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ETERNAL DESIGN-MYSTERY: THE SIMULTANEITY OF INSPECTION[1]

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SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND THE COSMOS

If the human soul is level of the nature in which the cosmos arrives to have knowledge of itself, the original ontological Whole appears in the human soul with its requirement for simultaneity.

Famous is the passage in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* where St. Thomas Aquinas posits man as the last end of all generation of the cosmos, because the soul of man is the ultimate form to which matter tends in its progressive perfection: "Ultimus igitur finis generationis totius est anima humana, et in hanc tendit materia sicut in ultimam formam. Sunt ergo elementa propter corpora mixta; haec vero propter viventia; in quibus plantae sunt propter animalia; animalia vero propter hominem. Homo igitur est finis totius generationis."[2] But what rules over the very disposition of the body is the rational soul, which is spiritual substance without becoming so progressively. It is the rational soul that makes the body and not vice versa. It is the rational soul that causes the humanizing step to result physically. The relationship

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[1] At the international conference "Eternity between Space and Time: from consciousness to the cosmos", Università di Padova, 19-21 maggio 2022.

[2] ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, 22, n.7. For a possible parallelism between St. Thomas and Teilhard de Chardin on the question of the evolution, see G. BARZAGHI, *L'escatologia evolutiva di Teilhard de Chardin*, in ID., *L'essere la ragione la persuasione*, ESD, Bologna 1998[2]; ID., *"Laudato si'" e il cristocentrismo cosmico. I fondamenti metafisici di un'enciclica sociale,* in "Glaux" XIV, XV, XVI, (2014-2016), pp. 79-96.

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of rational soul to body is like the relationship of art to artifact[3], because the rational soul is a *quid subsistens* by virtue of its spiritual dimension, namely self-knowledge.

In St. Thomas Aquinas's reflection, there are two diagnostic levels of self-knowledge: one is psychological in the proper sense and the other, ontological or metaphysical.

Psychological self-knowledge is the "*cognitio actualis*", *i.e.,* concomitant knowledge of oneself which is pre-reflected, preconceptual and conditioned by the position of acts or operations ("eadem cognitione intelligo intelligibile et intelligo me intelligere." *1 Sent*. d.1, q.2, a.1, ad2[4]). It is not scientific and abstract knowledge, but concrete and experiential self-knowledge. In order to know the other as other, one must know oneself as other than the other who is other than oneself. This does not change in the order of conceptualization.

Metaphysical self-knowledge is the "*cognitio habitualis*", *i.e.*, the pre-reflected, direct, immediate, unconditioned habitual knowledge of oneself, since this knowledge is by essence in the mode of presence. It is not noticed, because it is the metaphysical foundation of the "*cognitio actualis*" (*In 1 Sent*., d.3, q.4, a,5[5]; *De Veritate*, q.10, a.9; q.10, a.10, ad1; *Summa Theologiæ*, I, q.93, a.7, ad 4).

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[3] ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *In 4 Sent.*, d.44, q.1, a.2, ql.1: "Sicut dicitur in 2 *de Anima*, anima habet se ad corpus non solum in habitudine formae et finis, sed etiam in habitudine causae efficientis; est enim comparatio animae ad corpus sicut est comparatio artis ad artificiatum, ut dicit philosophus. Quidquid autem explicite in artificiato ostenditur, hoc totum implicite et originaliter in ipsa arte continetur; et similiter etiam quidquid in partibus corporis apparet, totum originaliter, et quodammodo implicite, in anima continetur. Sicut ergo artis opus non esset perfectum si artificiato aliquid deesset eorum quae ars continet; ita nec homo posset esse perfectus, nisi totum quod in anima implicite continetur, exterius in corpore explicetur; nec etiam corpus ad plenum proportionaliter responderet animae."

[4] "(…) it is by the same operation that I understand an intelligible reality and myself understanding it (…)." (All the English translations herein are the translator's if not specified otherwise.)

[5] "According to St. Augustine, to think, to discern and to understand differ from one another. To discern is to know a reality by its difference from others. To think is to

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It is a direct, immediate, unconditioned, constant cognitive relationship through the very essence of the soul: self-presence of the subject to itself in an unobjectified and unobjectifiable way.

It is an implicit self-knowledge[6]. Metaphysically, it is perfect return of a subject to himself (or herself). A text of capital importance on ontological self-knowledge is *De Veritate*, q.10, a.8. The main issue of the question is the essential knowledge: whether something is known through its own essence. This should not be understood in the sense of the *id quod cognoscitur*, but in that of the *id quo cognoscitur*. In other words, it is not about whether something is known essentially –that is, whether the essence of something is known, as opposed to a simply accidental knowledge of it or its accidents– but whether its very essence constitutes a means of knowing the thing itself.

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consider a reality according to its parts and properties; and so, the term 'think' is said as if to signify 'to compress together'. To understand means nothing other than intellect's having a simple intuition or vision of what is intelligibly present to it. Therefore, I say that the soul is not always in the act of thinking or discerning God or itself; because, if it were not so, whoever would naturally know all the truth about the nature of his own soul. But one comes to have this knowledge with difficulty and great efforts; indeed, in order to attain it, it is not enough to have a whatsoever presence of a reality, but an objectively definite presence that is accompanied by an explicit intention of the knower. Insofar as to understand is nothing other than to have an intuition (or vision), which means none other than a presence of the intelligible reality to the intellect in any manner, the soul always understands itself and God in un indeterminate way, from which un indeterminate love follows. According to philosophers, however, in another way, one can conceive an idea that the soul always understands itself. Indeed, one understands what he understands insofar as it is illuminated by the light of the active intellect and received in the passive intellect. Thus, just as the corporeal light is seen in the color, so the light of the active intellect is shown in every intelligible, not objectively, but as cognoscitive means."

[6] In Augustinian terminology, it deals with memoria sui (cf. ST. AUGUSTINE, *De Trinitate*, IX). The relation between habitual knowledge and actual knowledge is the same as that between *notitia sui* and *cognitio sui*, and *nosse* and *cogitare.* (Cf. ID.,

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In particular, the issue here is whether the human soul knows itself through its own essence. St. Thomas says that there two kinds of knowledge one can have of one's soul: a) knowledge of one's soul as an existing singular, which corresponds to perception of having a soul according to the question of its existence (*an sit*); b) knowledge of the soul in common, namely according to its nature and its properties, which corresponds to the question of its nature (*quid sit*).

Now, with regard to *perceptual* knowledge (a), St. Thomas distinguishes between *actual* knowledge and *habitual* knowledge. *Actual* perceptual knowledge is that by which a soul knows itself through its own acts. In fact, we perceive that we have a soul and live a life because we perceive that we feel and understand. In the exercise of the operations of the soul we perceive that we exist. Feeling our act of feeling and understanding our act of understanding, we feel and understand that we exist[7]. *Habitual* perceptual knowledge, on the other hand, is that by which the soul sees itself through its own essence: it is present to itself through its own essence.

Knowledge of the soul's nature (b) comes through reflection and detailed research of philosophical character. Habitual self-knowledge is of ontological and immediate character. It does not need the psychological mediation of soul's operations[8].

De Trin., XIV,14,18). The *notitia sui* is the implicit knowledge of oneself and the *cogitatio* sui is the explicit knowledge of oneself with emitting of a word. Therefore, *notitia sui* : *cognitio habitualis* = *cogitatio sui* : *cognitio actualis*. The soul would not try to know itself unless it knew itself in some manner. (Cf. ID., *De Trin.*, X,4,6; XIV,6,8).

[7] Cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *In 9 Ethic.*, l. 11.

[8] ID., *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 8: "Sed quantum ad habitualem cognitionem, sic dico, quod anima per essentiam suam se videt, id est ex hoc ipso quod essentia sua est sibi praesens est potens exire in actum cognitionis sui ipsius; sicut aliquis ex hoc quod habet habitum alicuius scientiae, ex ipsa praesentia habitus, est potens percipere illa quae subsunt illi habitui. Ad hoc autem quod percipiat anima se esse, et quid in seipsa agatur attendat, non requiritur aliquis habitus; sed ad hoc sufficit sola essentia animae, quae menti est praesens: ex ea enim actus progrediuntur, in quibus actualiter ipsa percipitur."

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The return or the perfect and complete reversion of a subject to itself signifies substantiality. The subject exists substantially in itself (*sub-sistere*), not in something different (*in-sistere*) with inhering in it as an accident. That which can revert to itself: 1) is incorporeal; 2) possesses a substance that can be separated from the body; 3) is self-constituting (subsistent); 4) also reverts to itself according to the substance, by reverting to itself according to the operation; and 5) is capable of reverting to himself always[9].

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[9] Cf. Id., *Super librum De causis*, prop. 15: "Every knower knows his own essence, and returns to himself in a complete way." In order to understand this proposition, it is necessary to consider six propositions in Prolclus's *Elementatio Theologica* (Proclus, trans. by E. R. Dodds, *The Elements of Theology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1963: 1) XV: "All that is capable of reverting upon itself is incorporeal." Cf. prop.7 *De Causis*: "The intelligence is an indivisible substance."; 2) XVI: "All that is capable of reverting upon itself has an existence separable from all body", because all that is corporeal is not capable of reverting upon itself (prop. XV); that which has un operation separable from the body must have a substance separable from the body; 3) XLIII: "All that is capable of reversion upon itself is self-constituted.", because every reality revert upon that by which it is constituted as substance; 4) XLIV: "All that is capable in its activity of reversion upon itself is also reverted upon itself in respect of its existence.", because reversion upon itself is equivalent to perfection: if it were only according to operation, this would be better than the substance; 5) LXXXIII: "All that is capable of self-knowledge is capable of every form of self-reversion.", because all that knows itself reverts upon itself with its own operation and so with its substance; 6) CLXXXVI: "Every soul is an incorporeal substance and separable from body.", because the soul knows itself; therefore, it reverts upon itself and thus is incorporeal. In the *De Causis* there are three fundamental theses: a) the soul knows its essence; b) the soul returns to its essence with a perfect return; c) the soul is separable from the body. The thesis 2 is equivalent to the prop. LXXXIII of Proclus. The complete return to or reversion upon itself. The return to the essence with the operation also implies that according to the substance. This is the complete return. Insofar as the soul knows its essence, the knower and the known are one thing in the soul. The cognoscitive operation comes from the soul insofar as it is knower and comes to the soul insofar as it is known. This is the circularity indicated by the prop. XXXV of Proclus: "Every effect

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This metaphysical or ontological self-knowledge is what enables us to diagnose the spirituality or immateriality of the rational soul: "(…) Third, for the reason that the intellect understands itself, which does not occur in a faculty whose operation proceeds through a bodily organ. In fact, according to Avicenna, the bodily organ, of which an organic operative faculty makes use, would be intermediary between this faculty and its object. The sight does not know anything save what can be represented in the pupil of an eye. Consequently, since it is not possible for a bodily organ to be intermediary between a certain faculty and its very essence, in no way is it possible for a faculty acting through a bodily organ to know itself. This argument is set forth in the proposition 15 of *De Causis*: *every knower who knows his essence returns to it in a complete return*. And, according to the Commentator, it is said that that whose essence is fixed and not transferred to another subject returns completely to its own essence. From all this it is evident that the intellectual soul possesses an absolute being, independent of the body. Hence, it is not corrupted by the corruption of the body."[10]

Again: "No body's action reflects on the agent: in fact, it has been proved in the *Physics*, that no body moves itself, if not partially, that is inasmuch as one part of it moves and another is moved. Now, the

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remains in its cause, proceeds from it, and reverts upon it." (*moné-proodos-epistrophé*). La thesis 3 indicates that the complete reversion is according to the substance and says subsistence per se or stability, simplicity and self-sufficiency. All that reverts upon another as upon subject is accident. The thesis 1(the soul knows its essence) is explicated by Proclus (Prop. CLXXXV: if the soul knows what is superior to it, the soul knows itself through the cause that precedes it.) and not in the *De Causis*. It should be noted that no (corporeal) body is able to revert upon itself, or in other words to enter in union with itself. All the parts of the body should be united to all, but this is not possible to what is divisible, because the parts are in different places. On the contrary, the substance and the operation of the intelligence are indivisible. The body is divisible in terms of substance by size and in terms of operation according to time.

[10] ID., *In 2 Sent*., d.19, q.1, a.1.

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intellect reflects on itself by its own action: in fact, it does not understand itself only partially, but also totally. Therefore, it is not a body."[11] In certain ways this is the intentional not-transcendability of thought[12].

And in the soul every reality has its perfect fulfillment and the whole universe shines the light of its perfection[13], because the soul is the remedy for the imperfection by which one part of the universe is lacking in the perfection of another part and of the whole universe.

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[11] ID., *Summa Contra Gentiles*, II, c. 49, n.8.

[12] There can be no exteriority to thought: if I think of the being as exterior to thought, I can't avoid falling into a contradiction, because that being is no longer exterior to the thought in the thinking. This means overcoming the being's presupposed otherness from its being known that has chained the modern gnoseology with its apex in Kant who theorized the "thing-in-itself": the unreachable real beyond phenomenon. This is what we can learn from G. Bontadini: cf. G. BONTADINI, *Idealismo and immanentismo*, in ID., *Conversazioni di metafisica*, Vita e Pensiero, Milan 1971, vol. I, pp. 11-38.

[13] ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *De Ver*., 2,2.: "Sciendum igitur est, quod res aliqua invenitur perfecta dupliciter. Uno modo secundum perfectionem sui esse, quod ei competit secundum propriam speciem. Sed quia esse specificum unius rei est distinctum ab esse specifico alterius rei, ideo in qualibet re creata huiusmodi perfectioni in unaquaque re, tantum deest de perfectione simpliciter, quantum perfectionis in speciebus aliis invenitur; ut sic cuiuslibet rei perfectio in se consideratae sit imperfecta, veluti pars perfectionis totius universi, quae consurgit ex singularum rerum perfectionibus, invicem congregatis. Unde ut huic imperfectioni aliquod remedium esset, invenitur alius modus perfectionis in rebus creatis, secundum quod perfectio quae est propria unius rei, in altera re invenitur; et haec est perfectio cognoscentis in quantum est cognoscens, quia secundum hoc a cognoscente aliquid cognoscitur quod ipsum cognitum est aliquo modo apud cognoscentem; et ideo in III *de Anima* dicitur, *anima esse quodammodo omnia*, quia nata est omnia cognoscere. Et secundum hunc modum possibile est ut in una re totius universi perfectio existat. Unde haec est ultima perfectio ad quam anima potest pervenire, secundum philosophos, ut in ea describatur totus ordo universi, et causarum eius; in quo etiam finem ultimum hominis posuerunt, quod secundum nos, erit in visione Dei, quia secundum Gregorium, *quid est quod non videant qui videntem omnia vident?*"

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The perfection of knower as knower, in fact, is such that the perfection of one thing is found in the perfection of another. A thing is known insofar as it is somehow beside the subject who knows it. This is how the perfection of the universe is realized one way or another in the rational soul that takes it in through reflection. In this self-knowledge of the Whole in an indeterminate form ("in a certain way") the self-knowledge of the determined (that is, completed in details) and absolute Self-knowledge, God, is evoked.

THE ONTOLOGICAL WHOLE

Dialectics is a discipline of the Whole. Dialectics reads and says relations between things. The Whole also *com*prehends in itself those who take (*prendere*) it, and those who comprehend the Whole comprehend themselves comprehending it. This is equivalent to saying that the Whole is self-reflexive: self-knowledge as absolute reflection of the order[14].

The position of the Whole as absolute speculative framework in which the foundation of the contents proceeds, is given by eliminating all otherness presupposed in thoughts. The Whole is not the Totality of the real; "the Whole is the realm within which the Totality of the real is examined, and in which the idea of this totality and the related question is posed."[15] Synonyms of Whole are "original implexum (cf. *complexum*)", "original structure," "circumfounding (*circumfondens*) horizon", "theoretical order" and "act of thought"[16]. It formally presents itself as transcendence or mediation of the immediate, first and

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[14] G. BARZAGHI, *Anagogia*. *Il Cristianesimo sub specie aeternitatis*, ETC, Modena 2002; ID., *Anagogia: il Cristianesimo sub specie aeternitatis. Teoresi e struttura*. In M. SALVIOLI (Ed.), *Tomismo Creativo. Letture contemporanee del Doctor Communis*, "Sacra Doctrina" Quaderni 1, Bologna 2015, pp.118-144.

[15] G. BONTADINI, *Per una filosofia neoclassica*, in ID., *Conversazioni di metafisica* vol. I, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 1971, p. 275.

[16] Cf. *ibid*., p. 280.

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foremost as a problematizing principle that sheds light on questionable aspects and thus in the purely methodological function[17]. However, it is also fundamental semantic framework through which every determination converges with every other determination. It is the semantic Whole.

If the Whole is the totality in its connecting tissue that we can formally theorize only with the logical paradigm of inclusive not-contradiction, the game becomes more inventive and captivating on the material level for softness of the probable, but never-proven conjecture.

The formal logical paradigm of inclusive not-contradiction consists in recognizing that whenever we affirm something, we negate it at the same time: *omnis determinatio est negatio*. If I ask myself what *A* is, I cannot immediately answer that *A* is such and such, because the question always revolves around its indeterminacy. Therefore, if someone answers by saying that *A* is *A*, it is like remaining in the indeterminate: he is not answering the question but just reformulating it!

Hence, it is necessary to *determine*, to draw *boundaries*, namely to *define*. To determine is none other than to include, but it also means to exclude. If I lock something *in*, something else is locked *out*. Indeed,

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[17] In my view, there is another question to consider: the identity and the difference between ontological Whole and methodological Whole. We can understand the term Whole in several ways: a) the abstracted figure of Whole, namely the objective notion or representation or concept; b) the metaconceptual figure of Whole, which is the equivalent to the pure act of thinking or intentionality. Both of these figures can be connoted in the idea of methodological Whole; and c) the ontological Whole, which, metaphysically speaking, is equivalent to God the Creator or the Absolute. The ontological Whole (c) is the material foundation of the intentional methodological Whole. The intentional Whole (b) is the creative act in human consciousness or rationality, or intellect, or pure thought as act. The Whole as concept (a) is the intentio prima and the intentio secunda in rational elaboration, in which the notion of creative act or God appears abstractly or formally as contained among other contents, although described and elaborated as meta-content. On the anthropological level, the material Whole is the totality of man which includes the relationships weaving his various parts. This is equivalent to saying –as will be seen– that the rational or spiritual soul is the whole man but not totally, and that the body is expression or dimension of the rational soul.

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exclusion is *negation*. If I want to resolve the indeterminacy of the question "what is *A*?", I have to negate it: to get to the determinate I have to *negate* the indeterminate, *i.e.*, the *not-determinate*. And the answer will be: *A* is *not not-A*. It is obvious that *A* is not *B*, nor *C*, nor the sun, nor this hand, nor this finger and so on. If I want to understand the totality of the things that are different from A, I just have to indicate them with a simple negation of *A*: it is the *not-A*. But if *not-A* is indispensable for the determination of *A*, we should conclude that *the universe different* from *A* is simultaneously directed to and stays in *A*[18].

In fact, if the logical string expounded negatively above is converted into an affirmative, we can say that "*A is not not-A"* corresponds to "*A is not not A"*. The double negation dissolves and the result is *A is A*. Here there is no falling back into the indeterminacy that was pointed out shortly before, since this time the identity is shown through a mediation and thus has a foundation. It is a true determination. What all this signifies is that there is the Whole universe other than *A* in the very identity of *A*.

And *every* determination different from *A*, which turns out to be the convergence of the universe that contributes to determining it, works together with all itself in order to determine *A*. This is the *omnia in omnibus* et *quodlibet in quolibet*. To have full intelligence, namely intimate reading of every determination one must have intimate intelligence of every other determination: to wit, one must have simultaneous reading of the ontological Whole. This is realized by the divine intelligence alone: God's science or knowledge of Himself and of everything in Himself.

Yet it is possible for us to realize a kind of mystical knowledge, so to speak: a sapiential taste. We just have to bear in mind one fact. In the logical string used above to indicate the condition of the determinacy, there is a variable datum which is nothing other than the determinate. In the example it was *A*, but could also be *B*, *C* or, as I said, this hand, this finger, this watch, and so forth. It is a purely verifiable

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[18] Cf. G. BARZAGHI, *Lezioni di dialettica. E l'esame di coscienza*, ESD, Bologna, 2019: "(…) l'universo diverso da A è converso in A."

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which cannot be inferred deductively. But in that logical string there is also an invariable datum represented by double negation: *not not*. This very datum represents the core of everything. It is *negatio negationis*, which is a dialectical way of signifying the absolutely positive, *scilicet* the innermost heart of all the possible determinations.

Meister Eckhart defines God in this way: *Deus est negatio negationis*[19]. We *taste* this positive absolute in every determination. "*Omnia cognoscentia cognoscunt implicite Deum in quolibet cognito*."[20] The positive absolute, namely the Absolute *simpliciter* or God appears in all the determinations –be they limited or participatory, significant, *partialiter expressive*, or abstract and isolated– of his perfection. In existing and appearing in them, the determinations are not isolated any more, because they are similar realizations of God's essence.

The connecting logical locus, which expresses this theoretical framework, is given by the relations of inclusion and exclusion between determinations, *videlicet* by the dialectic of the Whole. In the logic of the Whole or the concrete, the inclusion-exclusion relation is represented by the principle by which *omnis determinatio est negatio* (every determination includes the exclusion of its own otherness –the negation of its own negation– in itself). Being other than the other as signified by the transcendental *aliquid (aliud quid*) of the Scholastics (the Platonic *heteron*) implies the dialectic of being *placed as removed*. The sense of completed affirmation of every determination implies position of the negation of its own negation, or in other words, placing of removal of its own negation. But as long as it implies or, in other words, carries in itself what it excludes, it actually includes it in the mode of mediation, or indirectly (immediately would be contradiction!). This inclusion of exclusion by the identity of the other as other than the other of the transcendental *heteron* coincides with the semantic Whole[21].

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[19] Cf. Meister Eckhart, *Unus Deus et pater omnium*, in *Sermoni tedeschi*, a cura di M. Vannini, Milano 1985, pp. 39-45; Id., *Expositio Sancti Evangelii secundum Johannem*, nn. 207, 208, 556, 562, 611, 692.

[20] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q.22, a.2, ad1.

[21] The semantic Whole is represented by the not-isolation of the concrete and for E. Severino it is the situation of the eternity of the existing: the totality of the

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Therefore, if in every determination there is the positive Absolute, *scilicet* the Absolute *simpliciter* or God who contains every determination –be they limiting, or participatory, or significant, or *partialiter* expressive, and, in short, isolated– of Himself, every determination carries every other determination in itself according to its own mode: *omnia in omnibus et quodlibet in quolibet*. Therefore, it is no longer isolated!

The ontological Whole is the essence of God the Creator[22]. We can further explicate this idea by saying that the essence of God the Creator is the background of the creative act. God says the whole of Himself in Himself, although not totally, in every similar realization of His essence. Consequently, the realization as such carries every other similar realization of God's essence in itself. This determines the transcendental relationship that exists in the creaturely order, to wit between the parts of the created cosmos— the individual creatures. Fundamentally each creature is in every other creature, since the Creator is in every creature in such a way that in the divine intelligence each individual creaturely essence is essentially relative to every other individual creaturely essence. The ontological Whole is the very essence of God insofar as God, knowing Himself, knows every similar realization of His essence.

And if we consider the relationship between Creator and creature, it is possible to diagnose the transcendental feature of the relationship as well. As the term "Creator" indicates the very act of God which is God Himself, it points to the divine essence *directe*[23]. The creative act is God Himself.

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determinations is closely linked to each determination. In F. Berto's amazingly beautiful reflection (*La dialettica della struttura originaria*, Il Poligrafo, Padua, 2003), the *fundamental semantic relation* (FSR) is "the necessary dialectical link between any meaning *a* and its infinite negation *not-a*... This relation is a complication: the position of *a* implies the position of *not-a* and vice versa." (p. 24). Semantic holism (SH) is such that "the determination of meaning coimplies the determinacy of the Whole semantic field." (p. 24). FSR is the aspect of *position* of the Whole; SH is the aspect of *determination*.

[22] Cf. G. BARZAGHI, *Lezioni di dialettica. E l'esame di coscienza*, cit., pp. 171-245.

[23] Cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q.13, a.7, ad1.

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On account of this reason, I say that the creation is the founding relation. It essentially constitutes terms of the relation. The foundation (to create) is the constitutive relation of founding (creating-creator) and founded (created-creature), where the active has the primacy over the passive as we can learn in the fourth *modus dicendi per se*. For instance, "the singer sings."[24] Although God conceives a relation between Him as Creator and the world as creature in Himself, He is the Absolute and remains as such[25].

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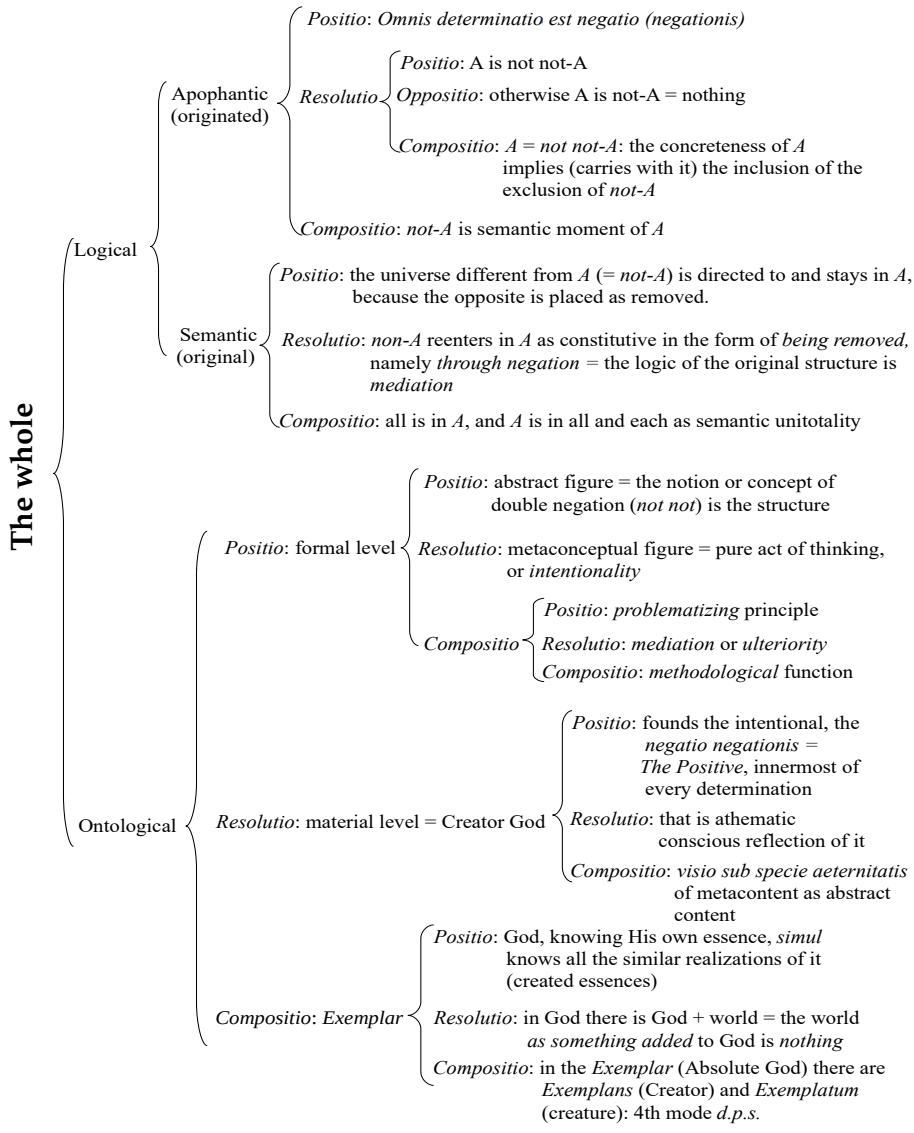
[24] "Sings" is predicated of "singer" per se, just like only a person who "sings" can be "singer" per se. In short, conceiving "singer", I conceive "singing", and conceiving "singing", I conceive "singer." But the reciprocity of conceptual reflection presupposes a primacy of the "singer" as acting subject (the active) over "sings" (the passive).

[25] Relation is a refering to (*esse ad*). And in its metaphysical nature it can be determined as a category, or, in other words, a class of reality. It belongs to that class of things, called accidents. And in this respect, relation like every accident is characterized by being in (*esse in*) a subject. Yet, relation as accident, namely insofar as it can be attributed or circumscribed to a typology, has such an indisputable superiority that one could affirm with St. Thomas Aquinas that it represents the core of the structure of the reality with the category substance. The Aristotelian categories or predicaments, i.e., the general frameworks of the types of the real are ten: substance and the nine accidents: quantity; quality; relation; acting; being acted upon; when; where; being in a position; and having. But some of these nine accidents can be traced back to substance: quantity (*mensura substantiae*) and quality (*dispositio substantiae*) (cf. *S.Th*. I, q.28, a.2), and some, to relation as specifications (cf. *In 5 Met*., l.17): acting (*a quo*) and being acted upon (*ab alio*, cf. *S.Th*., I, q.28, a.3, ad1), because, with motion removed, there remains relation (cf. *S.Th*., I, q.45, a.3); when by relation to time; where by relation to place; being in a position by relation to the parts; and having by relation to what is had. But the transcendental relation has a further character, since it is essential or constitutive, namely it is an indispensable constituent of the intelligibility of an entity.

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Deus est omnia in omnibus: eminenter (creatura in Deo) et participative (Deus in creatura)

Giuseppe Barzaghi OP



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Seeing Himself, God sees the other than Him in Himself, and seeing the other than Him, sees Himself in the other than Him and the other than Him in Himself. Seeing the other than Him in Himself, and Himself and every other than Him in the other than Him, God sees every other in the other like the "in Him of Himself and of the other than Him". This is a similar and original self-representation with no imperfections, and the similar realization of His essence, *scilicet* His essence in the similar mode. This is the *Exemplar*. But it is necessary to emphasize the fact that God's essence is His own being and action. Accordingly, His essence is the reality of the very creative act in which the other than God is in Him as actual reality in the eminence of its cause and not just as a pure effect. This is the dignity of *the caused*. The logical form that expresses this relationship is the fourth *modus dicendi per se*: the analytic reciprocity between subject and predicate that is based on the activity of subject (e.g., a singer sings). Specifically, the maximal analyticity of the fourth *modus dicendi per se* lies in the founded reciprocity. Put another way, not only do the subject and the predicate imply each other (cause-cause) mutually, but also the foundational causality that goes from the subject (cause) to the predicate (effect). Let's examine this with a mathematical example. If the number 10 had knowledge of itself in an exhaustive way, it would know all the arithmetic formulas that give 10. For instance, $5 + 5$, 5×2, $100 - 90$, $20 \div 2$ and so forth. This is because $5 + 5 = 10$; $5 \times 2 = 10$, $100 - 90 = 10$, $20 \div 2 = 10$. In fact, *all* of these arithmetical formulas give *totally* the same result of 10 without remainders. This is the meaning of "is equal to (=)", because they do not have anything more or less with respect to 10. Each, however, is different from one another for the reason that one thing is to add or to multiply and another, to subtract or to divide. Obviously, '100 – 90' is not '5 + 5'! Yet they *all* signify 10 and this very same number is in each of them, otherwise the equal sign (=) cannot be used. 10 exhausts each of those formulas in itself. 10 is in 5 + 5, 100 – 90 and so on. But not *totally*, for if *all* of it were *totally* in '5 + 5', it would not be in '100 – 90' totally and the difference between '5 + 5' and '100 – 90' would be eliminated. 10 is *immanent* in each of the arithmetic formulas signifying

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it and yet this number *transcends* them at the same time. In this immanent transcendence or transcendent immanence, knowing itself, the number 10 would know not only itself in each of them, but also all the arithmetic formulas that signify it. And knowing itself in each of them, it would know every other formula in each one of them in a particular way, *viz*. in the varied and irreducible mode of the other. To an objection according to which '5 + 5' is the same as '100 – 90' for the reason that they have the same number as their result, I reply that they – if each one of them is 10 – are the same in having the same result, namely a correspondence to '10 = 10'. Thus, it remains verified that '5 + 5' (inasmuch as it is '5 + 5') is not identical to '100 – 90' (inasmuch as it is '100 – 90'). If by analogy God and creatures are considered to be 10 and those arithmetical formulas respectively, "*Deus, qui est institutor naturae, non subtrahit rebus id quod est proprium naturis earum*."[26]

THE THEOLOGY AS SCIENCE AND ANAGOGICAL OR *SUB SPECIE ÆTERNITATIS* VISION

The Christian faith points to the ontological Whole with such expressions as mystery or eternal Design, which are centered in the Cross of Christ's Glory as the core of cosmic compassion (Acts 2:23; Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 1:21; Eph 3:6-9; 2 Tim 1:9; Col 1:26). If you make them explicit to yourself on seeing them, your soul will be enriched through inspection of them and become all things in a certain way: *anima est quodammodo omnia*, as has been said. Everything depends on the ability to inspect what can be passed unnoticed…

This inspective ability is what enables us to consider beyond apparent contradictions the revealed visions. For example, according to Rev 13:8, the Lamb, namely the Christ is immolated in the very creative act, while he is historically recognized as sacrificed two thousand

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[26] ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, II, 55, n.14.

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years ago on the earth which has already existed for quite a bit of time. And the same can be said concerning the creative mediation of Christ the man. As a matter of fact, there can be no room for mediation in the creation, be it divine (the Word) or creaturely (the humanity of Jesus), for the former implies the subordinationism of the Son while the latter means falling into the fallacy of *petitio principii*, or in other words, holding an opinion that the creature had dominion over the creation of itself.

The Anagogy represents itself in the form of a *reductio in Principium*. The *reductio formalis* is metaphysical in the proper sense of the word: reduction to the notion of entity. The *reductio materialis* is reduction to the notion of the creative act. And in nowhere other than the creation (*active sumpta*) lies a dialectical answer to the question. *Ex parte Dei*, the creative act is identified with the divine substance. Theologically one can ask oneself: how can it be possible for the cross of Christ's glory to exist as such in the very creative act, and obviously not as a gnostic duplicate? The answer is found in the perspective that considers the things and the history speculatively *sub specie aeternitatis*. It is called *ex parte Dei* in the language of scholastic philosophy. The Anagogy or the Supra-logos has as its inclusive center (2 Tim 1:9; Eph 3:11) the Eternal Design or the Mystery which, hidden from the eternal ages, includes all the creatures in a radial pattern. And it has as its perspective *vanishing point* the crucified and risen Christ, *scilicet* "the Lamb immolated in the foundation of the world," "through whom" and "for whom" all things are created and "in whom" all things hold together (Col 1:16-17). In order to understand Christ's creative mediation and immolation in the creative act, we need the *sub specie aeternitatis* perspective, namely the Anagogy. In this way, things do not occur successively one after another according to time, but consist in their being seated (*insidere*) inside another simultaneously. There is a shift from succession to *insìdere*. From God's point of view or *sub specie aeternitatis*, nothing *happens* but everything *is*. It's one thing to see history as separated dots on a line, and quite another to see history as a continuous line, unseparated, in which the dots therein are one in another, as you

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would when holding a stick in front of your face to take aim. This is insidence and simultaneity. No more "before" and "after". No longer does the creation come "first" and the redemption "after", but one is in the other and vice versa. *Ex parte Dei*, the things exist in this way.

Consequently, the ability to inspect will also be ability to say things through another. The intelligence enters and reads, and once the intelligence has moved forward, dialectics says one thing through another. In this sense, dialectics is a discipline of the Whole.

Theological syllogism and philosophical mediation; anagogical syllogism by theological mediation, with a Severinian exploration or inspection[27].

[27] G. BARZAGHI, *L'eternità dell'essente in teologia*, in G. GOGGI – I. TESTONI (ed.), "*All'alba dell'eternità". I primi 60 anni de 'La Struttura Originaria',* Padova University Press, Padova, 2018, pp. 10-11. Sito Web http://ases.psy.unipd.it; ID., *La mediazione: confluenze tomistico-severiniane*, in AA.VV, *Ai confini della contraddizione: Tommaso d'Aquino, Florenskij e Severino*, In Sedicesimo, Savona 2021, pp. 145-160; ID., *Il pensiero di Severino nella prospettiva anagogica*, in "La filosofia futura" 14 (2020), pp. 59-69; ID., *Aevum: l'intensità dell'eterno nella successione del tempo*, in A. TONIOLO e I. TESTONI, *Cristianesimo e Emanuele Severino. Quali possibilità di confronto? Approcci filosofici e teologici*, Padova University Press, Padova 2021, pp. 23-36. For a detailed exposition on the anagogical theorem, see *La Fuga. Esercizi di filosofia e anagogia*, ESD, Bologna, 2020[2] by G. Barzaghi.

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Exemplifications of anagogic and theological syllogism

G. Barzaghi OP

1) Of the Core or vanishing point of the Whole

SYLLOGISM
- Antecedent =
  - Minor Premise (Revealed Faith): …..... Christ is all in all (*Col* 3:11)
  - Major Premise (Philosophical Reason): ..... All in all is the Whole
- Consequent = Conclusion (Theology: *Opus fidei et rationis*): Christ is the Whole

2) Of the ontological Whole

SYLLOGISM
- Antecedent =
  - Minor Premise (Revealed Faith): …..... God is all in all (1Cor 15:28)
  - Major Premise (Philosophical Reason): .... All in all is the Whole
- Consequent = Conclusion (Theology: *Opus fidei et rationis*): God is the Whole

3) of the divine virtualities of philosophical discourse; for example, in E. Severino's view

Epicheirematic or Cataphractic Syllogism
- Antecedent =
  - Minor Premise: (E. Severino) All and every existing thing is eternal, because all is in every part, and every part is in all and in every other part (semantic whole)
  - Major Premise: (Theology) The eternity is the simultaneity of every existing thing in the essence of God, because God conceives Himself as Creator *ab aeterno*, that is as all in all (*Exemplar*)
- Consequent = Conclusion: All and every existing thing is the simultaneity of the essence of God as *Exemplar* = transcendental relation *Exemplans-exemplatum* in the fourth *modus dicendi per se* (foundational Relation).

4) Philosophical Parallelisms; for instance, Severino and Thomism (*Aevum* and becoming)

SYLLOGISM
- Antecedent =
  - Minor Premise: Becoming is appearing-disappearing of the eternals (Severino)
  - Major Premise: appearing- disappearing of the eternals is the discontinuously successive duration of the *aevum* (Thomism)
- Consequent = Conclusion: Becoming is the duration of the *aevum*

5) E. Severino as major premise of the theological syllogism

Minor: Christ is all in all (*Revelatum per se*) [and God is all in all (*Revelatum per accidens*)], **therefore** or **because** he is immolated in the very act of creating (*Ap* 13:8) in which all is connected.

Major: All and every existing thing is eternal, **because** all is in every part, and every part is in all and in every other part, because the eternity of the existing thing requires it and is the universal, eternal connection (Severino)

Conclusion:

a) The evident contradictoriness of the revealed datum is excluded.

b) One **comprehends** how all subsists eternally in Christ (*Col* 1:15-17).

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CONCLUSION

In short, the Whole remains the key to theological understanding of the faith. And this is due to the fact that the very faith presents itself as something that needs to be understood.

When I use the expression *ex parte Dei*, I do not intend to refer to the Thomist hypothesis of the creation *ab aeterno*. By the expression *ex parte Dei*, I mean to direct speculative reflection on the condition that the creatures (world) have in God's consideration of them and not on the condition that they might have! *Ex parte Dei*, then, means how God conceives or knows the world or creatures in Himself. And they are in the condition of eternity or simultaneity. God's science is always about *present upon present*: "*ordo praesentis ad praesens*"[28]. This is my anagogical perspective[29].

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[28] ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *De Ver.*, q. 2, a. 12.

[29] L. Messinese invents an expression to emphasize the exceedingly particular condition of the Severinian philosophising: "Neither secular, nor Catholic!" (ID., *Né laico, né cattolico. Severino, la Chiesa, la filosofia,* Edizioni Dedalo, Bari 2013). From a cultural point of view, I would say the expression is remarkably appropriate. From a theoretical point of view, however, I would say that it implies adequate reflection– a conclusion that goes beyond it dialectically. Now let's look at it this way. If *Catholic* and *secular* were in contrary opposition to each other, Severino's position could be true as an alternative third between two false ones. Nonetheless, if *Catholic* and *secular* were in contradictory opposition to each other, *tertium non datur*: either this way or that way! The contradictories do not admit indifference: *either with me or against me*! I would say the theoretical relation between *Catholic* and *secular* is in contradictory opposition and this lies in the fact that – always speaking theoretically– the *suppositio* of *Catholic* is "God exists", whereas that of *secular* is "God does not exist". Likewise, it is true that Severino does not acknowledge God. But the position behind this word is closer to the conception of the eternity of the whole than to that of its denial. Consequently, it is per se "correct" that the vital framework in which Severino's thought proceeds "must be" *Catholic* rather than *secular*. A) *Per signum*: why is it that, if the Catholic thought is so troublesome to Severino, he uses its terminology and contents of the faith to signify the completely different? "Holy Friday", "Easter", "Glory", – a term that appears in his vocabulary since 2001 along with "look of fate", which is equivalent to

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Anagogically speaking, the question, "Could God have not created the universe?" is, as consequence, meaningless. *Ab aeterno*, meaning in the simultaneity of duration of its being and that is, of the Absolute Being, glimpsed and that is, reflected in the inspection of every individual creaturely determination.

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my idea of "look of God", after reading and discussing my book *Soliloqui sul Divino. Meditazioni sul segreto cristiano*, ESD Bologna, 1997 that was reviewed with ELZEVIRO'S *La casa invisibile del Cristianesimo*, on the 'Corriere della Sera' (2000.5.5) and my *Oltre Dio, ovvero omnia in omnibus. Pensieri su Dio, il divino, la Deità*, Barghigiani, Bologna 2000– the very idea of Christ having the beatific vison in the moment of suffering on the cross, used to explain plausibility of an idea of suffering surrounded by the light of Joy (in *La follia dell'angelo*, Rizzoli, Milano 1997) are just a few examples. Severino uses the Christian language to express depth of his concepts. B) *Per argumentum*: as I keep on saying to Severinists (who are different from Severino, just as paper is different from soul), the original structure is pure negation of negation (*negatio negationis*). To say that "*A is not not A*" is materially equivalent to saying "Socrates is not not Socrates." or "This paper is not not this paper." *A*, *Socrates*, *this paper,* and so forth are material datum which cannot be inferred deductively and thus are *soft* of the structure, just like *not-not* is rigid structural datum. The fact that it signifies the condition of the steadiness and firmness of the whole and everything and its eternity, does not exclude the creationist view, in which everything is originally steady. Creation *ab aeterno* does not exclude the freedom of the creative act (which does not have a correspondence to the affirmation that it is possible for God *not* to have created the world. This view, however, is not admissible for the reason of God's eternity and immutability, otherwise aporetic theological anthropomorphism would be admitted as true), because, if the creature as something added to God is nothing, this means that God does not need it in order to exist as God, and that the creature does not begin to exist. It is ceaselessly in the creative act, which is God, and God is in each creature and each creature is in every other creature. This is the *Deus omnia in omnibus* of the Christian vision (the theoretical Catholicism mentioned above). In this perspective, not only is everything eternal, but the eternity of everything becomes indispensable so as to understand certain principal statements of the Revelation itself: the subsistence of all things in Christ (Col 1:17), the hidden and unspoken plan or mystery *ab aeterno* (Acts 2:23; Rom 9:11; 1 Cor 1:21; Eph 3:11; 2 Tim 1:9; Col 1:26), the Lamb immolated in the very foundation of the world (Rev 13:8), the divine Wisdom of Christ's cross to

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The focal face or vanishing point of this Eternal Design is Christ's Cross of Glory, the Lamb immolated in the very foundation of the world (Rev 13:8), which determines the fabric of emotion, compassion and consolation that structures the Whole both semantically and ontologically. All pervades in the innermost material fibers. And I call it limpid materialism: like a cosmic sacrament.

The Whole is eternal. And everything and every aspect is eternal, because it is such in the vision of God who has neither "before" nor "after". For this very reason, the eternity implies the coexistence of the whole. This very coexistence is what makes possible the simultaneity of everything and its immanence in every other. Evil and suffering are embedded in the good. And the real name of this concrete good is *commotion*, *compassion* and *consolation*. This is the eternal bliss.

I know that all this does not look right…, just like the sun seems to revolve around the earth, not the other way around. Nonetheless, it does. What puts an end to all discussions is some mystical experience given through divinizing and christifying grace which unites the theological faith and the beatific vision. But in no way does it depend on our ability. It is known by those who experience it.

Translated by Gregorio Kim O. P.

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which even the rulers of this world contribute unwisely (1 Cor 2). All of these truths imply an eternal framework, *sub specie aeternitatis*, as I have been arguing for nearly thirty years. And that is why I cannot understand a person –among those cited by Messinese– who insists "exclusively" on the historical dimension of Christianity. Then, the mental operation is more theological than simply philosophical, because, Thomistically speaking, theology as science structurally implies philosophy. It is the intensity of philosophizing. Why does one continue to seek confrontation with Christianity, if Christianity has ended like in words of Severino? But with no confrontation with Christianity would Severino's thought still have interesting contents, or would it become an inhospitable house? Cleared out the amazingly sweet and embracing fog of the Christian faith, would Severino's Castle still stand, or would it appear like a sand castle built on the beach for a summer day's enjoyment? With the Christian theology, the thought of Severino can be saved (as was the case with that of Aristotle or Plotinus...), whereas outside of it his thought is inexorably *an eternal that no longer appears*.