that hap-

pens along: the gathering which properly begins with the sheltering, i.e. the vintage, is itself from the start a selection [*Auslese*] which requires sheltering. For its part, the selection is determined by whatever within the crop to be sorted shows itself as to-be-selected [*ErlESEne*]. The most important aspect of the sheltering in the essential formation of the vintage is the sorting (in Alemanic [the southwestern German dialect]: the fore-gathering [*Vor-lese*]) which determines the selection, arranging everything involved in the bringing together, the bringing under shelter, and the accommodation of the vintage.

The sequence of steps in the gathering act does not coincide with the order of those far-reaching, fundamental traits in which the essence of the vintage [*die Lese*] consists.

It is proper to every gathering that the gatherers assemble to coordinate their work to the sheltering, and—gathered together with that end in view—first begin to gather. The gathering [*die Lese*] requires and demands this assembly. This original coordination governs their collective gathering.

However, *lesen* [to gather] thought in this way does not simply stand near *legen* [to lay]. Nor does the former simply accompany the latter. Rather, gathering is already included in laying. Every gathering is already a laying. Every laying is of itself gathering. Then what does “to lay” mean? Laying brings to lie, in that it lets things lie together before us. All too readily we take this “letting” in the sense of omitting or letting go. To lay, to bring to lie, to let lie, would then mean to concern ourselves no longer with what is laid down and lies before us—to ignore it. However, λέγειν, to lay, by its letting-lie-together-before means just this, that whatever lies before us involves us and therefore concerns us. Laying as letting-lie-together-before [*beisammen-vorliegen-Lassen*] is concerned with retaining whatever is laid down as lying before us. (In the Alemanic dialect *legt* means a weir or dam which lies ahead in the river, against the water’s current.)

The λέγειν or laying now to be thought has in advance relinquished all claims—claims never even known to it—to be that which for the first time brings whatever lies before us into its position [*Lage*]. Laying, as λέγειν, simply tries to let what of itself lies together here before us, as what lies before, into its protection, a protection in which

it remains laid down. What sort of protection is this? What lies together before us is stored, laid away, secured and deposited in unconcealment, and that means sheltered in unconcealment. By letting things lie together before us, λέγειν undertakes to secure what lies before us in unconcealment. The κειῖσθαι, the lying before for-itself of what is in this fashion deposited, i.e. the κειῖσθαι of ὑποκείμενον, is nothing more and nothing less than the presencing of that which lies before us into unconcealment. In this λέγειν of ὑποκείμενον, λέγειν as gathering and assembling remains implied. Because λέγειν, which lets things lie together before us, concerns itself solely with the safety of that which lies before us in unconcealment, the gathering appropriate to such a laying is determined in advance by safekeeping.

Λέγειν is to lay. Laying is the letting-lie-before—which is gathered into itself—of that which comes together into presence.

The question arises: How does the proper meaning of λέγειν, to lay, attain the signification of saying and talking? The foregoing reflection already contains the answer, for it makes us realize that we can no longer raise the question in such a manner. Why not? Because what we have been thinking about in no way tells us that this word λέγειν advanced from the one meaning, "to lay," to the other, "to say."

~~We have not busied ourselves in the foregoing with the transformation of word meanings. Rather, we have stumbled upon an event whose immensity still lies concealed in its long unnoticed simplicity.~~

The saying and talking of mortals comes to pass from early on as λέγειν, laying. Saying and talking occur essentially as the letting-lie-together-before of everything which, laid in unconcealment, comes to presence. The original λέγειν, laying, unfolds itself early and in a manner ruling everything unconcealed as saying and talking. Λέγειν as laying lets itself be overpowered by the predominant sense, but only in order to deposit the essence of saying and talking at the outset under the governance of laying proper.

That λέγειν is a laying wherein saying and talking articulate their essence, refers to the earliest and most consequential decision concerning the essence of language. Where did it come from? This question is as weighty, and supposedly the same, as the other question: How far does this characterization of the essence of language from laying ex-

tend? The question reaches into the uttermost of the possible essential origins of language. For, like the letting-lie-before that gathers, saying receives its essential form from the unconcealment of that which lies together before us. But the unconcealing of the concealed into unconcealment is the very presencing of what is present. We call this the Being of beings. Thus, the essential speaking of language, λέγειν as laying, is determined neither by vocalization (φωνή) nor by signifying (σημαίνειν). Expression and signification have long been accepted as manifestations which indubitably betray some characteristics of language. But they do not genuinely reach into the realm of the primordial, essential determination of language, nor are they at all capable of determining this realm in its primary characteristics. That saying as laying ruled unnoticed and from early on, and—as if nothing at all had occurred there—that speaking accordingly appeared as λέγειν, produced a curious state of affairs. Human thought was never astonished by this event, nor did it discern in it a mystery which concealed an essential dispensation of Being to men, a dispensation perhaps reserved for that historical moment which would not only devastate man from top to bottom but send his very essence reeling.

To say is λέγειν. This sentence, if well thought, now sloughs off everything facile, trite, and vacuous. It names the inexhaustible mystery that the speaking of language comes to pass from the unconcealment of what is present, and is determined according to the lying-before of what is present as the letting-lie-together-before. Will thinking finally learn to catch a glimpse of what it means that Aristotle could characterize λέγειν as ἀποφαίνεσθαι? The λόγος by itself brings that which appears and comes forward in its lying before us to appearance—to its luminous self-showing (cf. *Being and Time*, § 7b).

Saying is a letting-lie-together-before which gathers and is gathered. If such is the essence of speaking, then what is hearing? As λέγειν, speaking is not characterized as a reverberation which expresses meaning. If saying is not characterized by vocalization, then neither can the hearing which corresponds to it occur as a reverberation meeting the ear and getting picked up, as sounds troubling the auditory sense and being transmitted. Were our hearing primarily and always only this picking up and transmitting of sounds, conjoined by several

other processes, the result would be that the reverberation would go in one ear and out the other. That happens in fact when we are not gathered to what is addressed. But the addressed is itself that which lies before us, as gathered and laid before us. Hearing is actually this gathering of oneself which composes itself on hearing the pronouncement and its claim. Hearing is primarily gathered hearkening. What is heard comes to presence in hearkening. We hear when we are "all ears." But "ear" does not here mean the acoustical sense apparatus. The anatomically and physiologically identifiable ears, as the tools of sensation, never bring about a hearing, not even if we take this solely as an apprehending of noises, sounds, and tones. Such apprehending can neither be anatomically established nor physiologically demonstrated, nor in any way grasped as a biological process at work within the organism—although apprehension lives only so long as it is embodied. So long as we think of hearing along the lines of acoustical science, everything is made to stand on its head. We wrongly think that the activation of the body's audio equipment is hearing proper. But then hearing in the sense of hearkening and heeding is supposed to be a transposition of hearing proper into the realm of the spiritual [*das Geistige*]. In the domain of scientific research one can establish many useful findings. One can demonstrate that periodic oscillations in air pressure of a certain frequency are experienced as tones. From such kinds of determinations concerning what is heard, an investigation can be launched which eventually only specialists in the physiology of the senses can conduct.

In contrast to this, perhaps only a little can be said concerning proper hearing, which nevertheless concerns everyone directly. Here it is not so much a matter for research, but rather of paying thoughtful attention to simple things. Thus, precisely this belongs to proper hearing: that man can hear wrongly insofar as he does not catch what is essential. If the ears do not belong directly to proper hearing, in the sense of hearkening, then hearing and the ears are in a special situation. We do not hear because we have ears. We have ears, i.e. our bodies are equipped with ears, because we hear. Mortals hear the thunder of the heavens, the rustling of woods, the gurgling of fountains, the ringing of plucked strings, the rumbling of motors, the noises

of the city—only and only so far as they always already in some way belong to them and yet do not belong to them.

We are all ears when our gathering devotes itself entirely to hearkening, the ears and the mere invasion of sounds being completely forgotten. So long as we only listen to the sound of a word, as the expression of a speaker, we are not yet even listening at all. Thus, in this way we never succeed in having genuinely heard anything at all. But when does hearing succeed? We have heard [*gehört*] when we belong to [*gehören*] the matter addressed. The speaking of the matter addressed is λέγειν, letting-lie-together-before. To belong to speech—this is nothing else than in each case letting whatever a letting-lie-before lays down before us lie gathered in its entirety. Such a letting-lie establishes whatever lies before us as lying-before. It establishes this as itself. It lays one and the Same in one. It lays one as the Same. Such λέγειν lays one and the same, the ὁμόν. Such λέγειν is ὁμολογεῖν: One as the Same, i.e. a letting-lie-before of what does lie before us, gathered in the selfsameness of its lying-before.

Proper hearing occurs essentially in λέγειν as ὁμολογεῖν. This is consequently a λέγειν which lets lie before us whatever already lies together before us; which indeed lies there by virtue of a laying which concerns everything that lies together before us of itself. This exceptional laying is the λέγειν which comes to pass as the Λόγος.

Thus is Λόγος named without qualification: ὁ Λόγος, the Laying: the pure letting-lie-together-before of that which of itself comes to lie before us, in its lying there. In this fashion Λόγος occurs essentially as the pure laying which gathers and assembles. Λόγος is the original assemblage of the primordial gathering from the primordial Laying. 'Ο Λόγος is the Laying that gathers [*die lesende Lege*], and only this.

However, is all this no more than an arbitrary interpretation and an all-too-alien translation with respect to the usual understanding which takes Λόγος as meaning and reason? At first it does sound strange, and it may remain so for a long time—calling Λόγος “the Laying that gathers.” But how can anyone decide whether what this translation implies concerning the essence of Λόγος remains appropriate, if only in the most remote way, to what Heraclitus named and thought in the name ὁ Λόγος?

The only way to decide is to consider what Heraclitus himself says in the fragment cited. The saying begins: οὐκ ἐμοῦ . . . It begins with a strict, prohibiting "Not . . ." It refers to the saying and talking of Heraclitus himself. It concerns the hearing of mortals. "Not to me," i.e. not to this one who is talking; you are not to heed the vocalization of his talk. You never hear properly so long as your ears hang upon the sound and flow of a human voice in order to snatch up for yourselves a manner of speaking. Heraclitus begins the saying with a rejection of hearing as nothing but the passion of the ears. But this rejection is founded on a reference to proper hearing.

Οὐκ ἐμοῦ ἀλλὰ . . . Not to me should you listen (as though gaping), but rather . . . mortal hearing must attend to something else. To what? Ἄλλὰ τοῦ Λόγου. The way of proper hearing is determined by the Λόγος. But inasmuch as the Λόγος is named without qualification it cannot be just any customary thing. Therefore, the hearing appropriate to it cannot proceed casually toward it, only to pass it by once again. If there is to be proper hearing, mortals must have already heard the Λόγος with an attention [*Gehör*] which implies nothing less than their belonging to the Λόγος.

Οὐκ ἐμοῦ ἀλλὰ τοῦ Λόγου ἀκούσαντας. "When you have listened, not merely to me (the speaker), but rather when you maintain yourselves in hearkening attunement [*Gehören*], then there is proper hearing."

What happens, then, when such hearing occurs? When there is such proper hearing there is ὁμολογεῖν, which can only be what it is as a λέγειν. Proper hearing belongs to the Λόγος. Therefore this hearing is itself a λέγειν. As such, the proper hearing of mortals is in a certain way the Same as the Λόγος. At the same time, however, precisely as ὁμολογεῖν, it is not the Same at all. It is not the same as the Λόγος itself. Rather, ὁμολογεῖν remains a λέγειν which always and only lays or lets lie whatever is already, as ὁμόν, gathered together and lying before us; this lying never springs from the ὁμολογεῖν but rather rests in the Laying that gathers, i.e. in the Λόγος.

But what occurs when there is proper hearing, as ὁμολογεῖν? Heraclitus says: σοφὸν ἔστιν. When ὁμολογεῖν occurs, then σοφὸν comes to pass. We read: σοφὸν ἔστιν. One translates σοφὸν correctly as

"wise." But what does "wise" mean? Does it mean simply to know in the way old "wise men" know things? What do we know of such knowing? If it remains a having-seen whose seeing is not of the eyes of the senses, just as the having-heard is not hearing with the auditory equipment, then having-seen and having-heard presumably coincide. They do not refer to a mere grasping, but to a certain kind of behavior. Of what sort? Of the sort that maintains itself in the abode of mortals. This abiding holds to what the Laying that gathers lets lie before us, which in each case already lies before us. Thus σοφόν signifies that which can adhere to whatever has been indicated, can devote itself to it, and can dispatch itself toward it (get under way toward it). Because it is appropriate [*schickliches*] such behavior becomes skillful [*geschickt*]. When we want to say that someone is particularly skilled at something we still employ such turns of speech as "he has a gift for that and is destined for it." In this fashion we hit upon the genuine meaning of σοφόν, which we translate as "fateful" [*geschicklich*]. But "fateful" from the start says something more than "skillful." When proper hearing, as ὁμολογεῖν, is, then the fateful comes to pass, and mortal λέγειν is dispatched to the Λόγος. It becomes concerned with the Laying that gathers. Λέγειν is dispatched to what is appropriate, to whatever rests in the assemblage of the primordially gathering laying-before, i.e. in that which the Laying that gathers has sent. Thus it is indeed fateful when mortals accomplish proper hearing. But σοφόν is not τὸ Σοφόν, the "fateful" is not "Fate," so called because it gathers to itself all dispensation, and precisely that which is appropriate to the behavior of mortals. We have not yet made out what, according to the thinking of Heraclitus, ὁ Λόγος is; it remains still undecided whether the translation of ὁ Λόγος as "the Laying that gathers" captures even a small part of what the Λόγος is.

And already we face a new riddle: the word τὸ Σοφόν. If we are to think it in Heraclitus' way, we toil in vain so long as we do not pursue it in the saying in which it speaks, up to the very words that conclude it.

Ὁμολογεῖν occurs when the hearing of mortals has become proper hearing. When such a thing happens something fateful comes to pass. Where, and as what, does the fateful presence? Heraclitus says: ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστὶν Ἐν Πάντι, "the fateful comes to pass insofar as One All."

The text which is now current runs: *ἐν πάντα εἶναι*. * The *εἶναι* is an alteration of the sole traditional reading: *ἐν πάντα εἰδέναι*, understood to mean, "It is wise to know that everything is one." The conjectural *εἶναι* is more appropriate. Still, we set aside the verb. By what right? Because the *Ἐν Πάντα* suffices. But it not only suffices: it remains far more proper for the matter thought here, and likewise for the style of Heraclitean speech. *Ἐν Πάντα, One: All, All: One.*

How easily one speaks these words. How readily they transform themselves into a stolid maxim. A swarming multiplicity of meanings nestles in both these dangerously harmless words, *ἐν* and *πάντα*. Their indeterminate juxtaposition permits various assertions. In the words *Ἐν πάντα* the hasty superficiality of usual representations collides with the hesitant caution of the thinking that questions. The statement "One is all" can lend itself to an overhasty account of the world which hopes to buttress itself with a formula that is in some way correct everywhere, for all times. But the *Ἐν Πάντα* can also conceal a thinker's first steps which initiate all the following steps in the fateful course of thinking. The second case applies with Heraclitus' words. We do not know their content, in the sense of being able to revive Heraclitus' own way of representing things. We are also far removed from a thoughtful comprehension of these words. But from this "far remove" we may still succeed in delineating more meaningfully a few characteristics of the scope of the words *ἐν* and *πάντα*, and of the phrase *Ἐν Πάντα*. This delineation should remain a free-flowing preliminary sketch rather than a more self-assured portrayal. Of course, we should attempt such a sketch only in reflecting upon what Heraclitus said from within the unity of his saying. As it tells us what and how the fateful is, the saying names the *Λόγος*. The saying closes with *Ἐν Πάντα*. Is this conclusion only a termination, or does it first unlock what is to be said, by way of response?

The usual interpretation understands Heraclitus' fragment thus: it

*See Diels-Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th ed. (Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1951), I, 161, line 17. Kranz rejects the Miller-Comperz paraphrase *εἰδέναι* and prints *εἶναι*. Heidegger's citation of B 50 capitalizes *Ἐν Πάντα* and drops *εἶναι*.—TR

is wise to listen to the pronouncement of the Λόγος and to heed the meaning of what is pronounced, while repeating what one has heard in the statement: One is All. There is the Λόγος. It has something to relate. Then there is also that which it relates, to wit, that everything is one.

However, the Ἐν Πάντα is not *what* the Λόγος relates as a maxim or gives as a meaning to be understood. Ἐν Πάντα is not *what* the Λόγος pronounces; rather, Ἐν Πάντα suggests the way in which Λόγος essentially occurs.

Ἐν is the unique One, as unifying. It unifies by assembling. It assembles in that, in gathering, it lets lie before us what lies before us as such and as a whole. The unique One unifies as the Laying that gathers. This gathering and laying unifying assembles all uniting in itself, so that it is this One, and as this One, is what is unique. Whatever is named Ἐν Πάντα in Heraclitus' fragment gives us a simple clue concerning what the Λόγος is.

Do we wander off the path if we think Λόγος as λέγειν *prior* to all profound metaphysical interpretations, thereby thinking to establish seriously that λέγειν, as gathering letting-lie-together-before, can be nothing other than the essence of unification, which assembles everything in the totality of simple presencing? There is only *one* appropriate answer to the question of what Λόγος is. In our formulation it reads: ὁ Λόγος λέγει. Λόγος lets-lie-together-before. What? Πάντα. What this word means Heraclitus tells us immediately and unequivocally in the beginning of fragment B 7: Εἰ πάντα τὰ ὄντα. "If everything (namely) which is present." The Laying that gathers has, as Λόγος, laid down everything present in unconcealment. To lay is to shelter. Laying shelters everything present in its presencing, from which whatever lingers awhile in presence can be appropriately collected and brought forward by mortal λέγειν. Λόγος lays that which is present before and down into presencing, that is, it puts those things back. Presencing nevertheless suggests: *having come forward to endure in unconcealment*. Because the Λόγος lets lie before us what lies before us as such, it discloses what is present in its presencing. But disclosure is Ἀλήθεια. This and Λόγος are the Same. λέγειν

lets δληθέα, unconcealed as such, lie before us (cf. B 112*). All disclosure releases what is present from concealment. Disclosure needs concealment. The Ἄ-Ληθεια rests in Ληθη, drawing from it and laying before us whatever remains deposited in Ληθη. Λόγος is *in itself and at the same time* a revealing and a concealing. It is Ἄληθεια. Unconcealment needs concealment, Ληθη, as a reservoir upon which disclosure can, as it were, draw. Λόγος, the Laying that gathers, has in itself this revealing-concealing character. When we can see in Λόγος how the Ἔν essentially occurs as unifying, it becomes equally clear that this unifying which occurs in the Λόγος remains infinitely different from what we tend to represent as a connecting or binding together. The unifying that rests in λέγειν is neither a mere comprehensive collecting nor a mere coupling of opposites which equalizes all contraries. The Ἔν Πάντα lets lie together before us in one presencing things which are usually separated from, and opposed to, one another, such as day and night, winter and summer, peace and war, waking and sleeping, Dionysos and Hades. Such opposites, borne along the farthest distance between presence and absence, διαφερόμενον, let the Laying that gathers lie before us in its full bearing. Its laying is itself that which carries things along by bearing them out. The Ἔν is itself a carrying out.

Ἔν Πάντα says what the Λόγος is. Λόγος says how Ἔν Πάντα essentially occurs. Both are the Same.

When mortal λέγειν is dispatched to the Λόγος, ὁμολογεῖν occurs. This is assembled in the Ἔν, with its unifying dominance. When ὁμολογεῖν occurs, the fateful comes to pass. However, ὁμολογεῖν is never properly Fate itself. Where do we ever find, not merely things that are fated, but *the* fateful itself? What is the fateful

*Fragment B 112, Diels-Kranz I, 176 reads:

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίη δληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαιόντας

Healthful thinking is the greatest perfection; and wisdom consists in saying the truth and acting in accordance with nature, listening to it.

If we may venture another translation: "Thinking is the greatest *areté*, for what is fateful comes to pass when, in dedicated hearkening, we let unconcealment lie before us and bring forth [what is present] along the lines of self-disclosure."—TR.

itself? Heraclitus says what it is unequivocally at the beginning of fragment B 32: "Ἐν τὸ σοφὸν μόνον, "the unique One unifying all is alone the fateful." But if the Ἐν is the same as the Λόγος, the result is: ὁ Λόγος τὸ σοφὸν-μόνον. The *only properly* fateful matter is the Λόγος. When mortal λέγειν, as ὁμολογεῖν, is dispatched toward what is fateful, it is sent on its fated way.

But how is Λόγος the fateful, how is it destiny proper, that is, the assembly of that which sends everything into its own? The Laying that gathers assembles in itself all destiny by bringing things and letting them lie before us, keeping each absent and present being in its place and on its way; and by its assembling it secures everything in the totality. Thus each being can be joined and sent into its own. Heraclitus says (B 64): τὸ δὲ Πάντα οἰακίζει Κεραυνός. "But lightning steers (in presencing) the totality (of what is present)."

Lightning abruptly lays before us in an instant everything present in the light of its presencing. The lightning named here steers. It brings all things forward to their designated, essential place. Such instantaneous bringing is the Laying that gathers, the Λόγος. "Lightning" appears here as an epithet of Zeus. As the highest of gods, Zeus is cosmic destiny. The Λόγος, the Ἐν Πάντα, would accordingly be nothing other than the highest god. The essence of Λόγος thus would offer a clue concerning the divinity of the god.

Ought we now to place Λόγος, Ἐν Πάντα, and Ζεὺς all together, and even assert that Heraclitus teaches pantheism? Heraclitus does not teach this or any doctrine. As a thinker, he only gives us to think. With regard to our question whether Λόγος (Ἐν Πάντα) and Ζεὺς are the Same, he certainly gives us difficult matters to think about. The representational thought of subsequent centuries and millennia has carried this question along without thinking it, ultimately to relieve itself of this unfamiliar burden with the aid of a ready forgetfulness. Heraclitus says (B 32):

Ἐν τὸ Σοφὸν μόνον λέγεσθαι οὐκ ἐθέλει
καὶ ἐθέλει Ζηνός ὄνομα·

The One, which alone is wise, does not want
and yet does want to be called by the name Zeus.
(Diels-Kranz)

The word that carries the saying, *ἔθελω*, does not mean "to want," but rather "to be ready of itself for"; *ἔθελω* does not mean merely to demand something, but rather to allow something a reference back to itself. However, if we are to consider carefully the import of what is said in the saying, we must weigh what it says in the first line: *Ἐν*

λέγεσθαι οὐκ ἔθέλει. "The unique-unifying-One, the Laying that gathers, is not ready." Ready for what? For *λέγεσθαι*, to be assembled under the name "Zeus." For if in such assemblage the *Ἐν* should be brought to light as Zeus, then perhaps it would always have to remain an apparition. That the saying under consideration concerns *λέγεσθαι* in immediate relation to *ὄνομα* (the naming word), indisputably points to the meaning of *λέγειν* as saying, talking, naming. So precisely this saying of Heraclitus, which seems to contradict directly everything said above concerning *λέγειν* and *λόγος*, is designed to allow us renewed thinking on whether and how far *λέγειν* in the sense of "saying" and "talking" is intelligible only if it is thought in its most proper sense—as "laying" and "gathering." To name means to call forward. That which is gathered and laid down in the name, by means of such a laying, comes to light and comes to lie before us. The naming (*ὄνομα*), thought in terms of *λέγειν*, is not the expressing of a word-meaning but rather a letting-lie-before in the light wherein something stands in such a way that it has a name.

In the first place the *Ἐν*, the *Λόγος*, the destining of everything fateful, is not in its innermost essence ready to appear under the name "Zeus," i.e. to appear *as* Zeus: *οὐκ ἔθέλει*. Only after that does *καὶ ἔθέλει* follow: the *Ἐν* is "yet also ready."

Is it only a manner of speaking when Heraclitus says first that the *Ἐν* does not admit the naming in question, or does the priority of denial have its ground in the matter itself? For *Ἐν Πάντα*, as *Λόγος*, lets everything present come to presence. The *Ἐν*, however, is not itself one present being among others. It is in its way unique. Zeus, for his part, is not simply someone present among others. He is the highest of present beings. Thus Zeus is designated in an exceptional way in presencing; he is allotted this special designation, and appropriately called to such an apportionment (*Μοῖρα*) in the all-assembling *Ἐν*, i.e. Fate. Zeus is not himself the *Ἐν*, although as the one who aims lightning-bolts he executes Fate's dispensations.

That with respect to the ἐθέλει the οὐκ is designated first suggests that the Ἔν does *not* properly admit of being named Zeus, and of being thereby degraded to the level of existing as one being present among others—even if the “among” has the character of “above all other present beings.”

On the other hand, according to the saying, the Ἔν does admit of being named Zeus. How? The answer is already contained in what has just been said. If the Ἔν is not apprehended as being by itself the Λόγος, if it appears rather as the Πάντα, *then* and only then does the totality of present beings show itself under the direction of the highest present being as one totality under this [unifying] One. The totality of present beings is under its highest aspect the Ἔν as Zeus. The Ἔν itself, however, as Ἔν Πάντα, is the Λόγος, the Laying that gathers. As Λόγος, the Ἔν alone is τὸ Σοφόν, the fateful as Fate itself: the gathering of destiny into presence.

If the δκούμεν of mortals is directed to Λόγος alone, to the Laying that gathers, then mortal λέγειν is skillfully brought to the gathering of the Λόγος. Mortal λέγειν lies secured in the Λόγος. It is destined to be appropriated in ὁμολογεῖν. Thus it remains appropriated to the Λόγος. In this way mortal λέγειν is fateful. But it is never Fate itself, i.e. Ἔν Πάντα as ὁ Λόγος.

Now that the saying of Heraclitus speaks more clearly, what it says again threatens to fade into obscurity.

The Ἔν Πάντα indeed contains the clue to the way in which Λόγος in its λέγειν essentially occurs. Yet whether it is thought as “laying” or as “saying,” does λέγειν forever remain merely a type of mortal behavior? If Ἔν Πάντα were the Λόγος, then would not a particular aspect of mortal being be elevated to become the fundamental trait of that which, as the destiny of presencing itself, stands above all mortal and immortal being? Does the Λόγος imply the elevation and transfer of the mortal’s way-to-be to that of the unique One? Does mortal λέγειν remain only an image corresponding to the Λόγος, which is itself the Fate in which presencing as such and for all present beings rests?

Or does such questioning, which attaches itself to the guidelines of an Either-Or, not at all apply, because its approach is from the start

inadequate to the inquiry here undertaken? If this is so, then neither can Λόγος be the overcoming of mortal λέγειν, nor can λέγειν be simply a copying of the definitive Λόγος. Then whatever essentially occurs in the λέγειν of ὁμολογεῖν and in the λέγειν of the Λόγος has a more primordial origin—and this in the simple middle region between both. Is there a path for mortal thinking to that place?

In any case, the path remains at first confused and confounded by the very ways which early Greek thinking opened for those who were to follow. We shall limit ourselves to stepping back before the riddle, in order to get a first glimpse of several of its puzzling aspects.

The saying of Heraclitus under discussion (B 50) states, according to our translation and commentary:

Do not listen to me, the mortal speaker, but be in hearkening to the Laying that gathers; first belong to this and then you hear properly; such hearing is when a letting-lie-together-before occurs by which the gathering letting-lie, the Laying that gathers, lies before us as gathered; when a letting-lie of the letting-lie-before occurs, the fateful comes to pass; then the truly fateful, i.e. destiny alone, is: the unique One unifying All.

If we set aside the commentary, though not forgetting it, and try to translate into our language what Heraclitus said, his saying reads:

Attuned not to me but to the Laying that gathers: letting the Same lie: the fateful occurs (the Laying that gathers): One unifying All. —

Mortals, whose essence remains appropriated in ὁμολογεῖν are fateful when they measure the Λόγος as the Ἐν Πάντα and submit themselves to its measurement. Therefore Heraclitus says (B 43):

Ὑβριν χρὴ σβεννύναι μᾶλλον ἢ πυρκαϊήν.

Measureless pride needs to be extinguished sooner than a raging fire.

This is needed because Λόγος needs ὁμολογεῖν if present beings are to appear and shine in presencing. Ὅμολογεῖν dispatches itself without presumption into the measuring of the Λόγος.

From the saying first considered (B 50) we receive a distant counsel, which the last-named saying (B 43) indicates to be the most necessary of all:

EARLY GREEK THINKING

Before you play with fire, whether it be to kindle or extinguish it, put out first the flames of presumption, which overestimates itself and takes poor measure because it forgets the essence of λέγειν.

The translation of λέγειν as gathered-letting-lie-before, and of Λόγος as the Laying that gathers, may seem strange. Yet it is more salutary for thinking to wander into the strange than to establish itself in the obvious. Presumably Heraclitus alienated his contemporaries at least as much, although in an entirely different way, by weaving the words λέγειν and λόγος, so familiar to them, into such a saying, and by making ὁ Λόγος the guiding word of his thinking. Where does this word ὁ Λόγος—which we are now attempting to think as the Laying that gathers—lead Heraclitus' thought? The word ὁ Λόγος names that which gathers all present beings into presencing and lets them lie before us in it. 'Ο Λόγος names that in which the presencing of what is present comes to pass. The presencing of present beings the Greeks call τὸ εἶναι, that is, τὸ εἶναι τῶν ὄντων, in Latin, *esse entium*. We say the Being of beings. Since the beginning of Western thought the Being of beings emerges as what is alone worthy of thought. If we think this historic development in a truly historical way, then that in which the beginning of Western thought rests first becomes manifest: that in Greek antiquity the Being of beings becomes worthy of thought is the beginning of the West and is the hidden source of its destiny. Had this beginning not safeguarded what has been, i.e. the gathering of what still endures, the Being of beings would not now govern from the essence of modern technology. Through technology the entire globe is today embraced and held fast in a kind of Being experienced in Western fashion and represented on the epistemological models of European metaphysics and science.

In the thinking of Heraclitus the Being (presencing) of beings appears as ὁ Λόγος, as the Laying that gathers. But this lightning-flash of Being remains forgotten. And this oblivion remains hidden, in its turn, because the conception of Λόγος is forthwith transformed. Thus, early on and for a long time it was inconceivable that the Being of beings could have brought itself to language in the word ὁ Λόγος.

What happens when the Being of beings, the being in its Being,

the distinction between the two *as* a distinction, is brought to language? "To bring to language" usually means to express something orally or in writing. But the phrase now wishes to think something else: "to bring to language" means to secure Being in the essence of language. May we suggest that such an event prepared itself when ὁ Λόγος became the guiding word of Heraclitus' thinking, because it became the name for the Being of beings?

Ὁ Λόγος, τὸ Λέγειν, is the Laying that gathers. But at the same time λέγειν always means for the Greeks to lay before, to exhibit, to tell, to say. Ὁ Λόγος then would be the Greek name for speaking, saying, and language. Not only this. Ὁ Λόγος, thought as the Laying that gathers, would be the essence of saying [*die Sage*] as thought by the Greeks. Language would be saying. Language would be the gathering letting-lie-before of what is present in its presencing. In fact, the Greeks *dwelt* in this essential determination of language. But they never *thought* it—Heraclitus included.

The Greeks do experience saying in this way. But, Heraclitus included, they never think the essence of language expressly as the Λόγος, as the Laying that gathers.

What would have come to pass had Heraclitus—and all the Greeks after him—thought the essence of language expressly as Λόγος, as the Laying that gathers! Nothing less than this: the Greeks would have thought the essence of language from the essence of Being—indeed, as this itself. For ὁ Λόγος is the name for the Being of beings. Yet none of this came to pass. Nowhere do we find a trace of the Greeks' having thought the essence of language directly from the essence of Being. Instead, language came to be represented—indeed first of all with the Greeks—as vocalization, φωνή, as sound and voice, hence phonetically. The Greek word that corresponds to our word "language" is γλῶσσα, "tongue." Language is φωνή σημαντική, a vocalization which signifies something. This suggests that language attains at the outset that preponderant character which we designate with the name "expression." This correct but externally contrived representation of language, language as "expression," remains definitive from now on. It is still so today. Language is taken to be expression, and vice versa. Every kind of expression is represented as a kind of language. Art

historians speak of the "language of forms." Once, however, in the beginning of Western thinking, the essence of language flashed in the light of Being—once, when Heraclitus thought the Λόγος as his guiding word, so as to think in this word the Being of beings. But the lightning abruptly vanished. No one held onto its streak of light and the nearness of what it illuminated.

We see this lightning only when we station ourselves in the storm of Being. Yet everything today betrays the fact that we bestir ourselves only to drive storms away. We organize all available means for cloud-seeding and storm dispersal in order to have calm in the face of the storm. But this calm is no tranquility. It is only anesthesia; more precisely, the narcotization of anxiety in the face of thinking.

To think is surely a peculiar affair. The word of thinkers has no authority. The word of thinkers knows no authors, in the sense of writers. The word of thinking is not picturesque; it is without charm. The word of thinking rests in the sobering quality of what it says. Just the same, thinking changes the world. It changes it in the ever darker depths of a riddle, depths which as they grow darker offer promise of a greater brightness.

The riddle has long been propounded to us in the word "Being." In this matter "Being" remains only the provisional word. Let us see to it that our thinking does not merely run after it blindly. Let us first thoughtfully consider that "Being" was originally called "presencing"—and "presencing": enduring-here-before in unconcealment.