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The Pagan Gods in Marsilio Ficino's Christian Platonism

Martin Žemla

Abstract: The basic aim of Marsilio Ficino is to unify Christianity with Platonic philosophy, while referring to the "ancient wisdom" present in both. However, for him, Platonic philosophy comes hand in hand with ancient gods. To make use of them, Ficino claims to write not as a theologian but as "poet". Most typically, the ancient gods are allegories of astral influences on human affairs. But according to Platonists, stars are ensouled beings, gods expressing their effective powers – not just natural forces. Here, Apollo/Phoebus, the solar god and allegory of the Sun, is of special importance: for Ficino, solar and light metaphysics is generally crucial. In his *De vita*, he demonstrates how the stars, i.e. the ancient gods in their mythological context, help cure human bodies, including the subtle-material body, i.e. the animating "spirits". This "magical" cure is made possible through hidden and ubiquitous sympathies between all the stars, metals, stones, animals, flowers, and sensual qualities in general, which are all interlinked with certain gods. Although Ficino emphasises that this system of natural magic is limited to "nature", it seems that, in fact, his "imitating of the stars", and thus of the ancient gods embodying them, can ultimately have a higher, theological relevance.

Keywords: Marsilio Ficino; Pagan Gods; Christian Platonism.

1. Introduction

In his *opus magnum*, the *Platonic Theology on the Immortality of Souls*, Marsilio Ficino aims at substantiating Christianity by means of Platonic doctrines: a of "Christian Platonism".[1] This involved uniting two pillars of the "ancient wisdom" (*prisca sapientia*): Christianity, which goes back to Moses, as the ancient receiver of the Wisdom of God; and Platonism, the roots of which can be found in the works of Hermes Trismegistos, Zoroaster, and later Pythagoras and Plato, interpreted by the Neoplatonist philosophers.[2] Ficino embodied such a unity in himself when he, a Platonic philosopher and a physician, was ordained a priest in 1473.

For Friedrich Schiller, whose *Götter Griechelands* brought an 18th century literary revival of ancient gods, the deities represent an ideal of harmony, beauty and power, which was lost in the world in which spirit and sense are enemies.[3] Once again, he put antiquity against the world of Christianity. It is an attitude which had had an old tradition, although to join both was no less common. Of course, the Renaissance is *the* period when looking back to antiquity was the main program. The ancient motifs became ever-present in visual art, and also philosophers took the ancient Greek and Roman mythology as a mine to dig new ideas and combine them in their theories and concepts. If we look into some of Ficino's texts, we find pagan gods almost everywhere. Why? And is such an attitude fitting for a Christian philosopher and priest?

To answer these questions, two steps are necessary. First, we should turn our attention to how and in what sense ancient gods were used by Christian authors before Ficino.[4] And second, we will look at what, in fact, ancient deities meant for Ficino and what – if anything – was special in his attitude towards the ancient gods.

2. Pagan gods and Christianity before Ficino

"What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?"[5] The famous question by Tertullian suggests a clear position which, however, was far from the reality of the first Christian centuries.[6] Already Justin Martyr saw Greek philosophy (Heraclitus, Socrates) as a prelude to Christianity as the true philosophy: whatever was said correctly by the Greek philosophers belongs also to Christians.[7] Origen, Clement of Alexandria, and, especially, Augustine later corroborated such a view in their ways.[8] This, however, pertains rather to philosophy than to mythology.[9]

It is true that authors like Tatian (a student of Justin) or Athenagoras of Athens cannot stand pagan gods.[10] But, in fact, the first Christian apologists were themselves educated in the Greek culture. Especially in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, Christianity was cohabiting with pagan mythologies relatively long. The knowledge of pagan mythologies was a sign of education and literary culture, not a part of religion. Ancient gods were interpreted allegorically and morally (but similarly was the Bible).[11] Euhemerism became a quasi-standard interpretation of the gods as eminent historical rulers or heroes. This approach made it possible to incorporate pagan motifs into the Christian discourse.[12]

Another way of admitting polytheistic pantheon into the monotheistic religion was shown by Plutarch in his *De Iside et Osiride*. What distinguishes various religions are just names of gods, not their essence. They are for him, similarly as for the Stoics, names of the cosmic realities: Intelligence, Providence, and Powers.[13] A similar attitude was demonstrated by Apuleius in his *Metamorphosis*.[14] From a more philosophical perspective, we can, perhaps, relate this to Proclus' identification of the "Henads", as the aspects of the divine and absolutely transcendent One, with pagan gods.[15] As such, they are heads of the vertical "chains of being" (*seirai*): these "series" are powers with

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specific qualities which, penetrating all world, make horizontal and vertical connections among all things based on a system of universal sympathies and antipathies.

The meaning of the pagan gods and of Christian God, with his trinitarian mystery, was, of course, an object of early disputes between pagan Neoplatonists and Christian philosophers. A common instrument to show the proper meaning of one's god was allegory.[16] Plato himself used, and debated the use of, allegories, and so did his followers. In the *Republic*, he presented his famous allegories of the cave and of the Sun.[17] In the *Cratylus*, he discussed etymological-allegorical interpretations of Homer.[18] At the same time, he criticized the rationalization of myths in the *Phaedrus* (229c6 ff.). And, in the famous passage of the *Republic*, he claims that Hesiod, Homer and "other poets" related "untrue myths". Such poets are not allowed in his republic: the youth would not be able to distinguish allegories from plain truth (*Rep*. 377b-379a; 386b).[19]

The Neoplatonists applied allegories to interpret the ancient myths and Plato himself.[20] Plotinus, for example, presented an allegorical interpretation of Plato's *Symposium*.[21] The way for the Christian use of allegories was pathed by Philo of Alexandria with his allegorical exegesis of both the Bible and Plato's *Timaeus*.[22] Augustin in his *City of God* takes pagan gods for deified heroes, principalities or powers which were situated in nature by their Creator.[23] However, for a pagan Neoplatonist this might indicate a mischievous deed and a false attempt to save what inherently was a nonsense. Porphyry, an author of the allegorical treatise *Cave of the Nymphs*, addresses, in his *Against the Christians*, the false use of allegory by Christian authors (Origen).[24]

Let us skip the ancient debates and look at the Middle Ages. According to Jean Seznec, there are four traditions in which the ancient mythological lore was transferred to later generations: the historical tradition (turning gods into historical figures), the physical tradition (connecting gods with planets), the moral tradition (allegorizing the myths in moral tales), and the encyclopaedical tradition (summarizing all previous tendencies and sources).[25]

One of these domains seems specific: astrology. In Europe, it was largely influenced by treatises of Arabic and Persian origin. As Klibansky, Saxl and Panofsky, the authors of the *Saturn and Melancholy*, say:

> In astrology generally, but especially in astrological notions of planetary rulers who have inherited the names and qualities of the great Olympic gods, ancient piety had been preserved in an apparently profane form; and it was to remain so much alive in the future that the very gods who had been turned into stars – that is to say, apparently stripped of divinity – were an object of pious veneration and even formal cults for hundreds of years afterwards, while those not turned into stars … continued to exist merely in learned compendiums and allegorical moral tracts…[26]

Thus, astrology was the only place where the pagan gods, or at least some of them, could live their authentic lives and retain their old attributes. But the very connection between the ancient gods and the stars/planets as physical bodies was only possible thanks to stoics and their rationalistic interpretation of the pagan myths, reducing them to their allegorical meanings and stripping off their "personal" character, making them purely natural powers.[27] Such astrological interpretations were particularly suited to the Neoplatonic metaphysical systems, such as that of Proclus or Macrobius, as they, after all, shared the same mythical and natural philosophical foundations.[28] For Proclus, gods became rulers of the astral influences, while for Macrobius, they were connected with the planetary spheres through which the souls were making their journey to the body; in both cases, however, they have become faculties of the soul.[29] The astrological symbolism which was using the names of the ancient gods reappeared in the Latin West during the "renaissance of the 12th century" when authors such as William of Conches and Bernardus Silvestris began re-reading Plato's *Timaeus* and the Hermetical *Asclepius*.

But there were also the compendia in which pagan gods entered the medieval cosmos as allegories of moral values and explained by means of etymologies and euhemerism. They stood in the tradition going back to Varro, Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, and Pliny, which was collected by authors such as Servius, pseudo-Lactantius, Fulgentius, Hyginus, Macrobius and Martianus Capella, and later entered the world of medieval thought through the encyclopaedical works of Isidore of Sevilla and Rhabanus Maurus. But for the knowledge of classical mythology in the Renaissance, most important were yet other works. A special importance fell to the so-called *Mythographus III*, an author possibly identical with Alexander Neckham (+ 1217), for whom the pagan gods became only names for various manifestations of God's influences in the world.[30] This was a standard handbook of ancient mythology up to Petrus Berchorius and his introduction to the *Metaphorphosis Ovidiana moraliter explanata* (1340), which not only brought an allegorical and moral interpretation of Ovid but aimed, again, at reconciling pagan myths with Christian teachings.

The medieval studies of ancient mythology culminated in Giovanni Boccaccio's *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods*.[31] Boccaccio presents the richness of pagan deities and their relationships and explains how to adapt them to the Christian faith. In the footsteps of Latin authors as Cicero, Apuleius, and Macrobius, Boccaccio was convinced that the mythological stories had a hidden meaning,[32] or rather many meanings which are useful to learn from the Greeks. He tried to unmask them by use of astrological and moral explanations, allegories, etymologies, and euhemeristic claims that the gods were just extraordinary human beings.[33] For him, poetry is of divine origin and, as such, it can give allegorical account of divine truths.[34] That is why Boccaccio asserts, in his *Life of Dante*, that the ancient poets were writing about very noble and sublime things, and that poetry and theology are almost the same.[35]

Before we finish our very brief and fragmentary overview, it is inevitable to mention another author who dealt intensively with paganism and pagan gods: Gemistus Plethon who was considered pagan not only by his contemporaries but also by many modern scholars.[36] We might expect Plethon's conception of gods to have had some bearing on Ficino: Plethon, a Greek scholar well versed with ancient philosophy and culture, visited the council of Florence, and his visit became crucial for the philosophical Renaissance. Ficino himself testifies for his importance when writing that Plethon had given lectures

on Plato during the time of the Council that made Cosimo de' Medici establish the Platonic Academy in Florence two decades later.[37] Plethon also handed the texts of Plato to Cosimo, which Ficino later translated into Latin and commented upon.

At the beginning of his *Laws*, Plethon announces "the theology according to Zoroaster and Plato". For him, Zoroaster was an ancient wise to whom he, in his commented edition, ascribed the authorship of the so-called *Chaldean Oracles*. This influenced Ficino to acknowledge Zoroaster's primacy in the history of the *prisca sapientia*.[38] However, Plethon's conception of pagan gods is very specific, and it seems to hardly have any reasonable influence on Ficino. Unlike his predecessors who dealt with pagan gods and their myths, his use of the names of pagan gods is strictly philosophical and rationalising (as if following Plato's advice considering the rational myths in his *Republic*[39]) For him, their names designate philosophical principles in his cosmological system. So far, this could be an approach similar to that of Proclus. But Plethon, when speaking of the Greek gods, avoids the, in his opinion, mistaken accounts of the poets and elaborates on them solely "in accordance with philosophy". In this systematic elaboration, he departs way far from traditional genealogies of gods, their classical attributes and roles. This was, certainly, not Ficino's way.[40]

3. Ficino and the Pagan Gods

3.1. Allegories

We know that Ficino's younger colleague, Pico della Mirandola, was considering writing a treatise on pagan myths and their hidden meaning, called *Poetica Theologia*. Pico was sure that the ancient mythographers were hiding their secrets and so they covered them with "enigmatic veils and poetic dissimulation" that needed to be revealed.[41] Although Ficino did not write any such work in which he would undertake a systematic exegesis of the ancient gods, nor did he plan to, many explanations are scattered all over his works. His interpretation, however, seems very different from Pico's. Ficino uses the names of astral and non-astral deities and ultimately relates them to his astrological-magical theories and allegorical interpretations of the invisible realm. This is especially, but by no means uniquely, true of his books *On Life* and the twin-treatises *On the Sun* and *On Light*.

In the beginning of his book *On the Sun*, Ficino refers to his translation and commentary of Plato. He emphasises Plato's comparison of the Sun to God which became the leading motif of the present book.[42] The book deals with the "mystery of the Sun", and Ficino calls it a "gift of Phoebus" (i.e., the Sun) which he is sending to Pietro Medici as to a "patron of the Muses and a great disciple of Phoebus". Phoebus-Apollo is summoned as a guarantee of his ruminations, a leader of the Muses who "sing with him". Mercury, "the inventor of disputations", also "plays with Apollo", while he contemplates over more serious things with Saturn and Jupiter.[43] This is to support Ficino's reservation that, in his book, he will debate his subject – the Sun – not "dogmatically" but "in a manner of Apollo and quasi-poetically", as a "play" and an "allegorical and anagogical [i.e., mystical] exercise of the wits".[44] He does not aspire to a metaphysical or physical explanation but intends to proceed from the visible to the invisible "by means of similes taken from light", and thus to arrive "from the Sun to God, who has made the Sun his sanctuary", indeed his "visible image" and his "representative". As he adds elsewhere:

> In the book *On the Sun*, I do not so much teach astronomical things as I seek moral allegories through them and examine their anagogical relation to divine things. ... in the books *On Life* and *On the Sun*, I mix philosophical and poetic things quite freely...[45]

Obviously, the names of the pagan gods are part of a "poetical" way to deal with the subject otherwise reserved for theology which, however, uses another, "more dogmatic", style.

But to use poetical language does not mean that Ficino's exposition is *only* a play. As he remarks, he follows "a pythagorical and, indeed, divine principle" according to which we cannot speak of divine things "without light" – i.e., without divine "illumination" *and* without the examples of the "visible light".[46] Similarly as for Plato and Boccaccio, real poetry is imbibed with divine influence.[47] This is the ecstatic drunkenness which Ficino describes in his commentary on Plato's *Republic*,[48] and the first of four levels of the "divine frenzy", as he distinguishes them elsewhere.[49] That is also why "poetry" enables, for Ficino, a higher elevation of the human spirit than philosophy and theology - although it is hardly usable to establish a theological or political system.

As a Christian, Ficino uses the method of Neo-Platonic allegorical exegesis in combination with biblical exegesis and with the use of Dionysian symbolic theology. In his book *On the Sun*, he provides a "rather poetical" interpretation of planets and their interrelationships, mixing astronomical observations with Greek and Roman mythology, observations of nature and Platonic concepts. Most of Plato's words, says Ficino, demand an allegorical interpretation.[50] Thus:

> When he [i.e. Plato] says 'God' he means Apollo; when he says 'Muses' he means the souls of the spheres of the world. Of course, Jupiter is the mind of God, from which comes Apollo, the mind of the world-soul and the soul of the whole world, together with the eight souls of the celestial spheres, those nine souls being called the nine Muses because as they move the heavens harmoniously they produce musical melody which, when distributed into nine sounds, namely, the eight notes of the spheres together with the one harmony of them all, gives rise to the nine Sirens singing to God. Wherefore Apollo is led by Jupiter, and the Muses are led by Apollo, that is, the chorus of Muses is led by the mind of the world-soul, because just as that mind is illuminated by Jupiter, so does it illuminate the souls of the world and of the spheres. Now the levels through which that frenzy descends are these: Jupiter seizes Apollo; Apollo gives light to the Muses; the Muses arouse and stir up the gentle but invincible souls of the poets; the poets, being inspired, inspire their own interpreters; the interpreters move the listeners. Some souls are seized by some Muses and others by others, because some souls are allotted to some spheres and stars and others to others, as is maintained in the Timaeus. ... Apollo, moreover, is the soul of the Sun, and his lyre is the body of the Sun. The four strings are the four movements of the Sun: yearly, monthly, daily, oblique. The four tones – the Neate, the Hypate, and the twin

Dorians – are the four threefold groupings of the signs, from which the four qualities of the seasons arise.[51]

In his commentary on Plato's *Laws*, Ficino similarly explains the "allegorical teaching" and shows what is *signified* by the Muses, Apollo and Bacchus.[52] Commenting on the fifth book of the *Laws* where foundations of the ideal city are discussed,[53] he shows how the pagan deities are connected with the twelve signs of the zodiac and also with parts of the human body: "just as the body is a unit, though composed of many limbs", so also "the state must be a single unit, though composed of many citizens".[54]

However, the *Laws* and the anti-poetical parts of the *Republic* are not what Ficino usually has in mind when invoking Plato. For him, Plato spoke in stories and parables, more like a priest and a prophet than a philosopher, and his words purify the soul from agitation, separate the mind from the senses, and above all turn the mind to God to be enlightened by him; all this with the help of parables and dialogues that convince us more strongly and move us more deeply.[55] Thus, obviously, the allegory is *not* only another way how to say the same. What is crucial is the idea that the knowledge of God cannot be acquired by rational arguments but *by means* of symbols, allegories and analogies (*comparationes*). On the one hand, Ficino is well aware that God, or the Good itself, is unattainable and incomprehensible.[56] On the other hand, he seems to believe that this is true, primarily, for the rational cognition. Thus, for him, allegories are not merely a preferred rhetorical device for describing and provisionally grasping the ineffable, but indeed a practical means of *achieving* it. In his interpretations of Plato, Ficino points out repeatedly that humans can only reach their goal, that is the knowledge and love of God or the divine light, by way of their purification and likeness to the divine. This is an essential part of Ficino's thought.[57]

In this perspective, the pagan gods *cannot* be only different names for philosophical principles, as in the case of Plethon's rationalist interpretation of the pagan pantheon. In the sense of what has just been said, they must be capable to *move* us.

3.2. Natural magic

In my opinion, such a practical approach can be traced back to Ficino's *magia naturalis*. Here he makes an intense use of astrological symbolism which is built upon Greek and Roman mythologies and genealogies of the gods. At the same time, the natural magic relates, for him, to the allegory of the Sun and to the metaphysics of light: the most sublime perceptible entity in the world is light, and therefore it is light that serves as *the* image of the invisible, spiritual realm.[58]

Now, let us have a look at the *Three Books on Life* where Ficino develops his conception of the natural magic. Right at the beginning of the book, in the foreword to Lorenzo de' Medici, he invokes *Bacchus* – not Apollo-Phoebus, the solar god, as we might expect. Bacchus is the "supreme prelate of priests" because a perfect priest must be "deeply drunken with God" and thus "reborn". It also signifies, according to Ficino, that he is not writing with "gravity" but "rather in a style that is free and jocose". And he remarks that the mention of Bacchus may "be a sign not without meaning", because he "*heals* more salubriously" than Phoebus.[59] On the other hand, as Ficino often remarks, Apollo-Phoebus and Bacchus are inseparable brothers. Phoebus is the inventor of medicines and teacher of poetry who "gives us of his life not only by herbs but through the lute and music".[60]

All this is related to the fact that this text is not only a theoretical treatise but a practical instruction. In fact, the *De vita* is intended as a vade-mecum for scholars who, because of the character of their intense and focused studies, are in danger of excessive melancholy (the cold and dry bodily humour, related to the element of earth). It proposes advises which are *healing*. In the first two books of the *De vita* trilogy, such a healing, or prophylaxis, is focused, primarily, on the material body. The third book, however, is mainly concerned with processes in the "subtle" body – i.e., not only the sensory but also the cognitive, emotional and volitional components, for which the movements of the subtle-bodily "spirits" are responsible.[61] Ficino keeps assuring us that his "natural magic" is indeed limited to the "natural", medical contexts. But there are hints in his other works that it may have overlaps to higher ontological levels.[62]

The healing process uses the "three Graces", as emphasized by Ficino, i.e., the three beneficial "stars": Jupiter, Sun, and Venus.[63] Their positive influence is explained by use of astrological and mythological contexts. The most favourable for humans is the influence of Jupiter, whose "quality is very balanced, and whatever we ask of the Sun or Venus we get from him in his way"; moreover, it leads to philosophy, the discovery of truth and religion. Practically, this means the use of various plants, medicinal mixtures, stones, colours, scents and sounds which traditional astrology and astro-medicine associated with various planets and their characteristics. Thus, they were in a hidden sympathy with the planets, in accordance with the Neoplatonic "series". The aim here is to prepare and purify our bodily "spirits" by natural remedies and bring them to the proper harmony with the "spirit and life of the world". The "spirit", according to Ficino and the medical tradition, is a superfine entity that mediates between the material body and the immaterial soul. For Ficino, the same holds true for the world itself which is also a living being:[64] the immaterial soul of the world and the material world are connected by the world spirit.[65] It is diffused and coloured, so to speak, by means of the rays of the stars and planets and it is present in all things from which we can draw it. This omnipresent entity is, basically, the transmitter of life, the principle of which is the soul. The substance of the spirit itself is of a solar, Jovial, Venusian and Mercurial nature, while Saturn, Mars and Luna have little in common with the healthy spirit, but on the contrary make it dull and foolish.[66]

Therefore, we should accommodate us to the influence and qualities of the three ancient deities primarily, Jupiter, Apollo and Venus. We should even *imitate* them.[67]

3.3. Images

A specific way of how planetary influences – or the pagan gods who personify them -- can be used by us, according to Ficino, is by means of their magical images or talis-

mans. Although Ficino repeatedly expresses the reservation that he personally does not recommend this part of natural magic but only refers to it, given the space he dedicates to this topic, it is hard to believe him.[68] Thus he says:

> Then there are the particular written characters of the signs and planets as delineated by the Egyptians. They want all these, therefore, to be engraved on images. For example, if anyone looks for a special benefit from Mercury, he ought to locate him in Virgo, or at least locate the Moon there in an aspect with Mercury, and then make an image out of tin or silver…[69]

Or:

> To obtain long life, the ancients used to make an image of Saturn from the stone Feyrizech, that is, sapphire, in the hour of Saturn, when he was ascending and fortunately placed.[70]

This, again, pertains, to the idea of drawing life from the soul of the world and of making our *spiritus* as "heavenly" as possible[71] -- now with the help of images which can condense so to speak the planetary, and generally heavenly, influences. This way, the magical planetary images, i.e., the pagan gods, can be used to "heal" our subtle-material body: our thoughts, our will, our emotions, our feelings.

Finally, Ficino offers an even more spectacular way of healing which consists in exposing our "spirits" to the "image of universe" (*imago universi ipsius*). This method is described in the 19th chapter of the third book *On Life*. As he says, one should "sculpt an archetypal form of the whole world" in bronze and then imprint it, at the right time, "in a thin gilded plate of silver", but not in "the day of Saturn". The engraving should be done "on the birthday of the year, especially if then Jupiter and Diana [i.e. Venus]" are present. It is important to work not only with "lines" but also with colours. It is good to "add to the spheres, for a true imitation of the heavens, golden stars, and to clothe Vesta herself or Ceres, that is, the earth, with a green garment". Such and image should then be not simply observed but "reflected upon in the mind":

> In like manner, in the very depth of his house, he should construct a chamber, vaulted and marked with these figures and colours, and he should spend most of his waking hours there and also sleep. And when he has emerged from his house, he will not note with so much attention the spectacle of individual things as the figure of the universe and its colours. … You, however, will fashion a better image within yourself when you know that nothing is more orderly than the heavens and that nothing can be thought of that is more temperate than Jupiter; you should hope at last to attain benefits from the heavens and from Jupiter…[72]

Obviously, this "universal image" should attract the beneficial powers of the "Three Graces", and especially those of Jupiter. The gods mentioned here are representants of planets, and thus of various qualities of the "spirit" drawn from the heaven, as the next chapter explains. They are not just allegories but real forces and powers. According to those (Arabic authors) who believe it, Ficino says here, these astronomical and magical images and statues enclose "the spirits of the stars". As he remarks, "some regard the spirits of the stars as wonderful celestial forces, while others regard them as daemons attendant upon this or that star".[73] They can "take possession of human bodies and speak, move themselves or other things, and work wonders through them". Some also believe that the "daemons who inhabit the cosmic fire are insinuated into our bodies through fiery or ignited humours, and likewise through ignited spirits and fiery emotions". Similarly, "through rays caught at the right time and through fumigations, lights and loud tones, the spirits of the stars can be introduced into the compatible materials of images and can work wonders on the wearer or bystander":

> The Arabs say that when we fashion images rightly, our spirit, if it has been intent upon the work and upon the stars through imagination and emotion, is joined together with the very spirit of the world and with the rays of the stars through which the world-spirit acts. And when our spirit has been so joined, it too becomes a cause why (from the world-spirit by way of the rays) a particular spirit of any given star, that is, a certain vital power, is poured into the image - especially a power which is consistent with the spirit of the operator.[74]

3.4. The Sun

As we have saw in the beginning, a specific position belongs to Apollo-Foebus, the god of the Sun, or rather the Sun itself. Here, the peculiarity of Ficino's approach to the ancient gods is, perhaps, most visible. For him, the Sun is not a body, a natural object, but, as all planets, primarily an animating soul which is identical with its moving god. It is one of the Three Graces, so that

> whoever could grasp the light and heat of the Sun in all its purity and the quality with which they exist in it, and adapt them to his own use and in his own way, would take from thence eternal youth, or live at least one hundred and twenty solar years.[75]

The case of the Sun is special, however. Its light is not a natural light but has been infused in it directly from God.[76] Not from the pagan god Apollo, but from the Christian Triune God. But the light and "spirit" are similar and close related entities for Ficino. Thus, we may assume that if we receive the vital spirit and the light of the Sun, on the one hand, we receive its life-giving natural power, but, on the other hand, we receive here something from beyond of the purely natural.

4. Conclusion

In a way the pagan gods represent astral powers for Ficino. These are not philosophical principles like Plethon's. If anything, they are the heads of the "series" of beings, as in Proclus. For Ficino, however, the mythological stories are of great importance as they reveal how the gods interact with each other and which ones can rely on as our benefactors. Gods are not just imaginative allegories that could be fully rationally explained. They are, in Ficino's view, autonomous powers, even souls, which can be "invocated" for help. The "world spirit" of the living world is imbued with them, and, trhough it, they can foster our own "spirits". They can be used to enhance our life if we know how to get into contact with them and how to "imitate" them.

It is important to keep in mind the overall context of Ficino's *De vita*: its aim is to cure the melancholic malady of scholars. Ficino keeps repeating that he does not stretch it any further. He is certainly no "polytheist", as gods for him are limited by nature. Still, his project of the natural magic may be more daring. This is, perhaps, best visible on his conception of the Sun which, as the symbol of the invisible God and as a bearer of the divine light, overlaps into the realm of the super-natural.[77] As Michael Allen has shown, the higher goal of Ficino's "photological magic" can be convincingly inferred from his attempt to link the biblical motifs of the transfiguration by light that occurred with Moses on Mount Sinai and Christ on Mount Tabor to Platonic and Neo-Platonic contexts. "Follow" the light from its coarsest forms to its subtlest is understood very realistically by Ficino. The "illumination", for him, means that our spirit is imbued with light of a certain degree and certain quality, and through it both the soul and the body are penetrated with light. Thus, natural magic, following the luminous influences of the stars, or pagan deities, and imitating them, can be seen, ultimately, as a path to the resurrected, transfigured, Christ-like body.

Notes

[1] See M. Ficino, *Platonic Theology*, transl. M. Allen, London 2001, vol. 1, "Proem", pp. 9-11.

[2] See M. Ficino, *Platonic Theology* XVII,1, vol. 6, p. 6, where Hermes is the father of the ancient wisdom; for Zoroaster as the first sage, see idem, *In Plotini epitomae*, "Prooemium", in: idem, *Opera omnia*, Basel 1576, p. 1537. On various interpretations, contemporary criticisms and implications of the *prisca philosophia*, see M. Mulsow, "Ambiguities of the Prisca Sapientia in Late Renaissance Humanism", in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 65, 2004, pp. 1-13.

[3] A. G. Hill, Wordsworth, Boccaccio, and the Pagan Gods of the Antiquity, in *The Review of English Studies* Feb. 1994, Vol. 45, No. 177, pp. 26-41, here p. 30.

[4] This question is, of course, very complex and it can be approached from various perspectives. My attempt is but a brief (and uncomplete) sketch. In the context of the Renaissance, it has been scrutinized, to mention just the notorious works, by Jean Seznec in his *Survival of the Pagan Gods* (French ed. 1940, English 1953), Edgar Wind in his *Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance* (1958), Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl in their *Saturn and Melancholy* (1964, German ed. 1990, new English ed. 2019), and Joscelyn Godwin in his *Pagan Dream of the Renaissance* (2002).

[5] Tertullian, "On the Objection of the Heretics," in D. Ayerst, A. S. T. Fisher (eds.), *The Records of Christianity*, vol. 1, Oxford 1971, pp. 95-96.

[6] See, e.g., W. R. Cook, R. B. Herzman, *The Medieval World View*, New York 1983, pp. 56-60.

[7] Justin Martyr, *1Apol.* 46,3; *2Apol.* 46,2; see R. Fialová, *Justin Mučedník a jeho Bible*, Prague 2018, p. 48; M. Simon, "Early Christianity and Pagan Thought: Confluences and Conflicts", in *Religious Studies*, Dec 1973, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 385-399, here p. 385.

[8] See R. Herzman, "Confessions 7.9: What Has Athens to Do with Jerusalem?" in *The Journal of Education*, 1997, Vol. 179, No. 1, pp. 49-60.

[9] Yet Justin can make use also of the pagan mythologies to show that, although being of legendary character, they are no more and no less credible the teachings of Christians. See M. Simon, "Early Christianity and Pagan Thought", p. 392.

[10] See P. Dudzik, "Tatian a jeho Promluva k Řekům", in: Tatian, *Předmluva k Řekům*, Prague 2016, p. 56-59; Athenagoras of Athens, *Legatio pro Christianis*, I, chap. 13-30, where Athenagoras uses the euhemerist interpretation of pagan gods.

[11] W. Liebeschuetz, "Mythology in the Christian Empire", in: *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* Fall 1995, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 193-208, here pp. 195-6.

[12] A very specific case is, however, Hermes Trismegistos who, as it were, went the other way round. From the ancient Egyptian god Thovt, melting with the Greek Hermes, he evolved into the ancient father of all wisdom who was, at the same time, the greatest king, the greatest priest, and the greatest philosopher. He had been taken for a historical personality by the Renaissance authors who, like Ficino, had been seeking the "ancient wisdom" (*prisca sapiential*), until Isaac Casaubon proved in 1614 that the Hermetic texts were much younger.

[13] Plutarch, *De Is. Et Osir.* 67; quoted in M. Simon, "Early Christianity and Pagan Thought", p. 394-395.

[14] Apuleius, *Metam.* 11,5.

[15] Proclus, *Comm. in Tim.* I, p. 210 (ed. E. Diehl, Leipzig 1903-1906), *passim*; quoted in R. Klibansky, E. Panofsky, F. Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*, Nendeln 1979, p. 151, n. 80.

[16] The allegoresis of Homer's poems is of an old date, see E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, Princeton 2013, chap. 11 "Poetry and Philosophy", pp. 203-207.

[17] Plato, *Republic*, 506c-509d; 514a-517a.

[18] Cf., e.g. Plato, *Cratylus* 407a8-b2.

[19] Cf. A. L. Ford, *The Origins of Criticism: Literary Culture and Poetic Theory in Classical Greece*, Princeton 2002, pp. 86 f.

[20] Srv. W. Scheuermann-Peilicke, *Licht und Liebe. Lichtmetapher und Metaphysik bei Marsilio Ficino*, Hildesheim 2000, pp. 56 ff.

[21] Plotinus, *Enn.* III,5; see J. Charrue, *Plotin, Lecteur de Platon*, Paris 1978; R. Chlup, *Proclus*, Cambridge 2012, pp. 40-41, 191-200.

[22] See, e.g., D. T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the "Timaeus" of Plato*, Leiden 1986; idem, *Exegesis and Philosophy. Studies on Philo of Alexandria*, Aldershot 1990.

[23] Augustine, *City of God* XVIII, 14.

[24] A. Smith, "The Pagan Neoplatonists' Response to Christianity", in: *The Maynooth Review / Revieú Mhá Nuad,* Dec. 1989, Vol. 14, pp. 25-41, here p. 29.

[25] J. Seznec, *The Survival of Pagan Gods*, New York 1961.

[26] R. Klibansky, E. Panofsky, F. Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*, p. 133 and 155, n. 97.

[27] Ibid., p. 139.

[28] Ibid., p. 151.

[29] Ibid., p. 158.

[30] Ibid., pp. 171-173.

[31] See J. Solomon, chap. 20 "Gods, Greeks, and Poetry (Genealogia deorum gentilium)", in: M. Kirkham, W. Sherberg, J. L. Smarr (eds.), *Boccaccio. A Critical Guide to the Complete Works*, Chicago – London 2013, pp. 235-244.

[32] See C. G. Osgood, *Boccaccio on Poetry, Being the Preface and the Fourteenth Books of Boccaccio's Genealogia Deorum Gentilium in an English Version with Essay and Commentary*, Princeton 1930, p. 44.

[33] See *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods*, vol. I: Books I-V. I Tatti Renaissance Library, 46 by Giovanni Boccaccio and Jon Solomon, review by: W. G. Regier, *MLN*, January 2012, Vol. 127, No. 1, Italian Issue (January 2012), pp. 160-162, here p. 161.

[34] Boccaccio, *Genealogia* 14.22.1 and 15.8.4; quoted in J. Solomon, "Gods, Greeks, and Poetry (Genealogia deorum gentilium)", p. 237.

[35] Boccaccio, *Life of Dante*, trans. P. H. Wicksted, London, 1904, pp. 72-73.

[36] On Plethon, see V. Hladký, *The Philosophy of Gemistos Plethon*, Farnham 2014. Another author of the period whose work was seen as a revival of paganism, is the poet Marulus (1450-1524), see Ch. Fantazzi, "Introduction", in Michael Marullus, *Poems*, Cambridge, Mass. 2012, p. xix.

[37] V. Hladký, *The Philosophy of Gemistos Plethon*, pp. 2 and 282 f.

[38] V. Hladký, *The Philosophy of Gemistos Plethon*, p. 203.

[39] Plato, *Republic*, 379a ff. and 519d.

[40] Cf. V. Hladký, *The Philosophy of Gemistos Plethon*, p. 283.

[41] E. Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, New Haven 1958, p. 24.

[42] See Plato, *Republic* 508a-509b.

[43] M. Ficino, *De sole*, Proemium and chap. 1.

[44] This is, of course, a hint at the medieval teaching on the fourfold sense of the Scripture, one literary and three spiritual meanings, i.e., allegorical (what to believe), moral (what to do) and anagogical (what to hope for). Typically, Ficino leaves aside the literary meaning.

[45] Ficino to Angelo Poliziano, 20th August 1494, *Epistolae*, XII, in: *Opera omnia*, p. 958: *in libro de Sole, non tam Astronomica doceo, quam per haec morales allegoriasque ad divina perquiro. ... tam in libris de vita, quam de Sole et lumine cum Philosophicis poetica miscens, liberius sum interdum et forte licentius evagatus…*

[46] M. Ficino, *De sole*, chap. 1. On "poetic" speech, see M. Ficino, *De sole*, chap. 12; idem, *In Platonis Ionem ... Epitomae*, in: *Opera omnia*, p. 1282; idem, *In Parmenidem. Sexta suppositio*, 1, in: *Opera omnia*, p. 1199, etc.

[47] Plato, *Ion*, 533e ff.; *Republic*, 366b (poets as the „sons of gods and prophets of gods").
[48] M. Ficino, *When Philosophers Rule*, transl. A. Farndell, London 2009, pp. 9-10: „The second kind is above the influence of the Moon and is caused by a draught of nectar, so that the mind, being put outside itself and above itself, forgets mortal infirmities and in absorbing matters divine is dazzled by their primal brilliance; or rather, by savouring their taste, is taken out of its old ways by some unfamiliar warmth. But soon the mind sees clearly, enjoys wholesome tastes, and is properly nourished. Indeed, the divine Idea, by which the mind was made, penetrates the mind when it returns, as flavour penetrates taste. Its first action is to gently wash from the mind all that is foreign to it. Then it fills the mind completely, giving it greater delight by so doing. Its third action is to bring the mind back to itself, flooding it with inexpressible joy, when the mind first becomes intellect through the soul and finally becomes God through the intellect. And it no longer savours as it previously did, but it savours new things in a new way. And just as, in our experience, a strong imagination forms and moves the body, so in that realm the body together with its senses, being subject to the soul, is directly moved and shaped by the powerful action of the mind, so that body and senses are wondrously soothed by the ineffable sweetness of the mind."
[49] M. Ficino, *Summary of Plato's Ion or On Poetic Frenzy*, in: M. Ficino, *Gardens of Philosophers*, transl. A. Farndell, London 2006, p. 54: "There are thus four kinds of divine frenzy: the first is poetic frenzy; the second, that of the Mysteries; the third, prophecy; the fourth, the movement of love. Now poetry is from the Muses, mystery from Dionysus, prophecy from Apollo, and love from Venus. Indeed, the soul cannot return to the One unless it itself be made one. But having been made many, it has fallen into a body: it has been split into various operations, and it attends to separate items."
[50] M. Ficino, *In Parmenidem. Sexta suppositio*, 1, in: *Op. omn.,* p. 1199: *Itaque ferme omnis [Platonis] verborum facies poscit allegoriam*.
[51] M. Ficino, *Gardens of Philosophers*, p. 57-8; idem, *In Platonis Ionem Epitome*, in: *Opera omn*ia, p. 1283: *cum Musas, sphaerarum mundi animas ... Iupiter quidem mens Dei est ... Iupiter rapit Apollinem. Apollo illuminat Musas. Musae suscitant et exagitant lenes et insuperabiles vatum animas. Vates inspirati interpretes suos inspirant. Interpretes auditores movent.*
[52] M. Ficino, *When Philosophers Rule*, p. 83: „In this matter the Muses signify the divine discovery of truth granted to religious people by God; Apollo signifies the pleasing expression of this discovery, as well as prophecy; and Bacchus signifies abstraction of mind and the admirable work of religious men."
[53] Plato, *Laws*, 745b ff.
[54] M. Ficino, *When Philosophers Rule*, p. 105.
[55] M. Ficino, *In commentaria Platonis … Prooemium*, in: *Opera omn*ia, p. 1129.
[56] E.g., M. Ficino, *De sole*, chap. 2.
[57] Srv. W. Scheuermann-Peilicke, *Licht und Liebe*, pp. 64 f.
[58] See M. Ficino, *De Sole*, chap. 2: *Res nulla magis quam lumen refert naturam boni. Primo quidem lumen in genere sensibili purissimum eminentissimumque apparet*; idem, *De lumine*, chap. 16: *Denique lumen es, quasi numen quoddam in mundano hoc templo, Dei similitudinem referens*.
[59] M. Ficino, *Three Book on Life*, transl. C. V. Kaske, J. R. Clark, Tempe 1998, p. 103 (italics mine).
[60] M. Ficino, *Three Book on Life*, "Proem", p. 105.
[61] See M. Ficino, *Three Book on Life*, I, chap. 2, p. 111: "This instrument is the spirit, which is defined by doctors as a vapor of blood-pure, subtle, hot, and clear. After being generated by the heat of the heart out of the more subtle blood, it flies to the brain; and there the soul uses it continually for the exercise of the interior as well as the exterior senses". For the most subtle "spirits" of the black bile, similar to *aqua vitae*, see ibid., I, chap. 6, p. 121; cf. ibid., II, chap. 14, p. 207: "the spirit, which is constituted from the subtler portions of the humors, has naturally a fifth form most tempered and bright and therefore celestial…"; on the subtle „quality of the spirit", see ibid., III, chap. 11, p. 293.
[62] See M. B. Allen, "Transfiguration and the Fire within: Marsilio Ficino on the Metaphysics and Psychology of Light", in: P. J. Forshaw (ed.), *Lux in Tenebris. The Visual and the Symbolic in Western Esotericism*, Leiden 2017, pp. 50-65; to this, we will return later.
[63] See M. Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, III, chaps. 5 and 6.
[64] M. Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, III, chap. 11, p. 289 (i.e., *De vita coelitus comparanda*, 11, in: *Opera omnia*, p. 544); idem, *In Platonem* (*Introductio ad disputationem de amore. Oratio sexta*, 3), in: *Opera omnia*, p. 1342; et al.
[65] See M. Ficino, *Three Books on Life* III, chaps. 1; 3; etc.
[66] See M. Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, III, chap. 11.
[67] M. Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, III, chap. 6, p. 275: "Finally, when you fear Mars, set Venus opposite. When you fear Saturn, use Jupiter. And see to it that you engage in some continual motion so far as possible … imitate so far as possible the action of the heavens. But if you can pass through larger spaces in your motion, you will thereby imitate the heavens all the more and will get in contact with more of the strengths of the celestials which are diffused everywhere"; chap. 14, p. 313: "you should imitate both the dignity and the gifts of the Sun in your life"; chap. 21, p. 357: "not to think we are speaking here of worshipping the stars, but rather of imitating them and thereby trying to capture them"; ibid., p. 359: "Thirdly, observe the daily positions and aspects of the stars and discover to what principal speeches, songs, motions, dances, moral behavior, and actions most people are usually incited by these, so that you may imitate such things as far as possible in your song, which aims to please the particular part of heaven that resembles them and to catch an influence that resembles them … song is a most powerful imitator of all things. It imitates the intentions and passions of the soul … when it imitates the celestials, it also wonderfully arouses our spirit upwards to the celestial influence and the celestial influence downwards to our spirit"; chap. 22, p. 365: "our reason (either through the imagination and the spirit together, or through deliberation, or through both) by imitation is so able to adapt itself to Jupiter on account of its dignity and nearness to him that it can receive Jupiter and the rewards of Jupiter".
[68] See M. Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, III, chaps. 17 and 18.
[69] M. Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, III, chap. 18, p. 333.
[70] M. Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, III, chap. 19, p. 335.
[71] See M. Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, II, chap. 14, p. 205-209.
[72] M. Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, III, 19, pp. 343-347.
[73] M. Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, III, 20, p. 351.
[74] Ibid.
[75] M. Ficino, *De Sole*, chap. 12.
[76] M. Ficino, *De Sole*, chap. 11.
[77] On the following, see M. J. B. Allen, "Transfiguration and the Fire within: Ficino on Metaphysics and the Psychology of Light", p. 50 ff.

The Location of God: A Medieval Question on Pantheism and Its Responses in Early Modernity

Paul Richard Blum

Abstract: Peter Lombard discussed in his *Sentences* (lib. 1, d. 37) the meaning of the statement: *Deus est in omnibus*. It was an aside, as he noted, for it diverted the perspective from theology proper to the relation of things to the Creator. He differentiated divine presence as potency and essence and also as grace. Thomas Aquinas commented on the problem, both in his commentary on the *Sentences* and in his *Summa theologiae,* noticing the danger of pantheism (ante litteram, of course) when focusing on created things. During the Renaissance and early modern scholasticism the question: Where is God? and its legitimacy became a litmus test of Christian philosophy. Francisco Suárez and Théophile Raynaud reconstructed the history of the notion of divine omnipresence and its biblical hermeneutics and pointed to heretics past and present. Rodrigo de Arriaga responded by relating omnipresence to action at a distance in physics. Honoré Tournely, then, responding to Spinoza's pantheism, emphasized the otherness of God against rationalizing and naturalizing the divine. The formula, 'God is in everything,' discloses the conundrum that God's omnipresence is equally real, substantial, effective, particular, and universal.

Keywords: Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, Francisco Suárez, Téophile Raynaud, Rodrigo de Arriaga, Honoré Tournely, omnipresence of God, pantheism.

Introduction

Our interest is to investigate the context and conditions of pantheistic thought in Early Modernity. It is well known that modern secularism and atheism emerged after a historical period in which pantheism was a viable philosophical option. Pantheism promised to offer philosophical structure to such claims about nature that did not depend on revelation and yet asserted the existence and role of God in reality. As the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* defines it, at its most general, pantheism may be understood positively as the view that God is identical with the cosmos, that is, the view that there exists nothing which is outside of God, or else negatively as the rejection of any view that considers God as distinct from the universe.[1]

Among the many possible approaches, in this case we look at the proposition that God is indwelling in creation with the specific aspect of location. Is it legitimate – provided that God is involved in His creation – to raise the question, "Where is God?" The problem with that question is that a possible answer is: Everywhere is God. In that case, creation and creator cannot be distinct. Hence follows the objection that there must obtain a distinction between the Creator and creation to the extent that God's involvement in reality is not that of location. This problem of the location of God has been addressed by Peter Lombard in his *Sentences* (1:37-38), and commentators on this work followed suit. The evolution of the discussion marks the evolution of pantheism.

1. Peter Lombard

Let us start with Petrus Lombardus (1100-1160).[2] He discusses the problem of panentheism and of pantheism (of course not in those terms) as the questions, whether all things are in God and whether God is in all things. Evidently, the creation is in God's mind, but not substantially; otherwise, things were identical with God's essence (*Si enim hoc diceretur, intelligerentur esse eiusdem cum eo essentiae*; dist. 36, n. 1, col. 619). In a way, Peter thus established what we would call pan-en-theism, teaching "all things are in God;" however things are in God not as such, not as substances but mentally. Hence, the absolute metaphysical distinction between Creator and creation is maintained. Peter then discusses in which sense it can be said that "God is in things" (*Deus dicatur esse in rebus*). The answer is: the way in which God may be said to be everywhere and in all created things is *essentialiter, praesentialiter, potentialiter* (dist. 37, n. 1, col. 621 and 622). Before we consider the meaning of these adverbs, we notice that Peter states as a precaution that this way of presence exceeds the grasp of human understanding (col. 621). He adduces several authorities, of whom Gregorius is reported to phrase the presence as *praesentia*, *potentia*, *substantia*, which strictly speaking is not the same: Peter reduces the presence that sounds the 'being in' to modes of being. Referring to St. Paul (*Colos*. 2:9) and Augustine (*Epist*. 187, c. 6, n. 19; MPL 33, 739), the presence is a mode of *gratia*, insofar as God fills the variety of things that He erected as his *dilectissimum sibi templum gratia suae bonitatis* (col. 621). The presence by way of grace may be seen as a version of potential pantheism insofar as the purpose of creation was, indeed, the erection of the temple of the divine grace and goodness. From Ambrosius' *De Spiritu sancto* (ch. 7, n. 81 and 86; MPL 16, 723) Peter derives the distinction of the three Persons so that the Holy Spirit demarcates the distinction of the limited-

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ness of creation, on the one hand, from the divine ubiquity and eternity, which is, then, the condition of the potential to fill everything and the Redemptor of the world (*qui replevit orbem , et, quod plus est, replevit et Jesum, totius mundi Redemptorem*; col. 622).

With these argumentative moves, Peter shows the potential of ubiquity, both in human perspective and in divine attributes. For theological questions proper, this is important because, as Peter says in dist. 17, n. 9, the Holy Spirit is in all things and fully in every creature; however, many things in which He dwells do not 'have' the Spirit; otherwise even creatures without intelligence would have the Holy Spirit.[3] We observe a clear distinction between presence and possession: God is everywhere, but not everywhere is God. Things have no claim on the divine while their very existence depends on the presence of the Creator.

One viable response to the issue of the ubication of God, as already implied in the previous discussion, is the reference to grace. God's indwelling by way of essence, presence, and potency is thinkable as grace and goodness – we could translate that as God's care for His world. Therefore, the most convincing case of presence is that of grace bestowed on saints. Grace transforms presence in any vague sense into indwelling (*habitare*) in those who are of themselves good and thus *templum eius et sedes eius* (dist. 37, n. 2). The prime mode of location is metaphorical and spiritual, depending on the habitus of the recipient. Hence (ibid.), "The throne of wisdom is the soul of the just; for in the just ones, it is more specifically than in other things, in all of which nevertheless it is fully." This quotation from the *Book of Wisdom* (Sap. 7, 27; et c. 9, 10) presupposes that God is potentially and essentially present in the form of wisdom. Interestingly, later authors dismissed the role of grace, or reduced it to the presence of God in saints.

We should at least mention in passing that this form of speaking implies a negative theology, since it resorts to images and metaphors to discuss the unfathomable. In this case the unfathomable is God's location. Another aspect of this theology is its burdening of the recipient with the responsibility for God's presence. As Augustine said (not quoted here by Peter), "If God is, He is everywhere present." This is a moral statement, rather than an ontological one, for the statement is followed by the exhortation to the sinner: "Whereto are you stealing yourself from the eyes of God in order to speak somewhere what He would not hear?" Hence, Augustine continues, "Don't think of God in places – He is with you as such one as you were. […] Wherever you take refuge, there He is."[4]

Later, in section 4, Peter explains with a long quotation from Augustine (*De agone christiano*) that God couldn't possibly be affected by the limitations of the creation, which He inhabits in his divine way. It is like the sun that shines on dirty matter without becoming sordid. Obviously, that is an application of the universal truth (stated in section 5) that talking of divine location does not affect the divine nature. God's being everywhere has nothing in common with physical space and time. Even created spirits do have location (n. 6) in the sense of being at one place while being absent from another place, and yet they are not acquiring local dimensions; but God is absolutely location-free (*illocalis*) and non-circumscribable, because space and time are properties of changeable things as distinct from God (n. 9). Consequently, God's omnipresence is possible due to His infinity and physical and quantitative immobility and unchangeability (n. 14: *non tamen spatiosa magnitudine nec locali motu, sed immensitate atque immobilitate suae essentiae*).

Two lessons can be taken from this discussion: the first is that talking of God in general, but specifically discussing the relation of God to reality as in the question of divine presence, has to be constantly alert against reifying God in physical terms, although the whole exercise aims at understanding the relevance of the divine for the mundane. The other lesson is that, paradoxically, the most adequate language to address the relation between God and Creation is that of metaphor and spirituality. Metaphorically, God inhabits the world and most importantly the human soul. God is present in the saints to the extent of their saintliness; but, even more disturbing, God is present in human individuals to the extent of their sinfulness. This second lesson, it appears, does not help in understanding the world; it rather leads away from the world as it does not offer any refuge.

2. Thomas Aquinas

Among the countless commentaries on the *Sentences,* we now turn to Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). In his commentary on *Sentences*, Aquinas emphasizes that the question of any presence of God in things is one of modes, rather than of substance. That is known even from the comparison of physical with spiritual things in motion. In bodies, the mover and the moving cannot be in the same place, whereas spiritual movers are present in the moved object (like the soul in the body) without being shaped by that location.[5]

Commenting on the being in things by potency, presence, and essence, Aquinas takes the mode of presence of God by grace in the saints and in Christ as equivalent but distinct modes. In discussing presence in things, Aquinas notices that this is of different meanings, depending on how one looks at the reality of things or by way of concepts. From the perspective of things, 'God' has meanings as diverse as things are; but conceptually, the modes of presence, namely knowledge, potency, and others vary with the attributes of God. God is in all things universally, and that means modified by circumstance and perspective. This explains the constant wavering between denial and affirmation of propositions that may sound pantheistic. The presence is diversified according to the relation of things to God.[6]

The confusion about the relation between locality and God is provoked by two givens. On the one hand, every corporeal thing is tied to location, whereby, in Aristotelian physics, the location determines the limits of the body. On the other hand, since God cannot be delimited by any measure, it is God as the creator who sets those limits "by way of giving to the place the nature to locate and to contain" (*ut dans loco naturam locandi et continendi*) in the same ontological sense as God creates all features of things.[7] The fundamental difference is that between locating and being located. From this we may infer that the

common misunderstanding of pantheism, which assumes that God is everywhere without qualification, is that between the penetration of the infinite and the penetrability of the finite. Or, more generally, between the transcendent, which is foundational, and the real, which is dependent. The same difference obtains between the substance and the accident: to be somewhere is an accident to corporeal substances, although inevitable, whereas to be potentially and essentially everywhere is the essence of the infinite God.[8] Aquinas also states that saying God is everywhere – from the physical understanding of place – is metaphorical speech.[9]

In Thomas' comments on the *Sentences*, we implicitly gather the main objection against pantheism, namely the confusion between the state of creature and the Creator. While the entire question arises from the belief in the necessity and existence of God as the foundation and origin of everything, and especially as the logically and naturally necessary foundation of everything that is not absolute, the philosophical temptation is to consider the absolute in terms of the relative. Since nature is endowed with properties, among others location, in the pious attempt to fathom the divine, the temptation consists in projecting the finite back on the infinite rather than inferring the infinite from the finite. As Thomas says, concluding the question in his *Summa contra gentiles* (lib. 3 cap. 68 n. 9): God is "in all things in the mode of the agent" (*in omnibus per modum causae agentis*).

Ontologically speaking, God is no part of the creation and therefore has no properties of the created things, while He is in the created beings as the mode of the transcendent power. Also ontologically speaking, location is a relation. However, it is an external relation as it does not pertain to God's essence and interior denominations, such as wisdom, will, etc., which do not exist exterior to God. Location and time, on the contrary, are attributed to God only by way of human understanding (*secundum intelligentiae modum*) of the relation of something else to God (*Contra Gentiles*, lib. 2 cap. 13 n. 3).

We see that the problem of presence and omnipresence is that of the difference between claims in the ontological realm of things and the pure relation of the agent to the object. In the *Summa theologiae* we read: "God is in all things; however, not as part of the essence or as *accidens*, but as the agent is at hand in what it acts."[10] To be 'at hand' without participating in the object of action, that is the mode of presence of God in creation. And similar to what we have already heard, "Deus est in rebus sicut continens res" (ad 2.). Things are somehow located in God, if we guard our language from implying God to be a container; that is to say, location and presence are inevitably metaphorical expressions. This cautious way of expressing the relation of presence is also the condition for speaking of omni-presence. As soon as we liberate our speaking about 'God being in things' from the physical implication and understand that God is the locator of the located things, then also omnipresence becomes plausible. God "fills all places by giving being to all located things that fill places" (*per hoc replet omnia loca, quod dat esse omnibus locatis, quae replent loca*; a. 2, co.).
Now, the *Sentences* had declared that God is present *essentialiter*, *praesentialiter*, *potentialiter*; therefore, the meaning of these modes needs to be explored. Aquinas quickly gets the presence by grace out of the way: obviously, in humans God can be essentially present if they cognize and love God, as the saints do. The philosophical issue is that of essential presence in natural things. The enemy is Manicheism, meaning in philosophical terms dualism that separates the spiritual from the material realm. Against these, the involvement of the divine in the physical needs to be defended following the described patterns: everything is subject to God's potency; everything is "naked" under God's supervision (*omnia nuda sunt et aperta oculis eius*); and God is in everything as the cause of their being (a. 3, co.).

The question of ubiquity and presence of God is, philosophically speaking, an exercise in philosophical theology as the discipline that aims to establish methodical insight into realms that transcend rationality and therefore require fine-tuning of philosophical arguments. From the various problems that arise, it becomes plausible in what ways a philosophical theory about the relationship between the absolute and the relative can be derailed. The dualism of physics and theology is one flaw; pantheism, which identifies the finite and the infinite and thus abolishes transcendence, is another way to upset the balance.

3. Francisco Suárez

Aquinas' *Summa theologiae* has been the standard of theology over centuries starting with the Renaissance. As one sample, let us take a look into Francisco Suárez, S.J. (1548-1617).[11] To the quaestio 8 of *Summa I* he dedicated his chapter 2 of book II in his *Commentarii ac distributiones* on that book. First it is remarkable that the Jesuit summarizes the question of the location of God in the group of negative attributes of God, namely: infinite, immense, immutable, eternal, incomprehensible, and more. The "existence of God in all things or places" (title of chapter 2) is a subsection of the immensity. The reader should, therefore, be aware of moving in the area of negative theology. Apophatic theology makes statements about God from the finite perspective through cancelling out all that is finite. Speaking of ubication regarding God requires transferring whatever is associated with place in the material world to the immeasurable nature of God. After quoting from the Bible, Suárez explains:

> For the Scripture talks to humans in human ways and, thus, in order to describe that God fills all things, it uses this metaphor of human placement (*utitur metaphora illa humanae positionis*), as though he held the feet on the earth and the head in the heavens and would fill up everything else with his body.[12]

With this strong image it is manifest that when speaking of God's presence or assistance to things we are still using metaphors, which is known to be the proper way of speaking of God. When scrutinizing such figurative attributions of God, we should not forget that the omnipresence and any language of locality does not add or impute any perfection or real property (*modum realem*) to God's immensity. On the other hand, the suspicion arises that plain pantheism of the kind *deus sive natura* or "nature is all there is" overlooks the nuances between metaphorical

and apophatic speech and descriptive proposals with uninvestigated ontological implications.

Ubication is just an implication of God and things (*concomitantia*); for it lies in the nature of created beings to have no distance from God. "Just by being, [things] have the divine substance in them present that is altogether non-distant (*indistantem*) from themselves: and that is what we mean when we say God is in them." (n. 4, p. 38a) Instead of pondering location as some surrounding body, as was known in Aristotle's *Physics*, 'presence of God in things' means the absence of distance between God and things to the effect that location proves to be a metaphor for the negativity of dimensions in God. Consequently, the essential mode of presence of God in things is, for Suárez, the most proper conception. The non-distance of God's essence from His creation in all details (*per indistantiam essentiae suae ab omnibus rebus creatis*; n. 4, p. 38 a) is the true meaning of God's omnipresence. One consequence, which safeguards the distinction of things from God, is that this presence still is not implied in the definition of God by necessity but dependent on His freedom, namely, the freedom to create things outside of Himself.

Whereas immensity is a necessary attribute, an intrinsic mode of being, the discussed omnipresence depends on God creating external creation. "Being in things, as well as being everywhere, connotes that something actually exists outside of God, in which we affirm God to exist." It does not directly follow from God's immensity but, "if any one thing comes to be, it is necessary that God is in it by reason of His immensity."[13] Logically speaking, presence in things is *denominatio extrinseca*, that is to say signifying by something outside the thing rather than essential, although possible by God's essence.[14] Suárez comments on this assumption – if there is any one thing – terming it a hypothesis: 'if there were any such thing in existence outside of God …' Evidently, such a hypothesis is unrealistic because nothing is possible without God's action since there is nothing in existence without God's effective causation. What is striking here is the argument from finite things to God: is it at all possible to conceive of physical things without implying their being created? The answer lies in the distinction between a priori and a posteriori inferences.

The conclusion that the perfect efficient cause is perfectly present at the effect can be confirmed with an *a posteriori* argument, according to Suárez, in that we conclude from the action to the immensity. Any divine action in this universe can be extended to a doubly large universe and, from there, to infinite universes. However, the real presence of God in His creation depends on an *a priori* argument. From the immensity follows the actual presence in all things because the immensity implies action towards the existence of things; that is to say, God's action implies His presence.[15] It is striking that Suárez' contemporary expert of Thomistic philosophy, the heretic Giordano Bruno, employed the same reasoning regarding God's infinity. The fact that this does not exclude an infinite number of universes proved for Bruno that the universe is infinite and the worlds innumerable; and all that follows from God's perfection. In Bruno's case that amounted to a version of pantheism.

It should be noted that the question of ubication and immensity is largely discussed in Suárez's *Disputationes metaphysicae* (esp. disp. 22 and 30).[16] Disputation 51 is dedicated to the category "ubi" where also the distinction between material location and the location of spiritual beings is discussed. The distinction is this: being everywhere apparently implies a sort of 'somewhere' (*alicubi*), but this somewhere cannot be described or defined. That is correct, responds Suárez, because the 'where' of God is not among the categories of being, rather, in God, being somewhere and everywhere is his very essence.[17]

4. Rodrigo de Arriaga

A different approach is to be found in the Prague Jesuit Rodrigo de Arriaga (1592-1667). In commenting on Aquinas, he treats the question of the presence of God in things in his disputation about the existence, unity, simplicity, and perfection of God. Notably, there is no reference to negative theology. God is incorporeal and unchangeable, and the unchangeability of God is rooted in his immensity. Again, immensity offers the occasion to speak about God as being present everywhere. The first question is about the existence of God outside of heaven and in imaginary spaces. Arriaga reminds his readers that God being in imaginary spaces may not be taken in the sense as though those spaces were existing, because even the world as a whole is not in imaginary spaces. That is why they are termed imaginary. However, thanks to his immensity, God has a (conceptual) 'where' that is indistinguishable from himself. Arriaga explains it with the analogy of a mystic who has a beatific vision and sees God outside of the corporeal real spaces, and hence in seeing nothing the mystic sees God.[18]

This theorem of *spatium imaginarium* had become obligatory in late Renaissance physics and in Jesuit Philosophy.[19] It made it possible to treat the physics of moving bodies within the Aristotelian definition of place as the surface of the surrounding body of the located thing. This standard notion of place was not apt to describe physical movement as such, since place by definition does not move when the object occupies a new location. The concept was now supplemented with the idea of space, meaning the dimensions, within which the thing changes place, without any claim to physical reality; it was a mere conceptual necessity. Since the Aristotelian notion of place never was intended to be physically real (it was only the conceptual surface of the surrounding body), the new idea of imaginary space was ontologically not different from place but offered now the possibility of thinking of finite things to be moving in a merely conceptual three-dimensional space.

What we can see here is that with this approach Arriaga shifts the question of God's presence from the strictly theological realm to the question of physics. This is confirmed by his subsequent discussion of the presence of God due to his operation. God creates spaces and places by way of creating material things. That requires that God exists *formaliter* in every single location (*ubicationes*); and that implies that "God *formaliter* contains the perfection that consists in being in this or that place to the effect

to produce those locations that have a similar perfection."[20]

We had seen such an interpretation in Suárez, who identified the agency in the presence of God in creation. Arriaga's physical approach is confirmed by his discussion about the presence of God in things where he refers back to his own treatise on physics, in which he discusses the action at distance. This again, while known to the medievals, was a hot topic in early modern physics, involving among other things magnetism. Arriaga claims to have defended that immediate presence and physical contact without any intermediary causation is not necessary under the condition of absolute potency. This however does not sufficiently prove the immediate presence of God in things by way of his operation. He criticizes Suárez for his theory. The action does not make presence necessary. The argument is that God produces not only the things but also their locations, and from this he concludes that God has to contain in himself in an eminent way the locations of things, which is only possible if God is formally in every place where things exist and all their locations.[21] In his *Cursus philosophicus*, Arriaga holds that action at a distance is impossible in nature (admitting mediating causation). The theological objection that immediate action would require physical presence and hence God being immediately present in humans is rejected with the now familiar distinction between physical and spiritual or intentional presence. On the other hand, the physical presence in physical causation does not at all require the penetration of the cause in the effect; contiguity is sufficient. God's penetrating his creation is the result of his operation.[22]

Arriaga uses the language of 'formal' versus 'material,' saying that God has to contain the perfection in a formal way, which consists in any one thing being in this or that place. God can therefore produce locations, and from that we can infer the immensity of God out of his operations. The second argument is that it is impossible to imagine any real place or imaginary place where God is not present, which follows from his perfection. This is a version of Suárez' argument from *a posteriori* and *a priori* inference: From the concept of God's immensity follows His creating spaces; and from understanding the nature of location follows the presence of God.

It is noteworthy that for Arriaga the question of God's presence is not very important (he devotes only a few sections to it) and that he is clearly relating it to the physics of the creation. He seems to take the attributes of God for granted and therefore seems to be more concerned with the physical explanation of omnipresence. Equally, he doesn't seem concerned about the problems of pantheism. And he does not take many precautions to make sure the dialectics of God's indwelling in the world and the metaphysical and logical distinction of God from his creation remains challenging. Underestimating the speculative difficulty of understanding God as Creator and the creation as dependent from the Creator was most likely one pathway to early modern pantheism.

5. Théophile Raynaud

Around the same time as Arriaga, the Jesuit Théophile Raynaud (1583-1663) published his *Theologia naturalis*, a handbook of the part of metaphysics that – in the traditional Jesuit curriculum – deals with immaterial beings, i.e., angels and God. He devotes a long chapter to "the perfection of the Divine oneness derived from the unchangeability of God regarding place, that is, God's immensity."[23] One example of the usefulness of this treatise is the vast number of sources, ancient and recent, quoted to explicate the problem. The main thesis is this: God coexists substantially and by essence with every true or imaginary space that is infinitely extended; he is, hence, immense (immeasurable) and unmovable with regard to place (p. 691).

The notion of God being somewhere (*alicubi*) may refer to essence, presence, or power (as he endorses from Peter Lombard); however, only the first meaning of 'somewhere' may include place (p. 691a). The second meaning, presence, means God's view or watch that pervades everything (*contuitum omnia pervadentem*), probably implying providence. The location as potency refers to operations "from end to end" (*a fine usque ad finem*) which, as Raynaud avers, are possible even if the agent is not there. In this article, place-location as presence by essence and substance in "realibus locis" is the issue. We need to be aware that, for the question of pantheism, this distinction is of importance: what does the presence of God mean and entail, if not local presence, and how does it affect the distinction between God and creation? Equally, if the power of God makes God not only be present but also effective "in" the creation, what sort of "being in the creation" could that be?

Raynaud cites a number of authors who mistook the local presence physically and therefore in some ridiculous way, like God even being in the latrine, which might go back to Heraclitus who said in an aphorism that "even here are the gods" (frg. A 9), which he cites a few pages later.[24] The Presocratic dictum and the various reflections on God's sojourn on earth all revolve around the local and substantial interpretation that God is 'somewhere.' Therefore, to understand the verse of Psalm 138: "when I will ascend to the heaven, You will be there" as meaning that God is exclusively and substantially in heaven, is an error that is said to be refuted by Gabriel Vasquez and Hurtado (n. 76, p. 691b). This misunderstanding of divine location is, then, connected with the question of incarnation, as will become clear later in this disputation.

Among the misrepresentations of God's immensity are theories that teach God to be limited to the heavens or other places, which is due to the "carnal" view with bodily eyes so that God is considered in animal terms.[25] The opposite misrepresentation was to deny any presence of God (p. 692b). After reporting about many versions of asserting God's omnipresence from pagan and Christian authors, Raynaud also proposes the theory that God is "coexistent with the imaginary spaces," provided that such spaces are truly non-local and indeterminate. The true meaning of the idea is that if, hypothetically, "anywhere any real things exist or come to be, then God – not being enclosed in any circumscription of heaven – extends infinitely beyond and coexists with real things."[26]

Raynaud's favorite argument, however, is the Hermetic adage "God is a circle whose center is everywhere and circumference nowhere." For details, he refers to Nicholas of Cusa's interpretation in his *Docta ignorantia* I 21 and 23.[27] The adage is paralleled with quotations from Pimander, Pythagoreans, and other non-Christian and Christian authorities (p. 693a-b). The result is, presence is omni-presence: God is present in any physical place, but only by reason of his immensity and infinity so that the location does not reduce, delimit, or limit God's essence. Again, Raynaud applies hypothetical reasoning. We conceive of God's center to be in the middle of the world, although we can conceive of the center and middle to be anywhere else, while the imaginary space is implied in the concept of an infinite body. In other words, the statement about the center and the circumference is correct, provided we assume that in a corporeal world the center is anywhere (which is equivalent to hypothetically everywhere) and the circumference is infinite (which is equivalent to nowhere). Evidently, this way of reasoning starts with corporeal imagination and moves over to speculation. Regarding the idea of divine immensity, Raynaud emphasizes the negativity of the form of argument. However, he draws the positive conclusion that immensity does not entail a negation of the quiddity (*quidditative esse negationem*) but rather confirms there is "actual correspondence of God with any space, be that real or imaginary." Hence follows that the divine substance implies "infinite *quasi* local diffusion."[28] With that, scholasticism merges with Renaissance pantheism.

Raynaud elaborates further on the real presence and agency of God in creation by way of infinity and magnitude. It is crucial that God's infinity as immensity is essential, that is, infinity is not a property or any other attribution but given with the being and without any qualification.[29] Referring to Plotinus (*Enn*. VI 6, 31), Raynaud moves the concept of infinity close to negative theology (without using the term, of course), for infinity cannot be explained better than through negation of the end or terminus that encloses things. God is locally and temporally infinitely diffused by virtue of the denial of any local or temporal limit. Hence, God is *essentialiter* or by essence infinite because in his essence there are no limits of perfection (p.739a). At this point he refers to Gasparo Contarini's *Primae philosophiae compendium,* which discusses negative natural theology.[30] If the terminology of property is at all appropriate, then the relation that is manifest in propriety needs to be expounded. The infinity of God entitles him to reign over everything.[31] The presence and diffusion consists in the hierarchy (the governing of the degrees) and dominion of the perfect over the less perfect. Alluding to Aristotle's theory of the natural dominion of the master over the servants and the soul over the body, Raynaud suggests that God's presence is natural due to excellence. Even Epicurus (as Seneca reports in *De beneficiis* IV 19), while disarming the gods in order to liberate humanity of fear, held that the gods need to be worshipped for their outstanding majesty (n. 147-148, p. 758a-759a). This superiority results in domination. However, not every superiority empowers over the lower levels. Angels, he says, are superior to humans and yet have no dominion because they are of an entirely different species than humans. They do not form a community as, for instance, masters and servants form one community, in which one commands over the other. On the other hand, Angels, together with humans, are two communities that both are subject to God who is the vertex of all created beings. Therefore, the question regarding the location of God leads over to the understanding of presence and essence. Consequently, the superiority of God and the belonging of creation form a syndrome of natural theology, in which it is acceptable to speak of God dwelling in the world without abolishing the essential difference which would amount to plain pantheism.

6. Honoré Tournély

About a century after Raynaud, pantheism had become a public problem, due to Baruch Spinoza's philosophy. Therefore, the Paris professor Honoré Tournély (1658-1729) expressly mentioned Spinoza in his theology lectures. When discussing the existence of God, he claims that knowledge of the existence of God is "intimately impressed (*intime impressa*) in every human being." But what is it that is impressed? It is the idea of God who "factually and, indeed, alone is the most perfect being." Here the author mentions, in one breath, the Epicureans and Spinoza as those who "have the idea of a most perfect being but refer that to the world and don't believe in God." The error is, according to Tournély, that they transfer the idea of perfection, which they naturally share and admit, to the material world, "stupidly" contradicting themselves.[32] This is the shortest rebuttal against pantheism I know. Spinozism is equal to atomism (and we may remember Giordano Bruno as an atomist and precursor of Spinoza). If atomism that denies the existence of gods admits of highest perfection, then it imputes that perfection on the material world and endorses the same pantheism as that of Spinoza. The question of interest for us, here, is not whether Tournély does any justice to Spinoza or whether he is joining the anti-Spinozist tradition, but the coherence of the thought that the givenness of the idea of divine perfection may still lead to pantheism. The diagnosis we find here is this: lack of awareness of the notion of perfection as pre-empirical ('transcendental' in Kantian terms) induces to neglect the transcendent origin of the idea of the absolute and, hence, to bestow it on the world. It reminds us of Anselm's response to "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. Corrupt (*corrupti*) are they […]." The fool is victim of a performative contradiction (Anselm, *Proslogion* 2-4, on Ps. 14:1 and 53:1). Nevertheless, we should consider that the argument is actually not a systematic but a moral one. It is a moral flaw to not listen to the mind and to act stupidly. Pantheism is possible when the idea of God is projected upon the creation, although the very idea is distinct from the world.

Tournély comes back to Spinoza when he discusses the presence of God, which confirms that this attribute is closest to the temptation of pantheism. The question that precedes that about location is that God is about *simplicitas*. Is it the case that all compositions, be they physical, metaphysical, or logical, have to be removed from the idea of God? First among the heretics discussed is Spinoza. His *Ethics* is quoted where he says that there can be no two substances, nor can one be produced by another; that

God is the only substance possible or thinkable, and so on.[33] Tournély's thesis is that "God is not the only substance in the nature of things, nor is God that one and universal (*unica et universalis*) substance of the world."[34] For our purpose of interest are references to the extension of substance.

Such one and only substance must be extended – but where does mind or intelligence come from? Thinking and extension cannot be modes of the same substance because they are opposed. Even more, in scholastic terminology modes cannot apply to God, because a mode adds to a thing, which cannot be true of God, and if it were, then there had to be infinitely many modes, which annihilates all metaphysics of modality. As to extension, both as an attribute and as a mode, it provides alteration and mutation, which contradicts God's perfection that cannot be divisible. It is contradictory when Spinoza considers 'substance' as metaphysical and abstract, since every substance as such is to be viewed as physical (*physice ac in concreto spectanda*) and, hence, imperfect. Evidently, if God is the only and universal substance then he is everything *formaliter* including plant, rock, and lion.[35] With these objections, Tournély's explanation of the presence of God in things is predictable.

Of the generally accepted forms of presence (*potentia*, *praesentia*, *essentia*), Tournély focuses on essence, by which God "pervades and penetrates" everything as the "agent that is intimately present to the thing in which it acts" (p. 82a). He illustrates God's dwelling in the heavens through the comparison with the soul in the brain:

> As the soul diffuses all the spirit of life from the brain through all the limbs, so God infuses from the heaven […] in the entire circle of this universe the *quasi* spirit of his life conservation and providence while governing, moderating, and supporting everything, notwithstanding that he is by substance everywhere present.[36]

What this description conveys is the conundrum of omnipresence that is real, substantial, effective, particular, and universal – all at the same time. Doubts are possible whether his reference to the early modern anatomy of soul and brain makes sense. It is certain that the author favors the doctrine that God's presence in things can be inferred from his operation (p. 85a). This is the argument *a posteriori* that we have seen earlier. Predictably, Tournély also holds that "God's operation is transient, free, and external." With the possibility for God not to act, such operation is free and not included in the concept of God – hence not provable *a priori* – and the idea of God is metaphysically distinct (external) from that of creation.[37] The discussion closes with dismissing the question of imaginary spaces: Since there are no such fictitious imaginary spaces the debate about God being in or beyond imaginary spaces is moot (p. 87a). In Tournély's lectures we have a thorough and masterful discussion of the attributes of God that shows the influence of enlightenment philosophy that was shaping the debate about human understanding, cosmology, and natural theology. While defending the basics of scholastic philosophical theology they lay bare the implications that lead to empiricism as well as to pantheism.

7. Conclusion

This exploration of some classic and lesser-known commentaries on the theological question of the place of God has yielded some interesting results, especially with regard to the philosophical problem of pantheism. The problem turns out to be intimately linked with negative theology because any talk about God within the horizon of any determination inevitably violates the rule of ineffability. Therefore, we learn that by asking *where* God is we enter the realm of metaphorical discourse, which has its own rules in view of ontology and spirituality. What we need to avoid is what was called the "carnal view" or, rather, we need to be aware of that reifying temptation. For what we also notice is the fact that speaking about location and space in the context of God involves either the 'carnal' projection of finite and material samples onto the infinite and spiritual or the analysis of the absolute for the sake of understanding the dependent. In terms of logic, the projection requires *a posteriori* reasoning, including the provisional and uncertain nature of the result; the analysis of the concept of God follows *a priori* arguments, which may be well construed but depending only on the capacity of the human understanding. The latter concludes from the concept of God and his essence to his presence, the former from the finiteness of creation to the creator.

An interesting solution is to say that the physical perspective on omnipresence requires admitting that God produces not only things but also their locations. The emphasis, here, lies on the creative operation of the divine, which – as creation – implicitly allows for finitude, in producing both things and their attributes that all relate back to the absolute.

From this perspective it appears that underestimating the speculative difficulty of understanding God as Creator and the creation as dependent from the Creator was most likely one pathway to early modern pantheism. The subtleties of logical inference, of metaphorical versus factual language, of imagination versus inference, not to mention the ineffability of the object of negative theology – all these serve to safeguard the fundamental distinction between God and the world that rests in him and that he ultimately and constantly shapes. This distinction, methodologically, is clearly precautionary in terms of intent and outcome. So are pantheists bold and courageous, if not reckless? That is precisely how alleged pantheists like Giordano Bruno or Baruch Spinoza have been portrayed. Or as "corrupt" and "foolish" as Anselm's denier of God. Hence, localization is the touchstone of the distinction between the infinite and the finite, the absolute and the dependent, whereby the infinite can be conceived as quasi-local diffusion, with emphasis on diffusion: the infinite God can be present in things as though he were spreading out locally. As we saw, God is not in things in the category of "where" but by infinitely attending or caring. These, of course, are metaphors again.

One more aspect in the discussion about the omnipresence of God is that of dominion. God's care for the world is anything but cozy. He is setting the terms of the relationship. If time were a legitimate category (it has been discussed by the authors mentioned that it is not) the dominion of the Creator precedes the creation; epistemologically speaking, it is transcendental. Before any human

thinker can conceive of divine infinity and perfection it must have been true. Absolute perfection is pre-empirical; even the very idea of absolute perfection marks the fundamental distinction of the world from God. In one sentence, what we learn from this discussion is that God's omnipresence is equally real, substantial, effective, particular, and universal.

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Notes

[1] William Mander, "Pantheism," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2020 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2020), https:// plato. stanford.edu/ archives/ spr2020/ entries/ pantheism/. – This study is a result of research funded by the Czech Science Foundation as the project GA ČR 21-17059S "Pantheism and Panpsychism in the Renaissance and the Emergence of Secularism".

[2] The *Sentences* are quoted with reference to Petrus Lombardus, *Sententiarum libri quator*, ed. Jacques Paul Migne, Opera omnia 2: Patrologia Latina 192 (Paris: Migne, 1855), cited as MPL 192. On the medieval context see Luisa Valente, "'Deus est ubique, ergo alicubi?' Ubiquité et présence de Dieu dans le monde au XIIe siècle," in *Lieu, espace, mouvement: Physique, Métaphysique et Cosmologie (xiie-xvie siècles): Actes du colloque international Université de Fribourg (Suisse), 12-14 mars 2015*, ed. Tiziana Suarez-Nani, Olivier Ribordy, and Antonio Petagine (Barcelona: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Etudes Médiévales, 2017), 17–38. On more medieval discussions, especially Alexander of Hales, cf. Adrian Fuerst, *An Historical Study of the Doctrine of the Omnipresence of God in Selected Writings Between 1220-1270* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1951). Evidently, the question of the location of God was part of the philosophical debate about infinite space and vacuum, from the Middle Ages through early modernity; see Edward Grant, *Much Ado about Nothing. Theories of Space and Vacuum from the Middle Ages to the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). See also Jeffrey Witt, "An Introduction to God's Omnipresence through the 'four Ways' of Francis de Mayronnes OFM (Fl. 1320)," *Intellectual History Review*, forthcoming. Witt's paper inspired me to look into the issue in terms of pantheism.

[3] MPL 192, dist. 17, n. 9, col. 567: "Cumque ubique sit et in omni creatura totus, sunt tamen multi qui eum non habent. Non enim omnes Spiritum sanctum habent, in quibus est; alioquin et irrationabiles creaturae haberent Spiritum sanctum, quod fidei pietas non admittit."

[4] Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum 74, n. 9*, MPL 36, col. 952: "Si Deus est, ubique praesens est. Quo te auferes ab oculis Dei, ut in parte aliqua loquaris quod ille non audiat? […] Noli ergo cogitare Deum in locis; ille tecum est talis, quails fueris. […] Quocumque ergo fugeris, ibi est."

[5] Thomas Aquinas, *Super Sent*., lib. 1 d. 37 q. 1 pr and q.1 a. 1 co. All quotations of Aquinas are from https://www.corpusthomisticum.org.

[6] Aquinas, *Super Sent*., lib. 1 d. 37 q. 1 a. 2 ad 1 and ad 2, and q. 1 a. 2 ad 2, 3, and 4.

[7] Aquinas, *Super Sent*., lib. 1 d. 37 q. 2 a. 1 co.

[8] Aquinas, *Super Sent*., lib. 1 d. 37 q. 2 a. 2 co: "Deo autem per se convenit ubique esse: quia ipse totus est in quolibet loco; et infinitis aliis locis existentibus, in omnibus esset; et hoc non est communicabile alicui creaturae nisi communicaretur sibi esse virtutis infinitae."

[9] *Super Sent*., lib. 1 d. 37 q. 2 a. 1 co: "non convenit Deo esse ubique nisi metaphorice."

[10] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Iª q. 8 a. 1 co: "Deus est in omnibus rebus, non quidem sicut pars essentiae, vel sicut accidens, sed sicut agens adest ei in quod agit."

[11] Suárez appears to be aware of Duns Scotus' objections against Aquinas, but this is not the issue at hand; cf. Richard Cross, "Duns Scotus on Divine Immensity," *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers* 33, no. 4 (2016): 389–413; Grant, *Much Ado about Nothing*, 151–57.

[12] Franciscus Suarez, *Commentarii ac distributiones In Primam Partem Summae Theologiae D. Thomae* (Venetiis: Iuncta, Ciottus et Socii, 1608), 37b, lib. 2, cap. 2, n. 3: "Loquitur enim scriptura hominiubs more humano, et ita, ut describat Deum replentem omnia, utitur metaphora illa humanae positionis, ac si haberet pedes in terra, et caput in coelo, et corpore suo cetera repleret." The metaphor of feet on the earth and head in the heavens is a quotation from Augustine, *Enarratio in Psalmum 90,* Sermo 2, n. 5, MPL 37, col. 1167.

[13] Suarez, 38b, lib. 2, cap. 2, n. 5: "At vero esse in rebus actualiter, et similiter esse ubique connotant aliquam rem extra Deum actualiter existentem, in qua Deus dicatur existere. […] Hoc autem simpliciter necessarium non est […], necessitate absoluta, sed tantum conditionata, quia si talis res fit, necesse est, ut Deus sit in illa ratione suae immensitatis."

[14] Suarez, 38b, lib. 2, cap. 2, n. 5. (ibid. cf. SGent 2, cap. 13) Cf. Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, lib. 2 cap. 13 n. 3: "Duplex est modus quo aliquid denominative praedicatur. Denominatur enim aliquid ab eo quod extra ipsum est, sicut a loco dicitur aliquis esse alicubi, et a tempore aliquando: aliquid vero denominatur ab eo quod inest, sicut ab albedine albus. A relatione vero non invenitur aliquid denominari quasi exterius existente, sed inhaerente: non enim denominatur aliquis pater nisi a paternitate quae ei inest. Non igitur potest esse quod relationes quibus Deus ad creaturas refertur, sint res aliquae extra ipsum."

[15] Suarez, 39a, lib. 2, cap. 2, n. 7: "Potest autem hoc modo ex actione Dei inferri a posteriori immensitas ipsius, quia sicut agit in hoc univer-

sum, quod creavit, possit agree in aliud duplo magis, et sic in infinitum […] sine sui mutatione. Actualis vero praesentia substantialis ad omnes res existentes colligitur a priori ex immensitate, necessarium vero est adiungere actionem, ut per eam possint creaturae habere existentiam […]. Nam fundamentum ponitur ex vi immensiatis; terminus ponitur per actionem Dei."

A few sections earlier (ch. 2, n. 3, col. 37b), Suárez had stated that God's immensity can be demonstrated *a priori* from his infinity and perfection, and *a posteriori* from the effects and these not only factually but also from the infinite potential outcomes without changing himself.

[16] Franciscus Suarez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, (Opera omnia vol. 25-26) (Paris: Vivès, 1861) vol. 25, disp. 22, sect. 1: An possit sufficienter probari ratione naturali deum per se ac immediate operari in actionibus omnium creaturarum, esp. n. 16-23, pp. 805 ff.: Quomodo Deus immediate concurrat; vol. 26, disp. 30, sect. 7: An Deum esse immensum demonstrari possit, especially n. 52, pp. 112 ff.

[17] Suarez vol. 26, disp. 51, sect. 6, n. 7, p. 1005: "Quarto objici potest circa eamdem divisionem: nam Deus est etiam alicubi, cum sit ubique, et tamen neque est circumscriptive, nec definitive. Verum heec objectio potius declarat partitionem illam optime accommodari ad Ubi praedicamentale; nam Deus non est alicubi per aliquod Ubi pertinens ad hoc praedicamentum, quia ejus immensa praesesentia non est accidens, nec modus substantitae ejus, sed omnino ipsamet essentia ejus." On disp. 51 specifically see Olivier Ribordy, "La localisation comme enjeu métaphysique. Thèses sur le lieu, discutées par Francisco Suárez," in *Lieu, espace, mouvement: Physique, Métaphysique et Cosmologie (xiie-xvie siècles): Actes du colloque international Université de Fribourg (Suisse), 12-14 mars 2015*, ed. Tiziana Suarez-Nani, Olivier Ribordy, and Antonio Petagine (Barcelona: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Etudes Médiévales, 2017), 249–73.

[18] Rodericus de Arriaga, *Disputationes theologicae in Primam Partem D. Thomae. Tomus primus* (Antverpiae: Plantinus Moretti, 1643) disp. 2, sect. 9, n. 79, p. 48b: "[…] an Deus sit extra coelos in spatiis imaginariis. […] ut non intelligatur Deum esse in ipsis spatiis, quasi spatii aliquid sint: nam in hoc sensu neque mundus est in spatiis ullis; sed quod Deus habeat ratione suae immensitatis per Ubi a se indistinctum, id quod vere et realiter haberet mundus extra istum productus, ut scilicet existeret extra illum. Quod iam sic declaro: ut sicut Beatus clare Deum intuens […]; ita eodem modo (liceat sic concipere) si intueatur ultra coelum empyreum extra spatia realia corporealia, licet nullum ibi videat corpus, videat tamen Deum ibi […]."

[19] Paul Richard Blum, "Early Jesuit Philosophers on the Nature of Space," in *Jesuit Philosophy on the Eve of Modernity*, ed. Cristiano Casalini (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 137–65. For Francisco Suárez see: Miquel Beltrán, "El Dios de Suárez y los espacios imaginarios," in *Francisco Suárez (1548-1617): Tradição e Modernidade*, ed. Adelino Cardoso, António Manuel Martins, and Leonel Ribeiro dos Santos (Lisboa: Colibri, 1999), 93–98.

[20] Arriaga, *Disputationes in Primam Partem D. Thomae, I*, disp. 2, sect. 9, n. 81, p. 49a: "Nam Deus non solum producit res, sed etiam illarum ubicationes, ergo debet continere eminenter perfectionem earum ubicationum. […] ergo Deus formaliter debet continere perfectionem quae consistit in hoc, quod est esse in tali et tali loco, ut possit ubicationes, quae similem habent perfectionem, producere."

[21] Arriaga, disp. 2, sect. 9, n. 81, p. 49a.

[22] Rodericus de Arriaga, *Cursus philosophicus* (Parisiis: Quesnel, 1639), disp. 7 physica, sect 6, n. 48, p. 292a.

[23] Theophilus Raynaudus, *Theologia naturalis. Sive entis increati et creati, intra supremam abstractionem, ex naturae lumine investigatio* (Lugduni: Landri, 1622), dist. 7, q. 1, art. 6, pp. 690 ff.

[24] Raynaudus, n. 77, p. 693b, and n. 80, 695a, from Aristotle, *De partibus animalium* I 5, 645a18. It should be noted that the fragment of Heraclitus speaks of the fireplace or stove, but it is also known to have been a euphemism for latrine. Instead of *furnarium* (stove), Raynaud says *fumarium* (smoke chamber), which may be an error, but it also evokes an unpleasant place.

[25] Raynaudus, dist. 7, q. 1, art. 6, n. 76, p. 692a, quoting Fulgentius against Arrianus.

[26] Raynaudus, n. 81, p. 696a: "[…] Deum ibi esse eo quod substantia Divina non claudatur ambitu convexo extremi coeli, sed infinite ultra porrigatur, et ibi re ipsa iam nunc ita sit ut absque ulla sui mutatione coextitura esset veris rebus, si ibi aliquae quandoque fierent: Sic certissimum videtur quod contendunt […]." Many references follow.

[27] Raynaudus n. 82, pp. 697a-b. Cf. Paul Richard Blum, "Zentrum," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 12 (Basel: Schwabe, 2004), 1298–1301. Raynaud is more detailed than, for instance, Suárez, who also quotes the Hermetic text that "Deum comparavit sphaerae perfectae, cuius centrum est ubique et circumferentia nusquam." (disp. 30, sect. 7, n. 48, p. 110); he quotes it summarily and without further commentary, when discussing among the attributes of God the immensity, which is evidently connected with the presence of divine power in things, together with more sources of the Platonic tradition such as Marsilio Ficino and Augustinus Steuchus.

[28] Raynaudus, *Theologia naturalis*, n. 84, p. 699a: "Non dico Divinam immensitatem quidditative esse negationem: hoc enim falsum esset […]. Itaque per negationem indistantiae a quovis spatio, adiunctam Divinae omnipraesentiae, designo actualem correspondentiam Dei cum quovis spatio vero aut imaginario, quae Divinae substantiae immensitatem seu infinitam localem quasi diffusionem consequitur."

[29] Raynaudus, dist. 7 q. 3 art. 2, n. 127, p. 738b: "infinitatem non secundum propriam aliquam rationem, sed secundum quod ens seu simpliciter."

[30] Gasparo Contarini, "Primae philosophiae compendium," in *Opera* (Parisiis: Sebastianus Niuellius, 1571), 91–176, lib. 4, pp. 141-144.

[31] Raynaudus, *Theologia naturalis*, dist. 7 q. 3 art. 4, p. 757b: (heading) "De eadem Divinae naturae infinitate ut fundante eminentissimum titulum domini Dei in res omnes."

[32] Honoratus Tournely, *Cursus theologicus scholastico-dogmaticus et moralis, sive praelectionum theologicarum […] tomus primus* (Coloniae Agrippinae: Metternich, 1735), 41a, 44b: "agitur quippe de idea Dei, qui reipsa et quidem solus est ens perfectissimum. At inquires, Epicurei, Spinosa etc. habent ideam perfectissimi, nempe mundi, nec tamen in Deum confitentur? […] sed quia ideam illam ad mundum seu rerum universitatem transferunt turpiter aberrant, sibique manifeste contradicunt." The numbering of sections is confusing and therefore left aside.

[33] Tournely, 71a-b: "Simplicitatem Dei impugnavere […] Spinosa. […] 1. (Propositione quinta) ait, in rerum natura non posse dari duas aut plures substantias eiusdem naturae sive attributi […]" Almost literally are quoted *Ethics* I, propositions 5, 6, 15, 16, 29, and 36 (appendix).

[34] Tournely, 74a.

[35] Tournely, 75a.

[36] Tournely, 84b: "Sicut enim anima e cerebro omnem vitae spiritum per omnes corporis artus diffundit; ita Deus e coelo […] in omnem universi hujus ambitum, vitae conservationis et providentiae suae quasi spiritum infundit omnia regendo, moderando, sustentando; tametsi per substantiam ubique praesens adsit."

[37] Tournely, 86a: "[…] operatio vero Dei transiens, libera et externa; ergo praesentia Dei in rebus a priori non probatur ex operatione transeunte."

Elements of Life: Campanella's Living World Between Discord and Harmony

Elisabeth Blum

Abstract: In Campanella's magic universe, starting from the space that the first material substrate occupies, everything is alive with sense perception and a will of its own. The pre-condition of universal life is every creature's structural similitude to its trinitarian creator, whose Power, Wisdom, and Love are reflected in each individual as its power, knowledge, and will of existence. Since the active principle of life and sensation is fire – one of the two opposed physical elements Campanella assumes – the sensitive soul is material (animal spirits). In order to avoid both pantheism and dualism Campanella employs the inner dynamic of the trinitarian God for his cosmogony and cosmology.

Keywords: Campanella, Renaissance magic, panpsychism, pantheism, physical elements, animal spirits.

Panpsychism has recently achieved a kind of revival or second edition amongst philosophers of mind, who would employ it as an instrument for explaining our understanding of extra-mental objects: some common structure or disposition is presupposed that the mind could recognize as – its own or as itself? For cognizing itself in the other, or the other in itself?[1] Without a judgement on the explanatory power of such attempts, I would like to trace these theories back to a worldview, in which they had their legitimate place at its very foundation: the notion of universal animation, i.e., a living universe, was the cornerstone of Renaissance magic, enabling its propagators to account for the perpetual change of arising and perishing things and, in general, for their interaction, in terms of sympathy and antipathy. I chose as my testimony Tommaso Campanella, the less widely appreciated of the two peaks of Italian Renaissance magic, because he treats universal life as a central topic in a much more straightforward way than Giordano Bruno. As we will see, rather than panpsychism, Campanella's version of the universal life theory would be more properly termed *pansensualism*, since the word *soul* is used by him both for the material vital spirits and for the immaterial mind, and only the material sensitive soul pervades the entire universe.[2]

Let us pause here for a moment to consider what a revolution (in the most exact sense of the word) this approach was against the then main-stream philosophical worldview, Aristotelian physics and metaphysics. It was the reversal of an accepted hierarchical structure, of the explanatory order of such key philosophical concepts and notions, like matter and form, substance and accident, elements, soul, sense perception, intellect, etc. These would still appear, but with their meanings and functions altered according to their changed explanatory status. If life was no more seen as a complex effect of multiple heterogeneous causes, but rather as the fundamental generative and explanatory principle of all further processes, it could not be the prerogative of animals and plants but had to be coextensive with existence. All kinds of things and every single thing had to be granted at least some rudimentary awareness, self-awareness, and volition. Consequently, transformation and temporality were no more a deplorable deficiency limited to that cesspool of the universe, our sublunar sphere, but rose to the dignity of a universal law. Theories involving the natural places of elements, material spheres and their immaterial movers, or the substantial difference between the matter above and that below the moon became obsolete. Thus, if in Campanella's universe the evaporating vital spirits still had an impulse to rise towards the hot fiery sky, the reason thereof was not any specific quality of the place as such, but the desire of the spirits to join their own kind and kin. Last, but not least, as in other revolutions, the relative value of certain opposites was reversed: the individual came to range above the general, and accordingly sense perception above abstract thought, and the pre-eminence of man over other creatures appeared seriously compromised.

How can we conceive of the entire universe as animated? There are various ways, of which the shortest and least sophisticated is pantheism that posits an entirely immanent god, which enlivens the universe as a whole and every single part in it. A grave shortcoming of this simple solution is that, being based entirely on universal harmony, it encounters serious difficulties in accounting for negativity, discord and difference, hence for dynamic as such. But a dynamic pervading the entire universe, possibly even requiring a dynamical divinity instead of an unmoved mover, is exactly the core message of this brand of philosophy. Thus, as a theory, pantheism may be seen to be describing quite a narrow, self-dissolving circle. Such more complex variations on the theme of universal life as panentheism, panpsychism, pansensualism, and panvitalism manage to widen the ultimately inevitable circle, pushing back the self-contradictory consequences of an identification of the creator with the creation.

Giordano Bruno and Tommaso Campanella used each their own strategies to avoid that stasis, which is the last consequence of a merely immanent divine principle. Bruno's complex cosmology and metaphysics are, by now, well studied. Summarized in big lines, Bruno assumes a

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god that is both transcendent (as the absolute One beyond all understanding) and immanent (as Nature); an infinite universe that is the worthy image and likeness of the infinite divine power; an empowerment of universal matter, which is no more condemned to mere passivity, but keeps issuing the material forms out of itself; and the threefold minimum (atom, point, and monad) that seals, in its indivisibility, the union of physical existence, vital activity, and intelligibility.

Tommaso Campanella's philosophy is generally less accessible for lack of translations and of critical editions of most important parts of his oeuvre.[3] He is still mostly known as the author of the utopia *The City of the Sun*. Campanella's philosophy resembles in many details that of Bruno - unsurprisingly, since for both of them Aristotle is the main target of criticism. But there are also fundamental differences. The most obvious among them is that Campanella's metaphysics requires a finite, earth-centered world.[4] More important for our topic are differences regarding the precautions they each take against straight pantheism, and their choice of devices, by which a coextension of existence and life is achieved.

Campanella's God is a transcendent creator, a bestower of forms whose presence in the world consists in the structural reproduction of the divine essence in every individual essence, as we will see later on. This transcendence allows for a certain degree of autonomy of the material world under the laws of nature. However, far from upgrading the material principle by granting it some creative power, as Bruno did, Campanella insists on its utter indifference and passivity: its only property is its desire for form – any form.[5] Even more: Campanella dissolves the traditional notion of prime matter into two coextended concepts: the first thing God created is the incorporeal three-dimensional place for the world, or space, also called the first substance;[6] and this space is filled by the second substance, matter or the universal body, which is an undistinguished mass of pure receptivity without any measure, number, direction, preference, or resistance, thence able to receive and shed any form in any extent and any intensity.[7]

Just as space is the place God made for his creative power, matter is the stuff that distinguishes the accomplished artwork, God's beautiful statue, the finite world, from the infinite divine ideas that continue to form it. What makes this *second substance* function as a principle is exactly its corporeality: Since all forms are incorporeal, it must be the passive component that makes the composite body a body, and being a body is the precondition for being in the world, i.e., for existence. Hence matter is the perpetual bone of contention for rival active principles, the prize of their incessant warfare. Since nature abhors the vacuum as the presence and reminder of the nothingness from which the world was called into being, and to which it is eventually destined to return, space is brimful of living bodies, each eager to keep and extend their temporal permanence.[8]

For this is how Campanella defines the life of individuals: as the conservation, and, in the best case, expansion of all their essential properties and acts. As a process with a natural beginning and end, it is the incessant fight for the huge, but finite amount of material atoms.[9] Nature does not allow any individual thing to just keep to its own, for Nature is movement, transition, transformation of matter, generation and corruption. For all the stringency of its laws, this Nature can hardly be identified with the infinite creative power of God. So let us see, how it relates to God, how it is structured, or came to be, in the first place, and what it serves for in the last consequence.

In their criticism of the Aristotelian world-explanation, both Bruno and Campanella hearkened back to the Presocratic philosophers. A basic inspiration for both (indeed for all Renaissance magicians) was Heraclitus' protean world in continuous flux, governed by an all-encompassing mind and law, the logos. While Bruno adopted atomism for further elaboration of his theories, Campanella kept closer to Heraclitus, choosing war as his dynamic principle, namely the implacable conflict between two opposed basic elements.

Campanella rejects Aristotle's four elements, defined as the four combinations of two essential qualities. For him the elements must be exactly two, each representing one essential quality, or rather one agent principle: heat and chill, the first contrariety and the foundation of all opposition and distinction.[10] These are embodied in the basic elements fire and earth and placed (first and mainly) in the hot, rotating heaven with all its stars and in our cold, immobile planet Earth, which for the slowness and minor activity of its agent principle occupies a smaller portion of the universal matter and is thus forced in a defensive position.

The predestined loser, Erath, seeing itself under siege by an aggressive rapacious enemy and eager to hold on to its own, concentrated and condensed all its forces in the center of the world, adding to its original coldness the attributes of density, darkness, heaviness, and immobility. Though endowed with the opposite properties, Heaven imitated the strategy of Earth, concentrating part of its matter in the celestial bodies, and most of its effective force - heat and light - in the Sun. As the celestial bodies orbited that "center of their hatred"[11] in search of a weak point, with the intention to burn it, time began with the succession of days and nights, and with the seasons of the year. For God confirmed the hostile behavior of the first bodies, making it their perpetual habit, their very nature. So this is Nature: a destructive urge, which eventually must turn self-destructive, when fire finally accomplishes its aim to burn up the earth, devouring all its matter, and is subsequently extinguished for lack of further nourishment.[12] Left to its own devices, Nature has an inclination from top to bottom and its movement is a continuous flow downward. The world is doomed, which is another way to say: limited. It has its time, as all things within it have their time within it.[13]

However, as Campanella hastens to explain, while it is true that all natural drives are merely self-asserting, egocentric, with the sole aim of maximal self-preservation and self-expansion as an individual, or at least as a species, God turns the evil intention of the destructive elements into the instrument for His own good constructive plan. Using the dynamic of this first contrast, God proceeds to express His infinite creative ideas in a beautiful work of art: a perfect world in motion, full of an immense multitude of diverse individual beings, each of them right,

proper, and good in their own particular way, each contributing within its finite capacities to the vivacious universal harmony. For in a similar way as the conflict of heat and chill produced the great celestial and terrestrial bodies, the generation and differentiation of things continues. Under the various conditions of place and time the heat and light of the sun and the influence of the stars work on the matter of Earth, warming and rarefying it, while the earth continues to reclaim its own by cooling and condensing whatever comes within its reach.

This is how water and air, the two remaining elements of ancient tradition, to which Campanella denies any function as principles, come to be: by an increasing rarefaction of earthly substance through heat.[14] But this is likewise the origin of all other things, of stones, metals, and subsequently the more complicated organisms of plants and animals. All of them are alive, just as the basic elements are, and they all grow and decrease, loving to grow and hating to decrease.[15]

Though degraded from their function as primary elements to secondary bodies of diminished power, water and air still play a significant role in the further development and transformation of the physical world. Especially air, the extremely refined earthly vapor, with its swift mobility, high sensitivity and yielding adaptability renders some most important services: It is both the sense organ of the entire world[16] and the prototype and proximate matter of all vital spirits, hence indispensable for the exchange of matter in all organic life. Unlike the first elements, it is a peaceful neighbor to all other substances and quick to fill every gap and nook, in order to leave no space for vacuum, that formidable menace for the entire natural world.[17]

Now let us turn to consider the gist and structure of this genesis narrative.[18] The proper way to do so, is by counting up to three, since Campanella himself, being neither a monist, nor a dualist, counts up to three, or rather up to three-in-one, i.e., Trinity.

ONE is, of course, God, the first efficient and last final cause of everything, the absolute unity that enfolds everything in itself.[19]

TWO is not matter, but Nature, which is law, generative power, and process. It is created by God as different from Himself,[20] in guise of the first contrariety of two opposed active principles, heat and chill.[21]

THREE is the world of concrete existing things, a harmony imposed on the opposites, which could not on their own (e.g., by mixture) produce anything different from themselves.[22] However due to the ideal causes that flow from the divine mind they generate the entire multiplicity and diversity of individual beings, which all and each possess the divine imprint of the three *primalities* Power, Wisdom, and Love: the power to be, the knowledge or conscience of being, and the love of being or will of self-preservation.[23]

On all three levels we see God's presence in a different way, so that the force of nature and the structure of things bear witness of their divine origin.[24]

Counting ONE: First there is nothing but the One God. Since *nothing* cannot be said to *be* in any sense of the word, all is divine essence.[25] This is not to be understood as a definition of God by negation, rather God is Alpha and Omega, and everything in between, in a dynamic, creative sense: the first efficient and the last final cause of everything not in a mere static identity, but in a conscious, willful motion towards self-expression and communication. As Campanella puts It: "The first agent cause of natural being is God. God is the first being, the mightiest, wisest, most loving, the creator and governor of each and every thing. The final cause is the manifestation of God's glory."[26] With the passage interposed between the definitions of the agent and the final cause we see this God entering into relation to his creation (which is, actually, the only way we can conceive of him). We see Him reaching out and manifesting three fundamental properties, which we can easily recognize: Power, Wisdom and Love in an indissoluble union. These three *primalities*, as Campanella calls them, must be implicit in the divine essence, since we will find them explicated in the created world as the basic structure of each single creature within it. In this metaphysical speculation we cannot fail to recognize the Divine Trinity of Christian theology with its inner dynamic between the three persons in one God.[27] Now, such interpreters, who chose to see Campanella as a purely naturalist philosopher, and his numerous references to Christian theological positions as mere protective lip- service from a suspected heretic, ought to pause here: if a philosopher wants to prevent stasis in his system, he could hardly solve his problem more radically and thoroughly than by a God, who is himself dynamic. For this exigency you can scarcely beat the trinitarian model, it is, so to say, a godsent, and its function in Campanella's metaphysics is central and indispensable. More rigorously and explicitly than most Christian philosophers (maybe even more than St. Augustine), Campanella identifies the indissoluble unity of Power, Wisdom, and Love as the universal structure of all individual beings, the transcendent root of life, the vestige and similitude of their maker in all things.

Counting TWO: Though we have, in a sense, already anticipated three, finding it inside the one God, and also inside the single individual creatures, the relation of Creator and creature is plainly that between two opposite terms. Two introduces negation, since it is not one. Negation is the precondition of all distinction, which is our human way of perception: we see something against a background. We identify an object by isolating it, casting aside whatever it is not. But this evidently does not work the same way for our notion of God: As St. Augustine demonstrated in his *Confessions*,[28] everything we perceive in this world is not God, nor is it entirely opposed to him, while depending on Him for every instant of its being. What then? Of all possible candidates for being the contrary of God, the first and most absolute leads us nowhere: God against nothing, absolute being against absolute non-being is not a rational relation that fits the capacity of human mind, but an irrational trap. The unqualified *to be, or not to be* is not a question, unless one is looking for mischief. Thence, we are thrown back, in our natural reasoning, on the induction from the effect to the cause. For our normal human bottom to top perspective, it may then appear to be plain logic that "It is necessary that the active principles be contrary, […] because there are in the world contrary effects, while God is one, and therefore

there are contrary physical causes outside of God."[29] So, most appropriately, it would be the two agents, heat and chill, via their elements, fire and earth, which introduce negativity and distinction, as well as opposition. As they are active and productive, themselves alive and conferring life to their issue, world-immanent and temporal, they might be identified with created Nature, as opposed to God.

But seen from above, it is not quite so easy to establish, when and where creation, difference, and all the otherness from God actually starts, since the first thing created is the immaterial "almost infinite place" for the world.[30] Space being, so to say, torn out of nothing by God, it obviously must be different from him. But Campanella does not confront that issue. He just insists on its immobility, indifferent receptivity, and per se indeterminate immaterial three-dimensional extension. Indeed, it might be considered mere potentiality and devoid of all life and sensibility, if it were not said to "incorporeally penetrate the placed [material body], while the placed [body] penetrates the place corporeally"[31], and to "love the placed in such a degree that it cannot be without it, wherefore there is no vacuum in nature"[32] . It is obvious that Campanella is as eager to prevent all danger of dualism, as that of pantheism, therefore he strives with all his might to weaken matter and not to put it in opposition to God. It does not count, being "neither one, nor many, but can be united and plurified by division".[33] He points out that "the physical elements are not matter, but the seat of the first active principles"[34] and "the greatest bodies in the world, active in the highest degree, they generate themselves and are not generated by others, and everything that is composed of elements derives from them"[35]. Since the first agents and elements are alive and sentient active principles that transmit life and sensibility to the plants and animals composed from them,[36] we can see that Campanella's intention was to give the elements the status, function and generative power of Nature, as distinct from God.

Counting THREE: Three is the unity of the opposites, the divergent harmony, realized in the concrete being, both in the individual and in the world as a whole. For the completion of God's creation is the coexistence of the whole plethora of all possible individual things, which are generated and vivified by Nature, but ideated and perfected by God's own bounty. Left to their own devices, the elements would be unable to produce anything but themselves, since their mutual hatred allows them nothing but to destroy, evict, replace, or flee each other.[37] Only when they are overcome and modified by the ideal causes, which issue from the supernatural divine realm, the composition of more complex bodies becomes possible, up to the most highly developed living organisms that are human beings.[38]

However, the instability and vulnerability of such sensitive organisms increases with their complexity, and their new faculties arise in in proportion to as many new essential needs and threats to their existence. Indeed, in the natural order of things, man could hardly claim a privileged position, since life and sensation are common to all things, due to the more or less evident flow of the material vital spirits, while reason, traditionally the supreme distinction and pride of mankind, is degraded by Campanella to an inferior and less reliable surrogate for the best and truest way of cognition, which is direct sense perception.[39] If man, nonetheless, enjoys a high privilege, according to Campanella, it is owed not to nature, but to divine Grace that grants him a second soul, or mind. This immaterial, immortal, close to angelical soul has no other function than making humans aware of the supernatural realm and perhaps giving him some rare and vague glimpse of God himself, but this is an entirely different topic.[40]

Our concern here is with the omnipresent life in this world, given to every single being of whatever species, which, though limited in time, bears the true image of the living God. If the dynamic of exigency we find in Nature is but a distant shadow of the overflowing dynamic of fullness that issues from God, the presence of the inseparable trinity of Power, Wisdom, and Love in each individual is a closer likeness of its maker. For every natural thing has, as the very core of its essence, the power to be itself, the knowledge of its own being, and self-love, or drive to preserve its own being.[41] Though their existence is inevitably limited in time, through their primal attributes all things aim at infinite expansion and duration, so that we may call them a portrait of God *en miniature*.

And here we are immediately confronted with the dialectic of representation: if the structure and contour are the same, the image is said to be true, but if the dimensions and colors differ, the image is, obviously, false. The representation of the infinite immaterial essence in the limited medium of physical existence may bear a likeness, while it will necessarily show the difference. We can easily understand how, in an infinite essence, if power, wisdom and love are directed towards itself, they will nonetheless encompass everything in a generous outreaching providence. But within the limits of temporal existence, no being can reconcile self-centeredness with altruism, universal benevolence, and the gift of participation in one's own essence.

Thence the beauty and perfection of God's masterpiece is not expressed in the single creatures' attitude, but in the divine turn, or trick: the miraculous harmony, by which both the single individual and the entire world, is composed of divergent elements, functions, and intentions, even from the extreme opposition of being and nonbeing, since every realized form is the negation of all the possible other forms. Though every single thing is entirely self-centered, yet they each fall into their proper place. While playing their own part, they render, either according to their own will or against it, their particular contribution to the existential goodness of the whole life of both the individual and the world. This is the aspect in which God may be seen and recognized, though the picture, of course, does not know whom it is meant to represent.

Notes

[1] Godehard Brüntrup and Ludwig Jaskolla, eds., *Panpsychism: Contemporary Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). – This study is a result of research funded by the Czech Science Foundation as the project GA ČR 21-17059S "Pantheism and Panpsychism in the Renaissance and the Emergence of Secularism".

[2] The easiest access for readers of Italian to Campanella's pansensualism is Tommaso Campanella, *Del senso delle cose e della magia*, ed. by Germana Ernst, Roma-Bari (Laterza) 2007 (later on *Senso delle cose*); the most concise presentation of his entire system of physics and metaphysics is found in Campanella's *Physiologiae Compendium*, bilingual (Latin / Italian) edition: Tommaso Campanella, *Compendio di filosofia della natura*, ed. by Germana Ernst and Paolo Ponzio, Santarcangelo di Romagna (Rusconi Libri) 1999 (later on *Compendio*); all English translations of quotations are mine.

[3] Despite the immense progress of Campanella studies (close to inexistent before the 1960ies)due to dedicated scholars, starting with Romano Amerio's edition of the *Inediti theologicorum*, with further editions and studies by Luigi Firpo, Germana Ernst, Ada Lamacchia, Paolo Ponzio, Pasquale Porro, Maria Mucillo, Eugenio Canone, Jean Paul De Lucca, and others, and the foundation and success of the journal *Bruniana & Campanelliana*, there remains a regrettable disproportion between the importance of Campanella's philosophy and its accessibility. For instance, of the bilingual (Latin / Italian) critical edition of his *Metafisica universalis philosophiae* (Bari, Levante Editori) only book I (1994) and book XIV (2000) have appeared, and a sloppy, but widely used English translation of *The City of the Sun* misspelled the author's first name, to the effect that a phantom Tomasso Campanella keeps haunting bibliographies and library catalogues.

[4] Campanella admits the possible existence of an infinite number of worlds, which, however, for their great distance from us, could never become an object of certain knowledge: „Io certo non credo che Dio abbia finita la sua possanza in questa picciola palla […] ma stimo altre cose poter essere fuori, e Dio infiniti mondi poter fare di varie forme. Ma se ci sieno non si può sapere, se Dio non lo rivela…", *Senso delle cose*, p. 29; cf. C*ompendio* X, 1-4, p. 58.

[5] "Formae non egrediuntur de sinu materiae, sed dantur ab agentibus causis active, et ab idealibus determinative." (The forms do not emerge from the groin of matter but are given actively by the agent causes and determinately by the ideal causes.), *Compendio* VI, 6, p. 48; cf. *Senso delle cose*, pp. 33-34 and 36-37.

[6] *Compendio* V, 1-7, p. 44.

[7] Campanella does not say that God first made matter, but rather: "Primo ergo Deus fecit locum, in quo posuit causam materialem. In materia fecit instrumentales causas activas calorem et frigus, qui volentes occupare quisque materiam partiti sunt eam in duo elementa." (God first made the place in which he put the material cause. In matter He made the two active instrumental causes, heat and chill, which, each wanting to occupy matter, divided it in two elements.), *Compendio* II, 7, p. 38; and "Materia prima est corpus communis sine numeris, sine forma, et sine operatione, aptum ad recipiendum numeros, formas et operationes." (First matter is the body common [to all] without numbers, without form and without operation, fit to receive numbers, forms, and operations.) *Compendium* VI, 2, p. 46.

[8] "Cuncta quippe ex nihilo facta sunt, eorumque essentia rursum ad nihilum tendet, nisi eam auctor omnium regiminis manu retineret." (For all things are made from nothing, and their essence would tend back towards nothing again, if the author of the government of all did not keep it with his hand.), Tommaso Campanella, *De conservatione et gubernatione rerum* (Inediti theologicorum liber sextum), ed. Maria Mucillo, Milano 2000, p. 16; the *horror vacui*, the possibility of an artificially produced empty space, and the relation of bodies to space are discussed in *Senso delle cose*, pp. 24- 27.

[9] Campanella concedes the existence of atoms, but only as particles of divided matter without any active function as principles, without self-movement or any distinctive shape. Cf. *Compendio* VIII, 3-4, p. 52.

[10] "Necesse est principia activa esse contraria […] quoniam sunt effectus contrarii in mundo et Deus est unus; ergo dantur contrariae causae physicae extra Deum" (The first active principles must necessarily be contrary, since there are contrary effects in the world: therefore there are contrary natural causes outside of God.) *Compendio* VII, 1, p. 50.

[11] "Omnes planetae moventur cum sole circa Terram, centrum odii, ad exustionem Terrae", *Compendio* X, 7, p. 60.

[12] On the one hand this appears to presage, mutatis mutandis, the theory of entropy, which predicts the end of all processes, when all energy is converted into heat; on the other hand, Campanella's entire cosmology bears an uncanny resemblance to Heraclitus, as if its author were methodically filling the gaps between the surviving fragments.

[13] "Simul cum mundo factum est tempus. Est enim tempus successio, seu vicissitudo rerum mutabilium in substantia et operationibus, quale est ens naturale." (Together with the world time was made. For time is the succession or vicissitude of things that are changeable as to their substance and operations, which is how natural being is.), *Compendio* IV, 1-2, p. 40.

[14]"Elementata […] generantur a sole ex terra liquefacta et attenuata", *Compendio* VIII, 9, p. 54.

[15] *Senso delle cose*, pp. 3-4.

[16] *Senso delle cose*, pp. 135-136.

[17] "… tutte le nature […] ciascuna e tutte insieme aborriscono di maniera il vacuo tra loro, che con impeto naturale parziale corrono ad empirlo […]. Onde si vede l'aria nel profondo del mare aperto e nelle caverne della terra con impeto scendere per proibire il vacuo, quasi deponendo l'odio particulare che ha con la terra e con l'aqua, per soccorrere all'utile commune." (All natures, each one and all together, abhor the vacuum between them to such an extend that they hasten with a particular natural impetus to fill it. Hence, we see the air descend impetuously into the open sea and the caverns of the earth to prevent the vacuum, as if it set aside the particular hatred it feels against earth and water in order to serve the common welfare.), *Senso delle cose*, p. 23.

[18] For the hasty reader, this pattern is sketched here in a few short paragraphs, followed by a more detailed reflection for the more thorough, patient, or curious ones.

[19] "Causa agens entis naturalis prima est Deus. Deus est ens primum potentissimum, sapientissimum, amorosissimum, creator et gubernator omnium rerum. Causa finalis est manifestatio gloriae Dei." (The first agent cause of natural being is God. God is the first, most powerful, wise, and loving being, thr creator and governor of all things. The final cause is the manifestation of the glory of God.), *Compendio* II, 2-4, p. 38.

[20] "Contrarietas non est a Deo uno, sed accidit ex amore occupandi materiam in duobus activis principiis…" (Contrariety does not come from the one God but happens because of the love for occupying matter that is in the two active principles…), *Compendio* VII, 10, p. 52.

[21] *Compendio* VII, 4-8, p. 50.

[22] "Elementata non fiunt ex mistione quatuor neque duorum elementorum contrariorum, sed a calore Solis et materia terrestri devicta ad Ideam intelligentis Causae; […] Contraria non possunt uniri et conciliari ad faciendum unum tertium…" (The things consistent of elements do not arise through mixture of either four or two contrary elements; […] Contraries cannot be united and reconciled to make one third thing…), *Compendio* VIII, 1, 4, pp. 68-70.

[23] "Preterea primum ens est Deus potentissimus, sapientissimus et amorosissimus; ergo omnia entia participant potentiam, sapientiam et amorem propriae conservationis […]. Sed palam est in omni re esse potentiam et amorem suae conservationis: ergo etiam sensus, tum quia primalitates non reperiuntur seorsum, cum quia Dei opera perfecta sunt…" (Moreover, the first being is God, the most powerful, wise, and loving; hence, all beings participate in the power, wisdom, and love of their own preservation […]. But it is obvious that there is the power and love of self-preservation in all things, thus also the sense, both because the primalities do not occur separately and because God's works are perfect…), *Compendio* XXVII, 10, p. 108.

[24]As a consequence of this basic structure we encounter further fundamental triads, like the threefold way things come to exist: "Creare est producere ex nulla materia et ex nihilo, et hoc solus Deus facit. Generare est producere ex aliqua materia etiam modica, et hoc facit natura; facere est producer ex multa materia, et hoc facit ars." (To create is to produce out of no matter and out of nothing, and this does God alone. To generate is to produce out of some matter, even out of a modest amount, and this nature does; to make is to produce out of much matter, and this art does.) *Compendio* III, 4, p. 40.

[25] "… principia entis finiti, seu potius pro principia sunt Ens et non Ens; sed entis, ut ens, sunt pro principia, sive primalitates, Potentia, Sapientia, et Amor […]. Quod autem non ens possit esse principium entis finiti ibidem probatur. Finitio enim est terminus essentiae et existentiae, quae non potest nisi ad non esse simpliciter, vel non essere sui saltem, terminari. Nec requiritur non entis entitas, ut sit ita principium, sed non entitas, quoniam est principium termini, non rei terminatae…" (The principles, or rather pro-principles of finite being are Being and non-Being, but the pro-principles, or primalities of being as being are Power, Wisdom, and Love […]. For the finish is the border of essence and existence, which cannot border unless at non-being as such or, at least, its own non-being. But that not-being can be principle of finite being is also proved there. […] And an entity of non-being is not required for its being a principle in this manner, but rather its non-entity, since it is the principle of termination, not of the terminated thing…); Tommaso Campanella, *Metafisica universalis philosophiae*, book I, Bari (Levante Editori) 1994, p. 475.

[26] See above, note 19.

[27] See below, note 41.

[28] Saint Augustine, *Confessions* X, 8 - 9.

[29] See above, note 10.

[30] "… me arbitrare Locum esse extra mundum, et forte infinitum.", Tommaso Campanella, *Prodromus philosophiae instaurandae*, Francofurti 1617, p. 29 in: Tommaso Campanella, *Opera Latina Francofurti impressa annis 1617 – 1630*, ed. Luigi Firpo, vol. I, Torino (Bottega d'Erasmo) 1975; "spatium pene infinitum", Tommaso Campanella, *Realis philosophiae epilogisticae pars prima* (Physiologia), Francofurti 1623, p. 4, in: Tommaso Campanella, *Opera Latina* (as above), vol. II.
[31] *Compendio* V, 6, p. 44.
[32] *Compendio* V, 10, p. 46.
[33] "Materia non est unum, nec plura, sed potest uniri et plurificari per divisionem…", *Compendio* VI, 4, p. 48; cf. above, note 5.
[34] "… elementa aurem physica non sunt materia, sed sedes primorun principiorum activorum.", *Compendio* VIII, 3 p. 52.
[35] "Elementa sunt maxima mundi corpora maxime activa […], seipsa generant et non generantur ab allis, et omnia elementata fiunt ex eis.", *Compendio* VIII, 9, p, 54, "Or se gli animali […] hanno sentimento, e dal niente il senso non nasce, è forza dire che sentano gli elementi, lor cause…" (Hence, if the animals have sensitivity, and the sense does not arise from nothing, it is necessary to say that the elements, their causes, sense…", *Senso delle cose*, p. 3.
[36] *Compendio* XXVII, 1-10, pp. 106-108.
[37] "Contrarietas est inter duo semper mutuo se ab eodem subiecto expellentia" (Contrariness is between two that always expel each other mutually from the same subject [matter] ", *Compendio* VII, 2, p. 50; "Non datur sensus et locus mistionis: si enim mistio fit in terra, praevalet terra, et sic contraria non aequantur; si in aqua, aqua etc." (There is no sense nor place for mixture: for if the mixture occurred in earth, earth would prevail, and thus the contraries would not be equal; if in water, then water, etc.), *Compendio* VIII, 8, p. 70; cf. *Senso delle cose*, pp. 12-13.
[38] See above, note 5.
[39] *Senso delle cose*, pp. 106- 108.
[40] *Compendio* LIX, pp. 218- 223 treats it summarily, while Tommaso Campanella, *Metafisica universalis philosophiae Liber XIV*, Bari (Levante Editori) 2000 is dedicated entirely to this topic.
[41] "Res esse manifestationes deitatis, et in creatione potentiam, in gubernatione sapientiam, in glorificatione amorem relucere magis…" (The things are manifestations of the divinity, and prevalently reflected are in creation the power, in government the wisdom, and in glorification the love…), Tommaso Campanella, *De conservatione et gubernatione rerum* (see note 8), p. 12; "Namque sanè totus mundus, et quaelibet particula illius constituitur ex Sapientia, Potentia et Amore, […] veluti eas constitui Prima Bonitas amavit, Prima Ars disposuit, et Prima Potentia effecit;" (For indeed the whole world and every small part of it consists of Power, Wisdom, and Love, […] since the First Goodness loved, the First Art disponed, the First Power effected to constitute them;) , Tommaso Campanella, *Realis philosophiae pars prima* (see n. 27), pp. 3-4.

Reviews

Lorenzo Bernini, *Le teorie queer: un'introduzione* (Milano - Udine: Mimesis, 2018, ISBN 9788857541259).

Nel suo testo sulle teorie queer, Bernini si propone di fornire un'introduzione a chi da neofita si approcci agli studi su sesso, genere e sessualità, riprendendo alcune lezioni da lui tenute per l'Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca. In particolare, obiettivo del libro è tanto far emergere la natura profondamente politica di queste tesi intorno al funzionamento di determinati aspetti dell'umano, pur senza pretendere di risolverla, quanto quello di fornire una risposta efficace, seppur non definitiva, alle costruzioni avanzate da una certa parte della Chiesa cattolica per screditare questo ambito di studi. Per fare ciò, Bernini si rifà a tre divisioni interne al pensiero queer dell'ultimo secolo: il freudomarxismo rivoluzionario di Mario Mieli, il costruttivismo radicale di Michel Foucault e Judith Butler e, infine, le teorie antisociali di Leo Bersani e Lee Edelman.

Il libro si apre cercando di definire alcune parole chiave che costituiscono il fondamento per il restante sviluppo del discorso: queer, filosofia e politica. Per la prima, di origine più recente rispetto alle altre due, propone che si tratti di un termine polisemico («o meglio di un significato fluttuante», specifica a p. 13) la cui funzione è primariamente quella di «destabilizzare», ossia di mettere in dubbio, la realtà a cui viene applicato. Delle due restanti ricostruisce invece con maggior dettaglio la storia, in entrambi i casi a partire dall'antica Grecia. Filosofia è dunque prima la richiesta socratica del «che cos'è? » e poi argomentazione pubblica e critica; politica è invece prima ciò che ha a che fare con la *polis*, dopo la sfera dell'esperienza umana in cui si manifesta l'uso del potere (riprendendo le definizioni di Petrucciani S., *Modelli di filosofia politica* (Torino: Einaudi, 2003), infine la facoltà di condizionare le azioni altrui, in una prospettiva foucaultiana che più volte tornerà nel corso del saggio. Definite le due componenti, passa dunque a chiedersi cosa sia la filosofia politica, che, con Deleuze e Guattari, dirà essere costituita dall'«inventare o ridefinire concetti nel campo del potere» (p. 33). Distinti ulteriormente tre diversi tipi di filosofie politiche – realistiche, normative e critiche – fornisce finalmente una definizione delle teorie queer come «filosofie politiche critiche che, assumendo il punto di vista delle minoranze sessuali, denunciano come arbitrario, abusivo e intollerabile il regime che le rende tali» (p. 53).

Nei due capitoli successivi l'autore ricostruisce l'evoluzione del pensiero sulla sessualità dall'Ottocento a oggi, entrando poi nel dettaglio delle tre grandi correnti individuate in apertura per giungere fino alla contemporaneità. Inizialmente viene adottato come punto di partenza un documento pubblicato nel 2015 dalla Società Italiana di Psicologia per lo Studio delle Identità Sessuali in risposta alle campagne della Chiesa cattolica contro la diffusione della «teoria gender», nel quale vengono distinti tre assi binari: il sesso, aspetto fisico-corporeo; il genere, corrispettivo socio-psico-culturale del primo; l'orientamento sessuale, la «direzione» dell'attrazione di un individuo verso un certo sesso. Questa tripartizione viene subito problematizzata, introducendo da p. 61 in poi una serie di possibili criteri per classificare la sessualità umana: questi implicano che ciascuno dei tre assi possa essere definito altrimenti, non come binario ma come uno spazio multidimensionale in cui ciascun individuo si colloca come punto. Bernini riprende dunque Foucault nel definire la sessualità come un dispositivo di potere, un intreccio di convenzioni, norme, pratiche e saperi che definiscono e impongono identità sessuali al soggetto, rendendo inintelligibili le alternative. Un primo esempio di questo si dà con le teorie dell'inversione, per cui maschile e femminile vengono appunto invertiti come oggetto dell'attrazione, senza fornire una distinzione tra omosessualità e transgenderismo, che verrà invece introdotta soltanto negli anni '50 del Novecento. Queste categorie, sostiene, si applicano tanto alla medicina quanto al diritto, frapponendo all'individuo e al riconoscimento della sua identità ostacoli di varia natura, come la necessità di un'operazione di riassegnazione del sesso per il riconoscimento giuridico della transessualità. A seguire, viene ripresa la nozione di «naturalità» del sesso, stando all'autore promossa dalla Chiesa e da alcuni gruppi cattolici o di estrema destra (p. 80), a cui viene nuovamente contrapposta la tesi dei molteplici criteri per la classificazione del sesso di un individuo.

La prima delle tre teorie che Bernini passa poi ad esaminare è il freudomarxismo rivoluzionario, che, a partire dalle tesi della psicanalisi freudiana rielaborate da Reich e Marcuse, viene sviluppato in ambito queer (o, più propriamente, proto-queer) da Mario Mieli alla fine degli anni '70. Lo scopo dichiarato di questa teoria è liberare il desiderio, che viene represso dal potere per produrre forza-lavoro che a sua volta riproduca la società capitalista alienata: così facendo, per Mieli, si verrebbe a riconoscere in ciascuno il «polimorfismo perverso», da lui chiamato «bisessualità originaria» o «transessualità», che corrisponde all'originario desiderio precedente la distinzione di maschile e femminile. In tal senso, ogni orientamento sessuale diventa una «mutilazione» (p. 152) del desiderio originario, libero (e qui Bernini evidenzia le affinità alla schizoanalisi deleuziana), che rende ogni categoria relativa all'orientamento sessuale «psico-poliziesca» (p. 163, rifacendosi a Hocquenghem). Questa considerazione introduce la seconda delle teorie trattate: il costruttivismo radicale, che per Bernini è inaugurato da Foucault e portato pienamente nel campo della queerness da Butler, poco

più di un decennio più tardi. Per Foucault, la sessualità è un dispositivo di potere, come già accennato, e, conseguentemente, le categorie della sessualità altro non sono che costrutti culturali atti a produrre e controllare il soggetto, arrivando fino al suo corpo fisico (p. 168). Butler riprende il cuore di queste tesi e parla di una «matrice eterosessuale», una serie di norme che si rifanno all'eterosessualità, presa come punto di partenza, e costituiscono il maschile e il femminile come complementari, producendo la differenza fra i sessi. La pratica del *drag* costituisce per lei la destabilizzazione di questa differenza: «performando» l'altro genere, esso non è più un essere stabile, ma un fare, qualcosa di continuamente prodotto e che, nel prodursi, produce il soggetto. Non c'è dunque nulla da liberare, in quanto il soggetto è prodotto dalla sua stessa performance, e non preesiste alle norme che lo creano: l'unica possibilità di azione politica resta quindi la resistenza, una costante sperimentazione di altro dalla norma, tentando di creare comunità di riconoscimento più «vivibili», nelle parole di Butler (p. 185). Infine, l'autore del saggio presenta le teorie antisociali di Leo Bersani e di Lee Edelman, che, rifiutando la sovrapoliticizzazione del sessuale operata dalle due correnti precedenti, ritornano alla psicanalisi, concentrandosi non più sul concetto di desiderio ma piuttosto su quello di pulsione. La pulsione è una forza che domina il soggetto e gli fa perdere il controllo tanto su di sé quanto su ciò che gli è esterno, è autoannientamento: il soggetto viene eliminato nella *jouissance*. Quest'operazione negativa per Bersani ed Edelmann coincide con la «pulsione di morte", ossia il rifiuto di ogni prospettiva futura presupposta dal sesso procreativo-riproduttivo a favore del presente del godimento, e costituisce l'oscenità ontologica del sessuale (p. 195). In questa eliminazione tanto del soggetto quanto del futuro e del passato, diventa impossibile qualunque tipo di ricerca di senso. In conclusione, Bernini sottolinea come spesso, all'interno del dibattito contemporaneo e negli ambienti attivisti, queste tre prospettive (oltre ad altre, meno diffuse) si intersechino e si mischino, diventando «articolazioni di un'unica riflessione» (p. 209).

In generale, il saggio di Bernini fornisce un'introduzione compatta ma molto chiara e approfondita al campo delle teorie queer, evidenziandone la storia, gli intenti e le prospettive. Il libro si rivolge con successo a un pubblico molto variegato, risultando estremamente accessibile pur entrando nel dettaglio degli argomenti trattati grazie all'estensiva introduzione che viene fornita nei primi due capitoli e che non risulta ridondante anche per chi avesse già familiarità con la materia. Nel confronto con la confusione generata dalla narrazione della «ideologia gender», l'autore illustra con chiarezza alcune controargomentazioni che colpiscono proprio al nerbo della questione sollevata, rivendicando pienamente l'accusa di «innaturalità» che viene mossa alle teorie queer: è proprio quello il punto, mostrare che sesso e genere non sono categorie neutrali e date ma piuttosto terreni di contesa, definibili altrimenti meramente «disaccoppiando» criteri che da secoli sono stati usati per creare due categorie ma che, ugualmente, potrebbero crearne tre, quattro, cinque o addirittura non crearne. Risulta in questo senso estremamente efficace, ad esempio, la metafora dello «spazio multidimensionale» all'interno del quale gli individui si collocano come punti, certamente inseribili all'interno di un sovrainsieme più ampio per alcuni motivi ma distinti per altri. Allo stesso modo, il testo rende giustizia a quelle identità che solitamente vengono represse e silenziate, quali l'intersessualità (tra le pp. 104-114), e risulta particolarmente completo nel fornire anche un quadro medico, giuridico e politico delle questioni trattate, riuscendo a fornire una necessaria analisi del tema da prospettive fra loro diverse ma complementari. È, infine, decisamente lodevole l'attenzione riposta nell'evitare di appiattire e normare il dibattito interno ai movimenti rispetto a quale posizione teorica adottare, menzionando la natura «emergenziale» (nel senso di rispondente alle situazioni che progressivamente emergono) del pensiero e delle pratiche queer.

D'altro canto, è forse proprio quest'ultima precisazione anche uno dei punti di maggiore fragilità del saggio nell'ottica di risposta alle costruzioni che l'autore attribuisce ai «movimenti cattolici e di estrema destra»: proprio facendo notare questa convergenza intorno a un'unica matrice si perde, in una certa misura, quel rigore e quella solidità teorica che avevano caratterizzato le tre correnti nelle loro esposizioni singole. Certo, questo è inevitabile, in quanto, costituendosi il dibattito intorno alla queerness come un dibattito ancora aperto e profondamente legato a movimenti sociali e politici tutt'ora attivi, oltre che per la natura stessa dell'argomento trattato che è proprio quella di destabilizzare, vi saranno necessariamente posizioni «instabili» in merito ad alcune questioni. È poi quantomeno degna di nota la forte attenzione prestata alla prospettiva foucaultiana dall'autore, che, pur dichiarata, si presenta quasi in ogni pagina; è pur vero, in ogni caso, che questa è probabilmente la prospettiva più comune fra gli studiosi della materia, facendo quindi risultare comprensibile la scelta di adottarla come principale in un testo che si propone di essere in una certa misura rappresentativo degli studi sul tema. Infine, sono notevoli anche alcune omissioni almeno di menzioni a testi e autori di crescente o affermata importanza all'interno degli studi queer quali Sara Ahmed e Donna J. Haraway, ma questo è pienamente giustificabile nell'ottica di un volume che non ha altra ambizione se non quella di introdurre ad un tema così ampio e articolato.

In definitiva, dunque, il testo di Bernini si presenta come un'analisi completa e approfondita, pur nella sua compattezza, di fenomeni sociali complessi, operando dove necessario divisioni sistematiche e puntuali che facilitano la comprensione al pubblico a cui si rivolge ma mantenendo grande riguardo nel tentare di restituire le complessità e le intersezioni delle teorie analizzate. Quegli aspetti che del saggio possono risultare criticabili emergono come precise scelte, sempre esplicitamente motivate all'interno del testo, atte a restituire alcune caratteristiche delle realtà degli studi o dei movimenti che si rifanno alle teorie presentate. Il risultato è un volume che si presenta come un importante strumento per accedere a un ambito di studi che sta ricevendo sempre maggiore attenzione tanto nelle università quanto, più ampiamente, nella società tutta.

Andrea Chiurato

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Byung-Chul Han, *Le non cose. Come abbiamo smesso di vivere il reale* (Torino: Einaudi, 2021, trad. di Simone Aglan-Buttazzi, ISBN978-88-06-25109-3)

In questo saggio Byung-Chul Han introduce il concetto di "*non cose" (undinge)*, ma esattamente a cosa si sta riferendo? Il tentativo dell'autore è quello di delineare una nuova tipologia ontica di oggetto-merce: l'informazione. È una non cosa in quanto non ha una sua concretezza, essa parrebbe essere al di fuori dell'estetica umana. Estetica, qui, si intende nel suo significato originario di αίσθησις (*aísthēsis*) ovvero che pertiene alla sensazione, al poter sentire un τι (*ti*). La domanda è quindi necessaria: il mondo è ancora una cosa-causa, quel discorso che tiene a sé e lega tutte le cose rinviando, attraverso queste, l'esserci progettante ad altro? Oppure, mutuando Marx, esso è ormai soltanto un'immane raccolta di non cose? Cose, non cose, oggetti, merci. Andiamo con ordine.

L'oggetto come qualcosa di concreto, che ci "sta di contro", a portata di mano, nell'intendimento dell'autore, decade, quasi inesorabilmente, in una dimensione nella quale all'uomo gli è precluso ogni tangibile afferrare. Sempre più cose sono scorporate e consegnate all'inconsistenza del *cloud*, quella "nuvola informatica" che permette di elaborare e archiviare dati in rete. Siamo avvolti da un'infosfera che non è manipolabile, ma manipolante, attraverso la quale interagiamo e comunichiamo non con altri *Dasein* (*Esser-ci*) ma con altri *Inforg*, inquietante neologismo dal suono orwelliano, coniato dal filosofo Floridi (*La quarta rivoluzione, 2017*), che unisce la parola "*informational*" e "*organism*", e che descrive un "*digital produmer*" ovvero colui che, al contempo, è un produttore e un consumatore di informazioni. In questa distopica concezione, i consueti limiti della gettatezza del Dasein vengono stravolti e debordano nello spazio dedicato, di consueto, alla progettualità a venire fino ad assorbirlo completamente. La libertà di manovra di questo nuovo "essere umano" è una libertà che si muove in una dimensione ontico-digitale sottratta alla terra e alla cosalità. Ogni scelta è algoritmicamente *pre*scelta, perché alla base della (non)scelta vi è una in-formazione o più coerentemente dovremmo dire una in-formattazione: non siamo noi a scegliere ma è la scelta che giunge a noi da un altrove calcolante. Han vede una *"crescente smaterializzazione del reale"* non solo per quanto riguarda la sfera individuale ma anche quella socio-lavorativa, dove le nostre competenze vengono sì trasferite a delle cose, limitandosi però a gestire dei flussi di informazioni. Già Marx nel differenziare lo strumento dalla macchina evidenziava come quest'ultima degradasse le capacità del saper fare umano; laddove lo strumento era completamente assoggettato all'uomo, con la macchina, invece, è l'uomo che sottostà ai ritmi di questa e della produzione industriale. Le mani sono l'organo del lavoro e dell'azione, nel fare vi è già il fine proprio dell'uomo, di contro, il dito, il digitare, si fa mezzo per il mezzo, giacché il prodotto non è il fine ma lo strumento per il profitto. Interpretando il pensiero dell'autore potremmo dire che la direzione intrapresa dall'uomo non è più quella di una *vita activa* ma una *vita selectiva*, nella quale la libertà di scelta è, però, mera illusione.

Per Han non si tratta più di trascegliere cose-merci, ma esperienze di consumo. Si viene così a creare un'economia dello *storytelling*: il bene di consumo è interiorizzato attraverso emozioni e, subitamente, ciò che ci emoziona è poi condiviso e in questa condivisione c'è una sublimazione dell'emozione a informazione, quindi a non cosa-merce. Il capitalismo si fa capital-intimi-smo. Gli antichi solevano raccontarsi, attorno ad un fuoco, storie del loro passato, i miti, istituendo così attraverso quella condivisione, una comunità che si riconosceva in quel racconto e, mediante questo, si rendevano partecipi del proprio passato; ma essere radicati significava anche permettersi di poter andare oltre a quel passato e a quelle stesse radici, ovvero progettare ulteriori possibili. Oggi ciò che condividiamo sono le *story*, non nella comunità ma nella *community* globale, dove nessun passato viene evocato in prospettiva futura, tutto è un blocco presente, o un presente bloccato, e tutto continuamente svanisce dalla superficie delle reti sociali ma per venire, al contempo, archiviato nella oscura immaterialità senza fondo del *cloud*. Qui la *community* fa si che la comunità "*cessi di esistere*".

Dispositivo leviatanico delle nostre esistenze, lo *smartphone* riduce il mondo ad un insieme di non cose-merci, non "*utilizzabili*" ma consumabili. Esso è, di certo, nella sua immediata concretezza, una cosa, e ciò che fa è un pre-disporre, mediatamente, delle non cose-merci ma senza contrapporle ad un soggetto, ovvero, in senso heideggeriano, esse non si trovano, immediatamente, a portata di mano *(vorhanden).* Per il filosofo coreano vi è nella stessa consistenza ontica dell'oggetto-smartphone uno dei motivi che ci induce all'acquisto compulsivo delle non cose, in quanto, in esso, non vi sarebbe traccia di negatività, non vi è, in quello schermo piatto e liscio, una resistenza che ci trattenga dal digitare e dallo scivolare in quella dimensione non cosale.

Viviamo una relazione simbiotica con questa sorta di non-io, lo *smartphone*, ma forse dovremmo ormai pensare che è il nostro io ad aver subito un'alienazione in quella dimensione oggettuale del non-io. Il panico che ci sovviene nel momento in cui scordiamo il nostro dispositivo-io è più che sintomatico, è rivelatore. A volte ci ritroviamo ad esclamare: «c'è l'intera mia esistenza lì dentro!» e questa è più che una metafora, è quasi una presa di coscienza involontaria. Han riferendosi a questi apparecchi li nomina "*oggetti autistici*", ma qui viene il dubbio che l'oggetto in questione, in realtà, sia il soggetto. C'è un'evidente perdita di identità in tutto questo, una confusione tra chi sia il soggetto e chi l'oggetto. Come è potuto accadere?

Le nostre identità sono costruite, in parte, anche dai ricordi e quei ricordi, oggi più che mai, sono racchiusi e delegati in una memoria virtuale, sotto forma di selfie o semplici istantanee. Proprio su questo punto, Han, richiamandosi a Barthes, evidenzia come la fotografia analogica differisca, nel senso ontologico, da quell'accumulazione di istantanee che è presente nelle nostre reti sociali e nei nostri album digitali. La fotografia racconta un vissuto, non manifesta nessun barocchismo, anzi, mantiene, almeno in parte, proprio perché ancorata al passato, un alone di mistero, è una "*cosa*" significante che ha viaggiato nel tempo fino ad oggi, ma che è ancora aperta a possibili significati verso un altrove. Di contro, in un selfie o in una story tutto viene esibito e ostentato perché tutto è prossimo allo svanire e all'essere sovrascritto da altri selfie, altre informazioni da cogliere in pochi istanti. I selfie

non testimoniano la vita, non fanno emergere l'esser-*ci*; potremmo dire che, al contrario, essi marcano ancor di più la caratteristica essenziale dell'inautenticità, ovvero, riprendendo Heidegger, l'ascondere la non-latenza dell'essere. Nei selfie manca un esistenziale fondamentale quello dell'essere-per-la-morte, in quanto i selfie ambiscono ad una violenta *super-stitio* di perenne gaiezza, negando così l'angoscia del divenire e di quel trovarsi davanti alla "*possibilità della pura e semplice impossibilità dell'esserci*" (*Heidegger*). Ecco che l'esserci, snaturato della sua progettualità, si ritrova costipato in un eterno so-stare del presente.

Ritornando all'analisi di Han vediamo come essa non si limiti alla considerazione della superficie delle non cose, ma giunge al cuore ontico-cibernetico di quel "pensare artificiale" che è ben diverso dal pensare dell'uomo; heideggerianamente potremmo dire che se il primo è un mero calcolare, nel secondo vi è un pensare poetico. Il primo ha lo scopo della funzionalità, nel secondo vi è, nella sua essenza, l'*ek*-sistere, cioè l'essere portato fuori, in direzione della possibilità, e ciò lo distingue da qualsiasi altro ente, tanto più se l'ente si adoperi solo per il mero calcolo, ovvero quel verificare che è un render vero su dati già disposti, e perciò senza nessuna capacità progettante. L'intelligenza artificiale è solo un ente gettato, di fatto non pensa, perché non *ek-siste*; l'esserci, di contro, nel momento in cui è gettato, è già oltre la sua gettatezza, è aperto all'esser altro da sé, e per questo è, da sempre, oltre ciò che è.

L'Altro in quanto ente, nella descrizione non cosale del mondo che ne dà Han, è una presenza che marca la sua inevitabile assenza. Lo sguardo del soggetto è sostituito dalle informazioni o tutt'al più da sguardi che non sono a portata di mano, virtualizzati. Lo stesso avviene per lo sguardo ad opera delle cose, quell'alterità dell'oggetto che si fa altro rispetto al soggetto. L'Altro, oggetto o soggetto che sia, in definitiva, scompare, diventa anch'esso una non cosa. È auspicabile quindi, per il filosofo coreano, se non necessario, quello "*star di contro*" per poter, di nuovo, esser-*ci*.

Han richiama, ancora una volta, la teoria fotografica di Barthes, dove da una parte vi è la nozione di *studium* che si riferisce a quegli elementi facilmente comprensibili, secondo la quale, "*una volta ridotta ad informazione consumabile, la realtà stessa diventa uniforme*"; mentre dall'altra parte vi è la nozione di *punctum* che si presta invece ad una lacerazione del "*continuum informativo"* che, per il filosofo coreano, *"è luogo di massima intensità e densità*". Questa distinzione è applicabile anche all'ambito dell'arte. L'opera, nel suo essere cosa tra le cose, diventa una non cosa, un'informazione. Se così intesa, all'opera d'arte viene meno la sua peculiare caratteristica tradizionale di apertura alla verità in un senso profondo e radicale: nell'opera d'arte è in opera la verità dell'Essere. Nell'arte, heideggerianamente intesa come ascolto, vi è la possibilità ontica di giungere alla dimensione ontologica; è quel poter andare oltre l'inautenticità quotidiana in cui l'esserci è calato.

Han, infine, ci spinge a riflettere su come l'apparente inconsistenza ontica della non cosa in realtà sia alla base di una delle questioni oggi più sentite, ovvero l'ambiente. La persistente smaterializzazione del mondo che stiamo vivendo ci porta a non considerarlo più come qualcosa di organico e reale, esattamente come i dati e le informazioni da cui siamo circondati. Smaterializzazione che pare andare di pari passo con uno scorporamento del Pianeta. Ecco che prima di una qualsiasi eco-logia, Han ci invita alla concretezza della contemplazione, per una nuova "*onto-logia della materia*", un ripensare il (e un) fondamento.

In conclusione, per il filosofo coreano la questione ontologica diventa prioritaria rispetto a tutte le altre emergenze che, oggidì, si affastellano nelle nostre vite. Resta un punto da specificare. In un'ontologia della materia la questione centrale è davvero la non cosa? E se invece riguardasse la possibilità che ha l'esserci o di scegliersi o di stare, e quindi perdersi nell'inautenticità, la cui peculiarità è un'inessenziale incapacità di arrivare ad una vera apertura e a una vera comprensione verso la cosa, e in tal guisa, invece di incontrare la cosa stessa mantenersi così nella quotidianità media?

Certo, è vero, Han parla di *non cosa*. Per meglio chiarire la sua essenza si sarebbe potuto utilizzare un'opposizione già introdotta dallo stesso Heidegger, ovvero non tanto tra cosa e non cosa ma tra *cosa* e *oggetto*, (cosa e oggetto sono utilizzati come sinonimi dal filosofo coreano, ma come vedremo, non possono dirsi tali). La cosa è uno strumento, e questo è tale solo nel progetto, il quale implica una scelta, una decisione, e solo nel progetto e nel prendersi cura la cosa diventa davvero ciò che è. Di contro, nella mancanza di un progetto la *cosa* non si presenta nella sua vera natura, ma solo come *oggetto*. Si rende patente allora la vera essenza dell'oggetto o, nell'intendimento di Han, della *non cosa*: essa è tale non perché non "*sta di contro*" ad un soggetto, concretamente, ma perché, più propriamente, non appartiene alla progettualità della scelta, e così facendo è estranea al mondo e per questo diviene di per sé inaffidabile. Ecco che è solo nel momento in cui scegliamo di avere fede nella cosa che ci avviciniamo ad essa, istituendo così un rapporto con questa e, mediatamente, con chi ha avuto un commercio con quell'utilizzabile. Solo così facendo, cioè solo nella *scelta* e non nella cosa, la cosa diventa veramente tale e così la struttura si pre-dispone in funzione di un ordine terreno dove l'esserci si pro-getta. Un ordine terreno che è tale non tanto per un ritorno alla mera cosa quindi, ma per un ascolto della voce dell'Essere. Un ascolto, certo, reso sempre più difficoltoso dal nostro iperattivo produrre quel sciabordante frastuono di ridondanza informatico-digitale, un frastuono che è sì un dire, ma un dire come chiacchiera, non come λόγος.

Riccardo Bianco

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