

Mode of Procedure.—Beginning with Fragment

64

(Correlated Fragments: 41, 1, 50, 47).

FINK: I open the seminar with hearty thanks to Professor Heidegger for his readiness to assume spiritual leadership in our common attempt to advance into the area of the great and historically important thinker Heraclitus. Heraclitus' voice, like that of Python, reaches us over a thousand years. Although this thinker lived at the origin of the West, and to that extent is longest past, we have not overtaken him even now. From Martin Heidegger's dialogue with the Greeks, in many of his writings, we can learn how the furthest becomes near and the most familiar becomes strange, and how we remain restless and are unable to rely on a sure interpretation of the Greeks. For us, the Greeks signify an enormous challenge.

Our seminar should be an exercise in thinking, that is, in reflection on the thoughts anticipated by Heraclitus. Confronted with his texts, left to us only as fragments, we are not so much concerned with the philological problematic, as important as it might be,¹ as with advancing into the matter itself, that is, toward the matter that must have stood before Heraclitus' spiritual view. This matter is not simply on hand like a result or like some spoken tradition; rather, it can be opened up or blocked from view precisely through the spoken tradition. It is not correct to view the matter of philosophy, particularly the matter of thinking as Martin Heidegger has formulated it, as a product lying before us. The matter of thinking does not lie somewhere before us like a land of truth into which one can advance; it is not a thing that we can discover and uncover. The reality of, and the appropriate manner of access to, the matter of thinking is still dark for us. We are still seeking the matter of thinking of the thinker Heraclitus, and we are therefore a little like the poor man who has forgotten where the road leads. Our seminar is not concerned with a spectacular business. It is concerned, however, with serious-minded work. Our common attempt at reflection will not be free from certain disappointments and defeats. Nevertheless, reading the text of the ancient thinker, we make the attempt to come into the spiritual movement that releases us to the matter that merits being named the matter of thinking.

Professor Heidegger is in agreement that I should first advance a preliminary interpretation of the sayings of Heraclitus. This interpretation will give our discussion a basis and a starting place for a critical

surpassing or even destruction, and it will enable us to establish a certain common ground appropriate to inquiring discourse. Perhaps a preview of the particular language of Heraclitus' sayings is premature before we have read and interpreted them individually. The language of Heraclitus has an inner ambiguity and multidimensionality, so that we cannot give it any unambiguous reference. It moves from gnomic, sentential, and ambiguous-sounding expression to an extreme flight of thought.

As assigned text in our seminar, we will work with *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* by Hermann Diels.² For our part, we choose another arrangement. This should cast light on an inner coherence of the fragments' meaning, but without pretending to reconstruct the original form of Heraclitus' lost writing, *Περὶ φύσεως* [*On Nature*]. We shall attempt to trace a thread throughout the multiplicity of his sayings in the hope that a certain track can thereby show itself. Whether our arrangement of the fragments is better than that adopted by Diels is a question that should remain unsettled.

Without further preliminary considerations, we shall proceed directly to the midst of the matter, beginning our interpretation with Fr. 64: τὰ δὲ πάντα οἰακίξει κεραυνός. This sentence is clearly intelligible to everyone in what it appears to mean. Whether it is also intelligible in what this meaning concerns, however, is another question. But first, we ask what this sentence means. As soon as we reflect on it somewhat more, we immediately depart from the easy intelligibility and apparent familiarity of the sentence. Diels' translation reads: "Lightning steers the universe." But is "universe" the fitting translation of τὰ πάντα? After due deliberation, one can indeed come to equate τὰ πάντα and "universe." But first of all, τὰ πάντα names "everything" and signifies: all things, all of what is. Heraclitus speaks of τὰ πάντα vis-à-vis Κεραυνός [lightning]. In so doing, he enunciates a connection between many things and the one of lightning. In the lightning bolt the many, in the sense of "everything," flash up, whereby "everything" is a plural. If we first ask naïvely about τὰ πάντα, we are dealing with a quintessential relatedness. If we translate τὰ πάντα as "all things," we must first ask, what kinds of things there are. At the outset, we choose the way of a certain tactical naïveté. On the one hand, we take the concept of thing in a wider sense, and then we mean all that is. On the other hand, we also use it in a narrower sense. If we mean things in the narrower sense, then we can distinguish between such things as are from nature (φύσει ὄντα) and such as are the product of human technics (τέχνη ὄντα). With all the things of nature—with the inanimate, like stone, and with the living, like plant, beast, and human (in so far as we may speak of a human as a thing)—we mean only such things as are individuated and have determinate outlines. We have in view the determinate, individual thing that, to be sure, also has a particular, common character in itself, as being of a certain

kind. We make the tacit assumption that τὰ πάντα, in the sense of the many in entirety, forms the entirety of finite bounded things. The stone, for example, is part of a mountain. We can also speak of the mountain as of a thing. Or is it only a linguistic convention to call what has a determinate outline a thing? The stone is found as rubble on the mountain; the mountain belongs in the mountain range; the latter on the earth's crust; and the earth itself as a great thing that belongs, as a gravitational center, in our solar system.

HEIDEGGER: To begin, wouldn't it perhaps be appropriate to ask whether Heraclitus also speaks of τὰ πάντα in other fragments, in order to have a specific clue from him about what he understands by τὰ πάντα? In this way we get closer to Heraclitus. That is one question. The second question I would like to put under discussion is what lightning has to do with τὰ πάντα. We must ask concretely what it can mean when Heraclitus says that lightning steers τὰ πάντα. Can lightning steer the universe at all?

PARTICIPANT: If we begin by taking lightning only as a phenomenon, then we must wonder that it should steer the universe, since lightning as a phenomenal entity, as a sensuously perceptible, luminous appearance, still belongs together with all other entities in the universe.

HEIDEGGER: We must bring lightning into connection with the phenomenon of nature, if we wish to understand it "in Greek."

FINK: Lightning, regarded as a phenomenon of nature, means the outbreak of the shining lightning-flash in the dark of night. Just as lightning in the night momentarily flashes up and, in the brightness of the gleam, shows things in their articulated outline, so lightning in a deeper sense brings to light the multiple things in their articulated gathering.

HEIDEGGER: I remember an afternoon during my journey in Aegina. Suddenly I saw a single bolt of lightning, after which no more followed. My thought was: Zeus.

Our task now consists in looking with Heraclitus for what τὰ πάντα means. It is an open question how far a distinction was already possible with him between "everything" in the sense of the sum of individuals and "everything" in the meaning of the embracing allness. The other task, which is first posed for us by Fr. 64, is the connection between τὰ πάντα and lightning. We must also bring Heraclitus' lightning into connection with fire (πῦρ). It is also essential to observe who has handed Fr. 64 down to us. It is the Church Father Hippolytus who died roughly A.D. 236/37. From Heraclitus' time approximately eight hundred years pass before our fragment is cited by Hippolytus. In the context, πῦρ and κόσμος [cosmos] are also mentioned. But we do not wish to enter here into the philological problematic that emerges in view of the connection of the fragment and the context of Hippolytus. In a conversation that I held

with Carl Reinhardt in 1941, when he stayed here in Freiburg, I spoke to him about the middle ground between pure philology, which intends to find the real Heraclitus with its philological tools, and the kind of philosophizing that consists in thinking without discipline and thereby assuming too much. Between these two extremes there is a middle ground concerned with the role of the transmission of understanding, of sense as well as interpretation.

With Hippolytus we find not only πῦρ but also ἐκπύρωσις [conflagration], which for him has the meaning of the end of the world. If we now ask what τὰ πάντα, lightning, and also steering mean in Fr. 64, we must at the same time attempt to transfer ourselves into the Greek world with the clarification of these words. So that we can understand Fr. 64 in a genuine manner, I would propose that Fr. 41 be added to it: εἶναι γὰρ ἐν τὸ σοφόν, ἐπίστασθαι γνώμην, ὅτι ἐκυβέρνησε πάντα διὰ πάντων. Diels translates: "The wise is one thing only, to understand the thoughts that steer everything through everything." Literally translated, πάντα διὰ πάντων means: everything throughout everything. The importance of this saying lies, on the one hand, in ἐν τὸ σοφόν [the wise is one thing only] and, on the other, in πάντα διὰ πάντων. Here above all we must take into view the connection of the beginning and the end of the sentence.

FINK: There is a similar connection, on the one hand between the oneness of the lightning-flash, in the brightness of which the many show themselves in their outline and their articulations, and τὰ πάντα, and, on the other, between the oneness of σοφόν [the wise] and πάντα διὰ πάντων. As Κεραυνός relates to τὰ πάντα, ἐν τὸ σοφόν relates analogously to πάντα διὰ πάντων.

HEIDEGGER: I certainly grant that lightning and ἐν τὸ σοφόν stand in a relation to one another. But there is still more to notice in Fr. 41. In Fr. 64 Heraclitus speaks of τὰ πάντα, in Fr. 41 of πάντα διὰ πάντων. In Parmenides 1/32 we also find a similar phrase: διὰ πάντος πάντα περῶντα. In the phrase πάντα διὰ πάντων, the meaning of διὰ is above all to be questioned. To begin, it means "throughout." But how should we understand "throughout:" topographically, spatially, causally, or how else?

FINK: In Fr. 64 τὰ πάντα does not mean a calm, static multiplicity, but rather a dynamic multiplicity of entities. In τὰ πάντα a kind of movement is thought precisely in the reference back to lightning. In the brightness, specifically the clearing which the lightning bolt tears open, τὰ πάντα flash up and step into appearance. The being moved of τὰ πάντα is also thought in the lighting up of entities in the clearing of lightning.

HEIDEGGER: At first, let us leave aside words like "clearing" and "brightness."

FINK: If I have spoken of movement, we must distinguish, on the one hand between the movement that lies in the lighting of lightning, in the outbreak of brightness, and on the other hand, the movement in τὰ πάντα, in things. The movement of brightness of lightning corresponds to the movement that goes out from ἐν τὸ σοφόν and continues on in the many things in entirety. Things are not blocks at rest; rather, they are diversified in movement.

HEIDEGGER: τὰ πάντα are thus not a whole, present in front of us, but entities in movement. On the other hand, movement does not occur as κίνησις [motion] in Heraclitus.

FINK: If movement does not also belong among the fundamental words in Heraclitus, it still always stands in the horizon of problems of his thinking.

HEIDEGGER: To Frs. 64 and 41, we now add Fr. 1: τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον. γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν ἐοίκασιν, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῦμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔχει. τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγεθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὁκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὔδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται.³ At first, only γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε interests us. We translate, "For although everything happens according to this λόγος [reason, speech, word]." If Heraclitus speaks here of γινομένων [coming into being], he is, nevertheless, talking of movement.

FINK: In γινομένων γὰρ πάντων [coming into being of everything], we are dealing with things being moved within the cosmos, and not with the movement that issues from λόγος.

HEIDEGGER: γινομένων belongs to γένεσις [genesis]. When the Bible speaks of γένεσις, it means by this the Creation, in which things are brought into existence. But what does γένεσις signify in Greek?

PARTICIPANT: γένεσις is also no concept in Heraclitus.

HEIDEGGER: Since when do we have concepts at all?

PARTICIPANT: Only since Plato and Aristotle. We even have the first philosophical dictionary with Aristotle.

HEIDEGGER: While Plato manages to deal with concepts only with difficulty, we see that Aristotle deals with them more easily. The word γινομένων stands in a fundamental place in Fr. 1.

FINK: Perhaps we can add a comment to our discussion. We find γένεσις in an easily understood sense with living beings, phenomenally seen. Plants spring up from seeds, beasts from the pairing of parents, and humans from sexual union between man and woman. γένεσις is also native to the phenomenal region of the vegetative-animal. Coming into existence (γίγνεσθαι) in this region is at the same time coupled with passing away (ωθελοεσθαι). If we now refer γένεσις also to the region of

lifeless things, we operate with an expanded, more general, sense of this word. For if we refer γένεσις to τὰ πάντα, we expand the sense of γένεσις beyond the phenomenal region in which the genesis-phenomenon is otherwise at home.

HEIDEGGER: What you understand by the phenomenal sense of the word γένεσις we can also label as ontic.

FINK: We also meet the widening of the original, phenomenal meaning of γένεσις in common language, for example, when we speak of the world's coming into existence. We use specific images and domains of ideas in our representations. With γινομένων, in Fr. 1, we are concerned with the more general sense of γένεσις. For τὰ πάντα does not come into existence like that entity which comes into existence in accordance with γένεσις in the narrower sense, and also not like living beings. It is another matter when, in the coming-into-existence of things, manufacture and production (τέχνη and ποίησις) are also meant. The ποίησις of phenomena is, however, something other than the γένεσις. The jug does not come into existence by means of the potter's hand like the man is begotten by parents.

HEIDEGGER: Let us once again clarify for ourselves what our task is. We ask: what does τὰ πάντα mean in Fr. 64; and πάντα διὰ πάντων in Fr. 41; and γινομένων γὰρ πάντων in Fr. 1? κατὰ τὸν λόγον [according to the Logos] in Fr. 1 corresponds with ἔν τὸ σοφόν in Fr. 41 and κεραινός in Fr. 64.

FINK: In γινομένων the sense of γένεσις is used in widened manner.

HEIDEGGER: But can one actually speak of a widening here? I mean that we should try to understand "steering," "everything throughout everything," and now the movement that is thought in γινομένων, in a genuine Greek sense. I agree that we may not take the meaning of γένεσις in γινομένων narrowly; rather, it is here a matter of a general expression. Fr. 1 is considered to be the beginning of Heraclitus' writing. Something fundamental is said in it. But may we now refer γινομένων, thought in γένεσις in a wide sense, to coming-forth [*Hervorkommen*]? In anticipation, we can say that we must keep in view the fundamental trait of what the Greeks called being. Although I do not like to use this word any more, we now take it up nevertheless. When Heraclitus thinks γένεσις in γινομένων, he does not mean "becoming" in the modern sense; that is, he does not mean a process. But thought in Greek, γένεσις means "to come into being," to come forth in presence. We now have three different concerns, drawn out of Frs. 64, 41, and 1, to which we must hold ourselves, if we wish to come into the clear concerning τὰ πάντα. Let us also draw on Fr. 50: οὐκ ἐμοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστὶν ἔν πάντα εἶναι. Diels' translation runs, "Listening not to me but to the Logos (λόγος), it is wise to say that everything is one." Before all else, this saying centers on ἔν, πάντα, and ὁμολογεῖν.

FINK: If we now start out from coming-forth, coming-forth-to-appearance [*Zum-Vorschein-Kommen*], wherein you see the Greek meaning of γινομένων as thought in γένεσις, then we also have a reference to the brightness and gleam of lightning in which the individual thing stands and flashes up. Then we would have the following analogical correlation: as lightning on a dark night lets us see everything individual in its specific outline all at once, so this would be in a short time span the same as that which happens perpetually in πῦρ αἰείζων [ever-living fire] in Fr. 30. The entry of entities in their determinateness is thought in the moment of brightness. Out of Fr. 64 comes τὰ πάντα; out of Fr. 41 comes πάντα διὰ πάντων; and out of Fr. 1, γινομένων πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον. Earlier we tried to discern the movement of lighting in the lightning bolt. Now we can say that it is the movement of bringing-forth-to-appearance. But bringing-forth-to-appearance, which lightning accomplishes in entities, is also a steering intervention in the moving of things themselves. Things are moved in the manner of advancing and receding, waxing and waning, of local movement and alteration. The movement of lightning corresponds to the moving of ἔν τὸ σοφόν. The steering movement is not thought with respect to the lightning, or with respect to ἔν τὸ σοφόν, but with respect to the efficacy of the lightning and of ἔν τὸ σοφόν, which effects bringing-forth-to-appearance and continues to effect things. The movement of steering intervention in the moving of things happens in accord with the λόγος. The movement of things that stand in the brightness of lightning has a wisdomlike nature that must, however, be distinguished from the movement that issues itself from σοφόν. Fr. 41 does not concern itself only with the relatedness of the one and the many that appear in the one, but also with the efficacy of the one in reference to τὰ πάντα, which comes to expression in πάντα διὰ πάντων. It could be that λόγος in Fr. 1 is another word for σοφόν in Fr. 41, for Κεραινός in Fr. 64, as well as for πῦρ [fire] and πόλεμος [war]. πόλεμος is the πάντων Βασιλεύς [king of everything], the war that determines the antithetical movement of things that stand in the sphere of appearance.

HEIDEGGER: Do you wish to say that what is meant by γένεσις in γινομένων γὰρ πάντων serves to determine more closely the διὰ of Fr. 41? Do you then understand διὰ causally?

FINK: In no way. I would only like to say that lightning, which tears open the dark of night and, in its gleam, lights up and lets all individual things be seen, at the same time is also the mobile power of γένεσις in the manner of διὰ; and that this movement passes into the movements of things. Like the lightning, the λόγος of Fr. 1 also relates to τὰ πάντα. The movement of λόγος, which brings-forth and establishes, steers and determines everything, corresponds to the lightning movement that brings-forth.