Contact Made Vision:
The Apocryphal Whitehead
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> Religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness. It runs through three stages, if it evolves to its final satisfaction. It is the transition from God the void to God the enemy, and from God the enemy to God the companion. (*RM* 16)[1]

Introduction

The present Whiteheadian dialogue between natural process theology and Whiteheadian scholarship exploits a tangential approach that will provide new ways of contrasting Whitehead's worldview by adding a third unexpected speaker: Thomas, the Gnostic Jew who wrote his Gospel perhaps as early as 60 years after Jesus' death and could thus have constituted an earlier corpus than the canonical gospels—and their hypothetical *Q*.[2]

Some readers might consider that the price to pay is too high to venture oneself on such a cross-interpretative path: there is no need to impose an unfashionable syncretic burden either on Whitehead or on Thomas; the inflexion required on each of them to bring them together is simply too demanding and totally unscientific anyway. At least four answers immediately come to mind: first, there is no such thing as a totally objective interpretation in these matters (even the "hard-core" scientific enterprise does not completely escape from the social construction of its issues); second, this hermeneutical wager carries important consequences for each party; third, the rapprochement is operational only at the level of the fundamental intuition—of course not at the level of the technicalities (for the most part absent in Thomas anyway); fourth, what matters above all is to highlight new ways of understanding the human condition, not to stick sclerotically to dead abstractions. Let us notice moreover that the strong matriarchal or at least antipatriarchal emphasis of most Gnostic sects is of good omen in the present post-modern context.

Having said this, who could seriously dare to claim that we should not aim at a new vision, not only globally speaking, but also on such cultural landmarks as Whitehead and Thomas? The answer is simple: nobody, unless such a vision undercuts his or her own power on the social scene (or on its backstage). Granted, it is sometimes too demanding to shake intimate convictions while compassion should prevent us from harsh judgements. The requirement of authenticity nevertheless clears this objection promptly. Transfigurative contemplation is as old as humanity (remember the emblematic Mesopotamian orant sculptures or the role of *theoria* in

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Greek philosophy, religion and politics), and there is no doubt whatsoever that it is still alive in philosophy. Samuel Alexander has for instance boldly claimed: "I read Whitehead naturally not only to understand him but to save my soul."[3]

There is evidence that Whitehead knew at least of the *Oxyrhynchus logia*, published in 1898 by Grenfell and Hunt (thus far before the Nag Hammadi *logia*, discovered in 1945, and *Dead Sea Scrolls*, discovered in 1947). In *Religion in the Making* (1926), he writes:

> The notion of immanence must be discriminated from that of omniscience. The Semitic God is omniscient; but, in addition to that, the Christian God is a factor in the universe. A few years ago a papyrus was found in an Egyptian tomb which proved to be an early Christian compilation called "The Sayings of Christ." […] We find in these Logia of Christ the saying, "Cleave the wood, and I am there." This is merely one example of an emphatic assertion of immanence, and shows a serious divergence from the Semitic concept. (*RM* 71)[4]

Whitehead's repeated emphasis on immanence should be kept in mind when confronted with the Platonist temptation of his ontology.

Gnosticism has been for too long totally despised and interpreted as a weak blend of systems hastily syncretized. From a strict philosophical perspective, Jonas' doctoral thesis remains a landmark here[5]: he very smartly used Gnosticism to understand Heidegger and Heidegger's existentialism to cast light on Gnosticism. The present essay is, at a far smaller scale and in a more experimental fashion, in the same vein.

Practically speaking, our argument will have a double focus: on the one hand, Thomas' *Gospel* and, on the other, Whitehead's worldview, as it is exposed in *Process and Reality*, and its religious significance, as it is specified mainly in *Religion in the Making*. This paper proceeds in three main steps. First, it introduces the heuristic tools needed to interpret Thomas freely and thereby to flesh out what often appears as a rather abstract metaphysics; second, it sketches the zest of Whitehead's vision with the help of the introduction of his fundamental standpoint as it is embodied in the proto-idea of "creative advance of nature"; third, we revisit in conclusion the question of religious perennialism.

1. Thomas' Soteriology

Alfred North Whitehead's onto-theo-logical system is as challenging as Thomas' soterio-theological message. One is tempted to add "for completely different reasons"— after all aren't the requirements of post-modern speculative philosophy totally foreign to those of first-century mantic utterings?. But there are actually some striking similarities that can be pinned down for the sake of our argument, at the level of matter as well as the level of form.

On the one hand, the respective *general* worldview that nourishes both Whitehead, the British algebrist (unexpectedly) turned metaphysician after having taught applied mathematics in Cambridge and London, and Thomas, whose whereabouts are unknown, are fully compatible, if not downright similar in intent; on the other, the human psyche and language are such that, if you intend to make experience *speak*, be it everyday experience or—even more—Ultimate experience, there are not that many ways to do so, especially in print, where meta-

communication is impossible: no gestures, no mimics, no use of intersubjective space, no rhythm or pace are available… all of which creates what Edward T. Hall called the *Dance of Life* or the *Silent Language*. For our part, we will treat this question with the help of the concept of *interanimation* of sentences.

Needless to say, the price to pay to maintain the similarity between Whitehead and Thomas is manifold, but by no means philosophically too high (we are *not* concerned with religious orthodoxy here) and totally justified by the hermeneutical advantages brought out. For one thing, we put into the balance the respective general worldviews, reactivating the perennialist claim according to which there is a fundamental signature common to all core religious phenomena. Let us underline again that we deliberately deal with synthetic concepts animating the respective worldviews, not with finely shaded historical dogmas—in the broad sense that Whitehead gives to that word.[6] We do so all the more so since the meaning and significance of Whitehead's organic philosophy is susceptible of slightly different interpretations while Thomas' message is intrinsically problematic because of its encryption. Actually, specialists don't agree (one fears often for ideological reasons) on the issue of the exact link between Gnosticism, Judaism and Christianity: is there an essential or an accidental link between (some of) these religions? How deep are Gnosticism's historical roots? *Obiter scriptum*, is there a religion that manages to truly avoid the core Gnostic distinction between knowledge and faith? How far does this distinction mirror itself in the difference of status imposed, by definition, between clergy and lay-people? Even in the case of Buddhism, that heavily insists on the universal necessity to practice meditation in order to obtain a direct intuition of the Four Noble Truths, there remains a sharp distinction between the enlightened and the unenlightened individuals…

There is moreover no Heideggerian overtone in our introductory claim. On the one hand, we cannot afford here a discussion of the meaning and significance (if any) of *Sein und Zeit* (1927) to interpret the history of philosophical and theological scholarship—and even less Whitehead's own spiritual commitment. On the other, one finds indeed in *Process and Reality* (1929) an onto-theo-logical *argument* and in Thomas a soterio-theological *message*. Whitehead's introduction of a theological slant in his philosophy of nature is, according to him, totally dispassionate: in *Science and the Modern World* (1925), he makes clear that a genuinely eventful uni-verse is impossible without some tuning-in organism. In other words, in order to understand how events are possible at all, one needs an algorithm of sorts to (com)possibilize them—a constraint that has two sides: one, the very possibility of each event relies upon a *extensive* screening process that cannot be entirely self-catered; two, the com-possibility of contemporary events (their intensive *unison*) makes the former constraint more strict. This, argues the philosopher, is just a condition of coherence of his finely-shaded ontological system, it does not say much of God *qua* person, provided of course that this concept applies to such an "existent" (we are reluctant to say "Being"). *Prima facie*, it is rather surprising however that Whitehead chooses to call this algorithm "God." But when the argument got polished the reason emerged: God *qua* algorithm became only one side of the divine (the "primordial nature of God"); more importantly, God became a conscious personal existent ("the consequent nature") who has a direct impact on the world (to cut a long story short, "the superjective nature").

Whitehead's very last speculative article ("Immortality," 1941) makes even clear that there is an *infinite* number of divine "natures," thereby reopening the floodgates to polytheism.

In sum: starting from "below," Whitehead is led, from a strictly ontological standpoint that is anchored in a sharp phenomenological vision, to adopt a theological argument. The shift happens, and this is crucial, rationally, with the help of an argument that at times seems to puzzle the author himself. It is only progressively that the dry theological concept gets fleshed out with some of the most striking Christian claims: God is love and God suffers, both *because* of humans and *with* humans.

With regard to Thomas, the question is completely different: there is no real argument to be found in this Gospel; the author is only reporting what Jesus said—and Jesus speaks of experience, i.e., from personal emptying knowledge. Jesus explains what can be explained, suggests what is susceptible of being suggested, and above all tries to make the apostles adopt the right attitude in order to hopefully arrive at intuiting the divine—which amounts to intuiting Jesus' unconditional and compassionate love. Starting from "above", from the perspective of a total eschatological revelation, Thomas worries only about the salvation of individuals (community will follow). There is not much need, it seems, to primarily linger over rational matters here—especially in light of our forthcoming distinction between rationality, irrationality and non-rationality.

1.1. Basic Heuristic Tools

Two first important heuristic moves are necessary to allow our joint venture: one, to concede two main types of Gnosticism—Iranian and Syrian—and to bracket the question of their historical interaction; and two, to underline the fundamental Gnostic trait, which is the contrast between *gnosis* and *pistis*.

First, we have to distinguish Manichaeism or *Iranian* Gnosticism, whose roots are Zoroastrian and which survived in Paulicianism, Bogomilism and later in the Cathari (of the Albigensian Crusade); and *Syrian* Gnosticism, derived from Pythagoricism and Platonism, promoted by Valentinus and Basilides—and out of which has emerged Christian Gnosticism with figures such as Simon Magus and Marcion.[7] The absolute dualism of the former type (two co-eternal principles in perpetual conflict) is not as rigid in the latter (a blend of pantheism and emanationism), that is far more processual, relativized and subtly hierarchized.

The "war of Good and Evil" and the "Fall" are themes, of Babylonian roots, common to both types. The former constitutes the well-known cornerstone of Iranian Gnosticism, whereas the debauching of creation can be so to speak softened when understood from the perspective of the ladder of states of consciousness that will be properly introduced during our argument but that can already be made palpable with the help of the archaic idea of hierarchies of angels, humans and demons. The evil of the world can thus be understood *extrinsically* as being stuck in the wrong state/level of consciousness. So existence is indeed the struggle of light against darkness—not of two distinct realms though, but of higher states of consciousness against lower states (a contrast that makes perfectly sense in a panpsychic scheme allowing the distinction, not the birfucation of the bodily and the mental experiences). As far as Whitehead is concerned,

evil basically amounts to "birth at the wrong season,"[8] a relativistic concept that cannot be treated here.

For the sake of our argument, we furthermore borrow Gilman's distinction (that is not unrelated to James' influential distinction between the religion of the healthy-minded—and its nature mysticism—and that of the sick soul[9]) between "death-based" religion, that asks "What is going to happen to me, after I am dead?" and "birth-based" religion, that asks "What is to be done for the child who is born?"[10] Accordingly, the contrast between the two types of Gnosticism could amount to the following: Iranian Gnosticism is death-based, it features a posthumous egoism, while Syrian Gnosticism is birth-based, it fosters an immediate altruism (this is of course debatable in the case, e.g., of Valentinian Gnosticism). All this remains of course a matter of emphasis, especially since the question of metempsychosis blurs any attempt to enforce a strict distinction.

Since Thomas historically belongs to Syrian Gnosticism, the following important qualification is needed: Thomas' dualism is not extreme; it has to be understood from a holistic perspective seeing differences of degree in place of differences in kind. Under such a hypothesis, the well-known problematic Gnostic anthropological acosmism loses its absoluteness. Human beings are certainly separated from the divine, but their mundaneity constitutes a strong foothold from which they are expected to extract themselves. Spirit and matter, God and the World, should not be understood in opposition, because there is a tension leading from one to the other: this is precisely what is at stake in the human terrestrial existence. The direct correlate is a ladder of spiritual levels that can be approximated by a ladder of consciousness levels. The divine energy in us can be revealed and channelled by certain practices (like the *consolamentum*)[11] and, by doing so, salvation is made likely, if not inevitable. In sum, we will argue that Thomas promotes a *scala naturæ* that internally dynamizes the God/World bipolar. Please notice that such a move undermines the possible—although *totally* foreign to Whitehead's own intuition—Iranian interpretation of the God/World dialectics structuring *Process and Reality*: some could indeed be tempted to use the ambiguous appropriation of mundane satisfied actualities by the consequent nature and to claim that God lives vicariously through the existence of mundane processes, that God feeds through these processes that are thus emptied of their own intrinsic value for the sake of God's own survival.

Second, let us highlight that the constant Gnostic trait that runs through these schools, whether they are Iranian or Syrian, lies in the contrast between *gnosis* and *pistis*, a contrast that boils down to the difference between knowledge and faith and which is reflected in the distinction of esoteric and exoteric teachings. "Psychic" individuals are capable of the ultimate form of salvation while "material" individuals are cut off from salvation. This contrast structures a two-speed religion: the chosen receive a special, private, solitary revelation; the many are given—by the chosen—a common, public dogma to observe. Revelation is *experiential*, i.e., esoteric and not (fully) rational; dogma is *sacramental*, i.e., exoteric and as rational as possible in these matters. As Jung saw, it is a socially therapeutic dream of sorts (which means that it possesses a genuine efficacy and also that it could become a nightmare). Only the secret, revealed knowledge is saving (the contact with the divine is transfigurative); however, the public dogma allows one to put oneself in the position of a likely reincarnation as a chosen. Whereas *gnosis*

brings the trauma of light to the happy few (awakening to Truth is never painless), *pistis* confines the many, for their own good, in comfortable doxastic obscurity. The important point with regard to rationality, as we will see in a moment, is that rationality is by its very essence a public phenomenon. This does not mean that rationality is totally contingent, relative or even subjective. On the contrary, it means that it can be understood (and circularity is here a heavy burden) from below, independently of everlasting rules belonging to the celestial spheres.

When all is said and done—when the individual is dying—*pistis* appears as risky as *gnosis*. *Pistis*, defined by rationalized faith, carries indeed ultimately the same existential burden as *gnosis*—how to make sense of one's own life and secure the next one—but two different level of gnoseological risk are at stake here. The intensity of the commitment and its temporalization differ. The *pneumatic* accepts a far higher goal than the *hyletic*, who appears furthermore to postpone his/her dramatic involvement. The willingness to venture oneself, for the sake of salvation, beyond what is safe and comfortable is not commensurable; the respective vulnerabilities are thus different.

There is of course a social functional constraint behind this partition between perfection and imperfection, but we should certainly not adopt a reductionistic stance here: the religious obligations of the chosen are such that they cannot take part in everyday social life while their existence has to be supported by the work of the many. In the very same way that a Taoist needs a Confucianist society to survive, the Gnostic chosen need the life and work of their fellow faithful to assume their destiny and guide their community. The point is that *gnosis* and *pistis* are necessarily interlinked (i.e., *relative*) and Whitehead's *Religion in the Making* is better at exploiting this than William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). When you boil it down, claims James, the distinction is really about a living, breathing religious commitment (religiosity) versus a dusty one (religion *per se*). Whereas the American carefully puts in brackets the whereabouts of this constitutive correlation, the Briton exploits it and shows the importance of its bi-directionality: on the one hand, *gnosis* is at the root of *pistis* (the first-hand or inward experiences of the mystics inspire the ethos of the many); on the other hand, *pistis* informs *gnosis* (the past rationalizations of first-hand experiences and the collective structures they inspire carve the first-hand experiences of the few, or at least constitute their soil). As Whitehead writes: "The reported sayings of Christ are not formularized thought. They are descriptions of direct insight. The ideas are in his mind as immediate pictures, and not as analysed in terms of abstract concepts." (*RM* 56)

1.2. Religion and the Non-Rational

As a matter of fact, almost no scholar has ever tried to make sense of Whitehead's religious and theological speculations *in themselves*. The commentator either tries to interpret *Religion in the Making* or the seminal Part V of *Process and Reality* (focusing on the divine) from the perspective of a given denomination—or, on the contrary, attempts to evacuate God altogether from process thought. A feat that is not impossible, but that fails to do justice to Whitehead's thought. Our basic move is different: to systematize Whitehead's ontology and, from there, to encounter Thomas' soteriology.

On the one hand, the important works of Joseph Bracken, John Cobb, David Griffin, Thomas Hosinski, Joseph Mabika, Alix Parmentier and Tshishiku Tshibangu are very close to a Whiteheadian *natural* theology but they all belong to a particular denomination (Methodist for Cobb and Griffin; Catholic for the five others). The same remark can be made for the innumerable and equally important Buddhist interpretations and the recent promising publications of Muslim scholars such as Alparslan Açıkgenç, Mustafa Ruzgar and Mohammed Taleb. On the other hand, the three lay philosophers who have dealt with the theological dimension of Whitehead's cosmology—Donald Sherburne, Frederick Ferré and Donald Crosby—have promoted a process *atheology* with the help of very strong arguments that remain nevertheless inadequate to Whiteheadian thought. In both cases, Whitehead is not interpreted *secundum* Whitehead but either as a theological ancillary or as an atheological one. In sum: if it is impossible to extract the concept "God" from Whitehead last philosophical synthesis without ruining its coherence, it remains possible to develop a process thought independently of Whitehead's categories and especially of his theological commitment. Some complementary examples immediately come to the mind: Nicholas Rescher's (1928–) works, that deal with basic theological questions independently of Whitehead.[12] Franz Brentano (1838–1917), also a Catholic (he was a priest between 1864 and 1874), argues for an event philosophy developed in correlation with his theological ruminations and his formal ontology.[13] Lastly, with the exception of R. Poli and J. Seibt, all Brentanians seem determinate to willingly ignore the theological slant of their master.[14]

This question is complicated further by the allegiance of the vast majority of Western religious and theological studies to the speculations (most of them socio-political in spirit) of the first covenant, as they were recarved by the Paulinian legacy in the light of some unfortunate Greek premises (especially the insistence on the unchanging and passionless Absolute[15]) and put to the service of Roman imperial (and imperialistic) policies.[16] To condemn *all* these four successive layers of pitiful—but highly efficacious—political empowerment is one thing; to move beyond them is another. And it is equally important to realize that there is no need to actually begin with a destructive argument before starting a constructive one: in such complex matters, the risk of never being able to reach the second part of the argument is too high, especially since a balanced judgement would be expected.

Who dares to turn to the Gnostic message or to apophasis in Plotinus and Eckhart? Thomas Aquinas' rationalism reigns unchallenged, presenting itself as the safe harbour of plain common sense and universal religion. Nothing seems worse than irrationalism in religion while apophasis appears at best useless (who could make sense of this—or even succeed on this road, provided that there is one?) and at worst dangerous (isn't mysticism a form of psychosis after all?). Of extraordinary interest in this context is the additional fact that the Gnostic path leads straight to Buddhism[17]—perhaps because there is a highly probable Buddhist influence on early Syrian Gnosticism ("Siddhartha" Gautama, the historical Buddha, lived around 563–483 B.C.E.). An influence that was later reinforced through the missionary monk sent by king Asoka (who reigns in the years 272–232) to all nations, including Mesopotamia. According to recent (controversial, of course) studies, the real historical question is thus not *if* Jesus studied Buddhism, but *where* and *how much* he studied Buddhism.[18] Data are rare here, but a simple argument can be built

with the help of the famous Neo-Pythagorean Apollonius of Tyana, who is a contemporary of Jesus and who travelled to India in search of wisdom.[19] Scholarship has the tendency to isolate cultures and peoples, but the fact is that travel, mainly for trade purposes, has always created a cultural maelstrom (not necessarily fostering a religious relativism and tolerance). This matters especially since there is already a very rich scholarship exploiting the proximity between Whitehead and the various forms Buddhism has adopted over the ages (especially Mahayana and Pure Land Buddhism).

In light of all this, the most urgent thing to do is to defuse the argument exploiting the hydra of irrationalism to enforce religious conservatism, itself enslaved to political whiggism. Whitehead himself insisted on the religious primitive *collective* Barbary.[20] As a matter of fact, it is difficult to reasonably claim that what is needed in religious matters is *less* rationality and that irrationality does not need to be disposed of, prevented and rationalized. Well, hasty judgments are no more advisable here than in any other speculative matters.

Thankfully, we have an important conceptual tool at our disposal: the Jamesean articulation of first-hand and second-hand religious experiences (the main working hypothesis of his *Varieties*), that Whitehead himself uses with profit, and that can be traced back to the Gnostic contrast of *gnosis* and *pistis*, a contrast that we propose to use from now on as a paradigm (and that will not be italicized in order to distinguish gnosis and pistis from the Gnostic acceptation *per se*). What matters for James is gnosis: religion *qua* direct, personal, living contact with the Ultimate (that actually receives quite different definition in different traditions); religion *qua* indirect, collective, sedimented contact is bracketed by him as much as possible. By doing so, he obviously wants to focus on the roots of all religious phenomena (on the religious feeling or *Gefühl*) and furthermore to avoid dealing with the many historical dysfunctions of institutionalized religions (which boil down to their political stance). We have seen that Whitehead, for his part, rebalances this asymmetric picture and underlines the strict relativity of gnosis and pistis: the former indeed grounds the later, but there is a feedback on the former, that could itself not take place anyway without the latter.

Most importantly, James' analysis, when pushed to the hilt, brings to the fore another fundamental set of distinctions: the rational, the irrational and the non-rational. In conjunction with the gnosis/pistis binomial, it generates the following twofold thesis: gnosis discloses reality itself, which is non-rational in its *constitution*; while pistis provides a rationalization of gnosis that is always in danger of becoming irrational or purely instrumental.

Here is how we define our variables. A judgement is *rational* provided that it is congruent with the set of rules of relevance consensually adopted in a given culture—something that obviously involves a double tuning: synchronic (among contemporaries) as well as diachronic (in dialogue, as it were, with ancestors and their founding narratives). An *irrational* judgement is not congruent, but could become so, once some fixing-up (tuning-in) is provided. At the very least, it is easy to identify the irrational and possible to rationalize it. For its part, the *non-rational* is definitely incommensurable with reason, whatever the rational system at stake is; it names the intrinsic—or primordial—opacity of concrete reality.[21] In sum, we advocate an epistemological relativism (made operational with the rational/irrational binomial) fading in

front of the Ultimate (operationalized with the concept of non-rational). The conjunction of these two traits allows a strong constructivism together with a genuine realism.

Unfortunately, we cannot afford the detailed analysis of the question of the cultural validation of the rules of relevance here. Let us simply point at two ontogenetic constraints: phylogenetic (evolution in the biosphere) and koinogenetic (education in the ethnosphere).[22] Suffice it to say that the relative adequacy of the rules of relevance is the product of a long evolutive process that has seen all actors tune-in while adapting to the environment out of which they emerged in the first place. In the case of human beings, there is a second tuning process that takes place at the cultural level.

Hence, the issue of intercultural dialogue can be reduced to the possibility of establishing bijections between the relevant concepts belonging to both cultural spheres. If the bijection is straightforward, the allo-rationality is recognized as such. If the bijection fails, the irrationality is made "obvious." Let us however acknowledge that this is a purely theoretical standpoint: if any actual attempt is made, one soon realizes that bijections are possible if and only if they bind very abstract concepts. In practice, one concept always belongs to a conceptual network that semantically sustains it: there is no such thing as a semantically isolated concept; meaning always emerge out of a conceptual tissue. Ideally, there should be a conceptual democracy that sustains the respective cultures: a given concept is, in some respect, *independent* and, in some other respect, *interdependent*. In other words, its independence signals that it brings something to the semantic tissue while its interdependence signals that it properly makes sense only through the tissue.

Wilhelm von Humboldt was probably the first to see that the semantic structures of different languages are fundamentally incommensurable. Franz Boas, Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf drew the direct consequence of this incommensurability: since the vocabulary and grammar of a language are directly correlated to the thought and actions of its users, the understanding of a given cultural pattern from an external perspective is not really possible. Let us think of learning to speak (not only to understand) a second language: it is possible only if you live through the target language and embrace its cultural weight. Language, thought, and culture are deeply interlocked, so that each language might be claimed to be associated with a distinctive world view.[23]

The simplest way of putting this into perspective is a quick look at the Aristotelian substantialistic logic, which, since Boole, is defined by three principles. The principle of *identity* states that we come to know all things in so far as they have some unity and identity.[24] There is, in other words, a fundamental permanence amid flux; without it, no cognition, and indeed no life, seems possible. The principle of *contradiction* is somewhat the negative side of the principle of identity: it claims that the same attribute cannot, at the same time and in the same respect, belong and not belong to the same subject.[25] For Aristotle, this is "the most certain of all principles," the "natural starting-point for all the other axioms." According to the principle of *excluded middle*, there cannot be an intermediate between contradictories: of one subject we must either affirm or deny any one predicate.[26] There is no third possibility: *either* the cat is alive *or* it is not. An irrational proposition contradicts at least one of these principles.

Non-rationality aims at something different from simple irrationality: one can conceive how the irrational could become rational, but (by definition) *never* how the non-rational could be *fully* rationalized. The non-rational opacity of experience is not only due to the contingent specialization of our senses, to the deficiencies of our language and the weakness of our insight, it involves the very nature of our historical chaosmos: a multiverse constantly seeking new perfections. Opacity is rooted in the genuine novelty that manifests itself in the world and that gives its meaning to the strong pluralism advocated by thinkers such as Whitehead, James, Bergson, Peirce and Dewey (again: a pluralism featuring a constant renewal of the crude variety of experience). In other words, non-rationality embodies the intrinsic—or primordial—opacity of concrete (concrescent) reality; it is peculiar to process pluralism. Fully-fledged experience *exceeds* logic because new events and patterns are always popping in.

Gnosis gives access to the fullness of experience and, as such, it is a non-rational experience: *neither* a rational *nor* an irrational one. Only when the gnostic experience has stopped can one try to rationalize it in order to communicate its zest. Out of these attempts settle the religious practice of the many. It goes without saying that the sedimentation of pistis is a multi-layered process. The first gnostic utterances are not rational in the usual sense of the term: they are usually quite paradoxical and need to be refined in order to "speak" to everyone. To put it another way, the non-rationality of the mystical state is gradually transformed into a paradoxical rationality adapted to the transitional phase between the mystical and the normal consciousness, then again into a fully rational dogmatic corpus. This rationality can be criticized only from an external perspective, which means a different gnosis, either directly (through a new distillation process) or indirectly (by an open conflict with another dogma). In conclusion: pistis entirely relies upon a dogmatic corpus that evolves according to two main axes, experiential and conceptual. Experience provides new evidences and hence some dogmatic inflexion; the order of concept has its own requirements that suggest further dogmatic improvements. Depending on one's own worldview, adequacy is preferred (in realism), or not, to coherence (in idealism).

Our argument is as follows: the reproach of irrationalism is possible only when dealing with pistis *per se*; not with gnosis or transitional gnosis (this is how we will call paradoxical phase between the mystical *per se* and the normal consciousness exploited by pistis). All outstanding philosophers—and here let us think especially of Whitehead[27]—are exploiting in their works the virtues of gnosis, of a *vision*, or better: of a *contact* with the Ultimate. This exploitation boils down to transitional gnosis and accounts for the liminal rationality that they sometimes—not always—use. Gnosis is personal, solitary, never irrational. Pistis is collective, hopefully rational. As recent history of thought amply shows, only a philosophy refusing *to point at* experience can be fully rational, i.e., can bear no trace of transitional rationality luring the reader towards transitional gnosis. Such a purely analytical philosophy can afford self-reference; being ouroborian, it is fully transparent. The constitutive opacity of reality is gone. One could claim for instance that this is the essence of the Hartshornian project: in the process of making Whiteheadian thought fully transparent, realism had to be disposed of. In the same way that in everyday life people who are too polite cannot be trusted, in philosophy, systems that are too transparent cannot be ontologically reliable. "Seek simplicity and distrust it,"

claimed Whitehead,[28] who also insisted that "exactness is a fake."[29] These systems remain an important tool of investigation of the potentialities of human rationality, but nothing more.

It is basically such a dialectic that is disclosed in the history of religious thought. If we focus on Jesus for the sake of clarifying the status of the *Gospel of Thomas*, the following steps are quite obvious. First, Jesus' contact with the Ultimate—or Jesus' (momentary) identity with the Ultimate—is a purely gnostic experience (or first-hand experience, if you prefer the Jamesean concept). Second, Jesus' attempts to offer the gnostic light to his fellows human beings is only transitionally rational—hence intrinsically paradoxical. Third, the gradual distillation of the dogma (see, e.g., Pelikan and Soler on this)[30] constitutes an endeavour to achieve at all costs the highest intellectual coherence. Alas, this is possible only by "clarifying" the opacity, by replacing the total prehensive *contact* with the partial intellectual *vision*.

From that perspective, it is easy enough to settle the controversies around the historical priority of Thomas: conceptually speaking, it stands closer to the gnostic light itself (which can be equated here with the *Gnostic Light* indeed) and embodies thus a first transition towards full rational transparency. The development of the Christian doctrine has followed an uninterrupted trend towards full transparency until the Reformation (later, the "crise du modernisme" had also particular side-effects in Europe). The highest coherence was sought and bodies of texts developed additional layers of self-referential speculations. This tendency was of course largely anticipated by Jewish theologians.[31]

It is essentially the scientific breakthroughs of Bruno and Darwin that compromised first the socio-political hegemony exploited by Christian ecclesiastic authorities through their semantic and existential power; later came quantum indeterminism and recently chaos theory (to use only a few mile-stones). When theology as the pronouncement of the eternal Truth of the Scriptures lost credibility, new paths of understanding Jesus' message needed to be found, and every actor in the scientific and religious fields agrees that this happened for the better of both agendas. Of special interest for our present discussion is the fact that Protestants turned to religious *experience*, thereby factually drifting from pistis to—a very tamed form of—gnosis. But systematic concerns could not of course be obliterated in the context of a religious institution, even an institution centred upon the individual—hence the moderated version of pistis that is, overall, operational in Protestantism.

2. Whitehead's Systematic Ontology

> Mankind has wandered from the trees to the plains, from the plains to the seacoast,
> from climate to climate, from continent to continent, and from habit of life to habit
> of life. When man ceases to wander, he will cease to ascend in the scale of being.
> (*SMW* 207)[32]

It is possible—indeed advisable—to sketch Whitehead's ontology with the help of what James has called (and Deleuze after him) his "scream" and that we will here call his "proto-idea."[33] By doing so, we do not aim at summarizing the system but at firmly rooting it in its intuition. One speaks of a "proto-idea" in order to point at the special conceptual status involved by the debated expression. The "creative advance" is the farthest conceptual outpost, the tag that stands

the closest to the throbbing reality, i.e., to direct, non-linguistically mediated, full-bodied experience. In the course of our argument, we will progressively unfold the meaning and significance of this proto-idea with (i) ideas, (ii) categories and (iii) concepts. There is, in other words, an abstractive hierarchy that is rooted in experience, not in abstraction; it develops out of the requirement of adequacy, not of coherence.

2.1. Radical Empiricism

The direct or "pure" experience we have just alluded to is a typical feature of radical empiricism. To summarize a complex and ancient debate, radical empiricism can be contrasted with rationalism and empiricism in the following way. Rationalism and empiricism both work with root items or primitive factors (respectively, innate general ideas and acquired particular ideas) that are organized with a fundamental law (respectively, calculation and associationism of sorts). They share the common presuppositions that established substantialism: the existence of non-related primitive elements that can be obtained through regressive decomposition and synthesized through constitutive operation. Radical empiricism being unsurprisingly a *radicalization* of the empirical standpoint, it adopts a gesture foreign to rationalism—but it also supersedes empiricism itself. *All* experiences are now taken at face value: not only sense-perception, but also interoceptive and proprioceptive experiences, (causal) relations, altered states of consciousness, and so forth.

  This conceptual move has of course to be linked with the emergence of psychodynamics. James Ward (1843–1925) had coined the term "subliminal" in 1886 while discussing Johann Herbart (1776–1841), who is the originator of the psycho-scientific program.[34] We owe the use of the concept of "subliminal" in this radical empiricist atmosphere to F.W.H. Myers (1841–1901), whose work with London's *Society for Psychical Research* (that he co-founded in 1882), together with his sharp awareness of all the main conceptual advances of his time (the German psychophysics and the Salpêtrière nosologisation *versus* Nancy's hygeology) led him to lay the foundations of twentieth century dynamic psychiatry with the help of his emphasis on growth-oriented aspects of the subconscious. Whereas psychophysics was only interested in measurement and the Salpêtrière in degenerations and insanities, prefigurating the Freudian understanding of the unconscious as a "rubbish-heap," Myers understood it as a "treasure-house," as "beginnings of higher development."[35] With regard to the concept of subliminal itself (meaning beyond the threshold of consciousness), Myers uses Ward's concept in a suppler way: his point is no more to quantify sense-perception, but to circumscribe the halo of non-conscious processes that contribute to consciousness-zero. Since he furthermore perceives that "these submerged thoughts and emotions possess the characteristics which we associate with conscious life," he feels "bound to speak of a subliminal or ultra-marginal consciousness." In conclusion, Myers insists that his *subliminal Self* does not assume that "there are two correlative and parallel selves existing always within each of us [...: the] subliminal Self [is] that part of the Self which is commonly subliminal."[36] Let us underline the link between his thesis and his radical empiricism: all experiences have to fit—and these experiences can be considered in themselves or filtered through other experiences that happen to be more "conscious."[37]

According to thinkers such as Whitehead, James, Dewey and Bergson, all experiences matter: conscious, liminal, subliminal, superliminal… whatever. This is no small feat, all the more so since a very strong argument can be made for defining (philosophical) *thought* as being *necessarily* radically empiricist. What does "thinking" mean? It is not just a matter of giving reasons to causes (or causes to reasons), or to build a fully transparent conceptual edifice (or to refuse any systematic enterprise). The conceptual moment (and its proper architectonic requirements) is no doubt crucial but what matters above all is the depth of the vision that pilots it, its very experiential scope and its pragmatic impact. Interestingly enough, when one considers this experiential depth according to the variety of its modes (from the low-level experience of unicellular organisms to the high-level experience of superior mammals), of its durations (from the pure flash to the cosmic epoch) and of its extension (from microcosm to macrocosm), this depth discloses *ipso facto* a political stance. To accept a—socially, temporally or spatially—limited spectrum of experiences (i.e., of facts) leads inevitably to a right-wing politics. On the contrary, to accept the total, variegated spectrum leads to a left-wing politics. Now, a mode of thought that springs from data that are—voluntarily or not—limited is nothing but a form of *doxa*. Thought *per se* has to be concerned with nothing less than the common good…[38] Of course the old *cliché* is still pretty well alive: everyone has *his* reason to the right and *her* heart to the left and everyone would be more than happy to accept all the requirements of a social justice worthy of that name, if only this were reasonable (or even rational). On the contrary, we argue that all human beings are viscerally inclined to take care only of their own interests and of the interests of their own people (*cf.* the well-known "family values" cherished by the far right) whereas Reason demands the promotion of universal values and of their becoming.

To resume our argument: on the one hand, there are no fundamental items anymore, only an overwhelming experience, intrinsically vague and confused; on the other, the cognitive law involved is now genetic. The clear and distinct ideas that we manipulate in consciousness-zero are the product of a refinement process that contribute to their *creation*: it is no longer a matter of unearthing pre-existing stabilities, but of *constructing* them. Although the genetic law is ultimately of the order of a settled habit, its twofold dimension and general trend remain: on the one hand, there is an onto-genesis (whose archetypal characters are infants, idiots, intoxicated adults, Adam…) and a phylo-genesis (invented by Spencer when he claimed that what is *a priori* for an individual is actually *a posteriori* for the species) that should be thought in conjunction with koino-genesis (the process of convergence of individual consciousness through learning[39]); on the other, a progressive abstraction of patterns out of a wealth of details through discrimination and synthesis. From this nomological perspective, radical empiricism amounts to processism: the foundational premise and its emphasis on parts is replaced by an antifoundationalism emphasizing the whole *qua* complex and relational.

Whitehead's proto-idea is especially challenging because it asks the adoption of a perspective that belongs to what we have called in our previous section *transitional gnosis*. It is the lens through which pure experience (solitary non-rational gnosis) is reflected in categories (communal rational pistis). Since gnosis does not belong to consciousness-zero while pistis is firmly rooted in it, it makes sense to speak of a subliminal transition—something which is not

without significant linguistic consequences. Exactly, the linguistic consequences we have repeatedly alluded to can be boiled down to one single requirement: language is to be used as a lens directed towards the experiential realm, not as a self-coherent entity that would act as a screen between the speaker and its interlocutor (or the writer and its reader). This is basically what is meant by the *interanimation of sentences*—a concept that we owe to Quine and that can be introduced by a metaphor: in order to penetrate, through the mantle of words, to the body of experiences which it clothes one needs a closely knit system of categories. Hence, the empirical requirement (some applicability is needed) is more important than the rational requirement (logical consistency is advantageous, not always essential—especially in the light of what has been said of transitional gnosis). Accordingly, the usual insistence on Thomas' cryptogrammatic wording should be softened. In Plato's words: philosophy "does not at all admit of verbal expression like other studies, but as a result of continued application to the subject itself and communion therewith, it is brought to birth in the soul on a sudden, as light that is kindled by a leaping spark, and thereafter it nourishes itself."[40]

2.2. Heuristic of Whitehead's Intuition

At least three main conceptual mile-stones would need to be examined in order to circumscribe Whitehead's intuition: the creative advance of nature, *Process and Reality*'s pancreativism and its reformed subjectivism. Since we have done this work elsewhere,[41] we will offer here only a brief reminder and focus on the application of our heuristic thesis.

The creative advance embodies the Ur-concept of the late Whitehead (i.e., of his Harvard period, starting in 1924) and, as such, it is the key-vault of his entire work. The definition of its conditions of possibility leads—through the category of the Ultimate—straight to the all-embracingness of the concept of mother-creativity (hence the designation "pancreativism"). Further conceptual refinement involves the introduction of Whitehead's reformed understanding of subjectivity. The definition of subjectivity independently of consciousness, together with the understanding of its intrinsic transience grounds Whitehead's epochal (or bud-like) theory of actuality.

Three ideas or functors embody the proto-idea of the creative advance: creativity, efficacy and vision. They contain *in potentia Process and Reality*'s entire categoreal scheme. In order to understand how the scheme works, how it is stratified and interanimated, it would be worth considering the following intermediate steps: creative advance, Category of the Ultimate, creativity, principles and scheme. For the sake of the present argument's tightness, let us summarize our hermeneutic. Seen through the lens of the Category of the Ultimate itself, the creative advance appears as a rhythmic process, a dialectics of sorts between becoming and being. Becoming produces being, that in turn serves as basis for further becomings. In order to understand this fundamental process, *Process and Reality* uses one main concept—creativity— with many meanings and purposes. Hence the idea to speak of "mother-creativity" and, from there, to unfold its various semantic slices. First of all, mother-creativity is *dipneumonous*: God and the World constitute the two specular loci of the creative rhythm. Second, mother-creativity is *bifunctional*: on the one hand, it is *agent*, fundamental inclination towards novelty; on the other, it is *reticular*, partial goals, i.e., it is instantiated in actualities-subject (including the

consequent nature of God) and characterised in actualities-object (including the primordial nature of God).

In the context of the present work, the proto-idea of creative advance can be advantageously *translated* (there is indeed no strict one-to-one correspondence) into three conceptual tools: (i) the perennial concept of *scala naturæ*, (ii) reticular dipneumonousness and (iii) gnosis. Behind the apparent esoterism of these concepts lies a rather straightforward intuition, totally commensurable with the creative advance as it was spelled out in our first section. Although the three ideas have to be thought in their togetherness, a difference in emphasis can be perceived: the *scala naturæ* is a primarily subjective and form-like requirement; the dipneumonous character is more objective and matter-like; while gnosis tends to name the active relativization of the two. At this point of our argument, we need primarily to linger upon the *scala naturæ*.

2.2.1. Scala Naturæ

The significance of the perennial concept of *scala naturæ* is mainly two-fold: on the one hand, it epitomizes the idea that all differences in kind are to be replaced by differences in degree; on the other hand, it names the unison of private spiritual-soteriological ladders—not of course a pyramidal structure of power. The notion of *value* is here on the hot seat, as two of the major historical mile-stones testify: the Pseudo-Dionysus and Kant.

In *The Celestial Hierarchy* (Chapters 6-9), Pseudo-Dionysus asks: what is the first order of the celestial essences, what is the middle order and what is the inferior order. His answer exploits the names of the hierarchies that appear in the scriptures. They are divided into three groups of three hierarchies each: first, Seraphim (Fire, "Those who burn"), Cherubim (Messengers of knowledge, Wisdom) and Thrones (Seat of God); second, Dominions (Justice), Virtues (Courage, Virility) and Powers (Order, Harmony); third, Principalities (Authority), Archangels (Unity) and Angels (Revelation, messengers).

Kant, having rejected the cosmological, ontological, and design proofs of (or way to) God, argued in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) that the existence of God, though not directly provable, is a necessary postulate of the moral life. The moral law demands that human beings become perfect, this is however something that can never be finally achieved but only asymptotically approached, and such an unending approach requires the unending existence of the soul, which, in turn demands that the immortal soul evolves in a morally structured universe.[42]

One of the most important claims Whitehead makes lies in the destruction of the bifurcation of nature. The mental and the physical should not be understood as two totally different—hence separated—realms, but as one single ontological tissue with various shades of beauty, intensity and complexity in a perpetually evolving multifold of patterns. A somewhat similar intuition leads Leibniz (and Deleuze after him) to speak of *folds*. In terms of the functors of the creative advance: creativity and efficacy weave *growth*.

But growth is ultimately not random: there is a fundamental trend that properly *animates* all actualities (remember Aristotle's unisubstantialism). There is certainly decay after growth, but that decay is followed by further growth building upon the new given (the freshly decayed), and so forth. Whitehead argues for such a hierarchy with the help of what he calls "God's eternal

envisagement of possibilities". Through the concept of initial subjective aim (that is endowed by God's primordial nature to all actualities in the making), he makes quite a strong argument for an open growth.

Whitehead speaks in this context of the maximization of the "integral intensity derivable from the most favourable balance […] amid the given materials."[43] The problem with such a formulation is two-fold: on the one hand, how far is the language of maximization under constraint, so familiar in applied physics and in economics, applicable here? First, what is exactly to be maximized? Intrinsic or instrumental value? (*cf.* our next paragraph) In any case, is it the intensity of the experience (experience *defining* actuality), its complexity or its beauty that is to be sought?[44] Second: maximization involves comparison, which requires quantification, which is possible only in reference to the past and quite difficult in an open universe that never features twice the exact same event in the exact same environment. Hence the question: if the real core of actuality consists of its subjective intensity, of its *creativity*, which is not reduceable to the potential—objective past—data from which it spurs (including God's eternal envisagement), it is an absolute that can be relativized only *ex post*, i.e., at the end of the concrescence, after the "satisfaction." In other words: a given concresence is by definition beyond instrumental rationality and metrical constraints. To replace "maximization" by "minimization" is speculatively counter-productive in *this* context (but wouldn't be in a Socratic one) for two reasons: first, we remain within the same logic of quantification; second, we lose the very idea of a progress or lure towards better experiential states.

On the other hand, such a picture tends to promote an old-fashioned theistic vision of the divine, and, as some feminist critics have seen, the hierarchical structures of relations of Whitehead's ontology should be modified in order to by-pass its patriarchal overtones. A straightforward distinction inspired by the general systems theory shows indeed that a hierarchy does *not* need to be patriarchal and follow a logic of exclusion: (partially) ordered sets can be either nested or non-nested; a hierarchical (i.e., asymmetric) relationality other than a strict pecking-order is possible—it is indeed foundational to life. Overlapping is a logic of inclusion.

Anyway, Whitehead seems to take that optimization lexicon at face value precisely because of his theological commitment, the primordial nature providing the necessary archetypal structure. Let us peruse this issue. Two types of value are usually evoked in such an argument: intrinsic and instrumental value. The point of the *scala naturæ* is that both types have to be understood in one go, and this for two reasons. One, the intrinsic value of an event, which is a purely private virtue, will be factually assessed only from the perspective of its instrumental value. Two, both types are somewhat instrumentalized by the divine primordial envisagement itself. There is one fundamental way of assessing the value of any experience whatsoever, but it belongs exclusively to God and cannot be used for everyday purposes. This understanding is somewhat deeper than the view promoted by Birch and Cobb's *Liberation of Life*, according to which the hierarchy of value among living and non-living creatures is based upon the balance of intrinsic value (capacity for richness of experience) and instrumental value.[45] The event's value is primarily intrinsic, it stands by itself. Its assessment from God's perspective is subsidiary.

This could appear as a fundamental flaw in Whitehead's system; it is actually an immense advantage that allows him to escape the pit of patriarchalism while still providing a coherent

view on our multiverse. By doing so, he furthermore reactivates the perennial intuition that goes back, through Plato, to the ancient mysteries, such as those at Eleusis. In the *Symposium* and the *Phaedo*, Plato combines indeed the ascent of the soul to the most sublime, truly spiritual vision, with Eros. Whitehead's *Adventures of Ideas* has rediscovered this intuition. In terms of the functors of the creative advance: growth lured by vision *de facto* implies a ladder of sorts. But that ladder preserves the intrinsic value of events-in-the-making *and* secures the advance *per se*. The evocation of Plato is furthermore very suggestive of the move that might be needed towards a kalocentric understanding of the creative advance and thus of the debated hierarchy.

The continuum of existence spreads in all *bottom-up* directions: all our experiences relate to one another, we are all interrelated—so all our personal experiences are also public experiences; coercive, hierarchical power patterns are not fundamental, they are the by-product of private processes. The link with emanationism is immediate—but we have here an *inverted* emanationism, both because of the pluralism and the directionism involved. In sum, the concept of *scala naturæ* that is activated here can be specified by two contrasts: it embodies a stronger claim than the Great Chain of Being and a different one than the more traditional creationist or emanationist theses.

On the one hand, the Great Chain of Being—at the very least this is how we choose to see it in the context of the present discussion—basically names the continuity existing between all beings. Statically speaking, it means that all beings, animate, inanimate, conscious or not, complex or elementary, belong to the same ontological sphere; they share a fundamental kinship. Dynamically speaking, it means that process or change is understood *qua* trans-formation or meta-morphosis: nothing is really new under the sun; the phenomenological novelty boils down to the new appearance taken by old forms. Now, without genuine novelty there cannot be temporality and the processes involved are at best cyclical and most probably purposeless. The *scala naturæ* claims that there exist a hierarchy among beings, an order of sorts that allows us to speak meaningfully not only of a self-differentiating continuum but also of processes of (de)gradation.

On the other hand, precisely from the standpoint of the existence of such a hierarchy (not necessarily fully actualized, either because some levels are still potential or because the hierarchy is an open one, i.e., such that its entire configuration does not exist separately), mainly two times two figures can be discerned *a priori*, one monistically biased and the other intrinsically pluralistic. From the perspective of the Divine, if we rule out the pure static Parmenidean sphere and its Spinozistic sequel, two main alternative systems remain, both centred on the notion of degradation, devaluation or descent: creationism and emanationism. In both cases, there is factually a degradation of the Being of the Absolute in its creation(s). The absolute perfection is mirrored in various ways in the World, the subsidiary question being to know whether there is an increasing number of guises of the Absolute or simply a continuous trans-formation among them.

From the perspective of the World, two further contrasts should be specified, both centered on the notion of gradation, valuation or ascent. (We clear the question of the nestedness of the ordering.) The first one sets out a closed hierarchy, with God at its top: there exists only one single Being, that is (some would claim *ipso facto*) eternal and is likely to be seen as a person.

The second features an open hierarchy, that results from two axioms: local, relative, comparisons are possible—not global, absolute ones—and hence there is no guarantee that one single hierarchy exists (we can be actually dealing with one hierarchy evolving within another one…); moreover, the hierarchy is open, which basically means that new actualities are likely to *create* new steps on the ladder, something that is of special importance at the "top" of the ladder. None of the orders is totally perfect; all the hierarchies thus mutually participate in a constant march, striving towards new perfections. If God is still perched on the ladder, God is now intrinsically transient and probably impersonal. It is in this later acceptation that lies the meaning we choose to confer to the *scala naturæ*, reason why it is worthy of the term *inverted* emanationism. As Whitehead claims, "the task of philosophy is the understanding of the interfusion of modes of existence" (*MT* 71).

This has of course a direct impact on our Whiteheadian heuristic of Thomas. Whereas Gnostic scholars are likely to adopt the divine or top-bottom perspective, we stand squarely with the second alternative, the pluralistic bottom-up one. But one needs to know that, from the perspective of *Process and Reality*, the entire issue can be viewed from the perspective of the creative dialectic between the One and the Many: on the one hand, the Many concresces into (become) One; on the other, the One transitions (fosters) further Many. In other words, the Whiteheadian co-dependent origination between mundane and divine actualities exploits both a monistic top-down *and* a pluralistic bottom-up scheme; the organic totality is woven out of two threads, valuative as well as devaluative (interestingly enough, there is no judgement of value in the contrast between the two). *Process and Reality*'s chapter on "The Order of Nature" (pp. 83-110) provides, e.g., an interesting argument to flesh this out, but there is no need to go through it here.

2.2.2. Reticular Dipneumonousness

The fundamental *objective* trait of Whitehead's ontology, its pancreativism, can be synthesized with its core feature—dipneumonousness—as sketched above and as particularly exemplified in one of Whitehead's very last essays ("Immortality,",1941), according to which the Uni-verse is to be understood as the interplay between two "Worlds," the World of Active Creativity and the World of Timeless Value. The former is the world of origination of patterns of assemblage that nevertheless develops Enduring Personal Identity. The latter is timeless and immortal, but it nevertheless seeks Realization. Neither finitude nor infinitude are self-supporting; fact and value require each other.

Whereas the *natural ladder* names so to speak the *form* taken by events (at the very least their "strange attraction" for high-grade experiences), dipneumonousness names its abyssal *nonsubstantial* substratum. The Abyss has a strong historical anchorage in European thought (not speaking of India and Asia) with Meister Eckhart's "der Abgrund"[46]; it embodies, in the context of the present heuristic, a more fundamental and unifying trait than the Gnostic distinction between the unknown supreme God and the Demiurge (usually identified with the God of the *Old Testament*) who created this doomed world.

2.2.3. Gnosis

Gnosis provides the synthesis of the two previous mile-stones by means of the words that summon up the opening of the passageway, the archway that is also a psychic gate.[47] To show this, it suffices to re-centre the notion of gnosis on the individual. The *scala* appears then mainly as a subjective trait providing form to the dipneumon that is mainly the objective "matter." Unsurprisingly, we encounter again the absolute primacy of experience and its origination in "pure" relatedness.

3. Conclusion

> The modern world has lost God and is seeking him. […] If the modern world is to
> find God, it must find him through love and not through fear, with the help of John
> and not of Paul. (*RM* 73)

So far, we have argued for two main points. On the one hand, the two basic tools needed to make sense of Thomas (gnosis/pistis and non-rationality/rationality) are applicable from a Whiteheadian perspective. On the other, the two basic features of our Whiteheadian heuristic (radical empiricism and the *creative advance* triptych) could offer a systematic understanding of Thomas' most difficult passages.[48]

Before concluding, let us widen the debate a little. Our comparative argument actually involves two different steps: one, we claim that there is a similar basic religious hyperdialectic (a gnosis founding a pistis that in turn moulds gnosis) at work in our authors; two, that gnosis can be understood in a similar way in all religions, whatever their spatio-temporal localization: there is in other words a universal core of mystical experience, a core that we have already discovered to be intrinsically non-rational.

3.1. Religious Perennialism

There has been much-heated debate around these questions. For instance, as its title amply indicates, Aldous Huxley's *Perennial Philosophy* (1946) argued, mostly by means of extensive exemplifications, for such a universal fundamental core: gnosis (religiosity or mysticism) represents a common core at the centre of all pistis (or religions). On the contrary, R.C. Zaehner's *Mysticism Sacred and Profane* (1957) explicitly repudiates Huxley's perennialist claim and his drug-induced (hence non-authentic) experientialism. According to him, there are three fundamentally different types of mysticism: theistic, monistic and panenhenic (or nature mysticism)—in that strict hierarchical order. Zaehner's own work has been later challenged by Walter Stace's *Mysticism and Philosophy* (1960), that distinguished between two types of mystical experience: introversive and extroversive. The introvert mystical experience occurs with a complete merging of the subject and constitutes for Stace the mystical core of all religions (and of course the superior of the two types of experience). The extroversive experience is only a partial realization of introvert union; it amounts to a sense of harmony between two things. According to Stace, all mystical experiences have the following characteristics: they provide a sense of objectivity or reality, a sense of blessedness and peace

and a feeling of the holy, the sacred or the divine.[49] Both mystical experiences are of an underlying unity characterized by paradoxicality and are alleged to be ineffable by mystics.

This analysis directly taps into James' characterization of mystical states of consciousness (that applies to gnosis as it is here understood) by means of Eliade's bipolar enstasis/ekstasis (that has itself often been compared with Plotinus' distinction between "a standing in oneself" and "a standing beyond oneself in another"): enstasis names the Yogic annihilation (or *samâdhi*), the total absorption in the Whole; ekstasis names the *eagle's eye* on the Whole.[50] For its part, James' *Varieties*[51] highlights the following four traits of all mystical states; the first two are sharply marked, the last two less possibly so. (i) Ineffability: the mystical state of mind is qualitative, private, non-rational; it defies expression ("no adequate report of its contents can be given in words"). (ii) Noetic quality: the mystical state of mind is nevertheless cognitive in its own right, it is "full of significance and importance, all inarticulate though they remain." (iii) Transiency: except in rare instances, the mystical state of mind cannot be sustained for long. (iv) Passivity: although its oncoming may be facilitated by preliminary voluntary operations, the mystical state of mind itself is beyond the individual's will. In sum, they are "states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect" that "carry with them a curious sense of authority for after-time."

More precisely, here is how we could argue, with the help of James, for a perennialist religion. The *Varieties* raises the question "is there, under all the discrepancies of the creeds, a common nucleus to which they bear their testimony unanimously?" Its answer is unequivocally yes:

> there is a certain uniform deliverance in which religions all appear to meet. It consists of two parts:—1. An uneasiness; and 2. Its solution. 1. The uneasiness, reduced to its simplest terms, is a sense that there is *something wrong about us* as we naturally stand. 2. The solution is a sense that *we are saved from the wrongness* by making proper connection with the higher powers (*VRE* 508).

The universality of suffering is the fundamental fact, the extinction of suffering the goal. This powerful dialectic between the uneasiness and its solution is self-explanatory; it is however susceptible of (at least) two direct cross-elucidatory interpretations.

On the one hand, it obviously corresponds to the Buddhist Four Noble Truths: existence is suffering; the origin of suffering is ignorance of co-dependent origination and of impermanence (i.e., of eventfulness); the cessation of suffering amounts to becoming aware of universal interdependence and accepting impermanence; the path to achieve this is meditation. Again: this correspondence is unsurprising, since it embodies precisely our claim; the fact that there has been conceptual flux from and to the East only adds grist to our mill.[52]

On the other hand, the uneasiness corresponds to what Whitehead has called the bifurcation of nature while its solution lies in the destruction of this bifurcation. The bifurcation of nature has actually numerous complementary meanings in Whitehead's corpus, but they can be boiled down to the subject/object distinction that is constitutive of the normal state of consciousness (see *supra* the specification of the concept of consciousness-zero) and that is thus presupposed by all forms of cognition. In other words, what is wrong in the natural state of consciousness is the separation between the subject and its environment—and this echoes indeed the Gnostic acosmic subjectivity—while the cure (in the loose sense of the word) is connecting, i.e., feeling

the togetherness of all beings and existents. Needless to say, such a feeling occurs in an altered state of consciousness: consciousness-zero is *defined* by the bifurcation of the subject and his/her world. But one needs to add as well that the alteration at stake does not need to be understood in a dramatic manner: the conscious awareness of the web of life actually occurs quite often in everyday life and it is relatively easy to improve its conditions of possibility.

Accordingly, we can redefine the sacred/profane distinction. Sacredness is experienced when we strongly anchor ourselves in direct experience, thereby undermining the bifurcation, and recovering the awareness of our roots.[53] We live in a profane world as long as we accept and exploit the bifurcation constitutive of consciousness-zero. Let us notice furthermore that desacralization of all non-mental experiences—*qua* human consciousness-zero experiences—constitutes the very root of Western technoscience and of its nefarious applications.

3.2. Looking for God

The epigraph we have chosen aptly epitomizes what is at stake in this paper. "God" was once the most obvious "Being" available to individuals in their quest for salvation, sanity, social status, comfort, perhaps even for immortality. That obviousness is now totally gone for most Westerners. The God-Being is dead, for better and for worse: on the one hand, the old corrupted structures of power presently dwell among other historical paraphernalia, such as nation, race and class, as socio-political manifestations of how much *ad hoc* construction entered these old myths; on the other, the backbone of Western civilization disappeared with them and we now live at the verge of anarchy—if not friendly fascism.[54] The price to pay to get rid of the corrupted structure has thus been so far very high: no global narrative replaced sclerotic ideologies and individuals are now the unsheltered preys of the "market" and its "snakes in suits."

The puzzling fact is that most of us are *still* looking, in one way or another, for the divine or even for God; is it melancholy? or an ultimate *certainty*? Although the history of religions is full of treasons, the quest of the God of unconditional Love is intact. Whitehead claims that the death of God is not the death of religiousness, i.e., of the religious feeling. In order to rediscover the divine, he suggests to turn to John. We propose instead to turn to Thomas, who, incidentally, was in open conflict with John on dogmatic—and social power—matters.[55] This move involves two gestures: first, to rely as much as humanly possible upon pure experience, i.e., upon *contact*; second, to abandon all systematic claims that do not match such direct, unmediated experience. Granted, the existential price to pay to obtain pure experience is very high, but it should be compared with the suffering, separateness and isolation (all synonyms) in which we are so often confined in consciousness-zero. We have just seen that James' diagnosis is very clear about this: the nucleus common to all first-hand religious experiences consists of the crippling feeling of separateness that can be alleviated only by overcoming the bifurcation that conditions consciousness-zero and assuming again the web of inter-connectedness of all beings and existents. Furthermore, contact has to be made Vision and Vision necessarily settles in dogma: the destiny of creative non-rationality is to establish rational efficacy for the common good. One should be at the very least fully aware of the demanding constraints imposed on the

passage from private and non-rational experience (religiousness) to public and rational experience (religion).

In his last book, *The God of Metaphysics*, Sprigge repeatedly insists on the Nietzschean character of Whitehead's God. The predicate is used derogatorily to indicate that evil, suffering and sin do not matter much for the Whiteheadian God. God's impersonal and inexorable character lures events towards the highest intensity, full stop. From the perspective of our heuristic, God constitutes a more positive feature of Whitehead's cosmology: since *creativity* is wild, it exists beyond good and evil, while *efficacy* embodies the (im)pure necessity of the eternal objects and of the past events, God is the only visionary functor that constantly tries to lure the outcome of the hyperdialectics between creativity and efficacy towards higher experiences.

To sum up: there is an Apocryphal Whitehead to the extent that (i) very little has been said so far on his fully-fledged *natural* theology and that (ii) gnosis should rule system building as well as systematic interpretations striving for adequacy. Radical empiricism should not be a vain word in Whiteheadian scholarship.

Notes

[1] Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*. These are the Lowell Institute Lectures of 1926 [delivered in King's Chapel, Boston], New York, Macmillan, 1926.

[2] This paper was originally written a year ago for T. L. S. Sprigge (1932–2007), whose untimely death has prevented him from writing a response. It was published in Michel Weber et Pierfrancesco Basile (sous la direction de), *Chromatikon III. Annuaire de la philosophie en procès—Yearbook of Philosophy in Process*, Louvain-la-Neuve, Presses universitaires de Louvain, 2007, pp. 227-260. Timothy had been an early supporter of the *Whitehead Psychology Nexus* and held, as far as I can tell, a worldview compatible with the three basic features this paper identifies in Whiteheadian process thought: the existence of a *scala naturæ*, the explicit dipneumonousness (god and world being the two loci of the creative advance) and the primacy of *gnosis* over *pistis*.

[3] Samuel Alexander (1859–1938), in a Letter to Dorothy M. Emmet, quoted in her "Whitehead and Alexander," *Process Studies*, 21/3, 1992, pp. 137-148, p. 137.

[4] According to Whitehead himself, he spent around eight solid years perusing the theological scholarship of the time, before dismissing the subject (Lucien Price, *Dialogues* [1954], Mentor Book, 1956, p. 13; *cf.* 125).

[5] *Cf.* Simone Pétrement, *Le Dieu séparé. Les origines du gnosticisme*, Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 1984 [*A Separate God. The Christian Origins of Gnosticism*, Translated by Carol Harrison, San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1990].

[6] "The dogmas of religion are the attempts to formulate in precise terms the truths disclosed in the religious experience of mankind. In exactly the same way the dogmas of physical science are the attempts to formulate in precise terms the truths disclosed in the sense-perception of mankind" (*Religion in the Making*, 1926, p. 57).

[7] This distinction is a conceptual tool; there is no need here to dive into intricated historico-conceptual issues, such as the one involved by the Persian conquest of Syria, Palestine and Egypt. Cyrus entered Babylon in 539 B.C.

[8] "Insistence on birth at the wrong season is the trick of evil. In other words, the novel fact may throw back, inhibit, and delay. But the advance, when it does arrive, will be richer in content, more fully conditioned, and more stable. For in its objective efficacy an actual entity can only inhibit by reason of its alternative positive contribution" (*Process and Reality* [1929], Corrected edition, 1978, p. 223).

[9] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience. A Study in Human Nature*. Being the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion Delivered at Edinburgh in 1901-1902, New York, London, Bombay, and Calcutta, Longman, Green, and Co., 1902, Lectures IV to VII. James furthermore underpins his healthy/sick contrast with a further distinction between the once-born (who are permanently in an innocent state of happiness) and twice-born the former (who regain it through some form of salvation).

[10] Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860–1935), "a foremother in feminist philosophy of religion" as Frankenberry says, located an important gender difference in *His Religion and Hers* (1923). *Cf.* Nancy K. Frankenberry, "Feminist Philosophy of Religion", in *Stanford Encyclopeadia of Philosophy*, 2005.

[11] This book is not to be mistaken with Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, written during his imprisonment.

[12] *Cf. Process Metaphysics*, 1996, ch. IX.

[13] Peter M. Simons, *Parts. A Study in Ontology*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1987; Roberto Poli & Peter M. Simons (eds.), *Formal Ontology*, Boston (Mass.) / Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Nijhoff international philosophy series 53, 1996.

[14] *Cf.* Jacquette Dale (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Brentano*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004.

[15] John B. Cobb, Jr. and David Ray Griffin have insisted on five totally inappropriate traits: God as a Cosmic Moralist; God as the Unchanging and Passionless Absolute; God as Controlling Power; God as Sanctioner of the Status Quo; God as Male (*Process Theology. An Introductory Exposition*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, The Westminster Press, 1976). See also the revised edition of Cobb's *A Christian Natural Theology Based on the Thought of Alfred North Whitehead* [1965], Louisville, Kentucky, Westminster John Knox, 2007.

[16] It is difficult not to mention with that regard the amazingly strong influence of an extremely naïve reading of the *apocalypses* of Daniel and (especially) of Ezekiel on US foreign "policy".

[17] To take an early example: J. Kennedy, "Buddhist Gnosticism. The System of Basilides", *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1902, pp. 377-415.

[18] James M. Hanson, "Was Jesus a Buddhist?", *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, Volume 25, 2005, pp. 75-89.

[19] *Cf.* Gerd Petzke, *Die Traditonen uber Apollonus von Tyana und das Neue Testament*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, Studia ad Corpus hellenisticum Novi Testamenti, 1970; Robert J. Penella, *The Letters of Apollonius of Tyana*. A critical text with prolegomena, translation and commentary, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1979. Francophiles should enjoy Antonin Artaud's related speculations in his novel *Héliogabale ou L'anarchiste couronné* [1932]. Nouvelle édition revue et augmentée, Paris, NRF Éditions Gallimard, Œuvres complètes tome VII, 1982.

[20] "The age of martyrs dawns with the coming of rationalism. The antecedent phases of religion had been essentially sociable. Many were called, and all were chosen. The final phase introduces the note of solitariness: 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way […] and few there be that find it.' When a modern religion forgets this saying, it is suffering from an atavistic relapse into primitive barbarism. It is appealing to the psychology of the herd, away from the intuitions of the few." (*Religion in the Making*, p. 28)

[21] The concept of opacity has a farily long philosophical history; for a recent occurrence in the process field, see Nicholas Rescher, *Process Metaphysics. An Introduction to Process Philosophy*, Albany (N.Y.), State University of New York Press, 1996, pp. 129-132. The general background of our discussion has been elaborated on the occasion of two complementary studies: *Whitehead's Pancreativism: The Basics* (Frankfurt, ontos verlag, 2006) and *Whitehead's Pancreativism: Jamesean Applications* (forthcoming in 2008).

[22] These categories will be developed in the (SUNY, 2009) second volume of the Whitehead Psychology Nexus Studies: Michel Weber and Anderson Weekes (Eds.), *Consciousness Studies from a Whiteheadian Process Perspective*.

[23] Ludwig von Bertalanffy, "An Essay on the Relativity of Categories," *Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 22, N°4, 1955, pp. 243-263.

[24] *Metaphysics* Beta, 4.

[25] *Metaphysics* Gamma, 3; *Posterior Analytics* I, 77a10-22.

[26] *Metaphysics* Gamma, 7; *Posterior Analytics* I, 77a22-25.

[27] "I am also greatly indebted to Bergson, William James, and John Dewey. One of my preoccupations has been to rescue their type of thought from the charge of anti-intellectualism, which rightly or wrongly has been associated with it" (*Process and Reality*, p. xii).

[28] CN163; *cf.* PNK76.

[29] Alfred North Whitehead, "Immortality," in Paul Arthur Schilpp (ed.), *The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead*, New York, Tudor Publishing Company, The Library of Living Philosophers III, 1941, pp. 682-700, p. 700; *cf.* IS 267 or *ESP* 96.

[30] Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition. A History of the Development of Doctrine. I. The Emergence of Catholic Tradition (100-600); II. The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700); III. The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300); IV. Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700); V. Christian Doctrine and Modern Culture (since 1700)*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1971, 1974, 1978, 1984, 1989. Jean Soler, *Aux origines du Dieu unique. L'invention du monothéisme*. Préface de Jean Perrot, Paris, Éditions de Fallois, 2002.

[31] With the quadrilogy *Peshat, Remetz, Derasha, Sod*. *Cf.* Henri de Lubac, s. j., *Exégèse médiévale. Les quatre sens de l'Écriture*, quatre tomes, Paris, Desclée De Brouwer, Théologie, 1959-1964.

[32] Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*. The Lowell Lectures, 1925, New York, The Free Press, 1967.

[33] This part of our argument expands the conclusions of our recent monograph: *Whitehead's Pancreativism, op. cit.*

[34] James Ward, "Psychology," in Thomas Spencer Baynes (ed.), *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th ed, Edinburgh, 1886, vol. XX, pp. 37-85; Johann Friedrich Herbart, *Psychologie als Wissenschaft, neugegründet auf Erfahrung, Metaphysik und Mathematik* [1824].

[35] Frederick W. H. Myers, *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death* (2 vols.), New York, Longmans, Green 1954 [February1903 (posthumous)], Vol. 1, p. 72.

[36] Myers, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 14-15.

[37] *Cf.* Myers, "The Subliminal Consciousness", *Proceedings of the English Society for Psychical Research*, 7, 1891-1892, 298-355, p. 301.

[38] It cannot be denied of course that the concept of "common good" is itself problematic and needs an industrious argument to be settled. See, e.g., Arthur Edward Murphy, "The Common Good", *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, Vol. 24, 1950-1951, pp. 3-18 or David Ray Griffin, John B. Cobb Jr., Richard Falk, & Catherine Keller, *The American Empire and the Commonwealth of God: A Political, Economic, Religious Statement*, Westminster, John Knox Press, 2006.

[39] We have been toying with this concept since our 2000 paper "Consciousness and Rationality from a Process Perspective," soon to be published in the second Whitehead Psychology Nexus Studies (*cf. supra* n. 22). Our argument was inspired by Bateson's schismogenetic analyses. It has recently occurred to us that Cornélius Castoriadis has proposed for his part a contrast between the process of psychogenesis or idiogenesis and the process of koinogenesis or sociogenesis: *cf.* his 1975 *L'institution imaginaire de la société* (Paris, Éditions du Seuil), now available in English under the title *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Translated by Kathleen Blamey, Cambridge, MIT Press) and especially Chap. 6 ("The Social-Historical Institution: Individuals and Things").

[40] Plato, *Epistles*, R. G. Bury, trans. in Loeb Classical Library, London, New York, 1929, VII, 531.

[41] Michel Weber, *Whitehead's Pancreativism. The Basics*, *op. cit.*, esp. chapters V and VI.

[42] A recent exemplification: morality has to be enforced "in the name" of someone: see Dufour drawing the consequences of the cultural desintegration idenfied by Lyotard. (Dany-Robert Dufour, *L'art de réduire les têtes. Sur la nouvelle servitude de l'homme libéré à l'ère du capitalisme total*, Paris, Éditions Denoël, 2003.)

[43] "Thus so far as the immediate present subject is concerned, the origination of conceptual valuation according to Category IV is devoted to such a disposition of emphasis as to maximize the integral intensity derivable from the most favourable balance. The subjective aim is the selection of the balance amid the given materials." (*PR* 278; *cf. PR* 187; "maximum" is quite frequent, e.g., *PR* 128)

[44] *Cf.* the *kalocentric* arguments of Ferré and Henning: Frederick Ferré, *Being and Value, Knowing and Value, Living and Value* (Albany, New York, State University of New York Press, State University of New York Press Series in Constructive Postmodern Thought, 1996, 2001, 2001); George J. Allan & Merle Allshouse (eds.), *Nature, Truth, and Value: Exploring the Thinking of Frederick Ferré*, Lanham, Lexington Books, 2005; Brian G. Henning, *The Ethics of Creativity: Beauty, Morality, and Nature in a Processive Cosmos*, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005; also of the same author: "Is There an Ethics of Creativity?" in Michel Weber et Pierfrancesco Basile (sous la direction de), *Chromatikon II. Annuaire de la philosophie en procès—Yearbook of Philosophy in Process*, Louvain-la-Neuve, Presses universitaires de Louvain, 2006, pp. 161-174.

[45] L. Charles Birch and John Boswell Cobb, Jr., *The Liberation of Life: From the Cell to the Community*, Cambridge - New York, Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp. 152-153.

[46] *Cf.* also the interesting reappropriations of Heidegger ("das Nichts" and "der Abgrund"), Sartre ("le néant") and Berdyaev ("me-ontic" freedom). Bergson and Camus are especially important for making sense of Sartre's arguments. For a broader standpoint, Rudolf Otto's analyses in *West-östliche Mystik. Vergleich und Unterscheidung zur Wesensdeutung* (Gotha, Klotz, 1929; *Mysticsm East and West. A Comparative Analysis of the Nature of Mysticism*, Translated by Bertha L. Bracey and Richenda C. Payne, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1932) remain important.

[47] *Cf.* Clarissa Pinkola Estés, *Women Who Run With the Wolves. Contracting the Power of the Wild Woman*, London, Rider, 1992.

[48] A forthcoming Whiteheadian commentary of Thomas should make this plain.

[49] Any thorough argument would of course differentiate the holy from the sacred and from the divine. *Cf.*, e.g., Nathan Söderblom, *sub verso* "Holiness (General and Primitive)", in James Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopædia of Religions and Ethics*, Vol. VI, New York - Edinburgh, Charles Scribner's Sons - T. & T. Clark, 1913, pp. 731-741: "Holiness is the great word in religion; it is even more essential than the notion of God."

[50] Mircea Eliade, *Techniques du Yoga* [1948]. Nouvelle édition, revue et augmentée, Paris, NRF Éditions Gallimard, 1975.

[51] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience. A Study in Human Nature. Being the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion Delivered at Edinburgh in 1901-1902*, New York, London, Bombay, and Calcutta, Longman, Green, and Co., 1902, pp. 380-381.

[52] Schopenhauer's *Über die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde* (1813) and *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (1818) were the main actors in the introduction of Indian philosophy on the European scene, but that discovery was rather short-lived: the Eurocentrism of the late nineteenth century prevented any lasting interest until the second part of the twentieth century, when the seminal works of K. Nishida, D. T. Suzuki (and later of Alan W. Watts and Steve Odin) hit the scene. Besides, the speculative literature exploiting both Whiteheadian and Buddhists insights is very rich, especially on the concepts of togetherness, co-dependent origination, prehension, absolute nothingness, emptiness and kenosis.

[53] Interestingly enough, the importance of this move is being rediscovered in psychotherapy: see especially François Roustang's recent outstanding works (e.g., *La fin de la plainte*, Paris, Éditions Odile Jacob, 2000; or *Il suffit d'un geste*, Odile Jacob, 2003). Some of his books have been translated in English: *How to Make a Paranoid Laugh? or What is Psychoanalysis?*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999 [*Comment faire rire un paranoïaque*, Paris, Éditions Odile Jacob, 1996]; *Dire Mastery, Discipleship from Freud to Lacan*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982 [*Un destin si funeste*, Paris, Éditions de Minuit, Critique, 1976]; *Psychoanalysis Never Lets Go*, Baltimore (MD.), Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980 [*Elle ne le lâche plus*, Paris, Éditions de Minuit, 1980]; *The Lacanian Delusion*, Oxford University Press, 1990 [*Lacan. De l'équivoque à l'impasse*, Paris, Éditions de Minuit, Arguments, 1986].

[54] *Cf.* of course Jean-François Lyotard diagnosis in *La condition post-moderne. Rapport sur le savoir* (Paris, Éditions de Minuit, 1979) and the complementary analyses of Michel Henry in *La Barbarie* (Paris, Éditions Bernard Grasset, 1987) and the numerous relevant works of Pierre Bourdieu and Dany-Robert Dufour. See also Bertram Gross' *Friendly Fascism: The New Face of Power in America* (New-York, M. Evans & Co., 1980).

[55] *Cf.* Gregory J. Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered. Thomas and John in Controversy* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1994) and, by the same author, *One Jesus, Many Christs: How Jesus Inspired not One True Christianity, but Many—The Truth about Christian Origins* (San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1997). *Obiter scriptum*, one could underline a revealing fact. Whiteheadian scholarship has kept a fair visibility in natural theology only thanks to the Center for Process Studies located in the (Methodist) Claremont School of Theology. Until recently, there was even no cooperation whatsoever with the Philosophy Department of Claremont Graduate University and this can be easily understood in the context of the current pattern pervading the Humanities. (Philip Clayton and Roland Faber are now recognized as members of the Philosophy Department's faculty.) More curious is however the fact that Claremont process thinkers and their colleagues of the Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center (that fosters, with the

Claremont Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, internationally renowned Gnostic studies that benefit from the expertise of outstanding scholars such as James M. Robinson and Gregory Riley) basically ignore each other. (*Cf.*, e.g., James M. Robinson (General Editor), *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*. Translated and Introduced by Members of the Coptic Gnostic Library Project of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, Claremont, California. Third, Completely Revised Edition, With an Afterword by Richard Smith, New York, Harper & Row, Publishers, 1990.) It is quite unlikely that our short philosophical study, imperfect as it might be, changes that state of affairs, but the future should be at the very least kept open for new heuristic ventures beneficial for both fields. As Felix Frankfurter claimed, in a letter to the *New York Times* on January 8, 1948, reprinted as a Preface to the Mentor Book edition of *AE* (1928), the "need for breaking down sterilizing departmentalization has been widely felt. Unfortunately, however, a too frequent way of doing it has been, wittily but not too unfairly, described as the cross-sterilization of the social sciences."