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BRIEF DESCRIPTION

We call "neo-scholasticism" that renewal movement of philosophy and theology held during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We must take the term "neoscholastic" in a very wide sense because on one hand we can speak of a Muslim or Jewish scholasticism, and not only Christian, and on the other hand we can speak about a not merely scholastic Christian philosophy. It should also be noted that, in medieval scholasticism, a number of schools of very diverse thought existed and were perpetuated far beyond their initial time frame.

El neotomisme. Comprendre: Revista Catalana de Filosofia. Vol IV Nm. 2002/2. Pg 169-191. Barcelona (2002). ISSN 1139-9759



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1. Main characteristics of Neo-Scholasticism

We call "neo-scholasticism" that renewal movement of philosophy and theology held in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We must take the term *neo-scholastic* in a very wide sense because on one hand we can speak of a Muslim or Jewish scholasticism, and not only Christian, and on the other hand we can speak about a not merely scholastic Christian philosophy. It should also be noted that, in medieval scholasticism, a number of schools of very diverse thought existed and were perpetuated far beyond their initial time frame.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the scotist *oxonian opus* enjoyed the same fame than the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas and had a crucial influence on Francisco Suárez. The scotist view was very present in the *Auxiliis* scholastic disputes and also in the documents of the Council of Trent. In 1966 Paul IV presents Scotus in the *Alma Parens* letter as one of the greatest teachers of the Church and encourages the publication of *Dr. Subtle's* works.

Thomists and Molinists invoked St. Augustine's authority to defend their respective positions regarding the controversy that confronted them during this period. Several forms of augustinians dissapeared over time but a permanently valid substrate always remained, which is non other than attention to man before any cosmological concern. Strictly speaking, Augustinianism did not represent an academy, but constituted a seed of constant renewal of christian thought.

Thomism is the most important part of neo-scholasticism since most neo-scholastics are neo-thomists, although the differences between scholasticism and thomism are deeper today because in the second scholasticism a formalist thought prevailed, which had forgotten the act of Being as the backbone of St. Thomas Aquinas' thought. In the late nineteenth century, a major shift occurs in this evolution manifesting that in Aquinas there is not a system but rather a synthesis of principles always ready to new updates.

Inside neo-thomism a few precedents should be considered: first of all, the work done in the mid-eighteenth century by V. Buzzetti, A. Testa and A. Ranza – all of them teachers at Alberoni de Piacenza school – that culminated in the founding of the *Divus Thomas* journal; secondly, the works done by Italian jesuits Luigi Taparelli or Matteo Liberatore, grouped in *La civilita cattólica* journal; and thirdly, the writings of Jaime Balmes or Ceferino González, as well as those of J. Kleutgen in Germany, or those of G. Ferrari, G.M. Cornoldi and T. Zigliara in Italy.

Gaetano Sanseverino (1811-1865) was the leading figure of the Italian neo-scholasticism of the nineteenth century. Since 1837 he exercises his Chair at the University of Naples; in 1840 he founded the *Scienza e fede* magazine and six years later the Academy of Thomistic Philosophy. Joseph Kleutgen, S.J. (1811-1883) was the initiator of the scholasticism renewal in Germany. He taught Natural Law in Freiburg and Dogmatic Theology at the Gregorian University of Rome, and was probably the drafter of the first outline of the *Aeterni Patris*. His intellectual vigour is remarkable, as well as his clear exposition and his synthesis capacity of the thomistic thought. Generally, Italian authors, mostly clergymen, had a more apologetic disposition and elaborated more general works, specially textbooks. Spaniards, primarly lay people, were marked by their confrontations with Krausism, for their balance between Thomism and Suarecism, and for their interest in the history of thought and its political influence. German authors represent the most homogeneous group; with a good doctrinal formation, they mantain a controversial attitude towards the dominant currents of their country, and they began the study of medieval thought following scientific criteria.

The event that caused the revival of the neo-thomicism was the publication of the *Aeterni Patris* encyclical of Leo XIII on August 4, 1879, wich caused the renewal of the scholastic studies of that time. This momentum continued during subsequent¹ pontificates and encouraged the critical edition of St. Thomas' works known as the Leonine edition of 1882, as well as the publication of philosophy manuals, discussions and controversies surrounding the figure of St. Thomas Aquinas.

It is noteworthy in those years the importance that some thomistic schools had as gathering place for study and publication. Remarkable places like the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan – founded on 1921 – the University of Freiburg, the Dutch University of Nijmegen, the *Institut Catholique* of Paris and the Higher Institute of Philosophy of Louvain. On the other hand, philosophical thought finds a great broadcasting tool in the publication of specialized magazines. Among Dominican Order journals we should highlight *Revue thomiste* and *Revue des sciencies philosophiques et théologiques*, starting on 1908 during Le Saulchoir's novitiate and concentrating thomistic intellectualism faced to modernism, at the same time that the Society of Jesus edits *Les Recherches de science religieuse* and the *Archives de philosophie*. Among academic journals we must highlight the *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuse* (Paris 2886-1922) and the more conservative *Revee de philosophie* of the Catholic Institute of Paris. In the same line, *Bibliothèque thomiste* and the *Bulletin thomiste de la Société Thomiste* (1923)² are also remarkable publications.

We can find neo-thomists who follow a more historiographical perspective, like P. Mandonnet, M. De Wulf, H. Denifle, M. Grabmann, P. Glorieux, F. Ehrle, F. Pelster, K. Werner, O. Lottin,

¹ Pius X published the Doctoris Angelici Motu propio on June 29, 1914; Pius XI publishes the Studiorum ducem encyclical on June 29, 1923 and the apostolic constitution Deus Studiorum ducem on May 24, 1931.

² Remarkable publications with thomistic orientation: *Néoscolastique de Philosophie (Louvain), Divus Thomas (Piacenza), Divus Thomas (Freiburg), Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques, La Ciencia Tomista, Ephemerides Theol. Lovanienses, Angelicum, Acta Pontificiae Academiae Romanae S. Thomae, Revista de filosofía neoescolástica, Philosophisches Jahrbuch, Die neue Ordnung, Doctor Communis, Aquinas, Divinitas, Sapientiae (Buenos Aires), Sapienza, Estudios Filosóficos, Teología Espiritual, Studium, The Thomist, etc.*

É. Gilson, V. Beltrán de Heredia, M. D. Chenu, A. Walz, C. Giacon, A. Dondalne, etc; and others who follow a more systematic perspective. We could also classify neo-thomists in three main currents: those seeking for confrontation between St. Thomas and Kantianism; those who consider themselves as successors of the more classical commentators, like Garrigou-Lagrange or Ramírez; and, finally, those who seek a return to an essential Thomism, like É. Gilson and C. Fabro.

In France, the most important figures were J. Maritain, É. Gilson y Garrigou-Lagrange; D. Sertillanges, Pierre Russelot and André Marc, teachers at the Catholic Institute of Paris. It is also noted the work of R. Verneaux, P. B Grenet and J. Rassam, among others. Since 1894, Cardinal Mercier took over the teaching of Thomas by establishing the Higher Philosophy Institute of Louvain that, apart from studying classical issues, it will also present new ones in a Cartesian orientation. This position influenced Maréchal as well as J.B. Lotz and K. Rahner, who will endeavor to conciliate Thomistic Realism with the philosophy of Kant and Heidegger.

Louvain School was a radiating point of Thomism with undeniable merits, although the influence of Kantian Criticism has been the most discussed issue by other authors who don't consider its opinion being accurate to St. Thomas spirit. N. Balthasar y L. Raeymaeker, founders of the metaphysics line of Louvain, emphasized the special importance that the interiority of the trascendental has, so it is for this reason that self-awareness has a privileged place in their metaphysical synthesis. Among other teachers from Louvain we highlight Maurice De Wulff, who argues that the influence of Revelation in philosophy is only negative and therefore we can only speak about the existence of Christian philosophy in a material sense; and P. Van Steenberghen, who claims that epistemology must precede metaphysics.

There are great neo-thomists in German language too, such as Franz Ehrle – who founded the *Archiv für Literatur und Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters* – Martín Grabmann – possibly the greatest expert in Medieval thought; Alois Dempf; Gallus M. Manser; Joseph Geyser; Johannes Messner; Erich Przywara; J.B. Lotz; K. Rahner; W. Brugger; E. Coreth; Gustav Siewerth and Joseph Pieper. The main consequence of the *aeterni Patris* in Italy was the founding of the *Università Católica del Sacro Cuore* of Milan, with outstanding names like Giuseppe Zamboni; Agostino Gemelli; Francesco Olgiati; Gustavo Bontadini; Umberto Padovani; Carlo Giacon; Sofia Vanni-Rovighi and Cornelio Fabro.

Next, we are going to study the main authors of the neo-scholastic renewal of the XX century gathered in three main groups: those who, following the influence of Louvain, remain loyal to the trascendental school, like J. Maréchal, K. Rahner and J.B. Lotz; those seeking a return to a more fundamental thomism - who have been classified as *Exodus metaphysics* - like É. Gilson, J. Maritain and C. Fabro; and finally, those coming from the german neo-scholasticism like E. Przywara, G. Siewerth and H.U. Balthasar.

2. The Transcendental School of Louvain: J. Maréchal, K. Rahner and J.B. Lotz

Louvain School, thanks to the contributions of J. Maréchal, K. Rahner and J.B. Lotz was the first to propose a revision of naïve realism and of the reception of Kant's critical method which allowed the birth of a critical realism. Josep Maréchal (1878-1944) was born in Charleroi, Belgium, on July 1, 1878, studied philosophy, theology and science, and taught History of Philosophy at Louvain for twenty years. His most important works were *Le point de départ de la métaphysique* and *Précis d'histoire de la philosophie modern*, in which he starred the best attempt of a synthesis between Kant's work and thomism; he died in Louvain on December 11, 1944.

In *Le point de départ de la métaphysique*, J. Maréchal confronts the works of the great philosophers with thomism, showing the underlying dialectics en the history of the systems, and also studying the great crises of the West from the scepticism of the sophists and the loss of the thomistic synthesis in Duns Scotus, to Ocam's nominalism and racionalism. Maréchal highlights in Kant's work the inherent requirements of the critical problem since Kant does not find any solution to the mutual causality of will and understanding, and so proposes a translation of the thomistic terminology to critical language.

J. Maréchal endorses the kantian presuppositions of the noumenal reality and the transcendental method, but distinguishes two aspects of knowledge, the ontological of the immanence of the object in the subject and the psychological of the awareness of the object as opposed to the subject, so that the judgment made by logic truth has at least an implicit reference to reality itself and remotely to God. It is in this sense that J. Maréchal thinks that St. Thomas Aquinas culminates Kant's efforts, proposing the understanding of God as an implicit a priori in any other understanding, since if intellectual dynamism would not postulate the existence of God as ultimate end, it would merely be a movement towars nothing.

Karl Rahner (1904-1984) was born in Freiburg on March 5, 1904 and professed in the Society of Jesus in 1922. After his basic studies in Valkenburg, he studied with J.B. Lotz in Freiburg, where he had the chance to meet M. Heidegger, M. Müller, G. Siewerth and B. Welte. In *Geist im Welt*³ he presents his interpretation of St. Thomas in relation to the problems of modern philosophy and specially of German idealism. *Hörer des Wortes*⁴, the result of Salzburg conferences, is essential for the interpretation of his thought in philosophy of religion. After a few years at the Berchmans Pullach College in Munich, he returned to Innsbruck where he

³ Rahner, K., Geist im Welt. Zur metaphysik der endlichen Erkenntnis bei Thomas von Aquin. Kösel. München (1957): trad: Espíritu en el mundo: metafísica del conocimiento finito según santo Tomás de Aquino. Herder. Barcelona (1963)

⁴ Rahner, K., Hörer des wortes. Zur Grundlegung einer Religionsphilosophie. Kösel-Pustet. München (1942): trad: Oyente de la palabra. Fundamentos para una filosofía de la religión. Herder. Barcelona (1967)

became professor of dogmatic theology since 1949. He was counsellor of the second Vatican Council, and still he taught for three years in Munich and four more in Münster, before his death on March 30, 1984 in Innsbruck, where the Karl Rahner Archive was located until its relocation in Munich in 2008.

Rahner's transcendental method attemps to capture the thomistic thesis and, at the same time, those from Maréchal and Heidegger. Every statement about an entity is made in the horizon of Being, foundation of every act of thinking. And every act of knowledge of an entity takes place in the consciousness of opening to Being as the horizon from which concrete entities are illuminated. Knowing is not only a relationship between a subject and an object: prior to this relationship there's already the ontic unity between being and knowing; hence every question about Being is a question about the being of man, since man is opening to Being in general. This athematic opening to being is the transcendental experience in which all concrete experience lies and implies an athematic opening to God, who hides in the human transcendence as horizon and condition of it.

The *a posteriori* nature of knowledge should not hide the transcendentl element included in it and which already means an originary experience and not merely an objective reflexion; hence the evidences of the existence of God are nothing but an explicitation of the mystery that occurs in human consciousness.

The core of Rahner's anthropological argumentation embodies the finest Agustinian tradition; when analyzing human existence, it appears involved in God, so it is inherent to man feeling overset or transcended by a kind of love bigger than himself, feeling in the orbit of a hidden God who draws us all. The transcendental is rooted in the very structure of the human being, as it emerges from God; it indicates what appears in man *a priori*, derivative only of the God who created it, and that will allow us to determine, *a posteriori*, what man can do. That transcendental experience occurs whenever man knows a particular object by thematic or categorical knowledge, since it does not deplete his capacity to know that transcends every delimited reality. Man owns himself a priori, apart from any particular knowledge in his spiritual capacity opened to Being in general. Such self possession is a *redditus*, the complete return upon oneself that St. Thomas mentions, and can be called non-thematic knowledge of the own consciousness and of God itself.

The transcendental appears as an a priori structure of human beings and is distinguished from the categorical or *a posteriori*, as a knowledge linked to this or that human experience; the categorical simply explicits what is implicit in man, which is but the structure of those opened to infinite. The capacity to know is part of God's light as a condition of possibility that makes every thing and every concept intelligible.

Rahner speaks of creatureness and supernaturality to avoid understanding transcendental experience as an immediate experience of the transcendence itself, while the transcendental is mediated by the structure of the person that is created in the image of God, although not identical to God. Rahner affirms the *supernatural existential* freely implanted into human nature, which is the structure of man opened to infinite; the opening of the finite Being capable to hear and receive the word of God which intimately structures it.

Johannes Baptist Lotz was born in Darmstadt on August 2, 1903. In 1931 he enteres the Society of Jesus; he studied philosophy and theology in Valkenburg, Rome and Innsbruck. He was assistant and later professor of Ontology and History of Philosophy in Pullach, Munich, and from 1952 to 1985 he taught Philosophy at the Gregorian University of Rome. In the course of the transcendental experience offered by Lotz at the University of Munich in 1972, he collects the work done by Maréchal on the analysis of the judgement in the metaphysical knowledge of Being. This course, along with the work done by Lotz on the religious experience, was the beginning of the monograph "Transcendental Experience" used in 1976 in the Gregorian University of Rome, in which he reflects the threefold division of the ontological, metaphysical and religious⁵ experience.

Lotz claims that Kant offered a transcendental foundation of the unrealistic knowledge, while the classical conception offers a realism without transcendental foundation; he decided to deepen on one hand Kantian Transcendentalism until reaching the Being, and on the other hand classical realism until reaching its reflex foundation. Lotz places in the ontological experience the true transcendental experience of Being as the basis that comprises everything, as pure act that exceeds the categorial order.

Lotz is aware of the three-way treatment that St. Thomas gave to Being: Esse propium, ipsum esse (being itself) and esse subsistens (subsistent being) and argues that, starting from the esse propium and going through the Being itself, Aquinas reached the subsistent Being, which coincides with the divine Being. Lotz's transcendental method, rather than objective in the kantian sense, should be called injective, since it proposes an experience of Being whitin himself. Being is not a logical formality but an insight into the foundation of truth as Being, overcoming the limitations of the concrete, refuses these limitations to become the foundation. In the ontological experience man interiorizes himself to his original Being and transforms the explicit in what was prevoiusly contained in an athematic way. Although Lotz

⁵ Lotz, J.B., Allgemeine Metaphysik. Berchmanskolleg. Pullachbei München (1967); Id., Transzendentale Erfahrung. Herder. Freiburg (1978) trad: La experiencia trascendental. BAC. Madrid (1982); Id., Das Urteil und das Sein. Eine Grundlegund der Metaphysik. Berchmanskolleg. München (1957); trad: Le Jugement et l'Être. Les fondements de la métaphysique. Beauchesne. París (1965); Id., Metaphysica operationis humanae. Methodo transcendentali explicata. Universitas Gregoriana. Roma (1958); Id., Person und Freihelt. Eine philosophische Untersuchung mit theologischen Ausblicken (1979) Herder. Freiburg (1979)

distinguishes between the metaphysical and the religious experience, he claims that the absolute You is already prefigured in the subsistent Being; without this dark awareness of God, Being would remain immanent to the entity (*Ens*), losing the transcendence with which every entity transcends.

3. Metaphysics of Exodus: É. Gilson, J. Maritain and C. Fabro

É. Gilson, J. Maritain and C. Fabro are called the "metaphysics of Exodus" for claiming the participation of the created Being in the subsistent and creator Being of God, as it is stated in the book of Exodus when God affirms of himself: "I am who I am". The identification of God with Being makes every entity to be referred to God as the First.

Étienne Gilson (1884-1918) was born in Paris on June 13, 1884. He was educated in Christian schools, and attended college at the Sorbonne University of Paris in a clearly agnostic environment. He soon initiated in the investigation techniques that he learned from Brochard, Delbos, Lévy-Brull or Durkheim, although without being influenced by their positivist orientation. É. Gilson finds that the main ideas of Descartes start at the notions of scholasticism and, trying to find out if it is true that there was no philosophy but only theology in the Middle Age, concludes that most of the philosophical notions that have reached modern philosophy come from partristics and scholasticism; this is the case of the notion of a transcendent God, the concept of freedom, person or history.

É. Gilson presents a much deeper thomism than the one featuring on late scholasticism, highlighting the existential and concrete notion of Being. The innovation of St. Thomas' thought was being a coherent thinking with his faith, so that metaphysical modifications born in the faith on creation became the core of his philosophy of Being. The works of É. Gilson made possible, during the thirties, a series of meetings and discussions about the possibility of a Christian philosophy.

In 1931 the *Société Française de Philosophie* of the Sorbonne organized a debate on this issue, with the presence, among others, of É. Gilson and J. Maritain, defenders of the possibility of such a Christian philosophy, confronted to some of its detractors like Blondel, Brehier and Brunschvicg. In 1933 the *Société Thomiste* of the University of Milan and Louvain organized a symposium on the subject in which Steenberghen and Masnovo were opposed to the existence of a Christian philosophy in scholasticism. The debate continued for several years, in which Gilson, Garrigou- Lagrange, Sertillanges, Gouhier, Lang, Forest, Dempf and Sciacca had different positions than Manser, Van Riet, Giacon, Masnovo and Steenberghen.

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Jaques Maritain (1882-1973) was born in Paris the 18th of November of 1882 in a buegeois and secular family, althought thanks to Bergons's influence he refused positivism. From 1914 he was professor of history of modern philosophy at the Catholic Institute of Paris; in 1916 he was named member of the Roman Academy of St. Thomas and from 1945 to 1948 he was the French ambassador to the Holy See. Since then he lived in the United States where he teached at Princeton University. In 1960 he returned to France where, when his wife Raisa died, he retired to the convent of the Brothers of Jesus, near Toulouse, where he died on April 28, 1973.6

J. Maritain does not believe the verification of the limits of knowledge proposed by Maréchal to be indispensable, but on the other side, he is away from É. Gilson's position, for whom any form of critical realism would mean a concession to idealism. J. Maritain thinks that the critical problem consists in the metaphysical question of wheter thought is measured by reality, since every philosophy culminates its concepts in the intelligible Being. Deepening into the distinction between intellectus and ratio, J. Maritain thinks that the activity of intellect is extracting objects from experience and taking them to the immaterial visibility in act, first and foremost the Being and its properties, the essential structures and the intelligible principles. The intuition of Being is a knowledge which goes beyond the mere concept; beside this intuition there is also room for a knowledge through connaturality and affectivity, as those from the poetry or the moral experience.

Regarding ethical and political issues, Maritain diverges from most thomistic thesis. He thinks that ethics can not have a purely natural order since St. Thomas never developed a natural ethics but clearly subordinated to theology; in political philosophy he is far away from capitalist or socialist positions. The defect of Christianity was underestimating the autonomy of the temporal order, and in this situation J. Maritain proposes an integral humanism which will be the base of future Christianity. Only a personalist democracy responds to the demands of the human nature of these days. This new Christianity accepts both pluralism and the autonomy of the temporal, promotes freedom and proposes working for the city from love as a common task. If materiality is what makes man an individual, then spirituality is what makes him a person, so man as an individual is part of society, but as person he has no other purpose than God.

Cornelio Fabro (1911-1995) was born In Flumigano, province of Udine, on August 24, 1911. He studied at the Lateran University of Rome, where he received his doctorate in 1931 and where he taught from 1936 to 1938. In 1954 he imparted a course on participation and causality at the Louvain University and in 1959 he founded the first congress on atheism at the Pontifical Urbaniana University. From 1956 to 1058 he taught at the Catholic University of Sacro Core of Milan and later at the superior center Maria SS Assunta of Rome. He was also ordinary

⁶ Allion, J. M., Jacques Maritain. Oeuvres complètes. 17 vol. Éditions Saint Paul. Fribourg (1986-1999)

professor of theoretical philosophy at the University of Perugia from 1965 to 1982. His most important works are *La nozione metafísica di partecipazione* and *Partecipazione e causalitá*.⁷

In La nozione metafísica di partecipazione he dwells on the originality of the act of Being in the structure of the entity. The entity participates in Being, but the act of Being is the fisrt and transcendental act which can not be expressed by any concept. Thomism, which is an exception to the oblivion of Being denounced by M. Heidegger, discovers in participation the roots of the creative dependence of the entity with regard to Infinite. In Partecipazione e causalità C. Fabro deepens its analysis relating the thought of St. Thomas with both Plato and Aristotle's philosophy of Being on one hand, and modern thought on the other. These two trends coincide in offering the conception of Being participated in the entity as act of Being, and therein lies the rupture with immanentist thought. For the authentic Thomism, God is the entity per se subsistens which is ultimate foundation of Being.

4. Dialogical Philosophy: E. Przywara, G. Siewerth and H.U Balthasar

E. Przywara (1889-1972) was born in Kattowitz, Poland on October 12, 1889. From 1910 to 1913 he studied philosophy in Valkenburg; from 1913 to 1917 he was named accountable for Music in the Stella Matutina school in Feldkirch, Austria, although he returned to Valkenburg to study theology. He was ordained priest in 1920, and died on September 28, 1972 in Hagen. In 1932 he wrote his work *Analogia Entis*⁸ in which the thought of St. Thomas, the german mystical orientation, the open debate between Kant, Hegel and Kierkegaard, the influence of Max Scheller and Edith Stein, and the dialogue between Husserl and Heidegger converge. *Analogia Entis* offers a method of immanent hystorical understanding, a synthesis in which analogy is treated on the idea of order.

The analogy par excellence is the analogy of proportion, in the sense that there is a proportionate relationship between the creature and the world, and a disproportionate one between the creature and God. It is an excessive God since God is the transcendent par excellence, which is beyond all and is known at night, what means the knowledge of God as unknown. The original contribution of St. Thomas was finding the midpoint between the ascending hereafter which tries to break with the immanence of the created and the descending pace in which God communicates with the creature.

Przywara understands analogy as an original tension between these two directions: from the bottom to the front – of the immanence – and bottom-up – of the transcendence – in which analogy "explodes in the hereafter". This tension was noetically lost when racionalism began treating the analogy like an identity, falling into the homogeneous and neutral reason and

⁷ Fabro, C., La nozione metaphisica di partecipazione secondo S. Tommaso d'Aquino. Società editrice internazionale. Torino (1939); Id., Partecipazione e causalità secondo S. Tommaso d'Aquino. Società editrice internazionale. Torino (1940); Id., Dall'essere all'esistente. Morcelliana. Brescia (1950)

⁸ Przywara, E., Analogía entis. Josef Kösel-Friedrich Pustet. München (1932): french trad: Philibert Secretan. Presses universitaires de France. París (1990)

losing this tension. Przywara brought a new intelectuall enviroment among Catholic thinkers, because although his work defends a clear Catholic position, it also offers an open and constructive dialogue with modern thought, a dialogue already found in J. Maréchal, K. Rahner, J.B. Lotz and finally G. Siewerth, who introduced Heidegger's thought in Fribourg before K. Rahner and J.B. Lotz.

G. Siewerth (1903-1963)⁹ was said to be by H.U. Balthasar "one of the most universal thinkers of our time"¹⁰ represents the most fruitful attempt to dissect metaphysics considering Heidegger's requirement of a rigorous thinking of the difference of Being. Siewerth claims that the *De Deo Uno* of St. Thomas was limited by the unity and the simplicity of a God more likely of the philosophers than the Triune God of the Relevation. G. Siewerth finds the difference inside the divine Being, so that the real divine difference between the subsistence of the divine persons and the common act of Being – the *Urdifferenz* – should be taken as the archetype of the real distinction of the created and finite Being.

Being, precisely because of its limitlessness, is beyond our rational understanding since simplicity is the first and major sign of the transcendence of Being. G. Siewerth refuses to think Being as a universal matter or a logic genre, because what he wants is to emphasize the actuality of Being. Subsistence belongs to Being for its won right, not as the result of a formal synthesis.

The multiple finite configurations of Being represent partial views in which subsistence is attached to form or forms, but the actuality of this Being called non-subsistent is not derived from a formal judgement but from itself. Subsistance, as one being within oneself, is not derived from the form and it is not characteristic of it, but of the act of Being itself.

In a wise phrase, G. Siewerth states that subsistence "belongs to Being through the form". The absolute Being as foundation is already present in this sea of Being, the abyss of Being¹¹, the flow of Being, which is a mysterious presence of God in the world. Being can unify in a single concept the finite and the infinite, and we can speak of Being as *mediation* since Being is at the limit of the representation of the real. Siewerth highlights the simplicity and the limitlessness of Being and, considering its actuality, claims its mediation nature and understands Metaphysics of Being as *parable* or image of God.

Greeks did not know theology of creation; they remained prisioners of concreteness, conceiveing Being on a celestial ambit, in the realm of forms or in the divine thought, but what is created is similar to the creator because the main effect of God is the simple Being itself, unlimited and pure as emanation of God. Being springs from God as an actual flow, simple and infinite; it is the copy or image of the divine foundation. We are unable to distinguish the boundary between God and this Being because of the infinite fullness of this *sea of Being*. G

⁹ Siewerth, G., Der Thomismus als Identitätsystem. *Patmos-Verlag. Düsseldorf (1961); Id.*, Das schicksal der Metaphysik von Thomas zu Heidegger. *Patmos-Verlag. Düsseldorf (1959); Id.*, Die Abstraktion un das Sein nach der Lehre des Thomas von Aquin. *Otto Müller. Salzburg (1958); Id.*, Das Sein als Gleichnis Gottes. *Heidelberg, F.H. Kerle Verlag (1958); Id.*, Sein und Wahrheit. *Patmos-Verlag. Düsseldorf (1975)*¹⁰ *Balthasar, H.U.*, Abschied von Gustav Siewerth. *Hochland, 56 (1963)*

¹¹ Siewerth, G., Das Sein als Gleichnis Gottes. Heidelberg, F.H. Kerle Verlag (1958)

Siewerth, as a result of conceiving the created difference as the product of the reflection of the divine real difference, claims that Being is *parable* of God, fluent element of the divine communicability. Only man is capable of recognizing this mysterious presence of Being as mediation, as a parable of God, as the archetypal imprint of God.

Hans Urs von Balthasar¹² was born in Lucerne on August 12, 1905; he attended his elementary studies in Engelberg (Switzerland) and Feldkirch (Austria). From 1924 to 1928 he studied philosophy in Zurich, Vienna and Berlin. In 1928 he received his doctorate in Germanic studies with a thesis on "the eschatological problem in German literature"; he entered the Society of Jesus in Feldkirch as a postulant of the esatern German province. In 1931, while studying philosophy in Pullach - near Munich – he meets Erich Przywara and later began his theological studies in Fourvière (Lyon), where he established relationship with Henri de Lubac and Jean Danielou and began studying patristics. Ordained priest in 1936 in Munich, he translates and comments the Psalms of St. Augustine and an anthology of texts from Origen. He also translates works from Paul Claudel, Peguy, Mauriac, Bernanos, etc. And together with Karl Rahner begins to project a new dogmatics. From 1940 he intensified his dialogue with Karl Barth in an attempt to deepen the *entis* and *fidei* analogies. In 1945 he published "The Heart of the World" and after WWII he imparted numerous conferences and courses worldwide.

In 1947 he left the Company of Jesus and published "The Truth of the World", mantaining a strong activity as author and editor first in Zurich and then in Basel. He is incardinated in the diocese of Coira and manages the community of San Juan. In 1961 he publishes "The Glory of the Lord", the first volume of his trilogy; he was named member of the international comission of theology and in 1972 he founded Communio, an international theology and culture journal. From 1973 to 1983 he published the "Theo-drama" - second part of his trilogy — and in 1985 "Theo-logic", the third one. In 1988 he was appointed Cardinal by Pope John Paul II and died at his home in Basel on June 26, 1988.

H.U. Balthasar is capable of reading the philosophical difference regarding the Trinitarian difference, so that the supreme form of analogy of Being is the Trinitarian analogy. The *imago Dei* is the opportunity to show the Trinitarian nature of creation. Balthasar is aware that one can only be a theologist if he is also a philosopher; but he is also aware that all philosophy is sorrounded by a theological *a priori*, conscious and unconscious. The Modern age was right when distinguishing between philosophy and theology, but it was not possible to separate them, and a simple addition or juxtaposition did not provide any solution. A mutual involvement is required since metaphysics is called to go beyond itself, reaching its fullness in the field of the revealed truth. Faith and Reason meet in a reciprocal relationship, as well as nature and grace, or natural and supernatural. Supernatural is in the innermost structures of Being, so it is not possible to rebuild them as if they were not internally completed by grace.

¹² Balthasar, H. U., Geist und Feuer: ein Aufbau aus seinen Schriften. Johannes. Freiburg (1991); Id., Das Herz der Welt. Schwabenverlag. Ostfildern bei Stuttgart (1988); Id., Wahrheit: ein Versuch. Benziger. Einsiedeln (1947); Id., Herrlichkeit: eine theologische Ästhetik. Johannes. Einsiedeln (1969) trad: Gloria. Una estética teológica. 7 vols. Ediciones Encuentro. Madrid (1985-1989); Id., Theodramatik. Johannes. Einsiedeln (1973-1983) trad: Teodramática. Ediciones Encuentro. Madrid (1990).

This position met the efforts already done by Russelot, Maréchal, Guardini and De Lubac. Claiming that the creative act already includes a first manifestation of God, a revelation itself, accomplishes an overcome of the agnostic view of modern rationalism. Balthasar himself states that his philosophy is an anthropological goal and not only metaphysics, since cosmos is perfected by man. But since man is a dialogical personal being and there is an analogy between creature and God, an analogy between the transcendental attributes should also exist. The three moments of his *trilogy* have been already proposed: in the theological aesthetics, God appears; in the Theo-drama, God itself is given to us; and in Theo-Logic, God speaks to us.

Philosophy only finds its ultimate answer in the Revelation of Christ. In the acts of being given and being said by itself, the transcendental relations which constitute them are refreshed, so that the network of relations in which they are given to us deserve the name of communion between them. The common Being is the usual mediation between God and men, since it is the implication point between faith and reason, between theology and philosophy. In this way, Balthasar endorses the thesis of Siewerth about the destiny of Western metaphysics from St. Thomas to Heidegger.

Only by returning to the mystery of Being as necessary mediation between God and man, between faith and reason, is man capable to root again in the ground provided by Being. Balthasar focused his proposal in four differences: the ontic difference, which assures the real distinction between the created beings; the ontological difference, formulated in thomistic terms as distinction between essence and existence – or, in Heidegger terms, between entities and Being – the difference between Being and God, which recovers the thesis of Being as image of God; and the theological difference that distinguishes between the creator God and the created world.

On the one hand, the difference between Being and God assures the distance and the relationship between the beauty of Being and the glory of God, making possible the divine Revelation of which only the being can be receptacle, the frame or mirror in which God manifests in all its splendour. On the other hand, the theologic difference assures the

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need of the mysteries of the Trinity and the incarnation to answer the ultimate question about Being, bringing metaphysics to a fullness beyond itself. And this difference in the interior of the divine being is the ultimate condition of the possibility of creation, of a world trully different from God.

We can find the influence of several previous thinkers in his personal intuitions. First, Balthasar is indebted to Henri de Lubac¹³, who had warned of the danger of the dualism that would exist between natural and supernatural if Revelation is explained as something that simply overcomes an already fully constitued nature. In an autonomous humanity, the supernatural gift could only appear as a supplement or a useless addition. De Lubac refused any kind of dualism to insist on the reality of the effective presence of God in men, a presence that is, at the same time, natural and supernatural. Following de Lubac, Balthasar studies the mystery of the participation in the fathers and discovers that they distinguish a double moment in creation. According to this argument, there is a divine-human transition area through which creatures participate in the reality of God. He seems to understand the wisdom of Origen, the anima mundi of St. Agustin, the nature of Eriugena or the God-Nature of Goethe in these terms.

Secondly, H.U. Balthasar is also indebted to the influence of G. Siewerth for whom, as we have seen, Being is the first divine similarity or image; Being is simple, infinite, holy and empty at the same time; Being is neither God nor the finite entity but the mystery of a being *co-created* with the entities. Being as mediation does not imply pantheism because it is not God itself but Being who enters into the constitution of things; Being is the first copy or image that God makes of himself so that creatures are not created but *co-created*.

And thirdly, Przywara also influentied Balthasar with his interpretation of the thomistic distintio as polarity or unity in tension, since he proposes the actus essendi as sign of the grace of a personal you. The distinction between Being and essence means a reciprocal inclusion in which essences are containers simultaneously created with the flow of Being. The mystery of Being is this infinite between God and the world. Balthasar claims that Being is not subsistent but inherent; creatures are in relation with God as the air in relation to the brighting sun. The light of Being is neither born from creatures nor rotted in them but in God, which is principle of Being. Being is the first, immediate and universal mundane effect of God, the first object or primordial mystery, the place of God's Revelation, which makes possible its presence in the world.

In his explanation of Creation, Balthasar highlights two moments: first, when Being presents itself as the divine matter from which everything else is created; secondly, the embodiment of concrete entities. This *mediation of Being* is natural – not supernatural – since what is immediately participated would not be God but the divine resemblance of Being. Being is the deepest of things, but not an obstacle between God and the world but a not pantheistic emanation of God, similar to the Trinitarian procession of the Son; both mediations are not opposed since the being of things flows or emanates from the Verb. Creation distinguishes the order of nature and the order of grace, as God communicates through the gift of Being in the natural order, and through His immediate participation in the supernatural order.

¹³ De Lubac, H., Le Mystère du surnaturel. Aubier. París (1965). Trad: El misterio de lo sobrenatural. Estelai Barcelona (1970)

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