

I sing from fear in front of birth and death.

This is the tribute to Heraclitus I promised last time. Now, what is “subjective” and what kind of “confession” might a tribute to Heraclitus entail? First: You will hear whatever you hear of Heraclitus in my own translation. And as you might know, even the most objective translation is a subjective endeavour. And secondly, you will hear that my own readings and associations were born from and are being birthed by this philosopher, whom I consider above all else, a poet. And, as you might also know, an interpretation is but a confession of personal, very personal things.

And here is my first confession. Everyone, really everyone, calls Heraclitus dark, mysterious, difficult. For me, he is very bright, clear, concrete. Most likely, it is that my mind grasps one side of what Heraclitus says, the one side that fits it, and responds to it, and recognises it as unique and bright. Leaving the others for the others. For me, all that is complex about Heraclitus ~~is not anything more than~~ is what forms the base of his philosophy. The unity of contradictions. In two words, the world. And yes, the world is complex, dark, and mysterious. However, for Heraclitus, who ~~conceives the world and~~ understands it as a unit of contradictions, as one section of everything with the aim of creating ~~a thing~~, the world... No, for me Heraclitus is not dark. He is only a poet.

A poet that, like Sophocles, plays with the possibilities that he is offered by the Greek language and ~~the~~ its punctuation. ~~There~~ Where one epithet can have one or two or multiple meanings and can fit as much with the noun that precedes it as with the one that comes after it. And as such, ~~within~~ few words, multiple notions are expressed that coexist and are ~~definitely~~ all true. But the unfortunate translator will have to choose one and by necessity create a singular meaning, limited and poor, out of something broad that has the desire, or better, the arrogance to embrace the universe. Arrogance, Heraclitus believed, was an obstacle to progress, but also a holy illness – as the ancients believed for every kind of madness.

And after all this introduction, ~~to the mysteries and virtues of language and translation~~, I will go directly to Heraclitus’ excerpt from which today’s show title emerged.

“εἰ μὴ γὰρ Διονύσω πομπὴν ἐποιοῦντο καὶ ὕμνεον ᾄσμα αἰδοίοισιν,
ἀναιδέστατα εἴργαστ’ ἄν· ὠπτός δὲ Αἰδῆς καὶ Διόνυσος, ὅτεφ μαίνονται καὶ
ληναῖζουσιν...”

And in the first reading, the translation is deficient, in modern Greek, he says: If they didn't do a litany in honour of Dionysos and didn't sing the songhymn during the procession as a tribute to αἰδοίων (those who ought to be respected/vulva), what they would do would be shameful (αἰδῆ). However Hades (Ἅδης) and Dionysos, in whose name they become inebriated and mad, are one.

As if. That Hades and Dionysos are one was also told to us by contemporary psychoanalysts, two thousand years later, when we began rediscovering the world after the darkness of Christian civilization. But unlike Heraclitus, we did not bow over to language to look at what people know from when the world of humans was created, when the first people started giving names to things and notions – names that expressed what things and notions meant to them, how they expressed their deep and instinctual knowledge about the world. When did we bend down close enough to see that ᾄδω (to sing) has the same root as Hades (Ἅδης) and all together with αἰδοίων (vulva/one to be respected) and αἰδώς (respect or modesty). Oh this ancient Greek language with its punctuation marks and its fateful spelling. When did we realise that Hades(Ἅδης) means respect to the point of fear, and that αἰδοίων, which in the language of the ancients didn't only meant the female general organ of reproduction and not only the female one, is as equally as respectable and fear-inducing as Hades. And that all these connect and lead to or conclude in singing(ᾄδω). And that to sing (ᾄδω), loosely translated, could mean: I express my awe, respect and fear. And yes, I do so with rage and intoxication....

I can tell that the tribute to Heraclitus won't end today. Because it can't be completed when it needs to, in accordance with the initial promise that this be done subjectively, as a confession. So I will continue without the prospect of reaching an ending today. I will continue as arbitrarily as I began. For the sake of a minimal unity, I will try to focus on the psychographic excerpts of Heraclitus and not on the theological, scientific or sociological ones. While they are all interconnected and lead from one to the other.

ᾧ μάλιστα διηλεκῶς ὁμιλοῦσι λόγῳ, τῷ τά ὅλα διοικοῦντι, τούτῳ διαφέρονται.

It's especially with the one whom they are inseparable from that they disagree with. What would they have to say to the married couples, the children in relation to their parents, the political parties with their internal conflicts and the Christians with their interpretations and their Councils?

ἁρμονίη ἀφανῆς φανερῆς κρέσσων.

Because behind the disagreements, there is a deep, mystical harmony that is hidden, a harmony that's better than any obvious one.

Don't believe in the arguments of people. The more they argue, the more they love each other. But also, don't believe in the postcards with their obvious harmony of shapes and lighting. A work of art is hidden behind errors, clumsiness, mysterious combinations. Mystical harmony. That which sets apart an immaculate, smooth, industrial object, from a rough handmade one. One in which the soul of a maker has been invested, that definitely isn't harmonious at first glance. That hides its deep harmony behind its contradictions, because it is in their unity, the good and the bad together, the beautiful and ugly together, it is the saint and devil together, it is the everything. God. The world.

~~can be found~~
Hope is founded in contradictions, Lenin said somewhere.

ὁ θεὸς ἡμέρη εὐφρόνη, χειμῶν θέρος, πόλεμος εἰρήνη, κόρος λιμός. ἀλλοιοῦται δὲ ὅκωσπερ ἐλλαιων, ὅποταν συμμιγῆ θυώμασιν, ὀνομάζεται καθ' ἡδονὴν ἐκάστου.

God is the day-night, winter-summer, war, peace, glut, hunger.
It changes like oil, when being mixed with aromatic substances: it takes the name of each one.

τῷ μὲν θεῷ καλὰ πάντα καὶ ἀγαθὰ καὶ δίκαια, ἄνθρωποι δὲ ἃ μὲν ἄδικα ὑπειλήφασιν ἃ δὲ δίκαια.

For God, everything is good and beautiful and fair. It's the humans that named some things unfair and others fair.

ἦθος ἀνθρώπῳ δαίμων. For humans, god is their ethics.

Though the Christian Clement of Alexandria didn't hesitate to see in Heraclitus' fragment the everlasting fire, Hell, Hades, as an unavoidable punishment of those who succumb to the temptation of the Dionysian orgies. It seems that for him, Heraclitus had nothing dark. ~~I wonder though if Heraclitus had any particular appeal to him either.~~ Clear, bright, very clean—as he is for me.

This contains multiple interpretations. The ethos of a human is her god. Which could mean. A piece of god is within each of us, and it is what we call ethos, or character. It could mean otherwise too. The character of a human is her fate, her demon—her eulogy and damnation. And that last interpretation suits me well. Because I know that within my journey through life, I carry it within me.

Within my stubborn head. That it is surely being defined from outside incidents, but those are given and unavoidable. My reaction to those, however, is what constructs my fate. And my reaction is decided by some demon within me.

θυμῷ μάχεσθαι χαλεπόν· ὄν γὰρ ἂν θέλη, ψυχῆς ὠνεῖται.

It is harsh to go against desire. Because it takes away some soul, in exchange for what it wants.

Let the ascetics ascecticise. If their asceticism responds to their genuine mood, to that which comes out of their affect, their soul is not in danger. But if it is a result of a repression of desire and not the exercise of desire, it is very likely that all temptations of Saint Anthony, all the monsters of Hell, together with the last temptation of Scorsese too, will dismantle their soul, nights, and every desert they resort to.

And here is a tribute to Freud.

You won't find the ends of the soul, however far you move, whichever road you take. This is how deep it is.

γενόμενοι ζῶειν ἐθέλουσι μέρους τ' ἔχειν. Καὶ παῖδας καταλείπουσι μέρους γενέσθαι.

They are birthed and want to live and die. And leave behind them children to die as well.

This is the message Heraclitus left for Freud.