Abstract:

Author develops the literary and philosophical understanding of gods. She compares the human-god relationship in early Greek literature and philosophy. There is an interesting intrinsic tension in the literary tropes that only can be understood if the religious function of this literature is taken into account. Author tries to describe the vision of the world and humans place in it in both sources: literature and philosophy. As philosophical writing enter there can be seen a movement in the vision of the world structure, as the gods become more inaccessible for humans, but humans gain the opportunity to become more godly by a proper set of thought and actions proposed by philosophy. Religious poets were speaking of the past times, when the gods were approachable for people. Their fantasies often mixed with the old beliefs, so that the humanly-godly world has as much of wonder and eccentricity as of dread. Philosophy conquers not only minds but also hearts, in order to convey them towards the ideal, bearing in mind unattainable model of virtuous man. Religion describes god similar to human, philosophy forges a new god-resemblant figure form human.

Article gods and people…

Gods and people in literature and philosophy

*God by the picture of human or human by the picture of god? Homeric vision of reality versus Heraclitus’*

**Introduction**

Before philosophy was born there was literature. Religious poets were speaking of the past times, when the gods were approachable for people. Their fantasies often mixed with the old beliefs, so that the humanly-godly world has as much of wonder and eccentricity as of dread. Homer has created for people a specific encyclopaedia, and Hesiod has revealed the divine root of the reality. When philosophy enters the arena of the Greek world, the glory of the poets fades. Was philosophy a better proposition for the Greek world? Was it an alternative in the religiously pluralistic society? And in the end, could it deliver something, Olympian religion could not? Those questions bother the researchers of antiquity, because their inclination - the conflict between science and religion – is not ceasing. If we assume that philosophy is a field that supplants religion, then we need to agree that in future this act will have consequences for the religion itself. Philosophy becomes a basis for science. It inquires the reality but also intellectually enriches the religion. When we ask about the world as it is, we can’t avoid the question what is the god, that could create and direct it. Intellect becomes an infallible arbitrator of human life in all of its dimensions. Philosophy conquers not only minds but also hearts, in order to convey them towards the ideal, bearing in mind unattainable model of virtuous man. Religion describes god similar to human, philosophy forges a new god-resemblant figure form human.

The works of Homer transfer us to the world in which all the things and phenomena get their rightful place. In this diverse world you will not lack unexpected events, mysterious creatures, that cause awe or terror. His poetry is woven with the thread of worldly experience, but its colours come from unlimited imagination of the author. Heroes dazzle the mortals, and sometimes even immortals. The latter ones, although given supernatural powers, still fall victim to their own temptations. The greatness of a man is in elevating above the level of humanity. Homer’s dialectic shows a naturally limited human whose abilities which enable him to overcome all obstacles. Contrary to him: god is not exposed to suffering, hardship of work or death. The immortals are enjoying endless life, although in a result they are absorbed by their own weaknesses. A mortal, even virtuous one, has to acknowledge gods superiority with due worship…

From the very beginning philosophy contests those worldviews. Enough to track Heraclitus’, Empedocles’ and Pythagorean’s thought to find out about their distinct vision of human and the world. Human-hero is able to develop. He is only limited by his ignorance. Eventually there emerges an opposition of knowledge and ignorance. Human can gain divinity. In this dialectics human plays a big role, and god can only assist in this journey to the paradise lost. This kind of thinking owes its emergence to the orphic. Heraclitus discovers Logos. Ephesian announces its omnipresence as a sage, but also as a priest and prophet. He convinces us, that our life is tied to the truth about Logos. The Omnipresent Logos, that directs and rules all has a counterpart in every human psyche. Thanks to that we’re not only part of the cosmos, but we can also understand it, what elevates us to divinity. Divinity of a man is found in his nature, Human, although not equal to Logos, bears divine heritage.

**As god, as human. Homeric vision of the world**

In the Homeric world there is no place for absolutely mysterious and unknown. The latter could bring up the feeling of divinity - synonymous to otherness. Homer has grounded a certain model of reality philosophy could refer to: on the one hand affirming some of its elements, criticising given gods’ image on the other. That is how K. Banek writes about the meaning of the religion:

“This type of image of gods didn’t fit all the Hellenes. The possibility of conducting individual research of divine subjects created propitious space for creating diverse theories. Especially those directed towards declining anthropomorphism and polytheism. Religious tradition didn’t help solving existential problems nor have they fulfilled the need to >>make a personal connection between human and god<<” [[1]](#footnote-1).

Poetry delivers stories about the life of mortals and immortals placing them in a certain time and space. The border between mortals and gods is clear. Although it is not totally vague, it is in somewhat permeable in its roots. Gods contact people, but they use this closeness to pass on to humans the miseries they want to get rid of. Divinity doesn’t demand moral perfection, but eternal happiness. That’s why gods get rid of the evil and misery by sending it down to earth. As commonly known, in mythical understanding of the world Zeus rules from his throne for ages, while a man is subjected to the passage of time which “overwhelms him” and in the end someone else takes his place. Although in poetry difference between human and god is exposed, they are divided by an insuperable abyss, in the end they have much in common.

God is mighty, because having supernatural powers, he can act in the world suspending the laws of nature. He cannot though overpower actions of gods more powerful than himself and the power of Moira. Homeric project of a god is quite weak, but not because of insufficient powers, but rather because of him copying human nature. Divine beings are equipped in human senses. They are often hostage to their own desires and lust. Although Homer does not know what mean the ideals of freedom and free will, his immortal figures resemble power-hungry people following their desires to widen their field of influence. In reality they are enslaved by the will of revenge, sexuality and power. The object of their desire can be both earthly and heavenly. Gods are not perfect, but they are superior to humans, meaning that humans fate depends on their favour or reluctance. Priams words in Iliad testify this:

“Come hither, dear child, and sit before me, that thou mayest see thy former lord and thy kinsfolk and thy people—thou art nowise to blame in my eyes; it is the gods, methinks, that are to blame, who roused against me the tearful war of the Achaeans”[[2]](#footnote-2)

And prayers of both Achaia and Trojans:

“Father Zeus, that rulest from Ida, most glorious, most great, whichsoever of the twain it be that brought these troubles upon both peoples, grant that he may die and enter the house of Hades, whereas to us there may come friendship and oaths of faith.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

This prayer emphasises the real rule of Zeus, his power to turn fate. Mortal heroes of Homes are beautiful and great thanks to their bravery. Their world is admirable, so that sometimes some of them themselves seem equal to gods. Paris, noble Helen’s husband with beautiful locks, wearing beautiful armour, called divine by his enemy Menelaus, is in fact dependent on Olympic beings. Only death, that comes upon the brave warriors makes you think about the limit of human power. Gods can suspend commonly accepted laws and change the course of action with their powerful decisions. Aphrodite opposes the natural course of action and saves Paris:

“This he then tossed with a swing into the company of the well-greaved Achaeans, and his trusty comrades gathered it up; but himself he sprang back again, eager to slay his foe with spear of bronze. But him Aphrodite snatched up, full easily as a goddess may, and shrouded him in thick mist, and set him down in his fragrant, vaulted chamber, and herself went to summon Helen.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

He has to become invisible for a moment so that the change of his place of stay occur. On the battlefield, where mortals fate is at stake, Homer crates images, which testify the wonderfulness and supernatural power of gods. Gods who are able to suspend commonly applicable rules of the world. With help of those images he creates faith, that god can all of a sudden grab and take to the skies his chosen ones. Because Gods have their chosen ones. They favour them even on the price of the others gods’ anger. The world of Olympic gods if full of violence, sensual love and conflicts. However Homer upholds our belief that their life is full of happiness. All those things that happen to gods can be treated as adventures adding some flavour to endlessly ongoing life. Homer cannot differentiate bios form zoe. Eternal life in the form of zoe has to have its significant quality just as bios has. Immovable gods stuck in the skies would have not been authentic. “The immortals” are made to human measure, but filled with wonder. The wonder serves to enchant listeners imagination[[5]](#footnote-5). The magic gods can do is not only impossible in human world, but also unnecessary. Hera gives ability to speak to Achilles’s horse and hastens the sunset[[6]](#footnote-6). Despite all these wonders gods don’t inspire respect because of their impulsive actions and frauds caused by passionate affairs or anger form violation the laws and their will[[7]](#footnote-7). Homer’s poetry affects with powerful, colourful images, stimulates feelings, but slips in a prepared image of the world, idea of divinity within it. Homer uses middle eastern motifs also when he wants to show figures of the deities and their place of living. Olympus is patterned on Canaanite myth and the presence of god is often accompanied by an aura of bright light. Another track of middle eastern sources in Homers work we can find in the attitude of gods. It indicates widespread imaginaries about gods having their role model in human. Sitting position of gods during councils resembles the position of Mesopotamian and Ugaritic gods. We can find interesting take on this issue in Cornford: he states, that the (Olympian and mystical) type of religion and its idea of divinity may have emerged from two different experiences. We owe the creation of personal gods to collective experiences. In the sphere of Greek polytheism referred to as a Conglomerate, we are yet to consider two types of gods: Mystery God and Olympian God. Mystery gods are from tip to toe daimons of human collectives, while Olympian gods have their daimon rooted in local area, that is distinguishable from their worshippers[[8]](#footnote-8).

**Difference between gods and humans**

Undeniably, the life of Homeric gods is similar to humans life except for two traits: gods are enjoying uninterrupted eternal life and are given supernatural power. Gods act in heavenly and earthly sphere. They argue over theirs and humans fate. However Gods don’t form a democratic government, but rather a monarchy. A model for this monarchy is a middle eastern custom of a feast: a practice of a common banquet. This custom arrived in Greece a year earlier. In this imaginary human sphere is considerably separated from the godly one. The time acts against humans, because the abyss that separates humans and gods enlarges with time. Thus the vison of humans in the far past was close to how gods were imagined. Then (in the past) the mortals had been in a much better situation than currently. Humans were living alongside gods. With time a man has lost eternal youth the gods still have. Gods know much more than people because of their supernatural power and the rule they handle. People are much lower in hierarchy of beings than gods when it comes to the cognition, because of their limited competences. They do not have power, rule, nor knowledge. According to the Greek and middle eastern myths as people we have been deemed the necessity of hard work, tough everyday life. According to Homer, it is ancestry that enables a man to heroic acts and elevates him in human society.

**Heroes are beings placed in between humans and gods**

You can look at the works of Homer from the perspective of emerging cultural pattern. The poet creates a song in order to proclaim the acts of great heroes and praise their merits. The battling sides create a specific background to show greatness of a man endowed with many virtues. Although violated matrimonial laws were the pretext for the war, and the war itself becomes a revenge on Trojans, it is in this war the glory of human beings is shining bright. Heroes are after all a distinct kind of mortal beings. First of all, they are gods’ chosen ones and thus they get higher position than average mortals. Secondly, their acts are exceptionally great, because they are guided by nobility and bravery. The heroes do not have to be crystal clear in moral aspect. Homer shows them in their human, defective nature. After all they are selfish, proud and oftentimes they disregard gods’ laws. You could conclude, that it is the bravery that elevates them to the pedestal of fame, but the question of heroes is more complicated in Homer’s works. Gods love heroes and protect them because they are beautiful, able-bodied and cunning in fraud, which makes them successful in their actions.

One can say, that before the god’s interference in the life of a hero, there is some kind of a heavenly element in his character and life goal. Heroes are somewhat related to gods by birth. The best Hero- the most accurate one- Achilles of Achaia was endowed by nature with all possible merits of the soul and the body: he is beautiful, he can enjoy inexhaustible power, bravery, noble mind, aesthetic sense and generosity in human relationships. However those advantages can lead to outrageously cruel deeds. The figure of Hector, the most perfect of the heroes in Iliad, arouses admiration, but eventually reminds sad truth about humans vulnerability and faint human existence. Hector is handling his duty for his homeland, he uses all his power to save companions, but whatever he does, he just postpones the inevitable destruction of Troy. Eventually, even the most noble and brave man remains an earthly being limited by the time of birth and death. Some reflections of divinity shine through even after death of a hero, in the memory of the next generations and glory passed on in songs. Through this exceptional kinship and favour, gods help one-day-lasting creature reveal its greatness on the stage of the world. That is what Hera does, embodying violent zeal and passion. We get a distinct religious message from Homer, that what is happening on earth is an aftermath of gods actions. We cannot however say with all certainty, that gods created by Homer explain the mystery of human life. Quite the opposite: their presence leaves people puzzled, arouses fear that induces faith. Faith expressing in a cult and respect for their power. Multitude of Homeric gods creates a vivid plot, but it is not in any way the expression of a spirit, that would be able to acknowledge god’s wisdom and goodness (in an absolute understanding) and his omnipotence. Gods are themselves mediators between mighty, unpersonal force, that forces all to submission and a lower human world. We cannot ascribe omnipotence to gods. A little bit later, in Hesiod writing or other works of Orphics we will find such a description for Zeus: he, who acts along an eternal Law. In Homer’s poetry the shine of power comes from impersonal, abstract idea named Moira. She expresses inalienable laws ruling the world. Even great Zeus had to respect the verdict of Moira, which means that his will and acts must be limited to certain boundaries. His power over people and gods is analogical to royal power. The power of the rule is based on a certain order established by custom. Vernant (although he sees embodiment of the power of nature in Homeric immortals) admits that they have distinctly determined limits for their actions[[9]](#footnote-9). It proves only that Greek acknowledged the order of reality that could have been established with boundaries. The situation of a mortal was much worse because of limited possibility of cognition and his faint nature: he didn’t always understand the actions of a Moira. The gods themselves fight their own passions, that oppose the Fate, which means only that they are to weak to cope with rules based on uncompromising and intact order. It can be surprising that the greatness of a god doesn’t rely on his unrestricted will, but it relies on a will compatible with Moira’s acts in specific boundaries[[10]](#footnote-10). That is how D. Dembińska-Siury shows the question of Moira:

“Trying to outline this complicated structure in Homer’s writing, one could say, that in essence Moira denotes a decisive factor, while gods are watching over its realisation. It may seem that they act against the fate, and so they even do sometimes, however then, in their counter action they also oppose Zeus’ will. It happens for example when Athene, Hera and Poseidon in spite of Zeus order engage in battle an the side of Achaia. Hera doesn’t even retreat from a cheat to bypass the verdicts of fate, which can be exemplified by intentional postponing of the birth of Heracles by her. And at the same time gods watch over realisation of what is to happen” [[11]](#footnote-11).

Homeric works are nor having definite arrangement concerning gods rule, nor the impersonal force, that can be called the law ruling the world, although it’s all about rule and law in here. It is only in Hesiod works where complicated configuration of supernatural powers in rule is laid out. Zeus is the highest god, which means he does not submit to any limitations and his will is consistent with the fate. Krokiewicz sees in the fate, that is Moira, a collective mind of gods [[12]](#footnote-12). Moira is sometimes presented as a power towering over all, and sometimes as the will of gods. Homer uses the word “Moira” in an objective and subjective sense. In the first case, it means a part of life- Moira biou, which can be understood as a fate ascribed to a man. It is connected to the time, because it is the course of action. If we connect Moira to the gods will, to their plans, then we see that they concern events, that is causality in time. Moira remains in close connection with future reality, which indicates clearly the dependency of human fate from gods, their will, that has to be fulfilled. This is how Krokiewicz explains the conception of Homeric Moira:

“If we will assume that Moira remains in an essential connection to the mind of gods, and to a certain degree she symbolises it, then we’ll understand why it is located at once in them and above them. Gods have, just as humans, their minds and their hearts, wherein you need to remember, that individual differences have far lesser meaning when it comes to the minds than when it comes to hearts. Usually, you can say that “hearts” (emotionality, will and actions) individualize and divide people and gods, while “the minds” (the sense) unite and somehow unify the ones and the others, so that you can say not only about individual “minds”, but also about towering above them one and common, divine and human- General Mind. Moira is above gods and in gods, similar to the way we have: above us there is our sense and our conscience. Uppermost moira we can call the sense, the conscience or cosmic providence, that directs the god’s, human’s and all phenomenal world’s affairs, but she doesn’t directly realise them because she is incorporeal ”[[13]](#footnote-13).

**Conclusion:**

It’s extremely hard to find a proper definition of Homeric gods. And it doesn’t seem to be caused by the distance in time between Homer and a modern recipient of his poetry. The works of Homer are an example od religious literature. However we don’t know if divinity itself was the superior trait characterising all the gods. Was it linked to marvel or maybe to never ending life full of adventures leading to happiness? One is sure, according to Homer god has a “human” nature and by this nature he achieves happiness living eternal youth. This is where we can point out to a radical difference between a god and a man. The marvel seen by a human turns eyes on divine world. Supernatural power of gods served the purpose of making a man bow in front od of a more powerful being. For this is the order of reality- god should receive worship from human. The last one is dependant on his will, but the will is not absolute. Moiras watch over all things. It means that even in Homer’s works, vividly representing lives of gods and humans, idea of unity in the figure of Moira shines through. Whimsical gods live wealthy not bothered by maintaining a living; death is not a threat. If its true, that in the gods of Olympus you can find leisure class (aristocracy) of archaic era, then we need to assume that in this life full of delights and even mutual conflicts and rivalry one can see happiness inaccessible for people from lower classes. In the case of immortal beings this happiness has endless character. Human is situated on the opposite side in this situation, although he can even exceed gods with his virtues. Great acts of heroes are worthy of admiration. They can receive gods’ favour and elevate over the level of average mortals, being gifted advantages by nature. This life, limited by birth and death, is merely a flash of glory, a moment interwoven with suffering and happiness. All should know their limits so that they don’t trespass them, because as gods, as humans: all have limits. Homer doesn’t elevate human nor god. Moira is the force thanks to which actions have right progress. Moira towering over all is nothing else, but the necessity of events. Human although he is faint, in his fragility he can make great things in the limits of his borders and by his mortal nature. God that is modelled on human is also faint, he cannot overpower necessity nor he can overcome his passions and desires.

**Wisdom as a key to the divine and human nature**

Logos specifically understood by Heraclitus is the core of his teaching. All that is, is being directed by Logos and all reality has a specific nature thanks to the existence of Logos. In the world of Homer all had it’s designated place. Moiras towering over all guided all hierarchical reality to the right ending. Everything that happened, happened accordingly to the fate. That is why pre-unity can be found in old beliefs, and its far echoes can be found in Homer’s works, and in Heraclitus philosophy it takes up new meanings. Firstly, you need to notice, that Logos is the Highest Intelligence, Law and Divine Mind, and as a rule of opposite - it is also a god. This god is all, by combining all opposites, he is then plenitude and perfectness. Here we can agree with K. Mrówka, that he was pulled out of Olympus in order to take over whole cosmos[[14]](#footnote-14). Logos is a guarantee and the rule of unity. According to Heraclitus, human has a special place, because experiencing Logos – harmony, he finds it also in himself. *I have sought for myself* (B 101)*[[15]](#footnote-15)*. Logos influences humans life quality, because by living in human psyche as an individual logos, it gives a base to live accordingly to the actions of Logos in external dimension. In another sense, you can say that the logos is the law of the reality it creates and directs, because world maintains proper ratio, and relations between things are accorded with Logos. Then you can speculate, that logos of human souls works in a similar way. Rationality manifests through thoughts and statements about reality as it is. However, it doesn’t cover all traits of rationality because rationality is a life compatible with cognition. Having discovered Common Logos as a cosmic rule and immanent god of the world directing everything, Logos of the soul can only submit to that godly law if it acts reasonably. In accordance to the philosophers thought, the world gains full integration off all its elements through Logos - Mind, Intelligence. Human as a microcosmos can also submit to this reasonable action of integration by firstly identifying logos is himself. This godly rule is radically different from earthly thing and even creatures. God ceases to be a copy of a man and appears as a model of perfection, different from what is known and experienced. Divinity doesn’t mean endless, but limited existence (as it was in Homer’s writing). Homeric gods are only enjoying immutable condition despite of passing time, in opposite to all other beings. Heraclitan Logos is not perfect by separation from the rest of the reality it directs, nor by gaining immortality in the course of its existence. It is eternal as eternal is world is which it immanently exist, although the world doesn’t cover it fully. W. Wrotkowski cites the famous excerpt B 30, where we get to know that fire grasps everything and that’ s why reality is in its essence harmony and order.

Κόσμον τόνδε, τόν αυτόν απάντων, ούτε τις Θεών, οϋτε ανθρώπων έποίησεν, άλλ’ ήν αεί καί έστιν καί έσται πΰρ άείζωον, άπτόμενον μέτρα καί άποσβεννύμενον μέτρα.

* + 1. “The world, the same for all, neither any god nor any man made; but it was always and is and will be, fire ever-living, kindling in measures and being extinguished in measures”[[16]](#footnote-16).

Unity of the universe includes the total space-time and has a divine character. Trying to evade imputing Pythagorean views one could say that divinity is included in harmony: both spatial and temporal harmony. Eternity is not static but dynamic in a constant passage form the present to the future.

“[…] maxim B30 (1) understands in a ceaselessly >>material<< aspect (πΰράείζωον) the unity of the God-universe, taken >>hylozoistically<< ; and (2) pronounces >>space-time totality<<, as you would put it today (άεί),that grasps in itself the very same order in universe (κόσμος), spreading to (2a) all the past (ήν), (2β) all the present or mundane (έστί) and (2γ)all the future (έσται, B30; as above)”[[17]](#footnote-17).

Fire has to impose a rhythm because it is the originator of the order, then it is a law, according to which everything goes with a proper ratio.

God-universe in its visible, “material” aspect is identical with God-universe in his rational aspect that is invisible, but experienced internally. For this is one and the same principle ruling over world- Logos, the ever- lasting Fire. Maybe it means that the idea, that we grasp with our minds is identical to the “tangible”, directly experienced world. However it is the idea contained in the mind, that elevates us to the hights of holistic vision of the reality. Only the one who listens to the divine Logos can see the regularity of transitions in the Fire’s activity. Thin there is nothing surprising that Heraclitus directs us toward it in a prophetic impulse. Human finds logos in his mind.

Thank to the logos he can recognize God-Unity-Universe, in order to become himself an integrated unity. Only such a God, as a Unity-Universe can be eternal. This conception is entirely different to the one we know from Homer’s works. Heraclitan God is rationality manifesting through transitions of the universe. He is fullness, whole, perfectness, that can be a part of a human who has an individual logos. In the transmission of the teaching of Ephesian we come across such a phrase:

Couples are things whole and things not whole, what is drawn together and what is drawn asunder, the harmonious and the discordant. **The one is made up of all things, and all things issue from the one. (B 10)[[18]](#footnote-18)**

This very general and equivocal thesis directs us towards Orphism. Heraclitus indicates a process, constant transitions happening in the reality In this reasoning One is not a separate being, that emerges from multitude; instead it presents as a dynamic, merging principle of all (of the multitude). It appears to dominate over reality although it is not its beginning in the genetical and chronological sense.

**It is wise to hearken, not to me, but to my Word, and to confess that all things are one. *(B 50)*[[19]](#footnote-19)**

Logos reveals, or better proclaims the truth (is lets to be heard), that all the things are one. It is not Herclitus, a mortal, that teaches about the reality, but the Logos itself is a teacher, who unravels difficult, divine matters in front of a mortal man. It uncovers itself, and so it transmits us that the One dominates over everything that is (over the multitude). Although the interpretation can produce many difficulties, sense of the expression leads to describing Logos as wise (he is the only who teaches about everything). Thanks to it, there is a ceaseless movement in the world. Identity and difference are reconciliated just as all other oppositions. Multitude is countered unity, but also reconciled by it. According to Plato, Heraclitus taught that the reality was at once multitude and unity. It was not understood as a logical rule. J. Burkert attempts explaining this Heraclitan mystery by using the term of primordial substance. According to the interpreter of Heraclitan thought, identity, that is being explained by the multitude is the identity of the primordial substance in all of its manifestations. This identity has already been realised once by Milesian, but they found difficulties in the difference. Anaximander took the struggle of oppositions as an injustice, and Heraclitus wanted to show, that on the contrary, the struggle was thw highest justice (B62, B76, B80) [[20]](#footnote-20). We can get to know full image of the teaching about Logos by reading individual cognitive fragments of Heraclitan thought. God is a pair of oppositions that create oneness. Gods as figures are somehow turned into one cosmic god:

**God is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, surfeit and hunger; but he takes various shapes, just as fire, when it is mingled with spices, is named according to the savour of each.(B 67)[[21]](#footnote-21)**

For it appears, that coming to the stage of logical justification of identity and difference without the nature of Logos we are not able to understand it and so we are not able to understand the transition of oppositions. Logos **is and is not** all, that is multitude. In my analysis of the nature of Logos I will used the interpretation of K. Narecki, who formulates such thesis:

Logos is a Divine Mind, Common Intelligence,

Oneness reconciling all the oppositions

Divine Law

The highest principle ruling the world (equivalent of *arche* of Ionian predecessors)

Objectively existing reasonable being, independent of human word type of being. He is common and creative, because he brings into being all the things. He is present in the world. He is then immanent, eternal and omnipresent.[[22]](#footnote-22). Basing on all Heraclitan teaching K. Narecki builds up a definition of Logos. All those attributes confirm our opinions in the subject of identity of Logos with a specifically understood divinity. Logos is divine in its Law, Rationality, creativity. The definition of divinity here differs significantly from how Homer understood it. This differing conception of god makes Heraclitus closer to the Dionysian type of religion. But in contrast to religion, only the cognition can reduce the distance between human and Logos, because logos of the soul is in a way a bit of the divine Logos.

**The first step: knowing thyself. The turn towards individual logos**

Heraclitus’ sentence transmitted by Plutarch alludes to the Delphi invocation: Know thyself. Heraclitus forestalls philosophical interest in human. Thinker of Ephesus anticipates Socrates because he answers this Delphi call [[23]](#footnote-23). It is not only an answer of a religious man, who wants to be obedient to a god, but also answer of a philosopher who doesn’t have any authority except for the reason [[24]](#footnote-24). Heraclitus shows symptoms of introvert and solitary, but first of all he indicates on *psyche* and her cognitive abilities. **In the search for oneself there is included a way up and a way down. The way, at the end of which Logos reveals to human. Accordingly: as common Logos is accessible to the human, but undiscovered and invisible, as human is accessible to himself, but undiscovered and invisible. Looking for oneself will remain a specific philosophical posture for long centuries.** Human is a a part of nature, and the nature is hidden, so he needs some method of achieving the nature, revealing the truth about her. Heraclitus lives in the era when the desire of knowing the physical and social world plays an important role. The desire to know oneself is connected with the cognition of the world and its cause, with the cognition of the principle (*arche).* If it is also a rule of divine traits we could say that human grasping it with his mind, also grasps the world and himself. What for? To live a fullness. There is a soteriological aspect to that. It is very probable that there is a hidden sense to that, that we can decipher from the posterior texts of golden tablets. The consciousness, in fact- self-consciousness, is a condition for a happy life after death.

**You will not find the boundaries of soul by travelling in any direction, so deep is the measure of it. (B 45) [[25]](#footnote-25)**

**To the soul, belongs the self-multiplying Logos (B 115)[[26]](#footnote-26)**

A fundamental question arises: What is logos in human *psyche*? Can it be associated with intellectual abilities? Does deep human logos testify about unlimitedness of what is giving limits, giving things and phenomena a right measure? Let’s start by the fact, that for Heraclitus *psyche* was physical substance (atmospheric exhalation or steam), that is submitted to the laws od Logos, like all the cosmos. Therefore it takes part in a natural cycle of transitions of Fire. It can be then treated like other things that abide by the rules of Logos (having its limited amount and proper ratio) if not the fact that it has far (and even undefined) borders, because it has Logos. Psyche then cannot be one of the many things. Herclitus uses here a tern *peirata psyche*, that refers to a mythical image from Homers and Hesiod poems. The development of philosophy later on we owe to the Heraclitus thought. Parmenides od Elea creates metaphysics, that is not a continuation of Xenophanes idea, but rather a reaction to Heraclitus work [[27]](#footnote-27). The teaching of Ephesian is a material fully open to interpretations of different kind and even to a critique from those, who see the divine Logos in another perspective. Human logos is the ability of determining the proper ratio and relations between things and phenomena. It is, at last, the ability to express – the ability to speak. However thinking and speaking doesn’t cover fully what human logos is. Human logos can also enable human to the acts that go in accordance with thought and words. Just like common Logos directs the world, so logos of the psyche directs human actions. Rationality is not only an act of reason, a pure idea, but also an attitude of a man who lives in accordance with his worldview. In Homer’s works rationality was a certain idea of the world, while in Heractilus’ it is an action based on knowledge. Who is a human listening to Logos? Or better: what can he do? For we have a feeling, that those two visions: of god and of human, are dependent on each other. Moreover: they somehow interact on each other. Logos as Fire and god is not personal, but he is rational. He is a quintessence of rationality taken in specific terms. This Logos is in this sense, and only in this sense, close to the human, it is close to his psyche. Having particular logos human can become a consciously integrated part of divine oneness. As we know Heraclitus got to know this eternal music of cosmos, he saw the face of constant change, beneath which Logos is hiding. The change of consciousness is at the same time a transformation of one’s own existence to the one accorded with Logos-Law forever. In this perspective one can see clearly how the lines separating god, world and human are fading. If god surpasses a human, human can be someone more than he is. Human being by remaining in Logos becomes everything, because his consciousness gets a common dimension, that is a dimension including everything as it is in its change, in its rhythm of changing phenomena and events. This theory is supported by the words od Heraclitus about a depth of logos in human soul (B45, B115).

To grasp divine Logos with a mind is to gain for oneself a maximally widened self. Human in this aspect becomes a reduplication of cosmos – a microcosmos.

“Of course such a grave role of the term *logos* makes it the prime term in Heraclitus philosophy. For it is on it that human cognition is based, the theory on oneness and oppositions finds its solution in it, also Heraclitan imagination of god and divine fire is identified with it, at last, the mystery of the structure of eternal, ever-changing cosmos together with its human dimension- microcosmos, lies within it. In other words, Logos >>directs<< life of a human (because a logos of his soul is in a way a part of divine Logos), the life of state and society (because human laws have their beginning in one, divine Law – vide B114) and the fate of whole universe. Material substance for universe is fire, endowed with immanent steering it power” [[28]](#footnote-28).

The task of an enlightened man is to give up to the activity of Logos and become a part of cosmos through this process. The consciousness widened to incomprehensible length of cosmos “creates” a new man.

**Wisdom is one thing. It is to know the thought by which all things are steered through all things. (B 41)[[29]](#footnote-29).**

**Fire in its advance will judge and convict all things.  (B 66)[[30]](#footnote-30)**

Those fragments of Heraclitus teaching consist a try to define god and the principles of the world in a totally different style to what Homer has done, but also different to what Ionian philosophers have done. **God is not a being similar to human, but human can become similar to him, when he understands One ruling all. Therefore the only trait that could indicate on similarity to human is an ability to think. God is opposition of multitude, so he is unity, and as such he is other than the universe shaped by his thought.** The thought in which God-Logos is comprised, leads eventually to transformation of a limited human existence. As commonly known, in this time in Greece, attempts are made to escape religion locked in certain myths and public religious cult for more individual experiences and a direct contact with god. Nevertheless those attempts haven’t been desertion from practices, but in some regions – their intensification; practiced in order to achieve the desired state of bliss, euphoria associated with the presence of god in a man, or even his deification. It won’t be a misuse if we say that the conscious of Logos is not only a contact with an eternal rule of the world, but also a way to change one’s own existence. **The goal of Heraclitus teaching is the cognition of Logos, that directs human deeds properly.** It is assumed, following Aristotle, that the Greek thought was an attempt to rationally discover the world in search for a theoretical and disinterested knowledge**[[31]](#footnote-31)**. **It doesn’t stop us from stating that Heraclitus teaching could lead to a better kind of mundane life and a better life after death. For knowledge gives wisdom, that uncovers the true reality, and its cognition has a soteriological sense and leads from death to immortality.** It is worth underscoring, that Heraclitan identification od Dionysus and Hades (B15) could have has eschatological meaning, i.e. it was a symbolic expression of the domination of life over death. According to philosopher this religious worldview together with the purification rites, mystery cults doesn’t eventually lead to the proper way of living. The critique of religion is an attempt to save a human. That’s why Heraclitus as other philosophers in Vth century b.C. supersede Orphism from enlightenment circles[[32]](#footnote-32). Heraclitus seems to be arguing with different forms of religiosity, but not in order to negate the existence of god, but to show the thread of its false images and perplexity of practiced rites. Teaching about psyche and logos testifies about this kind of thinking about philosophical cognition. Cognition has an internal character, we can call it some kind of experience, in which subject finds individual and common Logos.

Heraclitus appears to be the first representant of philosophy, that creates anthropology. As Krzysztof Narecki has rightly put this question, image of human emerges on a base of theology and cosmology. “His philosophy of human could be described as the smallest of three concentric circles. Those circles cannot be really separated, and in no way one cannot imagine an anthropological circle in separation from cosmological and theological. Human in Heraclitus understanding is a part of cosmos and as such he submits to the law of wholeness, equally as other parts and everything” [[33]](#footnote-33).

Death is for a human the same it is for a cosmos: a necessary factor of constant change. Human in his individual shape is submitted to it, while human as a species is immortal. Heraclitus probably introduces and modifies ancient Greek thought, according to which reality comes from one stream of Life or Soul, that in turn manifest in everything. Individual man floats on the surface only for a brief moment, like bubble on the water. Then it bursts to give space for the next one. Did Heraclitus assign a specific type of existence to a soul after death? We don’t have enough evidence to support this thesis. In constant transitions Logos decides about the “identity” of life and death. This way ending can be a beginning, and this new beginning will reach its end. According to Ephesian the basic law deciding about “immortality” of a man is his death and reason, common to all people, allows to distinguish good and bad and accept only the credible things. The goal of life is contentment and pleasure coming from knowing Logos and from acting accordingly to his warrants. This is good and just.

**Conclusion**

Homer’s idea: God as a human

In Homer’s terminology we can find such phrases to describe a human being: one-day being, mortal, which underscores limited time a man has. According to poet human is a conglomerate of diverse experiences and sensual desires, but first of all he is a being, that is contained in a limited time-span of birth and death. His desire of uninterrupted life cannot be realised because of him having such a nature. What elevates him over his status is also his natural heritage, jest a little bit bigger on earth. Nature of a given human enables him to great acts. He becomes a hero by struggling with the adversities. Somewhat suffering adds him nobility and the ability to bear the pain, tenacity in fight or bravery in the battlefield become the cases of his greatness. Poetry is a monument of mortals, who conquer weak human condition, although they cannot defeat death. Only the gods found themselves in this sphere of reality, where there is no suffering, old age and death. Gods watch over order of the world; their presence should arouse fear, that leads to piety and worship towards gods in a human. However those immortal beings in Homer’s song sometimes cause laughter. Entangled in conflicts and intrigues they act like whimsical magnates. The immortality and supernatural power doesn’t add to their seriousness nor it gives them advantage over people. Their borders are gong the ither way around, and in other place than humans, which makes that despite of their strength and endless life they are inscribes in hierarchical world. Gods have their model on earth and although death is taken from them, and supernatural power is given, they are still beings limited in their possibilities.

Idea od god in Heraclitus is drastically different from the one we get to know in Homer’s writing. Happiness of a human cannot be linked to satisfying bodily desires, but with knowledge that gives birth to the right actions. Following literary and philosophical transmission we can see how the image of man is changing and how important place is taken by wisdom. According to philosopher to gain knowledge means to be directed (ruled) by Logos, that gets human being out of mistakes and limitations by integrating its thoughts, actions and words. Discovering Logos human becomes an integrated whole, but also a part of a cosmos. Knowledge makes him someone, who despite having a mortal nature elevates over its finitude and limitation. Human watching Logos (Reason, God, Law) changes his consciousness. The discovery of divine Logos makes him gain wisdom in universal, theoretical and existential, practical dimension. This idea of God-Logos changed entirely the perspective of human existence and the idea of a man’s place in the world. If Logos is god, then human can participate in his divine reality to become good and just.

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6. Homer, Iliad XVII [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
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8. Vide F.M. Cornford, *From religion to philosophy*, pp. 110-113 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Vide J. P. Vernant, *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne,* Paris 1974, p. 105 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Vide D. Dembińska – Siury, *Człowiek odkrywa człowieka. O początkach greckiej refleksji moralnej,* p. 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. D. Dembińska - Siury, *Człowiek odkrywa człowieka,* p. 13n, transl. K. Wygnaniec, all translations from polish by K.W. unless indicated otherwise [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
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13. Vide Krokiewicz, *Studia orfickie. Moralność Homera i etyka Hezjoda,* p. 130n [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. K. Mrówka, p. 210 „*Sacrum* has left the imagined in the past Olympus and pierced the cosmos*.* The article „about” also indicates the cosmic reality of god.” [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Plutarchus, *Adv. Colot.,* 20, 118 c (196 Pohlenz), source: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Fragments\_of\_Heraclitus#Fragment\_101 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
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17. Wojciech Wrotkowski*, Αιών. Wieczność w teologii Heraklita,* in: Przegląd Filozoficzny, Nowa Seria 16/ 2007, no 1 (61), p. 22 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
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20. Vide J. Burkert, *Early Greek Philosophy,* pp. 161 - 167 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
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22. K. Narecki, *Logos we wczesnej myśli greckiej,* pp. 67, 92 - 94 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Vide K. Mrówka, *Heraklit*, p. 281 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Vide K. Mrówka, *Heraklit,* p. 280 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
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28. K. Narecki, *Logos we wczesnej myśli greckiej*, p. 93n [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
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32. Vide A. Krokiewicz,S*tudia orfickie,*  p. 27 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
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