

LOGOS

Encounter of the Divine and the Human

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Abstract

“*What is in a name?*” William Shakespear wrote in his famous story Romeo and Juliet. Dragged out of its context, the saying seems to show insignificancy of a name. Is a name mere an arbitrary appellation for something or someone without any meaning inside? Before Shakespear, Cicero told us that “*Nomen est omen!*” Name, accordingly, is sign, augury, prognostication, prediction. If it’s so, a name, therefore, contains something beyond. It signifies something. In this regard I agree with Cicero, bearing in mind that a name “*conceals*” something else, be it hope, mission, essence or anything else. The Faculty of Philosophy of the Catholic University, St. Thomas – Medan (Philosophical and Theological High School, St. John – Pematangsiantar), picks up ‘Logos’ as the name of its scientific magazine. What is the idea lying behind this choice? To what extend does the name bear its ‘*omen*’? This simple article tries to deal with the question to account for the name, Logos. This presentation is a descriptive one.

Keywords: Logos, philosophy, theology, name, *nous*, soul, Word, God.

Preliminary Remarks

It was the chief on board of this journal which raised this simple reflection. When this journal was going to be born, the chief then asked anyone of lectors to suggest a name for the journal to be born. Some of us proposed to revive the old magazine *Rajawali* which has not been at large for quite long time. In fact, *Rajawali* is the magazine of the Faculty of Philosophy of St. Thomas Catholic University-Medan and STFT St. Yohanes-Pematangsiantar, since its foundation. Due to unknown reason, however, the magazine underwent a kind of “*life’s crisis*”. In a regular meeting of lectors one time, the lectors decided to revive the “so-long-dead” magazine, *Rajawali*. It was then a good idea.

Yet, during an informal chatting with the chief of the journal, other opinion appeared. What could be the appropriate name for the nascent journal? What kind of a name could be able to bear the essence and the

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mission of an institution like STFT St. Yohanes, which – *nota bene* – is a philosophical and theological institution?

It was “logos” that simply struck my mind. With a very simple reason, I proposed “logos” for the name of the journal. The idea behind the suggestion was very simple, namely, the logos is a subject of both philosophy and theology. It was so, the journal was born under the name “Logos”. I thought that my task had been over. In this third edition, however, the chief on board asked me to account for this very name in a form of reflection.

Logos, A Vast Domain of Meaning

First of all, one should acknowledge that it is not so easy to find out an exact equivalent of logos in other languages.¹ The reason to this difficulty would be the vast range of meaning contained in the word, logos. Just to give an idea for the vast domain of the meaning, one needs only to see its basic meaning etimologically.

It is always helpful to know the etymology of a term in order to have its panoramic world of meaning. Etimologically speaking, logos derives from Greek, lo,goj, which comes from verb le,gw² (*legō*). The basic meaning of the verb le,gw comprises: ‘to gather’, ‘to count’, ‘to enumerate’, ‘to narrate’, ‘to say’. From the verb yields the noun lo,goj signifying: ‘collection’, ‘counting’, ‘recognizing’, ‘calculation’, ‘consideration’, ‘evaluation’, ‘reflection’, ‘ground’, ‘condition’, ‘narrative’, ‘word’, ‘speech’.³ In these various and rich significations, one can find two lines of meaning: the meaning connected with *act of thinking* and the one pertained to *act of speaking*.

Logos containing act of thinking embraces everything related to reason, intelligence, mind, conception, science or any track that leads to thinking and reasoning. Through this line of meaning we gain a number of derivatives, such as: *logic* (logikh.: *a science thightly and closely connected to logos. The logic is the science of thinking rightly and correctly based on reason.*⁴), *biology* (bioj-lo,goj), *theology* (qeoj-lo,goj), *technology* (tecnh-

¹W.R. INGE, “Logos” in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, VIII, Edinburgh 1980, 133.

²It is a common use in grammar that Greek verb is presented with its *first personal* form le,gw (*I say*), but the meaning in translation is given in *to-infinitive* form (*to say*).

³DEBRUNNER, “le,gw, lo,goj, r`hma, lale,w” in KITTEL, G., ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, IV, Michigan 1985, 69-72; See also H.G. LIDDLE & R. SCOTT, *A Greek – English Lexicon*, Oxford 1968, 1057-1059.

⁴I. DI NAPOLI, *Manuale Philosophiae ad usum Seminariorum, Introductio Generalis: Logica – Cosmologia*, I, Italy: Marietti, 1955, 44: *Solutio problematis logici habetur per scientiam quae considerat ratiocinium (lo,goj) ac proinde appellatur scientia rationalis seu logica (logikh. episth,mh = scienza logica); et quia substantivum*

lo,goj), *geology* (gh/-lo,goj), *sylogism* (sun-logi,zomai: *deductive reasoning or conclusion drawn from premisses*), *catalogue* (kata-lo,goj: *list, enumeration based on a certain reason*), etc. The meaning prevailing on this line is science based on reason and thinking.

Everything that includes the real of this thought can be referred to adjectival form, *logical*. *Id est*, everything which is governed by rules of rightly and correctly reasoning or thinking. Contrary to this way of reasoning or thinking will be referred as *illogical*. A little bit different from *illogical* term, comes out *alogical* term. The term *alogical* is not a strict contrast to *logical*, but something that is foreign to reason, mind or thinking. Passion and sense, for example, are usually regarded as something foreign to reason, mind and thinking. They are beyond the boundary of reason, mind and thinking. They are not, however, *illogical*, but *alogical*.⁵

On the line of the act of speaking, *logos* approximately means “narrative”, “word”, “speech”, “a meaningful word”,⁶ or “meaningful statement”.⁷ In this frame we come to these word-derivations as: *monolog* (monoj-lo,goj), *dialog* (dia-lo,goj), *prolog* (pro-lo,goj), *epilog* (evpi-lo,goj), *apology* (avpo-loge,omai: *to speak in defense* → *defense*), *eulogy* (euv-loge,w: *to praise, bless* → *formal speech in praise of a dead person*), *homologous* (o`mo-le,gw): *to say the same, to agree, to correspond* → *same, agreeing, corresponding*), *elegy* (e; e; le,gw: *to say or to cry woe* → *lament, song of mourning*).⁸

Philosophy, Searching for the Ultimate Ground of All Reality

Due to his very nature and essence as rational being, human being has capacity to put everything into question. He puts into question about himself, “*Who am I?*” He asks critically the foundations of his capacity to know, “*What is the base of my knowledge?*” He questions everything that is, “*What is being?*” He looks for an answer, “*What could be the ultimate ground of all reality?*” etc. Human being searches for the ultimate ground of reality by transcending the reality, pulling his horizon beyond boundaries and going astray as vast as anything that is. A question arises, “Through which does human being search for the ultimate ground of all reality?”

(scientia) est commune omnibus scientiis, ipsum relinquitur, et remanet tantum adiectivum (logica) ad indicandam scientiam de ratiocinio. Logica ergo definitur: Scientia operationum intellectus (rationis) ad verum dirigendum.

⁵W. BRUGGER, *Philosophisches Wörterbuch*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1950, 183.

⁶BRUGGER, *Philosophisches ...*, 183.

⁷DEBRUNNER, “le,gw...,” 74.

⁸LIDDLE & SCOTT, *A Greek...*, 530.

From Myth to Logos, From Word to Word

The searching for the ultimate ground of all reality is undergone through 'word'. The English word 'word' meets its counterpart in Greek *mu/qoj* (*muthos*) and *lo,goj* (*logos*).

Originally, the basic meaning of myth *mu/qoj* (*muthos*) has nothing to do with phantasy, fabel, unhistoric story, untrue narrative. The basic meaning is thought.⁹ The thought, however, finds its outward manifestation through word, speech, conversation, story, narrative. In this sense myth gains meanings: word, speech, thing said, conversation, matter, tale, story, narrative. The verbal form of *mu/qoj* (myth) is *muqe,omai* (*mutheomai*) denoting 'to say', 'to tell', 'to converse', 'to narrate', etc.¹⁰ In fact, for Greeks thought and speech are identical.¹¹

So now, what is myth? Inferring from the analysis above, by myth human being seeks the ultimate ground of all reality through thought expressed in word, story and narrative. In this regard myth has no lesser value than logos. Truly, myth has its own rationality which brings its own truth where mystery and logos converge.¹² Myth is a total view on reality. It is an account of reality where the natural and the supernatural meet.¹³ Myth is a story that gives human being an image of world-view (*Weltanschauung*, *Weltzusammenhang*).¹⁴ In myth human being encounters the wholeness of reality.¹⁵ Myth narrates a holy 'history' to make present the original event of reality by recurring back to the beginning of time (*ab initio*). There human being comes into contact with mystery which reveals truth.¹⁶ Myth,

⁹STÄHLIN, "mu/qoj", in *Theological...*, 764.

¹⁰LIDDLE & SCOTT, *A Greek...*, 1151, klm. 1-2.

¹¹STÄHLIN, "mu/qoj", in *Theological...*, 766.

¹²BABOLIN, S., *Produzione di senso*, Roma 1999, 196. A questo punto risulta che non è giustificato relegare il mito ad uno stadio prelogico della cultura, ad un pensiero primitivo o infantile, poiché anche il mito contiene una verità, non chiaramente espressa in forme concettuali, sulla linea del dramma, della poesia e dell'arte in genere.... Ogni mito contiene quindi un nucleo originario di verità, un tema o messaggio centrale, un mitologèma o mitologhèma, che possiamo ritrovare anche in altri miti della stessa cultura o di diverse culture. Sulla verità convergono il mito, il logos e il mistero....

¹³STÄHLIN, "mu/qoj", in *Theological...*, 764.

¹⁴BRUGGER, *Philosophisches...*, 202-203.

¹⁵ADELBERTUS a Raamsdonk, *Mythe und Denken: Eine ethnologisch-philosophische Betrachtung über die Eigenart des primitiven Denkens auf Grund mythischer Gestaltungen indonesischer Naturvölker*, (dissertation), Romae 1957, 131. In der Mythe handelt es sich um eine Auseinandersetzung von Geist und Welt, 'eine Urbegegnung von dem totalen menschlichen Person mit der gesamten Wirklichkeit'.

¹⁶ELIADE, M., *Das Heilige und das Profane vom Wesen des Religiösen*, Hamburg 1957, 56. Der Mythos erzählt eine heilige Geschichte, als ein uranfängliches Ereignis, das am Anbeginn der Zeit, *ab initio*, stattgefunden hat. Eine heilige Geschichte

accordingly, is not mere a story, a fiction, a thing said. It goes beyond them, reaching truth and the holy. It is the ground of life. In this regard myth and philosophy are closely connected.¹⁷ When myth is narrated the beginning of reality is made present here and now. It makes the Real *par excellence*, the Holy One available. Myth, therefore, truly gives an answer to the searching of the ultimate ground of reality. Here we meet a very close parallel of myth and ontology.¹⁸

In the course of time, however, the basic meaning of the myth – *thought, meaningful statement in story or narrative* – shades off. It happens when the Attic associates and links *logos* (logos) to *alētheia* (truth) and *mythos* (myth) to *pseudos* (pseudonimity or falsehood). Hence *logos* gains the meaning, *true story* in opposition to myth, *false story*.¹⁹ In a more technical expression, myth is an invented or not very well established history in contrast to *logos* as a rationally established and constructed speech.²⁰ Later, on the ground of religious doctrines, the New Testament contributes to the shading off myth by repudiating it as error or false doctrine in connection to christian faith.²¹ This negative notion is inherited up to our modern time when R. Bultmann, for instance, proposes his famous ‘*dictum*’ of *Entmythologisierung* in dealing with the New Testament. It is this time – according to philosophical manuals – the birth-

erzählen, bedeutet aber soviel wie ein Mysterium enthüllen, denn die Personen des Mythos sind keine menschlichen Wesen; sie sind Götter oder kulturbringende Heroen, und deshalb bilden ihre *Taten* Mysterien, die der Mensch nicht erfahren könnte, wenn sie ihm nicht enthüllt würden. Der Mythos ist also die Geschichte von dem, was sich *in illo tempore* zugetragen hat, der Bericht über das, was die Götter und die Heroen am Anbeginn der Zeit getan haben. Einen Mythos (sagen), heißt verkünden, was *ab origine* geschehen ist. Sobald der Mythos einmal (gesagt) d. h., enthüllt worden ist, wird er zur unumstößlichen Wahrheit: er gründet die absolute Wahrheit.

¹⁷ADELBERTUS, *Mythe...*, 132-313. ‘Mythe ist Dichtung, aber sie ist mehr’. Es ist wahr, dass der Wert eines Gedichtes steigt je mehr es über die tieferen und letzten Wirklichkeiten etwas auszusagen hat.... Mythe ist Lebensbegründung.... Die Mythe ist im Denken der Primitiven ist nur wahr und heilig, in soweit und solange sie als lebenswichtig erfahren wird und von ihr her das Leben und die kultischen Formen von Sinn erfüllt werden.... Dieses Element, der lebensgründende Sinn, verbindet die ‘Mythe’ mit der ‘Philosophie’.

¹⁸ELIADE, *Das Heilige...*, 56. Der Mythos verkündet das Erscheinen einer neuen kosmischen (Situation) oder eines uranfänglichen Ereignisses. Er ist also immer der Bericht von einer (Schöpfung); man erzählt, wie etwas ausgeführt wurde, wie es *zu sein* begann. Aus diesem Grund steht der Mythos in engem Zusammenhang mit der Ontologie; er spricht nur von *Realitäten*, von dem was sich *real* ereignet, sich voll manifestiert hat. Natürlich handelt es sich um heilige Realitäten, denn das Heilig ist das *Reale par excellence*.

¹⁹STÄHLIN, “mu/qoj”, in *Theological...*, 770.

²⁰DEBRUNNER, “le,gw...”, 74.

²¹STÄHLIN, “mu/qoj”, in *Theological...*, 779.

day of philosophy, when lo,goj wins over mu/qoj, that is, when rationality surpasses irrationality: Philosophy is born!

Now then, what is philosophy? Amid various definitions given by some philosophers, one can say that the philosophy is a rational science on reality in its ultimate principles.²² Rationality is, therefore, the essence of the philosophy. Careful attention, however, should be paid to the meaning of 'rational' here, since it does not mean rationality as we understand in our modern way of thinking, but it is a term which is opposed strictly to revealed knowledge.²³ Philosophy is a searching for the ultimate ground of reality by logos, reason and mind.

Heraclitus "Coining Logos"

In the philosophical field, the beginning of the searching for the ultimate ground of reality goes back to the-so-called ancient greek philosophy, pre-socratic period. The Ionian philosophers are engaged to find out what would be the ground of all things, arch, (*archē*). Three great *genii* of Greek, *Thales*, *Anaximenes* and *Anaximander*, who are predecessors of Heraclitus, give answers to the question: *water, air, undetermined material* respectively.²⁴

Heraclitus, on his part, proposes fire as the ultimate ground of reality. In his opinion, everything is in eternally moving or becoming.²⁵ Every thing is in moving, *pa,nta r`ei/ (panta rhei)*. "We cannot plung down twice into the same water of a stream", he once illustrates. This impossibility comes due to the *being-always-moving* of the water.

Now, if all things are in a state of flux, is there still something which remains unchanged? If there is nothing remaining stable, that would be an *contradictio in terminis*. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that Heraclitus means to teach that there is nothing which changes, for this is contradicted by the rest of his philosophy.²⁶ Since all things are in state of flowing, all are in becoming, in this state of becoming, all realities are in battle, one in opposition to other. The battle is the source of diversity of

²²DI NAPOLI, *Manuale Philosophiae...*, 28. Ex iis quae praecedenter dicta sunt 'philosophia' definiri potest: 'Scientia rationalis rerum per supremas causas' (scienza razionale della realtà nei suoi principi supremi).

²³DI NAPOLI, *Manuale Philosophiae...*, 29: *Rationalis*. Philosophia non fundatur supra revelationem, Dei vel hominum, sed supra rationem.

²⁴DI NAPOLI, *Manuale ...*, 19.

²⁵GENY, P., *Brevis Conspectus Historiae Philosophiae*, Romae 1932, 44. Omnia esse in perpetuo *fieri*, proinde in perpetuo *fluxu*, nihil stare in mundo, iam a veteribus Ioniis assertum fuerat; sed insisti adhuc magis Heraclitus, illam veritatem expressionibus imaginibusque vividis extollens: Omnia fluunt; non bis in eodem flumine immergimur; mundus est quasi mixtura semper agitata.

²⁶COPELSTON, F., *A History of Philosophy*, I, New York 1993, 39.

realities. To this point, it is Heraclitus' contribution to present the conception of “*unity in diversity, difference in unity*”. The conflict of opposites is essential to the being of the one.²⁷ Resuming from this thought, Heraclitus comes to a conclusion that reality is one, and at the same time is many.²⁸

But how could the reality be one and at the same time many? The being-eternally-moving and becoming of everything originates from the fire. In Heraclitus' opinion the essence of all things is fire. If reality is always in state of flux and the world is constantly in battle, the flux and the battle could be of principal energy or force which causes everything in moving, striving and struggling. Such principal energy or force must be the fire, since the very existence of the fire depends on this ‘*strife*’ and ‘*tension*’.²⁹ There is nothing without modification of the fire.³⁰ Now, if all realities are in state of constant moving, there should be at least something to be stable nature in this world. The world, as Heraclitus maintains, is “an ever-living Fire, with measures of it kindling and measures going out”.³¹ It is not merely reality or thing, but animated reality. It is divine and author of all things.³²

The stability of all things depends on different measures of Fire, kindling or going out in more or less different proportions. If the proportions are not stable, the things are always in tension and moving. This is the very nature of worldly realities. Heraclitus, however, thinks that there should be something which has such stable proportions. It is the One. In the One there is no tension, strife and moving. All tensions and difference are reconciled and harmonised. This One is God. For God there is no fair and unfair, here and there, now and then. God is the universal Reason (Lo,goj) who governs reality; universal law immanent in all things.³³

Stoicism, Adopting and Developing Heraclitus

Stoicism adopts and develops what has been proposed by Heraclitus in regard to logos. In this philosophical school one finds a tractate on logos within the frame of discussion on world.

²⁷COPLESTON, *A History ...*, 40.

²⁸COPLESTON, *A History ...*, 40.

²⁹COPLESTON, *A History ...*, 41.

³⁰GENY, *Brevis Conspectus...*, 44-45. Sub illo tamen perpetuo fluxu affirmat Heraclitus *unicum* dari *principium materiale*, nempe *ignem*: res diversae non sunt nisi ignis modificationes (puro.j tropai.).

³¹COPLESTON, *A History...*, 41.

³²GENY, *Brevis Conspectus...*, 44-45. Ignis est *vivens, intelligens* (inest in eo ratio, lo,goj), deus, rerum artifex. Eius partes inter se pugnant, sed haec discordia quae separat, facit ut oriantur novi complexus, et inde resultat harmonia, fluxus vitalis: “Bellum omnium parens est omniumque rex”.

³³COPLESTON, *A History...*, 41.

According to the Stoicism, in inrahuman world – in anorganic stratum particularly – as once Aristotle has stated, there are four elements which are correspondent to four primary qualities and each element tends to refer back to its own natural *locus*. All the elements, however, can be reduced into one, fire.³⁴

To this philosophical view, the world is something animated whose soul is god. The god is identified with fire, even sometimes, with sun which should be adored as its symbol. It is intelligent being; it is Reason (Lo,goj) difussing every where. It is Fire the Author (*Ignis Artifex*), as once Heraclitus explains. From god spring out “*seminal reasons*” (lo,goi spermatikoi: *logoi spermatikoi*) hidden in reality. The seminal reasons guide the evolution of being. This god, which is the fire, is the source of all things and to which all will return.³⁵ It is fire which pervades and put everything in order.³⁶

Plotinus Inheriting Heraclitus and Stoicism

Plotinus was one of pioniers of neo-Platonism. The neo-platonism is a compact system, the center of which is God or the One,³⁷ who is the God?³⁸ In Plotinus’ philosophy, accordingly, the key-word is the One. The One is God who transcends everything. “He is the One beyond all thought and all being, ineffable and incomprehensible”.³⁹ This One, however, cannot be reduced to monism as in Parmenides’ concept. It is the source of multiplicity and prwtoj qeoj (*prōtos theos*: first deity).⁴⁰ Out of the One emanate three “entities”: ‘*Nous*’ (*Intellect or Word*), ‘*Soul, Materia*’.

The first one is ‘*Nous*’ which is the source or cause of everything (path,r to/u aitiou: *patēr tou aitiou*). It is o` ko,smoj nohto,j (*ho kosmos noētos*) or

³⁴COPLESTON, *A History...*, 105. In *corporibus anorganicis*, Stoici agnoscunt, ut Aristoteles, quattuor elementa, quae correspondent quattuor qualitibus primariis, et tendunt unumquodque versus locum suum naturalem; sed reducunt omnia ad *ignem*, in statu maioris vel minoris tensionis. Ignis, seu spiritus (lo,goj), omnia penetrat, omnia producit.

³⁵COPLESTON, *A History...*, 105. Omnia ex igne ortum habent et in ignem redibunt; hic mundus incendio peribit; postea alius formabitur, et ita porro.

³⁶BOYER, C., *Cursus Philosophiae ad Usus Seminariorum*, I, Parisiis 1950, 22. Deumque ipsum ad modum ignis cuiusdam concipiebant; at Providentiam extollebant: Deus est ratio (lo,goj) quae omnia pervadit et ordinat omnia; quemdam amorem omnium hominum laudaverunt.

³⁷BOYER, *Cursus...*, 25. Unum est principium supremum, supra omnem essentiam, supra ens, ex quo naturaliter omnia quasi ex fonte ditissimo, secundum diversos gradus multiplicatis, procedunt.

³⁸NAPOLI, *Manuale...*, 29.

³⁹COPLESTON, *A History...*, 464.

⁴⁰COPLESTON, *A History...*, 464.

ideal world or universe because it exists only in mind, *nous*.⁴¹ It is the source of multiplicity, because the One Itself is above all multiplicity. It is eternal and beyond time;⁴² a perfect image whom Plotinus may call, the highest God.⁴³ Why does one call that *Nous* is the source of multiplicity? Due to its being-perfect, it is impossible to penetrate the *Nous*. In order to be penetrable and comprehensible, the *Nous* produces multiple ideas which belong to intelligible domain. It contains Ideas or intelligible things bearing all kind of multiplicity.⁴⁴ “In *Nous* exist the Ideas, not only of classes but also of individuals, though the whole multitude of Ideas is contained indivisibly in *Nous*.”⁴⁵

Out of the *Nous* emerges the second one, ‘Soul’ – more precisely – World-Soul (*Anima Mundi*)⁴⁶, as once articulated by Plato in his *Timaeus*. It is the principle of incorporeal and indivisible world. In a certain way, it serves as a *medium* or a connecting link between the super-sensual world and the sensual one. That means, the Soul links both the *Nous* and the world of nature.⁴⁷ The Soul is the principle of living for everything.⁴⁸ Being incorporeal and immaterial, it is the Soul who penetrates any corporeal entity and gives it, therefore, capacity of living. The capacity of living – better, the being-living of corporeal entity – is what one may call ‘single soul’ (*anima*). Every single soul participates in the Soul. Put in another way, every single soul would be a part of the World-Soul.⁴⁹ This World-Soul (*Anima Mundi*) shares its ‘own being’ with corporeal world. It is here

⁴¹C.K. BARRETT, ed., *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents*, New York 1961, 184.

⁴²BARRETT, *The New ...*, 467.

⁴³GENY, *Brevis...*, 124-125. Ex Uno procedit *Intellectus*, qui est eius imago perfecta, qui fit actu intelligens, dum ad Unum se convertit; at, cum non possit illud perfecte intelligere, producit in se multitudinem Idearum, quae mundum intelligibilem constituunt. Saepae vocat Plotinus Intellectum Iovem, Deum summum.

⁴⁴BOYER, *Cursus...*, 25. Intellectus seu Verbum procedit ab Uno, et se conterens ad suum principium constituit mundum Idearum seu intelligibilem, iam aliquo modo multiplicem.

⁴⁵COPELSTON, *A History...*, 467.

⁴⁶GENY, *Brevis...*, 125. Ex Intellectu procedit *Anima* universalis, seu Anima mundi, quae est ipse demiurgus Platonis. Haec Anima est ad Intellectum id quod Intellectum ad Unum; convertendo se ad Ideas quae sunt in intellectu, ipsa fit actu intelligens, et apta ad producendas Idearum imagines quae corpora constituunt.

⁴⁷GENY, *Brevis...*, 468.

⁴⁸NAPOLI, *Manuale...*, 29. ..., *anima mundi* omnia vivificans.

⁴⁹BOYER, *Cursus...*, 25. Ex Intellectu procedit Anima, minus una, magis distinctione spiritali dispersa, quae ad materiam transit similitudinem quamdam diffundat.... Singulae animae sunt quasi partes Animae, quae, si insipientes sunt, ad seipsas convertuntur....”

Plotinus meets Heraclitus and Stoicism when he calls these souls, logos, spermatikoi, who take participation in logos.

At the ultimate row of the emanation, comes out *Matter* or material world, *materia* corresponding to Aristotelian material objects, *hylē*.⁵⁰ The *materia* should be distinguished from corporeal entity, for it has negative existence rather than positive one. It is most imperfect, non-being rather than being, root of the evil⁵¹ and barren, but capable to receive form.⁵² “Below the sphere of Soul is that of material world. In accord with his conception of the emanative process as radiation of light, Plotinus pictures light as proceeding from the centre and passing outwards, growing gradually dimmer, until it shades off into that total darkness which is matter-in-itself, conceived as the privation of light, as *sterēsis*.”⁵³

Jewish Logos, Theological and Philosophical Traits

Apart from the Jewish biblical ‘Word of God’, the concept of Logos could be found in Jewish theological and philosophical traits as well. To this domain we have biblical sources and philosophical tractates. There one may find a bridging – or perhaps more suitable, a mixing – philosophical and theological Logos.

Even though one might have found root of ‘theological reflection’ in Greek philosophy - by identifying Logos with God for instance – in our strict understanding of theology – however, the theological content of the term should be pursued in biblical passages.

Biblical Logos, From Word to Wisdom

It is true that one may not find an equivalent counterpart of Greek-logos in Hebrew Bible. Yet, it does not imply that “logos-conception” is absent in Hebrew thought.

To begin with, we may have recourse to an expression of *hwh ybrd* (*dābār YHWH*); literally means ‘word of the Lord’. According to Hebrew thought this ‘*dābār YHWH*’ contains an idea of self-revealing God. God reveals Himself through creation, *providentia divina* and revelation. A perfect *medium* of the self-revealing act would be His Word. God’s Word conveys a creative power: “Then God said, ‘Let there be...’; and there

⁵⁰COPLESTON, *A History...*, 469.

⁵¹BOYER, *Cursus...*, 25. *Materia, quamquam a primo procedit, est extra res divinas, est principium mali.*

⁵²GENY, *Brevis...*, 125. *Ultimo ex Anima mundi procedit materia, ens maxime imperfectum, potius non-ens quam ens, radix mali, infocundum, attamen capax recipiendi formas.*

⁵³COPLESTON, *A History...*, 469.

was....” (Gn 1:1-2:4a). God is present by His creative Word, His authoritative utterance.

Within the biblical passages one may trace a tendency to personify the act of self-revealing God. God’s Word is not only an utterance, a spoken thing, but also a ‘representative’ of God Himself. When prophets claim: “The word of the Lord came unto me” (Is 8:5; Jr 1:4; Ez 3:16; Am 7:8; 8:2; Hos 3:1), it does not simply mean that the prophets just hear the word of the Lord, but they have contact with Him who speaks. Through the Word the prophets encounter a personal God. The personification of God’s Word is more clearly depicted as prophets and psalmists state that God’s words will never return in vain (Is 55:10-12); are upright and faithful (Ps 33:4); heal and deliver (Ps 107: 20); melt Israelites (Ps 147:18). Differing from Greek way of thinking, however, Hebrew Bible makes such a personification through a poetical expression rather than a metaphysical reflection.⁵⁴

In the Hebrew Bible one can meet personification of God’s activity, such as in Angel, the Name, the Glory of God, God’s Dwelling in His temple,⁵⁵ etc. But there is an outstanding figure which prevails all other personifications, Wisdom.

Within the so called ‘Sapiential Books’ we meet a tendency where Wisdom seems to displace Word.⁵⁶ In the book of Job the wisdom means the hidden purposes which God is working in human existence. The book of Proverbs expresses that the wisdom is she who stands at the corner of streets to invite people to follow her path (Pv 1:20-21). She (the wisdom) is pre-existent. In Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom of Solomon, the wisdom is depicted in a way Stoicism and Platonism describe. There, “Wisdom is immanent in God, belonging to the divine essence, and yet existing in quasi-independence side by side with God.”⁵⁷ The wisdom – in Hebrew *hmkx* (*ḥokmâ*) – corresponds to Greek *logos* which is parallel to Hebrew *rbd* (*dābār*), word, as well. Yet, it seems that the Wisdom appears as more personal than the Word. Such a personal depict of Wisdom could be

⁵⁴ INGE, “Logos” in *Encyclopaedia...*, 135.

⁵⁵ L. BOUYER, *Le quatrième évangile: Introduction à l'évangile de Jean, traduction et commentaire*, Tournai 1958, 40. Très tôt les Hébreux on eu le sentiment que l’unité et la simplicité de Dieu n’étaient pas exclusives d’une certaine diversité. Qu’il y eût en Lui comme un visage particulièrement tourné vers le monde leur apparaissait plus ou moins confusé et nous en trouvons la trace dans plusieurs autres notions mystérieuses de l’Ancien Testament, toujours liées à la Parole. C’est le “Nom” du Seigneur. C’est son “Ange” qui accompagne les Israélites dans leurs pérégrinations et qui semble tantôt se confondre avec Dieu, tantôt s’en distinguer. C’est la “Gloire” de Dieu qui se répand parfois sur les choses. C’est sa “Demeure” dans le temple.

⁵⁶ INGE, “Logos ...”, 135.

⁵⁷ INGE, “Logos ...”, 135.

seen throughout Pr 8.⁵⁸ In Sir 24:3 and Wis 9 Word and Wisdom are linked closely as to express Logos.⁵⁹

Jewish Philosophical Logos

In the area of Hebrew philosophical traits, Philo must be mentioned. In Philo one can meet the “encounter” of Greek philosophical thought and Hebrew biblical expression of faith. “Philo not only blends Greek and Jewish ideas about the Logos; he achieves a syncretism of divergent Greek conception.”⁶⁰ Philo’s Logos, in fact, should be understood according to Platonic ideas and Stoic universal causality. By doing so Philo tries to conceive Hebrew God in a hellenistic way without ceasing to believe in the Old Testament Yahweh. Putting it in another way, Philo is a Jew who thinks hellenistically but never ceases to be Jew.⁶¹

The peak of Philo’s thought could be resumed in his understanding on God and Ideas. Similar to Stoicism, Philo acknowledges that God is transcendent, ineffable. He is Pure Being (to. o;ntwj o;n: *to ontōs on*), but at the same time, immanent as well. He is absolutely transcendent, going beyond even the Idea.⁶² Such a God cannot be contaminated by worldly things. In this Philo’s conception, accordingly, it is impossible for God to lower Himself down as human-being or to the level of human world.⁶³

Following Platonic philosophy, Philo states that God needs *intermedia* which are Ideas, in order to communicate with world. It is these Ideas that create intelligible world (ko,smoj nohto,j: *kosmos noētos*). Within the Ideas emerges what one may call *Verbum Dei*, Logos.⁶⁴ Philo identifies the Logos

⁵⁸BOUYER, *Le quatrième...*, 41.

⁵⁹BOUYER, *Le quatrième...*, 43.

⁶⁰INGE, “Logos ...”, 135.

⁶¹BARRETT, *The New...*, 172.

⁶²GENY, *Brevis...*, 120. *De Deo*. Ut transcendentiam Dei in tuto ponat, Philo affirmat eum esse *ineffabilem*, id est, nullo nomine posse vocari quod perfectionem aliquam in creaturis repertam exprimat (potius vocandus esset superbonus, superpulcher, etc.), imo prorsus *indeterminatum*, nam “Omnis determinatio negatio quaedam est”. Attamen ipse Philo plura attributa de eo demonstrat, v.g. quod sit immutabilis, aeternus, summe beatus, nullius indigens, summe simplex, iustus, misericors, omnia sciens, etc.

⁶³BOUYER, *Le quatrième...*, 44.

⁶⁴GENY, *Brevis...*, 120. *De Ideis*. Ne Deus polluaturo immediato cum rebus contactu, adsunt *intermedia*, nempe Ideae. Hae formant “mundum intelligibilem”; modo plures, modo pauciores a Philone ponuntur; inter eas eminet illa quae *Verbum Dei dicitur* (lo,gos), quae modo ut prima Idearum, modo ut ipsa Idearum collectio affertur. Ideae sunt vires seu instrumenta quibus Deus utitur ad agendum extra se. Philo videtur eas a Deo realiter distinguere; sed cum eas *irradiationem* Dei dicat, non improbabiler iam apud eum later germen Pantheismi emanativi.

with *intermediary* between God and the world. It means that the logos is neither God nor creation, but in between. Philonic logos, therefore, is not God and at the same time cannot incarnate, for it would be contrary to its very nature⁶⁵ – being in between God and human being. Putting it in Philo's utterance, the logos is he who stands between God and human being. Standing in such a position, the logos becomes a suppliant, intercessor for human being.⁶⁶ To express this complicated status of the logos, Philo has to borrow theological paraphrase: He is the principle of revelation; the first born Son of God; the Man who is the immediate image of God, the prototypal Man in whose image all other men are created; image of God, even the 'second God'.⁶⁷

Adopting Stoic thought regarding logos, Philo distinguishes two kinds of logos: *lo,goj evndiaqetoj* (*logos endiathetos*: immanent word or the faculty of reason itself) and *lo,goj proforiko,j* (*logos prophorikos*: expressed word or reason). The immanent logos is inward word or reason. It is mind or *nous*. The spoken word is outward manifestation of logos. When the *nous* is understood as the creator of all things – therefore *logos prophorikos* – it is intended as divine word.⁶⁸ When God creates everything by His Word, in Philo's way of thinking, such word is *logos prophorikos*. The *logos prophorikos* then belongs to God.

Christian Logos, Johanne Logos

VEn avrch/| h=n o` lo,goj(kai. o` lo,goj h=n pro.j to.n qeo,n(kai. qeo.j h=n o` lo,goj ou-toj h=n evn avrch/| pro.j to.n qeo,n pa,nta diV aurtou/ evge,neto(kai. cwri.j aurtou/ evge,neto ouvde. e[n o] ge,gonen....

Kai. o` lo,goj sa.rx evge,neto kai. evskh,nwsen evn h`mi/n(kai. evqeasa,meqa th.n do,xan aurtou/(do,xan w`j monogenou/j para. patro,j(plh,rhj ca,ritoj kai. avlhqei,aj

in principio erat Verbum et Verbum erat apud Deum et Deus erat Verbum hoc erat in principio apud Deum omnia per ipsum facta sunt et sine ipso factum est nihil quod factum est....

et Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis et vidimus gloriam eius gloriam quasi unigeniti a Patre plenum gratiae et veritatis.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made....

⁶⁵BOUYER, *Le quatrième...*, 44.

⁶⁶BARRET, *The New...*, 184-185.

⁶⁷R. SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel according to St. John*. Translator Kevin Smith from *Das Johannesevangelium* (Teil 1) I, London 1967, 486; See also COPLESTON, *A History...*, 460.

⁶⁸BARRETT, *The New...*, 183.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

Solemn Logos-Hymn

Now, our reflection on the Logos comes into its peak in the Gospel of John. Through the solemnly opening verses, John the Evangelist commences his Gospel with an 'eagle perspective' on Logos. In fact, the Gospel of John – in christian tradition – is represented by eagle. By the eagle perspective, John treats his Logos in such a way to present Him as God who becomes Man.

In the prologue of his Gospel, John provides three fundamental constataions regarding Logos, namely: His anteriority to created world, His existence with God, His participation in divine nature.⁶⁹

By constructing his prologue in such a way, John wishes to make an allusion to Genesis 1. It is clearly expressed by VEn avrch/| (*en archē*: in the beginning). The phrase 'in the beginning' seems to refer to Genesis' tyviareB. (*b^ere'sit*: in the beginning). By this expression Johannine Logos is thrown back to the very beginning of everything. Similar to the meaning of tyviareB. in Gen 1, the VEn avrch/| of the John's prologue should be understood not primarily in temporal meaning, but in principal one. By principal meaning one intends that the 'in the beginning' is an expression of point of departure as cause. The Logos is the cause of everything and prior to everything. He is pre-existent.⁷⁰ In fact, the word avrch/| in Greek signifies 'beginning, source, origin, first principle, element, etc.'⁷¹

The second idea pertaining to the prologue is the existence of Logos with God. Exegetically speaking, the construction of o` lo,goj h=n pro.j to.n qeo,n (the Word was 'with' God) has a peculiarity. The peculiarity lies on the use of preposition pro.j (*pros*). Common preposition parallel to English preposition 'with' would be para, (*para*). There must be an intention by the author to choose the given preposition. The intention expressed by the diction would be the closeness, intimacy and contact between God and the Word.⁷² It is true that the Word differs from God Himself, but at the same time they have an intimate union, special contact one with another. The Greek phrase pro.j to.n qeo,n, 'with God' – the subtlety of which

⁶⁹M.J. LAGRANGE, *Évangile selon S. Jean*, Paris 1927, 2.

⁷⁰LAGRANGE, *Évangile...*, 2.

⁷¹LIDDLE & SCOTT, *A Greek...*, 252, col. 1.

⁷²LAGRANGE, *Évangile...*, 2. En réalité le Logos est d'une certaine façon distinct de Dieu, puisqu'il est auprès de lui dans une union très intime. On prétend que pro.j ne signifie pas autre chose que para,, pour répondre à la question: auprès de qui est-il? Il semble cependant qu'il y a une nuance et que pro.j exprime spécialement qu'on se tient proche d'une personne, et para, qu'on habite ensemble..., c'est-à-dire que pro.j indique mieux un contact.

unfortunately cannot be contained sufficiently and fully by translation – connotes a nearness of persons.⁷³ In other words, no one is closer to God than the Word.⁷⁴ Logos is a distinct person.

The third constatation emerging from the prologue about Logos is His participation in divine nature: *qeo.j h=n o` lo,goj, the Word 'was' God*. Even though the Logos differs from God, yet He shares the divine nature of God. He is God. The evangelist tries to make clear his point. Johannine Logos is neither Greek *logos*-reason (faculty of reason, mind, impersonal cosmic order, divine intelligence), nor Hebrew God's words in the mouths of prophets (words outside God), but personal God. This 'paradoxical' nature of the Logos – He is God but not identical with God – is indicated through grammatical form. "In Greek the word of God, *theos*, is always used with the definite article when it refers to God the Father, *o theos* [sic].⁷⁵ When Greek wishes to express divinity it can use an adjective, *theion*, or it can choose to hold a middle position and use the noun *theos*, but without the article. In this way the author speaks of the Word as being as close to God as possible but does not completely identify the two."⁷⁶

The Word Becoming Flesh

Having reflected deeply on the divine character of the Logos – His pre-existence, dwelling with God and His divine nature – the evangelist comes to the peak of his reflection by turning his eyes down to see the Logos who becomes human being and dwells with man. The reflection reaches its culminating⁷⁷ point as the evangelist constatate that *o` lo,goj sa.rx evge,neto kai. evskh,nwsen evn h`mi/n, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*. Out of this simple statement two fundamental things would be worthy of consideration.

o` lo,goj sa.rx evge,neto: The Word 'became' flesh, resumes the whole mystery of incarnation. The mystery of the incarnation becomes a distinctive feature of Johannine Logos compared to both Greek philosophical *logos* and Jewish wisdom speculation. To this belongs a great number of expositions trying to pin point the origin and nature of Johannine concept of the Logos.⁷⁸

⁷³J.F. O'GRADY, *According to John: The Witness of the Beloved Disciple*, New York 1999, 60.

⁷⁴O'GRADY, *According ...*, 60.

⁷⁵There might be a mistyping in this transliteration. If one wants to provide transliteration for *o` qeo.j* it should be *ho theos*.

⁷⁶O'GRADY, *According ...*, 60-61.

⁷⁷O'GRADY, *According ...*, 60-61.

⁷⁸Due to limited purpose of this article, I am not going to enter the discussion of scholars regarding the origin and the nature of Johannine Logos. In order to have an idea for that matter R. Schnackenburg provides a sufficient and critically analysed exposition in his *Excursus I*. See SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel...*, 481-493.

The Johannine Logos differs from Heraclitus' logos, where logos is represented as a determinate structure of thought, intelligible unity of being.⁷⁹ There is not any hint showing that the logos is personal as found in Johannine Logos. The same can be applied to the logos of Stoicism. There we meet that the logos is rationality of universe, order of universe corresponding to moral attitude of man ορθοῦ λόγου (*orthos logos*: genuine logos). This stoic logos penetrates and sustains world, universe. It is by the virtue of the logos that the world becomes a cosmos, namely, a well-ordered world and a harmonious whole. Here one finds a very positive character of the world. In John, on the contrary, the world is depicted rather negatively. It is always in opposition to the Logos.⁸⁰

The peculiarity of Johannine Logos appears even in comparison to the Old Testament theology of 'Word of God' or Jewish Wisdom speculation. In the theology of 'Word of God' the logos is paralleled to creative words of God during the creation, God's words proclaimed by prophets and God's words found in Law (Torah) [Ps 119:38,41,105]. The logos of this theology, however, is not personal. Such a real personification of the Logos seems peculiar to John. This theology may have influenced John in his reflecting on the Logos but indirectly.⁸¹ Similar to the problem of the theology of 'Word of God', the Jewish Wisdom speculation should be put aside as a direct factor for John in constructing his Logos theology. It is true that the Jewish Wisdom speculation has a very close affinity to Johannine Logos. The personification of Wisdom, her pre-existent and divine nature would lead us to conclude that John might have adopted the Jewish Wisdom speculation to build his solemn logos-hymn directly. Even though such affinity is outstanding, yet it is still unclear why John does not maintain the term 'wisdom' and choose 'logos' instead. Truly, in the philosophy of Philo appears the idea of personification of the logos, but its very nature remains ambiguous being a intermediary abiding between God and the world. In the Philonic doctrine of the Logos there is no reference to an historic man.⁸² To resume, personal character, real personal pre-existence and incarnation are obscure in Jewish Wisdom speculation in comparison to Johannine Logos where God becomes human being.⁸³ It lays here the point which distinguishes Johannine Logos from other prior doctrines on logos.⁸⁴

⁷⁹SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel...*, 482.

⁸⁰SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel...*, 482.

⁸¹SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel...*, 483.

⁸²COPLESTON, *A History...*, 459.

⁸³SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel...*, 481, 483.

⁸⁴J. ZINK, *Erfahrung mit Gott: Einübung in den christlichen Glauben*, Stuttgart 1974, 172. Logos aber ist Geist, ist Helligkeit und Lebendigkeit des Geistes, ist Maß und Klarheit. Logos ist lebensschaffende, lebenausdrückende, lebenverwandelnde Kraft. Logos ist das, was die Welt verstehbar macht, deutbar, durch-scheinend auf Wahrheit

Logos, Transcendent and Immanent

evskh,nwsen evn h`mi/n: [*The Word*] dwelt among us, strengthens the affirmation articulated in the preceding verse, *the Word becomes flesh*. Despite a lack of grammatical parallelism, here does appear a parallelism of idea concerning “*Logos who is ‘with’ God*” and “*Logos who is ‘among’ human being*”. This idea is paired with “*Logos ‘is God’*” and at the same time “*Logos ‘becomes human being’*”. Johannine Logos, therefore, is transcendent and immanent; an idea which is obscure in other doctrines of logos so far.

An Old Testament tradition lays behind the expression evskh,nwsen evn h`mi/n. Literally rendered, the sentence would sound [*the Word*] pitched [*His*] tent among us. The verb evskh,nwsen comes from skhne,w (*skēneō*) or skhna,w (*skēnaō*): to pitch tent (h` sknh,; hē skēnē: tent, booth).⁸⁵ The imagery is reminiscent of God who takes His dwelling in tabernacle.⁸⁶ This biblical imagery reminds us to nomadic way of life (Jdg. 8:11). The nomads transport their tents pitching them here and there. The idea behind this biblical depict would be a transitory character of human life. The verb evskh,nwsen meets its counterpart in Hebrew verb !kv (*šākēn* or *šākan*: to settle down, abide, dwell).⁸⁷ As the Old Testament God (YHWH) takes His dwelling among His chosen people (see Ex 40:1-38; cf. also 1 Kgs 8:1-66), the Logos puts His tents, descends to live, among His own. God who becomes Man is present among human being. A close affinity to the expression could be referred to Wisdom as she pitches her tent: “Then the Creator of all things gave me a command, and my Creator chose the place for my tent.” (Sir 24:8). Such God’s presence is intimate to human being due to the abiding ‘among us’.⁸⁸

Summing up from our discussion so far, we can safely say that Logos is transcendent and immanent. He is God who becomes human being. In Him divinity and humanity – *visa versa* – encounter fully, perfectly and completely! Yes, in order to be a full and perfect mediator between God and human being, Logos has to become fully and perfectly divine and human.

hin. Logos ist Offenbarung, die im Wort geschieht, aber Logos ist auch Offenbarung in einem Bild oder in einem Menschen. Logos ist der Sprechende, sich offenbarende Gott.

⁸⁵LIDDLE & SCOTT, *A Greek...*, 1608, col. 1.

⁸⁶O’GRADY, *According ...*, 63.

⁸⁷F. BROWN, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English-Lexicon*, Peabody, Massachusetts 1996, 1014, col. 1.

⁸⁸LAGRANGE, *Évangile...*, 21.

Concluding Remarks

Having discussed our topic, what could we offer as concluding remarks? This article is entitled with, '*Logos: Encounter of the Divine and the Human*'. Through this descriptive presentation, we have tried to make clear that the Logos is the subject of Philosophy and Theology. In the philosophical domain, the logos is understood as 'something' bridging God and world; an *intermediary* in between. It is cosmic intelligence, principle of unity, world's well-ordered, single soul pervading reality, etc. Although philosophy gives hints to personal character of the logos, we are not sure, however, if the logos is truly personal. It is in the Gospel of John that we do find the Logos as personal God, Jesus Christ: God who becomes human being. In Him God encounters human being. In Him the Divine and the human meets together. Logos is our scientific journal in which also the theological subject (divine pursuing) and the philosophical inquiry (human efforts) come to encounter. '*Ut ephemeris nostra – Logos – crescat et floriat!*'

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