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Sebastian Borowicz[1]

The (familiar) abode is for man
the open region for the presencing of god
(the unfamiliar) one[2].

An idea of man as a metaphysical figure in Greek Classical art

The article deals with the problem of representation in Greek Classical art. The author analyses the idea of man from the perspective of the Greek natural tendency to represent various phenomena in the form of human figure. The notion of idea of man as a metaphysical figure shall be, however, understood not only as a psychisation of the image but broadly as the element of the process of antropomorphisation of the surrounding reality as well as giving human form to various phenomena including transcendent ones, e.g. the antropomorphisation of the images of gods. In case of the Greek image, an idea of man understood as a metaphysical figure reveals a man his being through the constantly undertaken attempt to appear fulfilment. Simultaneously, in the world of senses, this fulfilment entails the dissolution of the metaphysical secret.

Key words: idea, metaphysics, Greek art, Achilles, Classical Period

When Aristotle, in *Metaphysics*, writes his famous question "what man is; […] and why is this individual thing, or this body having this form, a man?" (Arist. *Met.* 1041b[3]), he responses: this is the substance of the thing, the essence, the nature of man. The essence has an individual character – it does not exist out of body; it exists within the human body and only due to it, in conjunction with it (as *entelechia*). "The exponents of the Forms [*eide*] – he says about the followers of the Academia – are partly right in their account when they make the Forms separate; that is, if

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2 Heracl. fr. 119 D.-K.: *ethos anthropoi daimon*, after: (Heidegger 1977: 234).
3 Transl. W.D. Ross.

the Forms are substances, but they are also partly wrong, since by Form they mean the one-over-many. […] they cannot explain what are the imperishable substances of this kind which exist besides particular sensible substances; so they make them the same in kind as perishable things (for these we know); i.e., they make *man as such* […] adding the word *as such* [*auto*] to the names of sensible things" (Arist. *Met*. 1041b[4]). For Aristotle, the "man as such" (an ideal man; *autoanthropos*) has no reason for its independent, separate and autonomous existence. The notion of an idea of man exists inasmuch as particular beings (particular substances), particular people, exist, in which this idea, as a form[5] (the inner nature, the essence), participates and which become its matter (*hyle*). Thus, every man contains a form of man in itself – it is a set of definitional characteristics, which appear in him and allow him to define himself as 'man'. This principle, idea, form which makes man a man – his metaphysical figure – is *nous*, potentiality free of matter, a divine part of the soul (Arist. *Anim*. 3.4, cf. Reale 1990: 363–364; cf. infra. Aristippus's notion of *anthropismos*). Nevertheless, in Aristotle's opinion, the presence of the soul in the body, its impact, is not mechanistic and impossible to imagine (Arist. *Anim*. 1.3). In peripatetic thought, distance between the soul and the body was already understood so radically, that any attempt to embody *psyche* seemed to be meaningless. Simultaneously, as defined by Aristotle, the work of an artist is not so much to imitate passively (to create an illusion) as to transfer form (the essence, the image in the mind) into the matter of the object (e.g. stone). Therefore, to give something (or someone) form signified not only the shaping of the lump in the colloquial sense, but also the transfer of principles into it, i.e. the essence (*eidos*), an image that was conceived. The art of image making one may thus perceive as the appearance of fulfilment and transition from *kosmos noetos* to *kosmos aisthetos*. Hence, on the plane of philosophical reflection, the doors to figuration of metaphysical phenomena remained not fully closed. Similarly, in Plato who says, in his *Phaedrus*, that although "it is not easy for all souls to gain from earthly things a recollection of those realities", nonetheless, the essence of the assimilated things (made in likeness) can hardly be spotted (*theaomai* 'gaze at something with admiration') by some people through the bleary organs of senses in images[6]. The images – *eikones*, may therefore, though with certain difficulty, render the essence of things – *genos*. Thereby, the current question is whether one can experience the idea of man as a crystallizing metaphysical principle in and through the image? Is there a direct way through which this idea, treated here as a set of virtues, an ontic fullness, may be revealed or expressed in the materiality of the image enhancing after all the impression of durability and immutability of the entity (especially stone, shiny)? Can

[4] Transl. H. Tredennick, cf. the second *aporia*, the so-called *aporia* of a third man or "what man is" (Pl. *Parm*. 132a ff, Arist. *Met*. 990b, 1039a, Arist. *Soph*. *Elen*. 178b ff). Polyxenus was the first who raised a critic argument of the third man against the Platonic concept of idea (Alex. *in Metaph*. 84).

[5] Gr. *morphe*, 'form, shape' and *eidos* 'shape, form', cf. gr. *idea* 'form, shape'.

[6] ἀλλὰ δι᾽ ἀμυδρῶν ὀργάνων μόγις αὐτῶν καὶ ὀλίγοι ἐπὶ τὰς εἰκόνας ἰόντες θεῶνται τὸ τοῦ εἰκασθέντος γένος (Pl. *Phaed*. 250b).

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it appear as a metaphysical figure – i.e. as something that cannot directly reflect or present itself or such a substance (i.e. other than the one present in physical nature, e.g. mentioned above *nous* or *logos*[7])? What is, then, that non-present? „It is not known and it can't be known because if we could give an answer, therefore, it would inescapably become a representation. An expression refers to something that is still enigmatic and which remains unexplainable. It is some sort of depth, some other side of things, some other residuum remaining outside what is expressed" (Buczyńska-Garewicz 2005: 21).

* * *

Our discourse will focus then not so much on consideration of the conceptual variability of ideas themselves, as it shall on a story about hypostases and their reification in images. On the plane of images, we will search not so much for the idea's individualized representations (e.g. allegory of Dike, who, as a personalized power, is a guiding principle of human life in Hesiod), as we shall endeavour – using the language of Karl Jaspers – to the "appearance of fulfilment", which is, as matter of fact, the idea of man in its desire for perfection. This leads us to art which is metaphysically involved and dependent on something transcendent, persistent and spontaneous, and this, as a result, bring us further, to the question "whether the work of art […] has a unique relationship with the value in which it participates, or, at which it, somehow, ‹opens›?" (Stróżewski 1992: 62–63). For that reason, the category of sense-perception (*aisthesis*), the category of the Greek eye, which looks in an active and passive way at the same time as emitting fire-light in its gaze and absorbing various *eidola* detached from all sensory objects, sculptures and images, will be crucial for us. It is also a geometric eye that perceives perfection and beauty through mathematic formulas.

Romano Guardini in his *Revelation* wonders if the human eye is able to perceive only physical beings. "Is the shape only a body? Is proportion, function of the organ, beauty only physical? […]. The activity of the eye comprehends physical elements defined spiritually; it perceives spirit which appears in matter. […] the tree gives the impression that it is a symptom of something greater than itself, […] it points to what is above it, in another sphere, in another world of concepts. The tree is transient, however, it denotes what does not pass. The tree is imperfect; it is a fragment of something else, but even then, it refers to what is complete and perfect. The tree is insufficient, it does not satisfy our desire for knowledge, but it says what is profound and thus it satisfies permanently. It is vulnerable and temporal, nevertheless it has something eternal and solid beyond itself, it is something else that may provide salvation by itself. […]. This actual being, standing out of objects and over them, crosses through them and becomes present, it embraces

[7] Greek *logos* embodies *metron*, hence one should understand it as 'measure, proportion, reasoning' and "the underlying coherence of things: it is expressed in the Logos, the formula or element of arrangement common to all things" (Kirk, Raven, Schofield 2003: 186; cf. infra gr. k*anon*).

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the observer" (Guardini 1940). The question about the appearance (*Anschauung*) of the tree raises not only important metaphysical and epistemological issues but is plainly a desire for the Invisible, "toward *something else entirely*, toward the absolutely other" (Lévinas 1991: 33). One should emphasize that we are significantly captivated by the language of metaphysical dualism which allows us to perceive the world in terms of the division of "matter and spirit". Hence, metaphysics in the title shall cause a certain degree of mistrust but there is no escape from it. In fact such an escape, as Martin Heidegger underlines, is neither necessary nor sufficient[8]. Nevertheless, back to Guardini's thought, just as a tree, also the shape and form (*idea*, *morphe*) of man, his body – such as we perceive it though our senses – is not exclusively physical for the Greek eye. Moreover, the human shape is not only typical for men. It is given to many other phenomena and transcendental beings making them not only visible but also beautiful and because of that beauty, perfect. The image of a sensual and perfect human body considered as a synthesis of many real figures is, already, supernatural in itself. It is an eclectic beauty resulting from the arrangement of the most perfect fragments and elements of the existing and visible bodies – *le beau ideal*. We deal with such a concept of beauty in the famous anecdote on Zeuxis (5–4th century BC). He painted *muta imago* – the likeness of Helen for the temple of Hera in Crotona (Cic. *Rhet*. 2.3., cf. Plin. *H.N.* 35.62.66; Eustath. *Comment. in Hom. Il.* 11.630; cf. Blankert 1973: 32–39). Five virgins were selected on the basis of their brothers' beauty to serve him as a "living model" (!) Zeuxis had to "take measure" from the chosen girls, i.e. he had to transfer (*transfero*) the truth – *veritas* on the silent picture. "For he did not think that he could find all the component parts of perfect beauty in one person, because nature has made nothing of any class absolutely perfect in every part" (Cic. *Rhet*. 2.3[9]). The echoes of this concept of perfection still sound far later in Plotinus concept of nature or in Dürer's so-called "model men". Nevertheless beauty is sometimes deceptive. The comment above from *Phaedrus* concerns the fourth kind of madness in humans. Men affected by it, "when he sees the beauty on earth, remembering the true beauty, feels his wings growing and longs to stretch them for an upward flight, but cannot do so, and, like a bird, gazes upward and neglects the things below" (Pl. *Phaed*. 249d[10]). Sensual beauty, as it is seen through the philosopher's eyes – as a principle of depiction– elevates and points to the truth, however, it does not touch it finally, it does not allow us to approach it. Nevertheless, do we not read in *Philebus* that "the power of the good has taken refuge in the nature of the beautiful; for measure and proportion are everywhere

[8] M. Heidegger wrote in *Letter on Humanisme*: „Along with *logic* and *physics*, *ethics* appeared for the first time in the school of Plato […]. Thinkers prior to this period knew neither a *logic* nor an *ethics* nor *physics*. Yet their thinking was neither illogical nor immoral. […] The tragedies of Sophocles – provided such a comparison is at all permissible – preserve the *ethos* in their sayings more primordially than Aristotle's lectures on *ethics*" (Heidegger 1977: 232).

[9] Transl. C.D. Yonge.

[10] Transl. H.N. Fowler.

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identified with beauty and virtue […] Then if we cannot catch the good with the aid of one idea let us run it down with three—beauty, proportion, and truth, and let us say that these, considered as one, may more properly than all other components of the mixture be regarded as the cause, and that through the goodness of these the mixture itself has been made good" (Pl. *Phileb*. 64e[11]). The beautiful image is somehow exceptional. The deeper the aesthetic response which it causes, the better we realize the opposite image, our own fleetingness, imperfection, mortality and the inevitability of the human condition. Against this backdrop, an image understood as *morphe* 'shape, form, figure, appearance'[12] becomes simultaneously something degrading, inherently dark (*morphnos*) (Kowalski 2001: 76; Beekes 2009: 970 – *morphnos*, 'dark-coloured'), grey, something which is devoid of gleam and shine – i.e. dead. Paradoxically, in the Greek dichotomy, an image of the perfect body, containing the inalienable element of mortality, exhibits (through an ideal beauty and saturated colour) what we might call an idea of man with even greater intensity at the same time. We are not concerned here, however, with an image of man with all his imperfections, behaviours, existential attitudes, features and qualities (especially mental) that are common to all people, human nature (*anthropeia physis*) or humaneness (*anthropismos*[13]) *in extenso*, but with a certain isolated core of this nature, its essence – a principle that focuses on the affirmative aspect of "being man", as Roman Ingarden understands it in his essay *On Human Nature*[14].

One should also underline, that there are, at least, several categories of thinking about the idea of a Greek man. Following David Hume or George Berkeley, who both expressed the opinion in the spirit of farfetched Aristotelism that all universal ideas are nothing but particular ideas, we can mention here, e.g., the idea of the Homeric hero, the idea of a citizen, the idea of a Xenophonean soldier--landlord, the idea of a Noble Man or, finally, the idea of Sophoclean "tragic men". These examples could be multiplied. These "ideals – as Karl Jaspers writes – can in a sense be schemata of idea, road signs […]. They are not images of fulfilment, they only stimulate man's desire to rise above himself" (Jaspers 1949: 68). We do not actually touch the idea itself when we dwell on ideals. We merely reach for its individual reflections and images. There is, however, one common denominator for all these "road signs", the fulfilment of the idea of men superior in themselves'. This is an inherent stigma of continuously striving for perfection. The Greek language included it in the universal concept of *arete* ('goodness, excellence, man-

[11] Transl. H.N. Fowler.

[12] Probably from a verbal root **merg^wh^* 'shine, glitter' (Beekes 2009: 970).

[13] "It is better to be a beggar – says Aristippus of Cyrene – than to be uneducated; the one needs money, the others need to be humanized" (*Anthropismos*, cf. Diog. Laert. 2.70, transl. R.D. Hicks). It follows that *nous* 'rationality, education' is the essence of human nature.

[14] "*La nature humaine consiste dans un constant effort* de transcender toute son animalite par son humanite et par sa signification comme createur de valeurs. Sans cette mission et sans son effort de se transcender soi-même, l'homme tombe sans secours dans sa pure animalité qui est sa mort" (Ingarden 1961: 223).

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hood, virtue'). Indeed, it becomes a measure for understanding an idea of man materializing in the concept of Simonidean good and happy men – *agathos aner*, *esthlos aner* (cf. Wróblewski 1972: 38–76; Donlan 1969: 71–95).

* * *

In *The ontological valence of the picture* Hans-Georg Gadamer states that the "picture is an event of being – in it being appears, meaningfully, visibly. […] The *ideality* of the work of art does not consist in its imitating and reproducing an idea but, as with Hegel, in the appearing of the idea itself" (Gadamer 2006: 138; cf. Heidegger 1977: 211[15]). Thus, the physical excellence, sensual corporality of the picture as a form of presentation is not only an artistic pretext for the act of *mimesis* here. The omnipresent idealization of Classical art should rather be considered a direct manifestation of an idea or – as Gadamer figuratively defines it – as its *appearing*. The ancient Greek language lends a highly doubtful expression of carnality to this "metaphysical appearance". After all, the term idea means 'figure, form, appearance of things, image'. Since the beginning, in the very term *idea*, there have been implanted two parallel worlds which originally formed an undivided unity: that which is abstract – *noetos* and that which is visible and has a specific shape – *aisthetos*. Therefore, an idea of man – as something symbolized – needs or even desires to present itself, because an idea in itself is non-sensual, infinite and unrepresentable (Gadamer 2006: 147). It not only may but, in a sense, must manifest itself through the form, shape and image. This process occurs on the principle of adaptation in the notion of beauty, what gives rise to the aesthetic of perfection in the Classical period. Obviously, it is impossible to present evidence for the existence of the transcendent world. Neither is it our aim. For us it is important only that people of the Classical period manifested such a belief. It is – as A. Gide writes – "the vague, ill-defined belief that something else exists alongside the acknowledged, above-board reality of every-day life […] a kind of unskilful desire to give life more thickness" (Gide 2001: 20). It is fulfilled naturally in a work of art, which leads us to that mysterious reality. If we were to search somewhere for traces of the "second space", it is to be found among images. But how can the heterogeneous *idea tou anthropou* manifest itself as a figure expressing this very metaphysical reality in the image? How and by what means of artistic expression may one make this idea concrete in the image? In order to revel in it – to look into the matter of the image – we shall resort to the procedure of confronting the complex notion of the idea of man with the concept of death and *ananke*. While looking through the prism of these two categories, we are able to perceive physically and sensually (*sic*!) the silhouette of the idea of man in the image of Achilles

[15] „Metaphysics recognizes the lightening of Being either solely as the view of what is present in *outward appearance* (idea) […] the truth of Being as the lightening itself remains concealed for metaphysics. […] However, this concealment is not a defect of metaphysics but a treasure withheld form it yet held before it, the treasure of its own proper wealth. But the lightening itself is Being".

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– a young warrior[16]. This idea – which is a concept, an abstract, a complex and non-uniformed structure, a strictly mental construction, than again a real one, an everlasting but inaccessible idea – begins to speak through (and as) the physicality of the picture when compared with *Thanatos* and *Ananke*. The image of death and *ananke* will act as "hermeneutics" here. Nevertheless, before arrive at the cliché of Achilles, it is worth dwelling for a moment on the issue of the relationship between images within the sphere of metaphysics and the problem of anthropomorphisation in Classical art *in genere.* In the world of the metaphysical dualism, idols become a serious threat for the world of real beings (ideas). They lead to the illusion of being. A crucial borderline runs also between imaginations and perceptions. One should not forget, that the Greek image it is not only *eikon* and *eidolon* but also *phantasmos* and *phantasma*. The last two types of images are the work of the imagination – *phantasia*[17]. One of the most significant features of Platonic theory is the fear of *mimesis phantasmatos*, the fear of imitatively similar images, which would lead to the confusion of being and false appearance, the order of the worlds of imagination and reality. This is also a fear of filling up the well-established metaphysical border between these "worlds" – a fear of return to the still vital archaic (magical) experience of unity of the perceptible (sensual) and imaginative worlds, where the "indifference" between perception and imagination inevitably leads. One should remember, that the accusation of emptiness that Plato lays against works of art could be raised only *a contratio*, i.e. against the "conjectural opinion of mortals" (Parm. fr. B 8, 50–53 D.-K., cf. Simpl. *ad Arist. Phys.* 30.14) ascribing to images the self-life (magical nature). These "conjectural opinions" are *doxa*, i.e. deceptive, vernacular representations based on sense-perception (*aisthesis*) building the void of ignorance. According to Plato, it is not managed by what is real but what is probable. *Doxa*, as something changeable, opposes knowledge (*episteme*), which makes eternal and permanent ideas the object of its cognition. Into the semantic space of the word *doxa* directed at senses and emotions, there have been pushed the remains of the magical way of experiencing the world. It is *doxa* that causes images not to simply beempty idols, but figures that may sexually arouse people of the Classical period. "People – as David Freedberg writes – break pictures and sculptures; they mutilate them, kiss them, cry before them […]; they are calmed by them […]. They give thanks by means of them, expect to be elevated by them and are moved to the highest levels of empathy and fear" (Freedberg 1989: 1). William John Thomas Mitchell calls this behaviour a "double consciousness surrounding images" (Mitchell 2005: 11). This remark reveals a phenomenon of "emotional colouring" and physical rendering of images that has its origins in animism. It is a special form of function of the idea of man as a transcending figure and it consists in lending human-like functions or human nature to images, anthropomorphisation of images at the level of emotion

[16] Both clichés overlap each other, cf.: (Lissarrague, Schnapp 1981: 275–297).

[17] *Phantasia* means also 'appearance' and this connotes the problem of border, cf.: (Borowicz 2012: 241–266).

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and ascription of human form to the relationships between man and the image. Mankind constantly puts itself in the role of Pygmalion, aiming to produce "living images". We deal in the "reviving" of images at the linguistic and behavioural level – this how we treat images, how we talk about them, how we lend certain causational features to them that are appropriate to human beings, all this certifies that we are being seized by our own delusion. Man causes images to impose upon himself with their empiricism and materiality or even to seem to be possessive and appropriative towards him. They are becoming an interactive element of the cultural reality. By the beginning of the 4th century B.C. (which more or less coincides with the beginning of Plato's activity as well as his Academy) we observe a significant visual rapprochement between pictures (*eikones*) and sensually perceived reality. This rapprochement is based on the imitative blurring of the border between these two spheres – a blurring that rises to the level of illusion, delusion and duplication. At the turn of the 5th and 4th centuries BC, the Greek world came close to the dangerous border beyond which veristic images would have to become totally melded with reality in the act of perception[18]. The indistinguishability of representation from the world of percepts based on the magical principle of unity of experience along with the acquisition by works of art of the mimetic illusion which would result in a world, where images were human doppelgangers, not so much at the level of making present certain affects and emotions (as previously), but at the level of form – the identity of the external appearance[19]. A fear of such a phantasmatic vision of the total diffusion of nature and reality made by the human hand (images-objects; Baschet 1996: 7–57) is attested by the story of Daedalus, quoted by Plato himself and later by Aristotle (Pl. *Men.* 97d, *Euth.* 11c, cf. Arist. *Anim.* l.3, Meineke, *Frag. com. Gr.* vol. I, 340ff). According to the popular account on which they both rely, the statues of the mythical sculptor had the ability to move like mythical Talos, the bronze giant (Ps.-Apoll. *Bibl.* 1.140, Apoll. Rh. *Arg.* 4.1638, Paus. 8.53.5) or golden automats (handmaidens) which Hephaestus "endowed with understanding in their hearts, speech and strength, / and the immortal gods gave them the cunning of the handiwork" (Hom. *Il* 18.416–421). One should also give particular attention to the reaction of the Athenians described by the scholiast. They were terrified by the behaviour of figures which clearly violate the ontological order. To trammel and tide the Daedalic images means to restore the balance – the proper relation between images and reality or between being and appearance. In spite of their specific qualities, affects and emotions, the works of Daedalus, however, only resembled living figures. We are not dealing with animisation *sensu stricto* here, but rather with psychisation of images. The Daedalic image does not cease to be an image, it loses nothing of the essence of its visuality – it is still to be recognized as an image (however skilful and cunning[20]), although it becomes equipped with some purely human dispositions which arouse, thereby,

[18] Cf. contemporary phenomenon of hologram which leads to the confusion of reality and image.
[19] Cf. infra *daidalon*.
[20] Cf. *daidalon* 'skillfully, curiously, cunningly' e.g. sculptured or wrought (Hom. *Od.* 19.227).

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the sense of threat which is expressed in the need for trammelling. The image gains and preserves its own position, the self-essence appropriate only to itself and different from that of the human through the "act of making alike" (but not duplicating). Daedalus does not become a "demiurge", and his images do not become human doppelgangers, the next Kratyloi – they remain a "game of identity and difference" (Markowski 1993: 35). One should emphasize, that this fragmentary anthropomorphisation becomes the salvation of the image in the world of "divided time" (Juszczak 2009: 3–10). From the perspective of metaphysics, when the image becomes identical with its model, it loses itself, perishes, although one should more properly say that it does not become an image at all. This problem is reflected in the story of Pandora, who (not her statue or image) is fashioned from clay by Zeus. A "living *daidalon*" comes into being – the first woman, a gift of all gods (Hes. *Theog.* 570–590, Hes. *Op*. 60–83). The story of Pandora and Epimetheus told by Hesiod – a poet of the "time of dreaming" – belongs to the magical reality and there, in the archaic world of *participation mystique*, metamorphic identity, *Lebenswelt*, in the space, which is governed by the rules of *appartenances*, the mental image is identical with what is done, with the sensual object (*to aistheton*) (cf. Kowalski 2001). In the gloss on Plato's *Meno*, the archaic *phantasiai* of Daedalus, while manifesting themselves through delusive and elegant appearance, inevitably undergo a degrading deformation – a qualitative reduction. They are already perceived in terms of metaphysical dualism, quasi-metamorphosis and the latter is not as much a real transformation as a deforming reduction of its essence, a passive reflection (*mimesis*). From the Platonic perspective, the "image that is done" is not (and it cannot be) a transference of qualities that maintain the completeness of the original *physis* of the visualized object. The flaw of materiality and illusion is that it is an inalienable testimony to its externalization simultaneously becoming a "salvation" and "slaying" of the image as apparition (*eidolon*) and appearance (*eidos*).

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The notion of idea of man as a metaphysical figure shall be understood not only as a psychisation of the image but broadly as the element of the process of antropomorphization of the surrounding reality, i.e. "as attributing certain tendencies, emotions, reactions or even moral principles and attitudes to the non-human objects" (Kowalski 2010: 35) as well as giving human form to various phenomena including transcendent ones, e.g. the antropomorphisation of the images of gods. In the latter case, the idea of man defined as a certain set of purely human qualities may serve as the approximation of transcendent beings (divinity), because – as R. Guardini writes in the aforementioned *Revelation* – "everything that a human being contains in itself is to be reflected in the images of Deity, images that men creates. […] There is no such a terrible factor or worthy of condemnation in a human being that would not be expressed in these images which aim to serve him to

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understand God" (Guardini 1940). The appearance of the Greek gods through the prism of ideas, forms and shapes that are appropriate to men follows a long tradition dating back to Homer and Hesiod and it shall be considered independently as a separate issue (Bugaj 2010: 151–178). The idealized human (and not divine) body as a certain figure (graphic formula) is used to represent a transcendent being. Moreover, the Classical art of the 5th century BC is hard to recognize as a mimetic within the meaning of Plato's passive reflection – it had not yet functioned in terms of degrading the metaphysics of what is true and false. The representations of gods or heroes, and "cult art" in particular, during that period did not imitate (in the colloquial sense) features of specific people, but rather gave a general human shape based on mathematical calculations which arrived at something abstract (i.e. that originally have no form) and transcendent. This process shall be called idealization, it is "forming", giving a measure (*metron*), and the status of images were not so much established on the simple, imitative transfer of the numerical relations that were present in nature, but on the simultaneous participation (*metheksis*), presence (*parousia*) and communion (*koinonia*) of numerical relations in the image and thereby on the dedication and elevation of that which is imagined through the beauty of numbers, harmony, proportion and symmetry. This idealization was the act of imitating[21] mathematical formulae (*kanon*) in an image which, therefore, gained a numerical nature i.e. *ratio*[22]. It was becoming a model – an idea *par excellence*. In the Greek language the word *kanon* means 'straight rod, measuring rod' as well as 'rule, model, norm'[23]. This term, as mentioned by Pierre Chantraine, is probably etymologically connected with gr. *kanna* 'reed' which may come from Semitic languages (cf. Akkadian *kanu*, Hebrew *qaneh* 'reed' and *qeneh ha-middah* 'measuring reed six cubits long') (Chantraine 1968: 492–493). Nevertheless, the semantically enhanced Akkadian form *kanu* 'to be firmly in place, to remain stationary (planets), to be secure (foundation, rule, position), to last, to endure, to remain in effect; to be loyal, reliable, correct, well-disciplined; to remain quantitatively constant; to establish, to set up, to place, to maintain' (Bomhard, Kerns 1994: 427) is of interest here. According to A.R. Bomhard and J.C. Kern, it is derived from the Proto-Nostractic **k[ʰ]an- / *k[ʰ]ən* 'to do, make or operate in a proper manner; to set straight, to make right' (Bomhard, Kerns 1994: 426). Proto-Indo-European *k[ʰ]on-*[24], Kartvelian (Georgian *ken-*, *kn-* 'to do, to make') and Proto-Afroasiatic **k[ʰ]an- / *k[ʰ]ən-* 'to do, make or prepare

[21] Cf. lat. *imitare* 'seizure, hold', a mimetic interception (Kowalski 2006: 79).

[22] In ancient Greece, number meant first of all „an articulated relation of quantity and of fractions of quantity, of logoi, of analogies" (Reale 1990: 74).

[23] Myc. *ko-no-ni-pi*, cf. gr. *kaneon* 'reed basket, dish', *kanabos* 'wooden framework, manikin, drawing of human frame' (Beekes 2009: 637).

[24] *Czech* konat *'to do, to achieve'*, vý-kon *'achievement'; Polish* wy-konać, do-konać *'to make, to achieve'; Old Church Slavic* u-konъ *'execution, deed'; Greek* dia-koneo *'to minister, to serve', Mycenaean* ka-si-ko-no *'servant, companion' (Bomhard, Kerns 1994: 426).*

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in a proper manner; to set straight, to make right; to establish'[25] derive from this root. In the Greek language, specific properties of the 'reed as a plant' and 'reed as a unit of measure' evoked metaphorical meanings such as 'straight, upright, standing', which were used in relation to the permanent and constant principles, rules, regulations or things that were made according to such principles, measures or standards – and therefore regular and well established things. This term, however, became embroiled not only in legal but also in cosmological terminology. In Semitic languages 'permanence' and 'immutability' were ascribed to the immobility of planets and stability of power (e.g. Jupiter connected with Marduk)[26]. This cosmic aspect of *kanu – qaneh* is especially interesting in relation to the Polykleitos's notion of canon as the embodiment of cosmic laws (macrocosmic dimension) in the image of human body (microcosmic dimension). One should probably ascribe the genesis of such mental and cognitive schemes to the sacrificial and shamanic-mantic practices associated with dividing and re-forming the human body (cf. supra **kənə* 'to cure' in Proto-Chadic), elements of which (as units) subsequently became identified with elements of the universe (Kowalski 1999: 36). Such identifications were applied to images or representations of the human body and thus mathematic categories of 'measure' and 'ratio' that were recognized during these practices finally gaining an axiological dimension (cf. *anthropos metron*; *homo mensura* – 'man the measure') (cf. Lincoln 1986; 1991). One should place Protagoras's famous statement *panton chrematon metron ho anthropos* – man is the *measure* of all things, which is cited by Plato in his *Theaetetus* (Pl. *Theaet.* 152a2), in such a context.

We know very little about *Kanon*, a treatise by Polykleitos of Sikyon that illustrated his aesthetic theories and the rules of sculptural art. Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History* mentions, that Polykleitos was a pupil of Hagelaidas and "he also made the statue which sculptors call the canon referring to it as to a standard from which they could learn the first rules of their art. He is the only man who is held to have embodied the principles of his art in a single work [*artem ipsam fecisse artis opere iudicatur*]" (Plin. *H.N.* 34.55[27]; cf. Plin. *H.N.* 35.74). The explanation of his theory was the sculpture of the 'Spear Bearer', a figure that he formed according to the methods (principles) of contrapposto, rhythm, the golden section (*sectio aurea*) and the golden rectangle – it is the general geometrisation of the body based on the golden ratio (cf. Moon 1995). "Canon – as Giovanni Reale emphasizes – expressed an essential *rule of perfection* that the Hellenes indicated in

[25] Proto-Semitic **k[ʰ]a/wa/n* 'to set stright, to make right; to establish' > Hebrew *kūn* 'to be correct, right, proper, firm, established, clear, determined, ready, prepeard'; Phoenician **kwn* 'to exist, to establish, to prepare'; Ugaritic **kwn* 'to be'; Arabic *kāna* 'to be, to exist; to happen, to occur; to make, to create; to shape, to fashion'; Proto-Chadic **kənə* 'to cure' > Kanakuru *jaŋi* 'to cure', Zaar *wukŋ* 'medicine'; Tera *kənə* 'to cure'; Bura *kuri* 'to cure'; Lamang *ɣwini* 'medicine' (Bomhard, Kerns 1994: 426).

[26] In context of law terminology and procedure cf.: (Black, George, Postgate 2000: 159; Holtz 2009: 239–242); in context of the astronomic terminology cf.: (Smith 2006: 101).

[27] Transl. K. Jex-Blake.

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a perfect proportion expressible in an exact fashion with numbers. Therefore, the *form* (= Idea), which in various ways is realized in the plastic arts, for the Greeks was reducible to a numerical ratio and to number. Indeed the perfection of figure and form retraced in sculpture in addition to being joined with the numerical relations of the parts among themselves and of the parts with the whole, was also joined with the geometrical figure" (Reale 1990: 74–75; cf. Herz-Fischler 1990). The geometrism of Polykleitos's canon, in spite of the fact that figures became incarnate through mathematical formulas, gave statues the impression of being block-like and indeed Varro reproaches the sculptor, claiming that all of his figures are square – *quadrata*[28]. This impression of squareness related to stockiness resultant essentially from the primacy of numbers and ideas over visual impact and aesthetics as well as having important ethical foundations. The square was a geometric figure expressing perfection in Pythagorean doctrine – a harmonic relationship existing between the four primary elements; it was an image (*eikon*) of the divine being (*theias ousias*) (Steiner 2003: 43, 275). When included in the human form, it became its principle. We find this ethical dimension of the square in one of the preserved odes of Simonides, the theme of which is nobility:

> For a man, indeed, to become good truly is hard,
> In hands and feet and mind foursquare,
> Fashioned without reproach[29].

A good and happy man, who follows *arete*, is a model man (*aner tetragonos*; lat. *homo quadratus*); he allows the metaphysical dimension of the idea of man to appear, understood as perfect harmony through the connection of the square with the human body (Pender 2005: 363–400). In *Timaeus* Plato also refers to the beauty of geometric forms and the symbolism of the square (the Demiurge's geometrisation of body) (Pl. *Tim*. 27ff., 47ff). He even quotes Simonides in *Protagoras* (Pl. *Prot*. 339b)[30]. In *Gorgias*, the concept of the cosmos is founded on the tetragon of unity of Heaven, Earth, Gods and Humans (Pl. *Gorg*. 507e–508a). Also Aristotle considers the square an extraordinary figure. In *Rhetoric*, we read that a good man is four-square[31]. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, *aner agathos* is 'good in very truth' and 'four-square without reproach' (*tetragonos aneu psogou*; lat. *quadratus sine probro*) (Arist. *Nic. Eth.* 1100b 12. Cf. Arist. *Met.* 986a 22). It is due to the *kanon* developed by the art of the 5th century BC that the image participated in the world of nature (*physis*), as well as becoming a part of that nature – i.e. an organic scheme where, behind the layer of purely sensual perfection, a mathematical operation was hidden; and that operation was the basis for the harmonic

[28] Gr. *tetragonos*. Varro probably took this term from the works of Xenocrates of Sicyon.

[29] χερσί τε καὶ ποσὶ καὶ νόῳ τετράγωνος τετυγμένος (Pl. *Prot*. 339b (Sim. fr. 37.1); Thayer 1975: 21).

[30] On mathematical concepts of Plato and geometry see: (Pl. *Phaed.* 110b; *Tim*. 31b–32a, 53c–55c; *Rep.* 509d, *Hipp. Maj.* 303b; Plut. *detect. Or.* 427; cf. Herz-Fischler 1990: 78–85).

[31] τὸν ἀγαθὸν ἄνδρα φάναι τετράγωνον (Arist. *Rhet*. 1411b 27).

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proportion of bodily elements and it is exactly there, where Greek beauty crystallized itself[32]. Nevertheless, Polykleitos was not the only one who created a canonical figure illustrating an artist's theories of proportion. Also Timanthes of Cythnus "painted a hero, a picture in which he touched perfection [*absolutissimi operis*] having comprehended in it the whole art of painting [*artem ipsam complexus*[33]] the male figure" (Plin. *H.N.* 35.74)[34]. Pliny also underlines painter's inventiveness. In his opinion "he is the only artist whose works always suggest more than is in the picture" (Plin. *H.N.* 35.74[35]). One should emphasize here, that the development of Classical art probably wouldn't be possible without the mathematical and philosophical backdrop based on the doctrine of Pythagoreans[36]. In *Akusmata* we read "tetractys which is the harmony […] What is most beautiful? Harmony" (Iamb. *V. Pyth.* 82). The tetractys mentioned above is a sequence of the first four natural numbers that produces the most perfect number called "the fount of ever-flowing nature" (Sext. Empir. *Adv. Mathem.* 7.94–95). The principles of mathematics became for the Pythagoreans – as Aristotle emphasizes – an ultimate principle. "They saw further that the properties and ratios of the musical scales are based on numbers, and since it seemed clear that all other things have their whole nature modelled upon numbers, and that numbers are the ultimate things in the whole physical universe, they assumed the elements of numbers to be the elements of everything, and the whole universe to be a proportion or number" (Arist. *Met.* 985b 23[37]). The reflections of the Pythagorean School seem to be present in one of the very few remaining fragments of Polykleitos's *Kanon* which survived in *Mechanike syntaxis* of Philo of Bizantium. We read there, that "perfection [*to eu*] depends on many numerical ratios [*pollon arithmon*] and minor differences shall determine it" (Phil. *Mech.* 4.1: τὸ εὖ διὰ πολλῶν ἀριθμῶν γίνεται[38]; cf. Urlichs 1887). The term *eu* used by Polykleitos as a noun means 'the right, the good, perfect, the ideal' and as adverb 'fortunately, happily, morally well' especially in contrast to 'bad' (*kakos*). The semantic fusion of 'the good', 'perfection' and 'idea' is of significance here and it has its roots in Pythagoreanism, too (cf. Stob. 4.1.40h; Iamb. 203). In the Greek art of the Early Classical period, a representation of divinity in the form of an idealized human

[32] This opinion belongs to Chrysippus of Soli, who, quotes Polykleitos's *Kanon* (Gal. *Placit. Hipp. et Plat.* 5.3; Tatarkiewicz 1963: 3–8).

[33] Cf. supra "*artem ipsam fecisse artis opere iudicatur*", which refers to the sculpture of the 'Spear Bearer'.

[34] This picture was exhibited in Roman *Templum Pacis*. He probably wrote a treatise entitled *Kanon*, too. Zeuxis, a rival of Timanthes, also introduced his own canon, however, Pliny (35.64) says that he is criticized "as having exaggerated the heads and extremities of his figures", transl. K. Jex-Blake.

[35] Transl. K. Jex-Blake.

[36] Especially the concept of harmony and balance – a harmonic contradiction of antithetic beings, which manifests itself as a symmetry in images.

[37] Transl. H. Tredennick.

[38] Transl. author.

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body – i.e. a beautiful form based on numbers and an abstract mathematical model – is the way in which the ideal appears in itself (understood in parallel with 'the good', 'good thing'). The idea of man materialized as figure appears here not so much as a mirror image of a human being but as the image of numerical ratios transcending nature and the cosmos; it is a set of ratios and mathematic formulas captured in the image of a human body, a sensual testimony to cosmic harmony and order[39]. A somewhat similar judgment, indicating that an image is not just a passive imitation, may be found in one of the fragments of Heraclitus. We read there, that "it may perhaps be that nature has a linking for contraries and evolves harmony out of them and not out of similarities […] and he has devised the original harmony by means of contraries and not similarities. The arts, too, apparently imitate nature in this respect [ἔοικε δὲ καὶ ἡ τέχνη τὴν φύσιν μιμουμένη τοῦτο ποιεῖν]" (Ps.-Arist. *Mund*. 5.396b.7[40])[41]. Art criticism made from the perspective of metaphysics – i.e. one that makes use of an established division, order and classification of beings into the real (ideas) and the apparent (things and images) – had its roots in Plato's cosmogony. This approach, however, implied the existence of a level of mathematical entities (*intermediates*) situated between the sensible and intelligible world (Pl. *Men*., cf. Reale 1990: 76). Apart from geometric, astronomic and musical entities, souls belong here, too. Hence, images (like statues or pictures) based on canon could participate on the level of intermediate entities to some extent. Canon, however, was not strictly obeyed as we know from Plato's *Sophist*. The reason was prosaic – there was a natural need to preserve the visual ratio of images arising from perspective (*eurytmia*) which differed from the mathematical axiom. This was perfectly perceived by Plato. He, after all, "possessed – as Paul Friedländer puts it – […] the plastic eye of the Greeks, an eye akin to that by which Polykleitos perceived the canon […] and so the eye by which Greek mathematicians looked at the pure geometric forms" (Reale 1990: 48, 74). Nevertheless, this violation of mathematical rules (symmetry in particular) was for Plato a rejection of truth; hence, he understood art mainly as an act of making appearances (*phantasmoi* and the activity itself was called the 'the art of making appearances" – *phantastike techne*).

[39] "[Pythagorean speculation, in short,] envisioned the *Kosmos* as a vast – if invisible – numerical configuration, a harmonious universe of ideal mathematical structures underlying the visible world. Everything that existed – including the soul and social life – was literally governed by divine numbers and numerical ratios separate from matter and physical objects. Numbers (*arithmoi*; *arithmos*, number), as the purest instance of non-material *being* are denizens of an eternal, invisible realm of ideal relations. Moreover, this intangible order is deemed to be the authentic region of speculative inquiry. […] In other wrds the early Pythagorean sects sought and found *structure* throughout the visible and invisible cosmos: in a literal sense, the cosmos itself was *Logos* incarnate" (Sandywell 1996: 198–199).

[40] Transl. E.S. Forster.

[41] Democritus, in turn, says that art imitates nature i.e. that people imitate (or replicate) the behaviour of animals, Plut. *de Soll*. 20.974a.

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With Polykleitos's canon, the idealization of the form of the human body by way of metonymy became a principle used to express the perfection of the idea of man. It is also the way in which the Greeks both expressed their craving for perfection and how they attempted to maintain it. Thereby, the beauty of the Classical form was never an empty idealism. The idea of man seen as the desire for *arete* – an excellence that meets the concept of *kaloskagathia* – hid behind it. In the language of images, physical beauty became this, that which unites man as an individual with the idea of man with his *arete* and thereby acquires a didactic dimension. And if not for Plato… Indeed, if the world that surrounds us is just an illusion? A strict Platonic negation of the sensual cognition directly damages the visual arts, just liberated from archaic schemes, as well as relying on the senses more strongly than ever. Philosophical cognition and knowledge negate the image based on *doxa*. Hence, it is ultimately better to abandon the level of *logismos* and *phronesis*. Our cognition, or rather recognition, of what we may call an epiphany of the idea of man, in the image one should be based on *doxa*, *pistis* (cf. Arist. *Anim.* 3.3.) and consciousness understood as the act of *Weltanschauung*. Due to an intuitive insight into Being, the intellectual appearance is situated very closely to the notion of *pistis*, which – as Porphyry noted – is formulated in an unexplored and irrational space (Porph. *Adv. Christ.* 1.17). Such a perspective enters into the sphere of religious cognition (cf. Cioran 2004: 66–69), while philosophical cognition is left somewhere aside. This is not the result of an intellectual negligence but rather a natural need to turn our attention to the sphere of *doxa* and popular beliefs. Images that emerge on the border of religious cognition, folklore and the arts frequently combine simplicity and literality of form with the deep eschatological sense within themselves. The natural need or even necessity of literal, imitative representation is the main feature of the Greek phenomenon of experiencing of *bios*. This also concerns the sphere of transcendence or is even immanent to it. On the level of popular beliefs, an attempt to define an abstraction always ends with its involuntary inclusion in categories that refer to sensual cognition – this leads to anthropomorphisation and psychisation of images. Nevertheless, for the above mentioned popular beliefs, which are based on *pistis*, an image is not just a symmetrical reflection of this, the sensual; the image is not an empty act of *mimesis*. On the contrary, it is a pretext for faith. The experience of the image is finally based on the act of *methexis*.

* * *

At this point, it behoves us to go back to the interrupted experiment consisting in the comparison of the idea of man with the concept of Death and Necessity in the image. This clash of concepts is a flashpoint causing an anthropomorphic image, like a supernova, to reveal its character as a figure endowed with metaphysical

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experience. To the metaphysical consciousness such a figure is a type of structure, a specific form or formula, where the actual ontic content, a metaphysical stigma, *signifié* – a secret – remains enclosed. The figurative aspect, i.e. the one that reifies the transcendental entity, is of special importance here. In Greek culture, the process of giving form to idea, its reification, often took place through simultaneous union with something very physical, sensual and often full of sexual expression. The metaphorical, allegorical or semiotic structure that arises on the plane of images begins to communicate that which is abstract (incorporeal) through the physical, sensual and beautiful. Among the many Greek images (not so much in the literal sense as in the sense of a cultural cliché) one in particular bears within itself a *genus homo* pattern. It is the image of Achilles, a young warrior. Here, in this image, both Death and Necessity are factors which introduce not only a metaphysical element but also initiate a process of crystallization of abstraction such as the notion of the idea of man.

* * *

Achilles. One may assume that his image is a simple metonymy – an effect of mapping of the idea of man on the ideal figure of a young hero. Here, the drawings of the Greek masters express perfection through beauty, a beauty which is not embedded in the human body of a hero but which becomes a principle of the whole Greek cosmos as harmony, symmetry and proportion. Images of Achilles which belong to this ontological and cosmic order become figures that embody *arete* as well. Nevertheless, the metaphysical dimension of the Achilles's image, understood here broadly as a cultural cliché, is sanctioned not only by that beauty which emanates from it but also by Death and Necessity. It is a beautiful death because it happens in the maturity of youth; it is a terrifying necessity because it signifies the inevitability of his fate. Indeed, it is through them, that Achilles becomes a beautiful dead (Vernant 1996: 55–60) and it is finally death that takes what is most precious – youth, strength and beauty. However, simultaneously she preserves these qualities (the work of memory). Thus, the idea of man shall first become squandered; it shall dissolve everything of its ideality in the image of Achilles if it is to appear directly. The heroic *arete* materializes itself only in the physical death of the hero as Werner Jaeger remarks (Jaeger 1962: 42). It is due to death and *ananke* that such elements of mimetic image as strength, beauty and youth, which hitherto referred us to the ideal, obtain coherence, stability and continuity which allow them to escape from the inevitable decline that characterizes everything that is human (Jaeger 1962: 42). They begin to point not to the ideal of a hero but to an idea of man as such. In this act we can identify the "dissolving of *mimesis*" that occurs as the "dissolving of beauty". This reduction simultaneously signifies Jaspers's "appearance of fulfilment", as idealizing is far from underestimating the reality of death (Vernant 1996: 58). Instead of the previous *mimesis* that mirrors *arete* through the corporeal beauty, there appears *metheksis*.

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It operates, however, not on the physical surface of the picture, but in the sphere of thought and memory. The image dies when it becomes memorialised, it redoubles the death which, however, preserves all these elements of the idea of the Greek man that Achilles represents in collective memory. It is exactly in this relationship – as Jean-Pierre Vernant remarks – "established, through the various forms of collective commemoration, between the individual with his heroic biography and the public, the Greek experience of death is transposed onto an aesthetic and ethical plane (with a "metaphysical dimension") (Vernant 1996: 57). This aesthetic plane is a place where the aesthetic of perfection dissolves itself in death and necessity. The death of a young hero is a necessary condition for the "metaphysical situation" or "metaphysical *signifié*". When such a situation occurs, it ruins the perfect body – a perfect image in which it simultaneously manifests itself. The role of art (or the image) in expressing what is abstract and metaphysical consists not so much in appearance of beauty as in the sublimation of physicality so, the revelation of an idea can be completed in the final dissolving act of *mimesis*. Mimetic sublimation of the body is a necessary condition of this metaphysical revelation. Paradoxically, the perfection of Achilles (*arete*, *to eu*), as a metaphysical figure seems to be incorporeal, but it presents itself in an extremely corporeal picture (it is a peculiar *noumen*, a thing as such) – the dead Achilles, as the image of idea of man, is not himself anymore. He becomes a cliché in collective memory and it is the task of that memory to preserve the individual who strives to preserve the *self* in collective consciousness. The dead Achilles loses his definite form and becomes an abstraction. Only in this way, may his image detach itself from its sensuality and therefore be experienced through *methexis* – i.e. participation in an idea of man that appears in this way.

Finally, one should underline that the picture of Achilles itself does not seem to bear a metaphysical stigma. It is only the representation of the already dead Achilles, a young warrior that invokes such a metaphysical context, as it is depicted on white-ground *lekythoi*, where the idea of man is conceptualized in the consciousness of the spectator through the direct insight of this particular image and participation in it through the prism of "dissolvation", which the fate and death of Achilles causes. The idea of man, however, perishes in the representation – or more accurately – in the process of representing the young Achilles. Outside the context of death, this dissolution of the metaphysical secret in favour of the aesthetic impression (that is made in the act of idealization) causes the picture of a hero not to become a metaphysical figure. "The work of art – as Gadamer writes – is conceived as an event of being and the abstraction performed by aesthetic differentiation is dissolved. A picture is an event of presentation" (Gadamer 2006: 145). The *signifié*, mentioned above, disappears by the way of figuration. It is just an ephemeral "appearing" in its occasionality.

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* * *

We have already noticed, that the idea of man contains in itself a certain trans-historical and inalienable semantic core which can be defined as a continuous desire for perfection (*to eu*, *arete*). From this perspective, one may perceive an image as a form of record or preservation; it is a system of signs that allow for transfer (*transfero*) or commemoration of that abstract core[42]. In Classical art, this set of the most important human qualities becomes embodied as the perfection of numbers present in images of the human body. Therefore, the idea of the perfect harmony of the world – the *Logos* "appears" through the anthropomorphic image and the representation itself becomes a metaphysical figure. In the social space of the Greek *polis*, the Greek *paideia* is a direct expression of that aforementioned core. She is directed to the everlasting and universal ideal of man (*kalokagathía*), refinement of body and soul, perfection and fulfilment. This, however, is a road sign which refers to the idea of man as such[43]. It is a road sign that points to this idea, as it refers the Greek "humanity" to the good, to the idea of goodness and this is the first principle and ultimate goal towards which the Greek man is obliged to aspire. Hence, an idea of a man, in one of its definitions, is a metaphysical model, an idealized portrait purified from of all defects and imperfections – a *noetic* prototype. The question about the Greek idea of man is thus the question about the structure of the real and perfect being; it is a question about that "God's particle", which presents itself in man. Nevertheless, the complex Platonic model of the idea of man, by virtue of its self-definition, is opposite to humaneness (*anthropismos*). The Greek man is not, and indeed cannot be, the essence of ideality himself. The idea of the Greek man as a unity of the most valuable human qualities collides dangerously with humaneness. It is Ananke ('Necessity') and Moira ('Destiny') both, who inevitably and unrelentingly weight on it. Hence, *anthropeia physis*, as we know even from a cursory reading of the Greek tragedians, always points to the inherent stigma of human imperfection. In the tragedies of Aeschylus or Sophocles, to be a man means to be able to suffer. Suffering enables human existence – it is the essence. It is precisely suffering that makes Oedipus a venerable man, as Jaeger remarks, similarly to Achilles – a young warrior made venerable due to his bravery and moral attitude. The dignity they both receive becomes a testimony to their own perfection, their *arete*. The suffering of a "tragic man", which becomes a path to the liberation that awaits him at the end of life, paradoxically becomes the appearance of his fulfilment. "The gods, who once abased you, uplift thee now" says Ismene to the old and blind Oedipus[44].

[42] Cic. *Rhet*. 2.1: *ut mutum in simulacrum ex animali exemplo veritas transferatur* (cf. Toporow 2004: 181).

[43] In language of the anthropological discourse we can say, that an idea of man is a much broader concept. It is proves to be an autoreduction of culture to the layer of certain behaviors or individual attitudes, which are the most important for that culture.

[44] νῦν γὰρ θεοί σ᾽ ὀρθοῦσι, πρόσθε δ᾽ ὤλλυσαν (Sophocles 1968: 394, transl. F. Storr).

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Therefore, the Greek world – especially the one that is experienced through images – continues its existence in an inner dilemma between the perfect (divine) and imperfect (human), which belong to the heroic world of Homeric epos and which is expressed by Greek tragedy. The Greek world is founded on that antonymic and bipolar structure, otherwise the desire for *arete* would contain nothing of heroism; it would simply be a passive acceptance of self-ideality. This constant split of Greek consciousness of existence, which reflects itself in visualization, is neither definitive nor schizophrenic. These planes of experience (the idea of man and human nature) cross paths in images, in the structure of universal signs and figures, which by preserving the corporeal and sensual (thus simultaneously the imperfect and temporary) bear within themselves – like a birthmark – a certain metaphysical stigma. It certifies the Greek man's ability to cross the traumatic border of the condition of self-existence, both by bravery and suffering as well as beauty and goodness. The idea of man exists in an image in so far as there exists a specific human, physical and imperfect reflection which has its share of *hybris*, *ate* or *koros*. In the Greek image, an idea of man understood as a metaphysical figure reveals a man his being through the constantly undertaken attempt to appear fulfilment. Simultaneously, in the world of senses, this fulfilment entails the dissolution of the metaphysical secret. This is also the final condition under which the necessity of aesthetic intensification that frequently hides behind such notions as death (Achilles) and destiny (Oedipus) shall reveal itself. These notions play an important role in the process of crystallizing the idea of man in Greek images. With this in mind, it is worth noting, as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel wrote in *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, that the common need for works of art is to search among human ideas, as they exist in order to make human beings aware of whom they are (Hegel 1927: 57). Finally, the Greek image puts a man in front of himself, as "there is no art except on a human scale. The instrument that allows man to go beyond his measure […], escapes the conditions of the work of art" (Gide 2000: 270), and indeed, this potential embedded in Greek imagery that aims at the appearance of fulfilment becomes the most important manifestation of the idea of man understood as a metaphysical figure. "O light feet of Achilles! you are not scorned with impunity" (Gide 2000: 270).

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