PONTIFICIA UNIVERSITAS ANTONIANUM

FACULTAS THEOLOGIAE

Specializatio in Dogmatica

Andreas Bernadinus ATAWOLO

THE CATEGORY OF GOOD IN BONAVENTURE'S CREATIVE TRINITY:
TOWARDS A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THEOLOGY AND SCIENCE

Disertatio ad Doctoratum

Moderator   : Prof.ssa Mary MELONE

Correlatores : Prof. Johannes B. FREYER

             Prof. Lluìs OVIEDO

ROMAE 2016

1. Bonaventure's Works[1]

Apol. Paup	*Apologia pauperum contra caluminatorem*
Brevil.	*Breviloquium*
Chr. Unus	*Christus unum omnium magister*
De donis	*Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti*
Decem Praec.	*Colattiones de Decem Praeceptis*
Eccl	*Commentarius in librum Ecclesiastes*
Hexaëm.	*Collationes in Hexaëmeron sive illuminationes Ecclesiae*
Itin.	*Itinerarium mentis in Deum*
LegM.	*Legenda Maior Sancti Francisci.*
Myst. Trin.	*Questiones Disputatae de mysterio Trinitatis*
I Sent.	*Commentarius in I librum Sententiarum*
II Sent.	*Commentarius in II librum Sententiarum*
III Sent.	*Commentarius in III librum Sententiarum*
IV Sent.	*Commentarius in IV librum Sententiarum*
V Sent.	*Commentarius in V librum Sententiarum*
Perf. ev.	*Quaestiones disputatae de perfectione evangelica*
Red. art.	*De Redectione artium ad theologiam*
Sc. Chr.	*Questiones disputatae de scientia Christi*

2. Journal, Publisher, Dictionary

ACPQ	*American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*. Journal of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, Washington, 1990ss.
Ant	*Antonianum*. Periodicum philosofico-theologicum editum cura professorum Pontificiae Universitatis Antonianum de Urbe, Romae, 1926ss.

---

[1] Based on *Dizionario Bonaventuriano* (a cura di Ernesto Caroli), Editrici Francescane, Padova, 2008, p. 16

Ang   *Angelicum*. Trismestre Pontificiae Estudiorum Universitatis A Sancto Thoma Aquinate in Urbe, 1924ss.

AO   *Alpha Omega*. Rivista di Filosofia e Teologia dell'Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum, Roma, 1998ss.

CollFranc   *Collectanea Franciscana*. Periodicum cura institute historici Ordinis Fratrum Capuccinorum editum, Roma, 1931ss.

CFIT   *Commission on the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition. English Speaking Conference of the Order of Friars Minor*. Publish by The Franciscan Institute St. Bonaventure University, NY., 2001ss.

CN   *Città Nuova* Editrice, Roma.

Cord   *The Cord*. A Franciscan Spiritual Review published quarterly by Franciscan Institute Publications at St. Bonaventure University, New York, 1950ss.

DrSer   *Doctor Seraphicus*. Bullettino d'informazione del Centro di Studi bonaventuriani, Bagnoregio, 1954ss.

DivThom   *Divus Thomas*. Periodico quadrimestrale dello Studio Filosofico Domenicano,della Provincia San Domenico in Italia, Placentiae, 1880ss.

DizBon   *Dizionario Bonaventuriano*, Editrici Francescane, Padova, 2008.

ÈtFranc   *Études Franciscaines*. Revue publiée par les Frères Mineurs Capucins de la Province de France, Paris, 1899ss.

ETL   *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*. Louvain Journal of Theology and Canon Law, Gembloux, 1924ss.

FHS   *Franciscan Heritage Series*. Commission on the Franciscan Itellectuial Tradition, Franciscan Institute St. Bonaventure University, NY., 2003ss.

FrancStud   *Franciscan Studies*. Published by the Franciscan Institute, St.

	Bonaventure University, NY., 1941ss.
Greg	*Gregorianum.* Published by Pontifical University Gregoriana, Rome, 1920ss.
HTR	*The Harvard Theological Review.* Issued quarterly by the Faculty of Divine in Harvard University, Cambrige, 1908ss.
IJST	*International Journal of Systematic Theology.* Published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd, Oxford, 1999ss.
ItalFranc	*Italia Francescana.* Rivista trimestrale di cultura francescana, Conferenza Italiana Ministri Provinciali Cappuccini, Roma, 1926ss.
ITQ	*The Irish Theological Quarterly.* Published at the Pontifical University, Maynooth, Dublin, 1906ss.
MedStud	*Mediaeval Studies.* Published by Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto-Canada, 1939ss.
MF	*Miscellanea Francescana.* Rivista Trimestrale di scienze teologiche e di studi francescani, a cura dei professori della Pontificia Facoltà Teologica 'San Bonaventura' dei Frati Minori Conventuali, Foligno-Roma, 1886ss.
MiscMed	*Miscellanea Mediaevalia.* Veröffentlichungen des Thomas Instituts der Universität zu Köln, 1962ss.
NY	New York City.
PL	*Patrologie cursus completus. Series Patrologia latina*, ed. J Migne, Apud Garnier Fratres editore set J Migne successores, Parisiis, 1878ss.
RFNS	*Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica.* A cura del Dipartimento di Filosofia dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Firenze, 1909ss.
RT	*Ricerche Teologiche.* A cura della Società Italiana per la Ricerca Teologica, Roma, 1990ss.

RS	*Religious Studies*. An International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1965ss.
S. Bonaventura	*S. Bonaventura 1274-1974*. Volumen Centernarii/cura Commissionis internationalis bonaventurianae-Grottaferrata: Coll. S. Bonav. 1973-1974. 5 vol.
SIEPM	*Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale*. Edité par la Société Internationale Pour L'étude de la Philosophie Médiévale, Louvain, 1964ss.
StudFranc	*Studi Francescani*. Trimestrale di vita culturale e religiosa a cura dei Frati Minori d'Italia, Firenze, 1903ss.
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*. Published by Cambridge University Press, Edinburgh, 1948ss.
THJ	*The Heythrop Journal*. A Bimonthly Review of Philosophy and Theology, Oxford, 1960ss.
TheolStud	*Theological Studies*. Published quarterly by SAGE Publications on behalf of Theological Studies, Inc., for Society of Jesus in the United States, NY, 1940ss.
Thomist	*The Thomist*. A Speculative Quarterly Review of Theology and Philosophy, Washington D. C., 1939ss.
WTUSP	*Washington Theological Union Symposium Papers*, The Franciscan Institute St. Bonaventure University, NY., 2001ss.

3. Biblical Text[2]

Ex	Exodus
Eccl	Ecclesiastes
Gn	Genesis
Is	Isaiah
Jn	John
Jas	The Letter from James
Lk	Luke

---

[2] Based on *New American Bible*, Catholic Bible Publisher, Wichita, Kansas, 1981-1982 ed.

Mk	Mark
Mt	Matthew
Phil	Philippians
Ps	Psalms
Rom	Paul's Letter to the Romans
Tim	Paul's Letter to Timothy
Wis	Wisdom

4. Critical Apparatus

a.	articulus, article
ad.	addit
cap.	capitulum, chapter
cf.	confer
con.	contra, contrary
concl.	conclusio, conclusion
d.	distinctio, distinction
dub.	dubium, doubt
ed.	editor, editors, edition
eng.	English (translation)
et al.	and others
fund.	fundamentum
id.	idem
it.	Italian (translation)
lib.	liber
n.	numerus
p.	page
par.	pars, part
PP.	Patres-editores
prol.	prologus, prolog
prooem.	prooemium
q.	quaestio, question
resp.	responsio, respond
ss	succeeding
sol.	solutio
st.	saint
u	unicus, unique
v	volume

INTRODUCTION

1. Main Scope of this Study

The main purpose of the study is to present Bonaventure's theology of creation in Trinitarian paradigm and to bring it as a *window* towars dialogue with modern science. We choose the term *good* (bonum) as key word considering that Bonaventure adopts it from the Dionysian principle, but utilizes it to express the biblical conception of God as essentially dynamic in his self diffusiveness (*bonum diffusivum sui*). The *primitas* of Father is understood in the function of his *charity*. We choose this idea as a helpful scenario to find the theological *ratio* of relation between Trinity and Creation, the two major poles of the present study.

A great Italian bonaventurean scholar, Cherubino Bigi OFM, speaking of Bonaventure's doctrine of time and creation, once wrote that "the first problem of the finite being is the question of its beginning, thus its origin"[3]. That passage recalls properly Bonaventure's own words: "If we don't know the meaning of *being per se*, we cannot fully know the definition of any particular substance"[4]. It is considered that the question of the origin is related to our system of knowledge – a theme that has remained meaningful in contemporary thought. Gilson rightly notes that a great metaphysical system must be faced with the problem of the first origin of things; he writes therefore, that "we can never in any case disassociate the explanation of things from the consideration of their raison d'être"[5].

---

[3] CHERUBINO BIGI, "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo in San Bonaventura" (hereafter "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo"), in *Ant*, 39 (1964), p. 448. For the most significant themes of Bigi's study on Bonaventure, see GIOVANNI MOTTA, "Padre Vincenzo Cherubino Bigi Interprete di San Bonaventura", in *DrSer*, 61 (2013), p. 107-116.

[4] *Itin*., III, 3 (V, 304a): "Nisi igitur cognoscatur quid est *ens per* se, non potest *plene* scire definitio alicuius specialis substantiae". Latin quotations of Bonaventure's works are taken from SERAPHICI DOCTORIS SANCTI BONAVENTURE, *Opera Omnia* (10 volumes), Studio et Cura PP. Collegii a. S. Bonaventure, Ad Claras Aquas, Quaracchi, 1882-1902.

[5] E. GILSON, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure* (English translation by Dom Illtyd Trethowan and Frank J. Sheed), Patterson N. J., 1965, p. 104.

Bonaventure was not only interested on the question of origin of things but on their finality as well. He writes: "For any person who is unable to consider how things originate, how they are led back to their end, and how God shines forth in them, is incapable of achieving true understanding"[6]. This quotation indicates subtly his triadic paradigm. Indeed, the basic foundation of Bonaventure's whole theological system is the Trinity Creator, and we take it as the general logic of this present study. He points out three key words which covers his whole system, namely *emanatio*, *exemplaritas*, *consummatio*: "this is the whole of our metaphysics: It is about *emanation*, *exemplarity*, and *consummation*; that means to be illumined by means of spiritual rays and to be led back to the supreme Being"[7].

2. General Outline

Based on that general paradigm, the central point we treat in the first chapter is the question of an eternal world. Bonaventure negates consistently the view of an eternal world. His main *ratio creationis* is that it is impossible for something that has its being after its non being to exist for all eternity, since this implies a contradiction. For him, a world created from eternity, theologically is contradictory. This doctrine, nonetheless, opens another serious question, as we are talking "about the possibility of a temporal creation from an eternal being"[8]. Naturally we know nothing of the eternal being unless we have any *medium* which opens our eyes to see it. Bonaventure has really considered that "we speak of eternity hesitantly (*balbutimus*)"[9]. Our language does not have a sufficient instrument to describe the

---

[6] *Hexaëm.*, III, 2 (V, 343): "Nissi enim quis possit considerare de rebus qualiter originantur, qualiter in finem reducuntur, et qualiter in eis refulget Deus, intelligentiam habere non potest"; see translation in Z. HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery on the Triune God", in Kenan B. Osborne (ed.), *The History of Franciscan Theology*, The Franciscan Institute St. Bonaventure University, NY., 1994, p. 51.

[7] *Hexaëm.*, I, 17 (V, 332): "Hoc est medium metaphysicum reducens, et haec est tota nostra metaphyisica: de emanatione, de exemplaritate, de consummatione, scilicet illuminari per radios spirituales et reduci ad summum. Et sic eris verus metaphysicus"; see HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 51.

[8] BIGI, "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo", 453.

[9] *Myst. Trin.* q. 5, a. 1, resp. (V, 91a); see *Works of Saint Bonaventure. Disputed Question on the Mystery of the Trinity* (introduction and translation by Z. Hayes), The Franciscan Institute St Bonaventure University, NY., 2000, p. 211.

eternal Being unless he reveals himself. The communicative nature of God, therefore, is an important point considered in this study.

Speaking of the beginning of the world, for the Franciscan, the best way to resolve the polemic of the eternal of the world is to know the role of the Divine Word as *ratio* exemplar of creation. The proper way to understand the divine revelation is through the *Verbum Divinum*. Hence, Bonaventure speaks of triple Verbum: *Verbum increatum*, *Verbum incarnatum* and *Verbum inspiratum*. The divine Word is the Medium of human knowledge, the model or exemplar par excellence of all creation. Such an intense Christological argument opens our horizon to be convinced that for Bonaventure, Trinity and Incarnation "are two radix of faith, and anyone who ignores it does not believe anything"[10].

Bonaventure claims that "the faith in the Trinity is the foundation and root of divine worship and of all the Christian religion"[11]. Keeping in consideration the role of Triune God as the Creator of the world, in the second chapter we see that in Bonaventure's world-view, God reveals his name not only as *being* but also as *good*; while the first designates God *in se* (*quid est*), the second designates God *pro nobis*. The Franciscan identifies God more as *supreme good* than as *being*[12]: "The power of supreme Good (*summi boni*) is so great that nothing else can be loved by creature except through a desire for the supreme Good"[13].

For Bonaventure the communicative nature of God is rooted in the self-diffusive good which renders God triune. To develop his doctrine of the Trinity, he turned to two main sources: Pseudo-Dionysius and Richard of Saint Victor.

---

[10] *Hexaëm*., VIII, 9 (V, 370b): "et isti sunt duae radices fidei, quas qui ignorat nihil credit".

[11] *Myst. Trin*., q. 1, a. 2, resp. (V, 56a): "fides Trinitatis et fundamentum et radix est divini *cultus* et totius *christianae religionis*" (English trans., Hayes, 131).

[12] Cf. O. Todisco, "Il Carattere Cristiano del Pensare Bonaventuriano" (hereafter "Il Pensare Bonaventuriano"), in *DrSer*, 61 (2013), p. 17.

[13] *Itin*., III, 4 (V, 305a): "Tanta est vis summi boni, ut nihil nisi per illius desiderium a creatura possit amari, quae tunc fallitur et errat". For English translation, see *Works of St. Bonaventure. Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* (English translation by Z. Hayes; introduction and commentary by Philotheus Boehner), Franciscan Institute Publications Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2002, p. 89, 91.

According to Dionysius, the highest good is self-diffusive and gives rise to being and Richard claims that the highest good is love, and love is personal and communicative. Under the influence of Dionysius and Richard, Bonaventure would say that if the divine mystery were not supremely communicative in itself, it could not communicate being to the finite.

Creation is an expression of divine communion (*ad intra*) to creature (*ad extra*) through the *ratio aeterna* of the Father, which is divine Word. Our central point in the third chapter, therefore, is the divine communication *ad extra* in the cosmos. Creatures are *footprint*, *image* and *similitude* of God. In Bonaventure's metaphoric language, *book* is but one of more than a dozen metaphors he used to communicate the theological significance of creation: they are *signs* given to us so that we might be led through them to the *contuition* of God; the soul passes through signs to what is signified. The structure of *Breviloqium*, *de Scientia Christi* and *Itinerarium* offers a clue to reflect the role of divine Word as the light which illumines human knowledge to be able to know Christ as the door of salvation.

The doctrine of three-fold analogy puts in light that the task of the theologian is to help make the book of creation more legible. Bonaventure was very interested in cosmology and entertained questions of the cosmos in the pursuit of theological truth. This tendency, as we treat it in the fourth chapter, resonates with modern science, particularly when scientific data discover the irreducible complexity and harmony in the cosmos. Bonaventure's theological method *per se* is a paradigm that elevates our consideration on cosmological system. As shown in *De reductione*, for Bonaventure, 'science' means a broader way of knowing; a more holistic approach to knowledge of nature than what is typical of modern science. Such an epistemology opens a holistic world-view not only for science itself but for theology, as well. The point made clear in this chapter is the plausibility of bringing forward Bonaventure's theology of creation as a *window* of dialogue between theology and science. Even thou Bonaventure was not aware of contemporary technology and science, he has intuition of creative synergic in the cosmos.

Bonaventure's world-view invites us to see the richness of creature not only as *things* (*res-reference*) but as signs (*signum-meaning*). The world is seen not only as a comprehensive *structure* in technical logic – and being so does might be eternal – but also as a *cosmos* which designates a *message* to be accepted[14]. This is an invitation to be aware to a dynamic cosmos in which we are deeply related, and to seek the divine Word expressing itself in the rich fecundity of cosmic life.

3. Sources and Methodology

The present study is indebted to Bonaventura's works. In addition to the original source in Latin, there are many accessible translations and studies on Bonaventure's writings. In connection to our theme, among many bonaventurean modern scholars, the translations and studies of Father Zachary Hayes OFM[15] prove very useful. Hayes was professor of systematic theology and who today is still regarded as a preeminent interpreter of the works of St. Bonaventure.

As noted above, the first and fundamental thing this study hoped to achieve is to understand the thought of Bonaventure, specifically on "theology of creation in the Trinitarian paradigm". Even though the study is not a critical research on any particular text of Bonaventure, it deemed necessary to describe some of the key concepts to obtain a logical framework of its theme. The theme of creation was presented by Bonaventure broadly in his works, so it is necessary for us to find out an integral intersection from his various texts, to hold consistently the main line. Considering the modern sensibility, this study has to give further some insights to bring about its actuality. Certainly, to find a window of dialogue one needs a medium. As such, we need some philosophical insights to mediate its dialogue.

---

[14] Cf. TODISCO, "Il Pensare Bonaventuriano", 20.

[15] Fr. Hayes (1932-2014) developed and taught a variety of courses covering subjects such as revelation, Trinity, creation and cosmology, Christology and eschatology. He also became keenly interested in the relationship between religion and the sciences. He was a member of the Chicago Center for Religion and Science. Concerning Hayes' writings, see *FrancStud*, 60 (2002), p.1-6; see also *FrancStud*, 65 (2007), which contains various articles presented during a symposium in honor of Hayes, on March 11, 2006 at Saint Louis University; see the article of ILIA DELIO, "Cosmic Christology in the Thought of Zachary Hayes", p. 107-120.

4. Some precedent studies

The theme of relationship between the Divine Trinity and creation can be expressed in the so-called Triune Creator. Several authors have explored it. Some examples need to be mentioned here: Study of Alexander Schaefer[16] is a solid study on anthropological aspect, focusing on the place of man in the creation. The rich text Schaefer's used contributed much to our approach. Luc Mathieu's book *La Trinità Creatrice*[17] is a legitimate reference on this theme; and we are indebted to the general logic of his book. We have the advantage also to read the study of Wayne Hellmann[18] which proposes the meaning of the term *ordo* in Bonaventure's theology of creation. Indeed this term is very central in understanding Bonaventure's *ratio creationis* in contrast to those who believe in an eternal world. *Order* proposes a harmony between a beginning, process and finality of the world.

In our approach the dialectical question of origin, of its model (exemplar), and its finality, captured the existential issues on God's design in the world that is the universe is not purposeless. The recent works[19] of Hayes anticipate the key point of our approach: that science and religion can and should be in dialogue, in respect to the question of human identity and the future of the universe. This perspective is emerged also in the various works of Ilia Delio, with a project of actualizing Bonaventure's cosmological-theology through the view of process philosophy, theory of Evolution and Big Bang. We have considered enough of her contributions without entering profoundly in technical scientific issue as she has done.

---

[16] A. SCHAEFER, "The position and function of man in the created world according to Saint Bonaventure", in *FrancStud*, 20-21 (Sept.- Dec. 1960), p. 261-317; 233-382.

[17] LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità creatrice secondo san Bonaventura* (hereafter *La Trinità Creatrice*), Biblioteca Francescana, Milano, 1994.

[18] J. A. WAYNE HELLMANN, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology* (Trans., ed., appendix by J. M. Hammond), St. Bonaventure University, NY., 2001.

[19] Z. HAYES, *the Gift of Being. A Theology of Creation*, A Michael Glazier Book, Minnesota, 2001; ID. *A window to the Divine. Creation theology*, Anselm academic, Winona, 2009.

5. Final Modality

Our treatment is more interested to the fact that 'reality' does not consist of a part or even of a whole, but it is a holistic reality. The mechanism of life both at microcosm and macrocosm level is irreducibly complexity. Bonaventure's own terminologies designate it: emanation - exemplary - the consummation; efficient cause - exemplary causes - the final cause; power - wisdom – goodness. These three-fold analogies say that creation is the act of relationship. The Trinitarian communion is the first principle of creation. Through the doctrine of analogy and method of *reductio*, the point we want to make clear is that the interaction with theology encourages science to stop looking at itself as an apology of what already exists and becomes an instrument of a new model. At the same time, theology has to renew its own knowledge of reality in awareness that it does not have all the answers. The final goal proposed in this study is to have a deeper sense of awe at the mystery of the cosmos and human dignity.

6. My Gratitude

For all the process that the present study has undergone, I owe a particular debt of gratitude to my professors who accompanied me throughout this research journey. First, I am indebted to Professor Mary Melone, my main mentor, for her support and encouragement to learn Bonaventure's thought. My deep gratitude to Professor Johannes B. Freyer for his skillful accompaniment and for his comprehensive knowledge on Bonaventure's texts, which made my not so comprehensive knowledge on Bonaventure's thought, emerged as an integral piece of written literature. Special thanks also go to Professor Maksym Adam Kopiec and Lluìs Oviedo for their careful reading and support on the issue of dialog between theology and science. My special gratitude also to brother Nazarius Popielars Ki and his staff of the library of Antonianum, for their friendly service during my research. May God, the highest Good, reward them a good life as Franciscans.

CHAPTER I
BONAVENTURE ON THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF AN ETERNAL WORLD
TOWARD A METAPHYSICS OF EXEMPLARITY

Introduction

The question of whether or not the world could have been created from eternity was one of the most important questions of the thirteenth century[20]. Even in modern times, the question remains of considerable interest with various consciousnesses. Regarding this issue, Richard Dales describes:

> "In the 1270s impassioned debates among philosophers, theologians, and clerical administrators at the University of Paris centered principally around three issues: the unicity of the active intellect, the animation of the heavens, and the eternity of

---

[20] Cf. B. M. BONANSEA, "The question of an eternal world in the teaching of St. Bonaventure" (hereafter "Eternal World in St. Bonaventure"), in *FrancStud*, 34 (1974), p. 7. The question of the eternity of the world is the most discussed problem of Bonaventure's theory of creation, to which numerous studies have been devoted. Here are some studies from which our treatment refers: B. BROWN, "Bonaventure on the Impossibility of a Beginningless World: Why the Traversal Argument Works", in *ACPQ*, 79 (2005), p. 389-409; M. D. WALZ, "Theological and Philosophical Dependencies in St. Bonaventure's Argument Against an Eternal World and a Brief Thomistic Reply" (hereafter "Bonaventure's Argument"), in *ACPQ*, 72 (1998), p. 76-98; R. DAVIS, "Bonaventure and the Arguments for the Impossibility of an Infinite Temporal Regression", in *ACPQ*, 70 (1996), p. 361-172; S. BALDNER, "St. Bonaventure and the Demonstrability of a Temporal Beginning of the World: A Reply to Richard Davis", in *ACPQ*, 71 (1997), p. 225-236; R. DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1990; VAN STEENBERGHEN, "Saint Bonaventure contre l'éternité du monde", in *S. Bonaventure, 1274-1974, Vol. III*, Collegio S. Bonaventure, Grottaferrata, 1973, p. 259-278; A. COCCIA, "De aeternitate mundi apud S. Bonaventuram et recentiores", in *S. Bonaventure, 1274-1974*, Vol. III, Collegio S. Bonaventure, Grottaferrata, 1973, p. 279-306; A. GISHALBERTI, "La Controversia Scolastica sulla Creazione, in *RFNS*, 60 (1968), p. 211-230; R. SORABJI, *Time, Creation and the Continuum. Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1983; VOLLERT C et. all (translation and introduction), *St. Thomas Aquinas, Siger of Barbant, St. Bonaventure, On the Eternity of the World (De Aeternitate Mundi)* [hereafter: "The Eternity of the World"], Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wis, 1964.

the world. The only one of these which still seems important today, and the only one which has not become irrelevant because of a change in the world view, is the eternity of the world"[21].

By the second quarter of the thirteenth century, all the works of Aristotle that we now have were known in the West. Their impact on theology was huge and sometimes bewildering. That time, Aristotle, after all, provided a complete system, one that had no room for the Christian God, and that often conflicted with the Christian faith. Like all scholastics, Bonaventure, found himself in constant debate and dialogue with other theologians, both among his contemporaries and immediate predecessors. On the one hand, he relied heavily on Aristotelian logic, physics, and metaphysics. On the other hand, certain key areas of difficulty developed during this century, coming to a head in the 1260s and 1270s. Most notable were Aristotle's belief that the world lacks a beginning; that there is just one soul for all human beings; and that the highest human good is the life of the philosopher[22].

Keeping in mind that general intellectual context, we will present Bonaventure's position against the argument of creation *ab aeterno*. He discusses the issue in a particular question of his *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* (1096-1164)[23], where he asks, "Whether the world has been produced from eternity or in time"[24]. The question being asked is whether it is possible to conceive the world or any contingent being in such a way that the duration of its existence, while actually determines the here and now, would have had no beginning and would therefore be infinitely distant from the present moment[25].

---

[21] DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 1.

[22] Cf. CROSS, *Duns Scotus on God*, 3-4. An example of study on medieval thinkers is the book of R. CROSS, *The Medieval Christian Philosophers*, I. B. Tauris, London/NY., 2014.

[23] PETRUS LOMBARDUS, *Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae*, Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, Grottaferata (Romae), 1971; English translation: PETER LOMBARD, *The Sentences*, vol. I-IV (translated by Giulio Silano), Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, 2010.

[24] Cf. *II Sent.*, d. 1, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2 (II, 19).

[25] Cf. BONANSEA, "Eternal World in St. Bonaventure", 11.

In our treatment, some perspectives from contemporary scholars on the issue are included here, since they contribute some 'provocative' insights: "It is no secret that one of the most important conceptions of the theists about 'God' is Creator of heaven and earth"[26], and it is the most extensively discussed issue on the difficult relationship between faith and reason or between theology and science[27]. To ask whether the world has a beginning or none at all, is to doubt the existence of God the Creator: "Or one may assume the heretical but 'reasonable' and 'intelligible' position of philosophers, proponing of an eternal and uncreated world; or accepting the solution of the faith of a world exited *ab initio temporis* of God's hands"[28].

The last quotation indicates that, the final modality of this chapter is not merely to answer the question in a simple black-and-white-scheme, but in a more profound way as a theological issue. The content of that alternative as laid out in the quotation is a significant motivation to find out Bonaventure's methodology in his treatment on metaphysic of the first being as the ultimate horizon of human intellect investigation. As we will see later, for example, in Bonaventure's *Hexaëmeron*, his solution on the debate supposes a broad understanding of his theological-metaphysical reflection on the divine Word as *ratio aeterna* of creation. We hope to make clear that, to understand Bonaventure's creation theology, means to hold his programmatic vision on the human life and the entire universe[29]. Viewed in this way, one might say that Bonaventure's theological vision has its contribution to our contemporary dealing with the question of the human itinerary in the world.

---

[26] WILLIAM L. CRAIG, *The Kālam cosmological argument*, WIPF & STOCK, Eugene, 1979 (paperback, 2000), p.149.

[27] Cf. A. GISHALBERTI, "La controversia scolastica sulla creazione *ab aeterno*, 211.

[28] L. BIANCHI, *L'inizio dei tempi. Antichità e novità del mondo da Bonaventura a Newton*, Leo S. Olschki Editore, Firenze, 1987, p. 26. This chapter is indebted also to a good study on the present theme by BIANCHI, *L'errore di Aristotele. La polemica contro l'eternità del mondo nel XIII secolo*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze, 1984.

[29] Cf. MERINO, *Storia della Filosofia Francescana*, 70.

1. The Ancient Greek thought

Today we know by revelation that the world was created in time. Related to this is the question asked by philosophers whether God could have created the world or any creature from all eternity? Before presenting Bonaventure's position to that philosophical question, we present in the foregoing paragraphs the historical background of ancient Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle.

1.1. Plato (427-348/47 BC)

Plato is the Greek philosopher who laid emphasis on art (technê/ τεχνεη) as opposed to nature (phusis/ φυσισ). To him, art is a product of the mind and intelligence and is superior to the mindless operation of nature. He exalted reason over sense perception, because man's sense of perception is about things that are always undergoing change[30]. In the *Timaeus*[31], Plato's major treatise on cosmology and natural philosophy, Plato said that this world had a beginning; but on the other hand he had admitted the existence of an eternal matter in a chaotic state[32]. To prove his point, he stated that the world is fashioned by a god, or *demiurge*. The *demiurge* is not a creator god, making a world from nothing, but rather a divine craftsman who makes a world from chaotic materials already available. In order to make the best possible world from this preexisting chaotic matter, the *demiurge* turns to the Idea or Form of living creature and copies every species of perfectly existent entities that it contains[33].

Reading *Timaeus*, particularly the passage 28A-38C, Dales observes that Plato seems to contradict himself: He has clearly made a distinction between the exemplar and its model of existence (*aion*, *aevum*, *eternity*) and the *mundus sensilis*

---

[30] Cf. E. GRANT, *A History of Natural Philosophy. From the Ancient World to the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, 2007 (Reprinted 2008), p. 22.

[31] English translation of *Timaeus*, see PLATONIS, *Timaeus*, translation with Introduction by DONALD J. ZEYL, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis/Cambridge, 2000. For an analytic perspective on the book, see SORABJI, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, 272-275.

[32] Cf. BONANSEA, "Eternal World in St. Bonaventure", 9.

[33] Cf. GRANT, *A History of Natural Philosophy*, 24-25.

and its mode of existence (*time*). The exemplar remains always the same, while the world is its moving image. But it is not completely clear whether the ideas are a temporal or whether they simply persist through time without change or motion[34]. On the one side, speaking of the existence of the whole heaven (*ouranos*) or world order (*kosmos*), Plato was convinced that,

"[…], everything that comes into being must necessarily do so by virtue of some cause, for nothing comes into being whose origin is not preceded by an appropriate cause and reason. The craftsman determines the kind of thing he makes" (28A).

But Plato himself is not sure in answering the following questions: "Has it always been? Was there no origin (*archē*) from which it came to be? Or did it come to be and takes its start some origin? (28B). Then he continues saying:

"It has come to be. For it is both visible and tangible and it has body – and all things of that kind are perceptible. And, as we have shown, perceptible things are grasped by opinion, which involves sense perception. As such, they are things that come to be, things that are begotten. Further, we maintain that, necessarily, that which comes to be must come to be by the agency of some cause. *Now to find the maker and father of this universe (to pan) is hard enough, and even if I succeeded, to declare him to everyone is impossible*" [28B-28C].

The above answer was still followed by more questions: "Which of the two models did the maker use when he fashioned it? Was it the one that does not change and stays the same, or was it the one that has come to be?" (29A). It is precisely seen that the question of exemplarity becomes one of the most fundamental philosophical question: what is the eternal model after which all the copies (i.e., creatures) are shaped? "Plato had asked this question, but had never found an adequate answer"[35]. We have no intention to discuss this problem in this study; we simply want to show that even if there is an obscure area, the idea of an exemplar

---

[34] Cf. DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 4-9. For more analysis on the *Timaeus*, see Xeyl's introduction to the translation quoted herein.
[35] Cf. HAYES, "Beyond the prime mover", 8-9.

model between god/craftsman and creatures provides the nucleus for the Christian theology. Speaking of Plato's influence on Bonaventure, the point we want to make here is that, the idea of an eternal model in creation contained *in radix*[36] the doctrine of exemplarism in Bonaventure designates that everything that exists is a copy or replica based on a pattern or model. Let us look at more passages from *Timaeus*:

"Now surely it's clear to all that it was the eternal model he looked at, for, of all the things that have come to be, our world is the most beautiful, and the fact is that the craftsman is the most excellent. This, then, is how it has come to be: it is a work of craft, modelled after that which is changeless and is grasped by a rational account, that is, by wisdom. Since these things are so, it follows by unquestionable necessity that this world is an image of something. [...]. Now why did he who framed this whole universe of becoming frame it? Let us state the reason why: He was good, and one who is good can never become jealous of anything. And so, being free of jealousy, he wanted everything to become as much like himself as was possible. [...]. The god wanted everything to be good and nothing to be bad so as far as was possible, and so he took over all that was visible – not at rest but in discordant and disorderly motion – and brought it from a state of disorder to of order, because he believed that order was in every way better than disorder" (29A-30A).

The great Platonic tradition is given a specifically Christian Content; for it is clear from Bonaventure's Christology, that the exemplar is in a preeminent sense in the world who lives at the very center of God and who, as an incarnate, is the center of all created reality. Herein lies the key of Bonaventure's conviction that the greatest metaphysical question cannot be answered is due to the ignorance of the incarnation[37]. Unfortunately the doctrine of exemplarism then was rejected by Aristotle. As we will see more, in his *Commentary on the Sentences*[38] and *Hexaëmeron*, Bonaventure pointed out that the most serious philosophical mistake of Aristotle was his rejection of the Platonic theory of exemplarity.

---

[36] MERINO, *Storia della Filosofia Francescana*, 65.
[37] HAYES, "Bonaventure: Mystery of the Triune God", 227.
[38] *II Sent*. d. 1. p. 1, q. 1, resp. (II, 7).

1.2. Aristotle (384-322 BC)

Around 1270 the integrative work on the *corpus* of Classical and Islamic texts after the translations of Aristotle was largely completed. Aristotle and Averroes had by this time became key sources in the philosophical conversations[39]. Aristotle was known as a chief voice in the great intellectual enterprise in Latin West. His view was part of a long tradition of later thinkers and commentators.

1.2.1. Basic thought on Creation

The bulk of Aristotle writings on the eternity of the world seem clearly to imply or explicitly to teach that the world never had a beginning. As a consequence he negates not only the first coexistence of world and time but also time and motion[40]. In *Topica* 1, 11 (104b), he had raised the question of whether the world is eternal or not as an example of a subject suitable for dialectical, as opposed to demonstrative. He writes: "There are other problems also, concerning which we have no argument because they are so vast, and we find it difficult to give any reasons, for example on the question whether the world is eternal or not"[41].

In fact he was widely recognized as not to have taught that the world was demonstrably without a beginning. In his penetrating analysis of time in *Physica* 4, 11-12 (219b-221a), he decides that the 'now' is not a part of time, since time is not composed of 'nows' any more than a line is composed of points; it is rather the boundary between the past and the future, and so it must always have past time on one side of it and future time on the other. Consequently time could never have begun, nor can it ever end. In *Physica* 8, 1, Aristotle's subject is *movement*, and he aims to show that it has no beginning or end; so in *Physica* 8, 10 (266a), he writes:

---

[39] Cf. CROSS, *The Medieval Christian Philosophers*, 76. For English translation of Aristotle's works, see JONATHAN BARNES, *Complete Works* (*Aristotle*), Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1991.
[40] BIANCHI, *L'inizio dei tempi*, 14.
[41] DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 39-40.

"the first cause causes a motion that is eternal and causes it for an infinite time"[42]. In *De caelo*, after a detailed technical analysis of the views of his predecessors, at the end of Book 1, he introduces his own views at the beginning of Book 2, 1 (283b) in the most precise terms, which certainly look like a dialectical argument, not a demonstrative one. He writes:

> "That the heaven as a whole neither came into being, as some assert, but is one and eternal, with no end or beginning of its total duration, containing and embracing in itself the infinity of time, we may convince ourselves not only by the arguments already set forth, but also by a consideration of the views of those who differ from us by claiming that it came into being. If our view is a possible one, and the manner of generation which they assert is impossible, this fact will have great weight in convincing us of the immortality and eternity of the world"[43].

The last quotation can be understood to mean that Aristotle might have believed that the world is eternal. He maintained the eternity of the world, and went as far as to say that the world could not have had a beginning[44]. For him, the cosmos was a gigantic spherical plenum that had neither a beginning, nor would it have an end. Everything in existence exists within that sphere; nothing exists, or can possibly exist, outside of it: neither matter, nor empty space, nor time nor place[45].

In *Metaphysics* 9, 8 (1050b), one might see explicit statements of the world's eternity. Aristotle leads the reader on a search for the knowledge of the first cause. Then he leads the reader to the prime mover concluding as follows:

> "There is then something which is always moved with an unending motion, which is motion in a circle; and this is clear not only in theory but in fact. Therefore, the

---

[42] DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 40-41. For more analytical treatment on creation in Aristotle see also SORABJI, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, 276-277.

[43] ARISTOTLE, *De caelo*, 2, 1 [283b]; see DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 40.

[44] Cf. BONANSEA, "Eternal World in St. Bonaventure", 9 and SORABJI, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, 276-2780.

[45] Cf. E. GRANT, *A History of Natural Philosophy*, 37.

first heavens must be eternal. There is therefore also something which moves them. And since that which is moved and moves intermediate, there is a mover which moves without being moved, being eternal, substance, and actuality"[46].

It is at this point that we have an encounter with Aristotle's god. This god is not the creator of the world. In fact, Aristotle's world has no creator, for it exists eternally. This god has no loving, providential care for the world or for human beings. And as pure, self-contained, monadic being, it is the transcendent end toward which all movements in the world are directed[47]. According to Grant:

"Although he (Aristotle) did not assume a creation for the world, he did believe in a god, but a rather strange god, one who serves as a final cause for an eternal world, without beginning or end. Indeed, Aristotle's god has no knowledge of our world's existence but is wholly absorbed in thinking about himself, as he alone is worthy of serving as his own object of thought. Even if the world were not the object of god's thoughts, Aristotle regarded it as a rationally structured physical sphere that contained all that exist, without anything lying beyond"[48].

1.2.2. Models of interpretations on Aristotle

Generally scholars present three lines of interpretations on Aristotle[49]. On the one side, are the Jewish Neo-Platonists of the tradition of Proclus and the Arabian commentators on Aristotle, such as Avicenna and Averroes, who admit the eternity of the world; on the other side, are the Jewish theologians and the Mohammedans who defend not only the fact of creation in time but also the impossibility of an eternal world. Moses Maimonides, whose contribution to the understanding of the problem at issue is of primary importance, attempted to show that while the fact of

---

[46] ARISTOTLE, *Metaphysica* 9, 8 [1050] (DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 40; see ARISTOTLE, *Metaphysics*, translated with an introduction and commentary by STEPHEN MAKIN, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2006, p. 11-12); see also SORABJI, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, 277-279.

[47] Cf. HAYES, "Beyond the prime mover of Aristotle", 7.

[48] GRANT, *A History of Natural Philosophy*, 38.

[49] See the introduction of BIANCHI in BOEZIO DI DACIA, *Sull'eternità del Mondo* (traduzione e note di L. Bianchi), Uicopli, Milano, 2003, p. 12-13; Cf. BIANCHI, *L'errore di Aristotele*, 164-165; BONANSEA, "Eternal World in St. Bonaventure", 9-10.

creation is of the domain of faith, a philosopher cannot demonstrate with absolute certainty neither the necessity nor the repugnance of an eternal world. This is basically the view that was adopted later by Aquinas, taking off from his teacher, Albert the Great. Lastly, are the Franciscans specially, Alexander Hales and his disciple Bonaventure who affirm the impossibility of an eternal world.

According to Bianchi, the last category is an Aristotelian *right*, referring to those who are substantially hostile to Aristotle's thought, recalling the classic position of Augustine. The second group is a *center* position, sustained by those who try to assimilate it freely as a critical-view. The first one is a *left* group, meaning those who try to recover literally all the theses of the Philosopher and those of his leading commentator, Averroes. As we will see later, it is against this background that Bonaventure took his position in the controversy and rejected both the theory of an eternal world and the notion of a possible eternal creation.

As indicated above, certain Islamic authors made a contribution in the translation thus they have a clear influence on the scholastic tradition. This belonged to the first category of Aristotle's stream, thus called Latin Averroism. We have the great Muslim commentators of Aristotle's works like Avicenna/ Ibn Sīnā (980-1037) and particularly Averroes/Ibn Rushd (1126-1198). Averroes's close textual readings of Aristotle did nothing to attempt to mitigate theologically troublesome issues in Aristotle's thought. For example Aristotle believed that the world must lack a beginning, and that there is just one soul for all human beings[50].

The Jewish theologian, Moses Maimonides (1138-1204) defended another world-view: He was not troubled by the fact that many of the tenets of the faith could not be demonstrated rationally. Maimonides attempted to show that while the fact of creation is in the domain of faith, a philosopher cannot demonstrate with absolute certainty neither the necessity nor the repugnance of an eternal origin of

---

[50] Cf. CROSS, *The Medieval Christian Philosophers*, 11.

the world. In his treatise, *Dux dubitantium* (2, 17-18), he intended to clear away the doubts many people had on the proper meaning of the words of Scripture as felt. For him it is a mistake to base a proof of God's existence on the creation of nothing, as this proposition is incapable of proof. He held that neither the creation of the world in time nor its everlastingness was capable of demonstrative proof[51].

1.2.3. Bonaventure's reading on Aristotle

To understand Bonaventure's reception of Aristotle is one complex problem encountered in studying Bonaventure. It is not surprising, as Cullen notes, that Bonaventure reads Aristotle through the eyes of Augustine: The Franciscan clearly sees part of his task as incorporating the Aristotelian insights into the intellectual heritage of Augustine[52]. One finds that Aristotle is presented as 'the Philosopher' throughout Bonaventure's work, especially in his early *Commentary on the Sentences*. Even in the writings of a scholastic theologian such as Bonaventure, Aristotle is the most frequently cited philosophical source[53].

Bonaventure came to know Aristotle during his study in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Parish. Since 1235, as a young bachelor Bonaventure started to study, and in 1243 he became a Master at the same faculty. He appreciated Aristotle as the Philosopher par excellence. For him, Aristotle was an authority on his disposition; Bonaventure read Aristotle not for polemics but as a good philosophical tool for defending his own autonomic view, that is the Christian faith[54].

Gilson indicated that there is no systematic critical word about Aristotle in Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Sentences*. However, Bonaventure did

---

[51] Cf. DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 45-56. For more detail study on this theme, see GRANT, *A history of natural philosophy*, particularly in chapter 4: "Islam and the Eastward Shift of Aristotelian Natural Philosophy".

[52] Cf. C. CULLEN, "Bonaventure's Philosophical Method", in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, (J. M Hammond, W. Hellmann, J. Goff, eds.), Brill, 2014, p. 126. Hereafter other article from the book indicated as follows: the title, (J. Hammond et al., eds.), page number.

[53] Bougerol counts 930 quotations from Aristotle (BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, Eng. trans. José de Vinck, St. Anthony Guild Press, Patterson N.J., NY., 1964, 27).

[54] Cf. BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, 26-27.

appropriate to some extent Aristotle's epistemology and was familiar with his *Physics*, but treated it with some moderation during that period. At that time he was well aware that Aristotle taught the eternity of the world; and for him that doctrine was extremely hard to reconcile with that of creation[55].

In this aspect, for Bonaventure, Aristotle might be excused as he thought as a natural philosopher, but he wondered under what conditions any of his contemporaries might hold that the world is an eternal world. What follows is Bonaventure's assessment of Aristotle:

"Nevertheless, certain contemporaries say that the Philosopher never thought or intended to prove that the world did not begin at all, but [only] that the world did not begin by way of natural motion. I do not know which the truer [interpretation of Aristotle] is, but this I do know: If he held that the world did not have a beginning by way of nature [*secundum naturam*], he held the truth, and his arguments for time and motion have strength [*sunt efficaces*]. However, if he thought that the world began in no way, he clearly erred, as was shown with the several arguments above. And to avoid contradiction it was necessary for him to hold either that the world was not made or that it was not made from nothing. Moreover, to avoid an actual infinity it was necessary to hold the corruption or the unity or the reincarnation of the rational soul – and thus to destroy blessedness. This error has a bad beginning and the worst end"[56].

---

[55] Cf. E. GILSON, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 169.

[56] *II Sent*., d. 1. p. 1. a. 1. q. 2., resp. (II, 22-23): "Ouidam tamen moderni dicunt. Philosophum nequaquam illud sensisse nec intendisse probare, quod mundus *omnino* non coeperit, sed quod non coeperit *naturali motu*. Quod horum magis verum sit, ego nescio; hoc unum scio, quod si posuit, mundum non incepisse *secundum naturam*, verum posuit, et rationes eius sumtae a motu et tempore sunt efficaces. Si autem hoc sensit, quod *nullo* modo coeperit; manifeste erravit, sicut pluribus rationibus ostensum est supra. Et necesse fuit, eum ad vitandam *contradictionem* ponere, aut mundum non esse factum, aut non esse factum ex nihilo. Ad vitandum autem *infinitatem actualem* necesse fuit ponere aut animae rationalis *corruptionem*, aut *unitatem*, aut *circulationem*; et ita auferre beatitudinem. Unde iste error et malum habet *initium* et pessimum habet *finem*". [English trans., STEVEN BALDENER, "St. Bonaventure and the Demonstrability of a Temporal Beginning: A Reply to Richard Davis, in *ACPQ*, 71. 2 (1997), p. 231-232].

Reading this passage, we need to consider Bonaventure's significant change of view in his reading on Aristotle: This early reading of Aristotle is different from the later one he had found in the maturity of his metaphysical lecture, *Hexaëmeron*, elucidated at University of Paris in 1273[57]. In this mature work Bonaventure's rejection on Aristotle was based on the Philosopher's notion of eternal world and his denial of exemplarism. Bonaventure reacted against a conception of Aristotelian science that had developed at the Arts Faculty and that sought, in some ways, to divorce philosophy from faith. He insisted on the limits of reason and philosophy and on the importance of the subordination of philosophy to a higher science, as for him Christ "*est medium omnium scientiarum*"[58]. Bonaventure makes no attempt to ground his thought in arguments that do not rely on revelation authority[59].

1.2.4. Condemnation in the University of Parish

When Aristotle's philosophy reached Western Europe by way of translation from Greek and Arabic into Latin in the twelfth century, it entered a society that was already beginning to question the role of religious authorities. The translation generated an enormous interest in natural philosophy, metaphysics, and logic. This interest found an institutional home in the new universities, particularly at the Faculty of Arts in Paris. Although most scholars and students enthusiastically received Aristotelian philosophy, some theologians and Church authorities viewed it with suspicion[60]. On the 10th of December 1270, the Bishop of Parish, Stephen Tempier, condemned 13 'errors' taken largely from the teachings of the Paris Arts Faculty. He condemned particularly the teaching which proposed "*quod mundus est eternus*" and "*quod nunquam fuit primus homo*"[61].

---

[57] BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, 27.

[58] GILSON, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 28. Cf. CULLEN, "Bonaventure's Philosophical Method", 127. On the theme of Bonaventure's reading of Aristotle, see also DELIO, "Is creation really good? Bonaventure's position", in *ACPQ*, 83 (2009), p. 5-7.

[59] Cf. H. F. ROBERT-LONGSHORE, "The Word and Mental Words: Bonaventure on Trinitarian Relation and Human Cognition" in *ACPQ*, 85 (2011), p. 100.

[60] Cf. GRANT, *A history of natural philosophy*, 242-243. For a detail study on the history of condemnation, see L. SILEO, "Il concetto culturale del duecento e Bonaventura. La 'riscoperta' di Aristotele, in *DizBon*, p. 48-65 (51-53).

[61] BIANCHI, *L'errore di Aristotle*, 9-11.

The Decree of Tempier was published in *Chartularium universitatis parisiensis*. Again on the 7th of March 1277, under the authority of Pope John the XXII, ordered an investigation of the errors which have been defended in the University of Parish, Tempier condemned a total of 219 theses, in what turned out to be one of the most important doctrinal moves in the history of the later medieval philosophy. One of the key sets of propositions condemned was those concerning the eternity of the world. Number 87 of the Syllabus was a proposition related evidently to the theme. Each of numbers 89, 99, 101, and 205 proposed the necessity to study the argument of the Philosopher on the eternity of the world; the statements that the world is not newly made neither proceed in duration, the infinite number of revolution, and that time is infinite. One might add more articles relevant to the eternity of substance and the heavenly body (31, 32, 72, 80), the eternity of the intelligence (34, 35, 37-41, 44, 45, 51, 60) and the soul (129-131)[62].

2. Between Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas

The setting of this discussion is the early 1250s. During this period Bonaventure and Thomas raised the question on the eternity of the world and discussed it in their *Sentences Commentary*. This section will show that the arguments of Bonaventure and Aquinas would have far reaching consequences.

2.1. Contact between the two Saints

In the 1250's, Bonaventure and Aquinas (1224/25-1274) were both well entrenched within the established tradition of opinions on the eternity of the world. For example, they both agreed that the world was not in fact eternal and that it was heretical to believe otherwise. Both also agreed that Aristotle had discussed the eternity of the world only from the standpoint of physical laws and hence taught nothing contrary to the Christian faith. Bonaventure did not explicitly claim that the

---

[62] Cf. R. CROSS, The Medieval Christian Philosophers, 18-19.

non-eternity of the world could be demonstrated[63]; and Aquinas did not yet hold that an eternal world was an actual possibility.

But there was disagreement between the two men which was of crucial importance, namely whether an eternal world created from nothing implies a contradiction, so that it would have been impossible for God to have made it thus even if he had so chosen[64]. Thomas was powerfully influenced by the views and attitudes of his teacher, Albert the Great, and among this was the very high regard for the philosophy of Aristotle and the conviction that neither the eternity of the world nor its temporal beginning was truly demonstrable, although many strong reasons on behalf of the Christian position could be brought[65]. On the contrary, Bonaventure as his master, Alexander of Hales, affirmed the impossibility of an eternal creation, and it can be demonstrated scientifically[66].

Many studies on the theme show that the two Doctors are recognized in each of their works. Bougerol believes that during the period of Bonaventure's *Commentary on Sentences*, Thomas knew the lecture of Bonaventure[67]. So even though Thomas may not have been responding directly to Bonaventure's opinions, many of his arguments are quite applicable to the Seraphic Doctor's view[68]. Dales writes: "Thomas already knew Bonaventure's treatment of the question in his *Commentary on the Sentences*, and that certain things about it bothered him, most especially that Bonaventure seemed to imply that in his *paradoxes of infinite*, he had devised convincing argument against the eternity of the world"[69].

---

[63] Although this is not the common interpretation of Bonaventure's doctrine, it is convincingly argued by STEVEN E. BALDNER, "St. Bonaventure and the Demonstrability of a Temporal Beginning of the World" - the article indicated above.

[64] Cf. DALES, Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World, 86-87.

[65] Cf. DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 97.

[66] Cf. BONANSEA, "Eternal world in St. Bonaventure", 10.

[67] Cf. BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, 30.

[68] M. WALZ, "Bonaventure's Argument, 95.

[69] Cf. DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 98.

2.2. Thomas's Argument

In his *Commentary* on the second book of *Sentences*, written probably in 1253-1254[70], Thomas delves on the question whether it can be demonstrated that the world is eternal or that the world began to be. Thomas lists three general positions: *First* is the view of the philosophers who hold that certain things in addition to God are eternal (a position which he rejects as false and heretical). *Second* is the view that holds that the world began to exist after having not existed, and that God has not created an eternal world, not because he himself lacks the power, but because an eternal and created world is impossible. *Third*, the view that others hold that everything other than God began to be, but that human reason cannot demonstrate this. Thomas, himself adopts the third position.

Thomas concludes by appealing to Aristotle's statement in the *Topica* that the eternity of the world is one of those difficult questions for which there are only probable arguments and to Maimonides's assertion in the *Dux dubitatum* 1, 17 that one cannot argue from the present condition of the world on the manner it came into being[71]. In sum, for Thomas it is only by faith alone that we can hold, and no demonstration can be shown to prove, that the world did not always exist; he writes:

> "[...] the third position is of those who say that everything aside from God began to be, but nevertheless God could have produced things from eternity, so that the fact that the world began cannot be demonstrated but is held and believed through divine revelation. And this position rests on the opinion of Gregory. [...] And I agree with this position, because I do not believe that a demonstrative reason for

---

[70] For discussion on the issue of eternal world and in Thomas' chronologically subsequent texts, see E. BERTOLA, "Tommaso d'Aquino e il problema dell'eternità del mondo", in *RFNS*, 66 (1974), p. 312-355. For a recent study on Aquinas' view on creation, see JOHN F. WIPPEL, "Aquinas on Creation and Preambles of Faith", in *Thomist*, 78 (2014), p. 1-36.

[71] Cf. DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 99; WIPPEL, "Aquinas on Creation and Preambles of Faith", 6.

this can be devised by us, just as it cannot for Trinity, although it is impossible for Trinity not to exist"[72].

In *Summa theologiae*, Thomas makes clear the distinction between ontological and temporal dimensions of creation. The term *ex nihilo* must be understood in ontological sense, not in temporal priority from *non-esse* to *esse*. According to him creation is the *total dependence* of the universe on God; and this total dependence is not itself a function of the universe having a beginning. To make something from nothing does not mean duration from non-exist to exist, but a precedence of nature. Consequently, the idea of *ex nihilo* implies not the creation after nothing (*post nihilum*), but it simply means that creation does not come from something (*non ex aliquot*); thus not from any preexistent matter[73].

Similarly in *De Potentiae* (1265-1266) – probably written in the same period of the *Summa theologiae* – he defends the argument that there is no logical contradiction in speaking of the beginning-less creation[74]. For him, while creation of the world is demonstrable, creation *ab initio temporis* is a revealed truth which must be believed only by faith, and cannot be an objective of scientific knowledge. Our intellect cannot inquire into the production of the first creatures, because it cannot comprehend that art which alone is the reason these creatures were as they

---

[72] AQUINAS, *Comm. In Sent.* 2, d. 1. q. 1, a. 5, sol. : " […] Tertio positio est dicentum, quod omne quod est praeter Deum, incepit esse, sed tamen Deus potuit res ab aeterno produxisse; ita quod mundum incipisse non potuti demostrati, sed per revelationem divinem esse habitum et creditum. Et haec positio innititur auctoritati Gregorii. […] Et huic positioni consentio: quia non credo, quod a nobis possit sumi ratio demonstrativa ad hoc; sicut nec ad Trinitatem, quamvis Trinitatem non esse sit impossibile"; see S. TOMMASO D'AQUINO, *Commento alle Sentenze di Pietro Lombardo – e testo integrale di Pietro Lombardo*, traduzione di Carmelo Pandolfi e P. Roberto Coggi, Studio Dominicano, Bologna, 2000, p. 62, 64. For English translation, see DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 99).

[73] Cf. *Sum.* 1, q. 46, a. 2 c. (S.TOMMASO D'AQUINO, *La Somma Teologica – La Creazione*. Traduzione e commento a cura dei Domenicani italiani testo latino dell'edizione leonina, Casa editrice Adriano Salani, Firenze, 1972, p. 80-81).

[74] *De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 14. resp. ad obiecta: "Ad octavum dicendum, quod ratio illa non probat nisi quod esse factum, et esse semper, non habeant ad invicem repugnantiam secundum se considerata; unde procedit de possibili absolute" (S. TOMMASO D'AQUINO, *La potenza divina* (a cura di Battista Mondin), Studio Domenicano, Bologna, 2003, p. 395); ST. THOMAS AQUINAS *On Creation*. *Quastiones Disputatae de Potentia Dei Q. 3* (translation and note by S. C. Selner-Wright), The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, 2011, p. 123-130.

are. For Thomas the beginning of the world is an "articulus fidei", which can only be proved by faith (credible), but scientifically it is indemonstrable: "*sola fide tenetur, et demonstrative probari non potest*"[75].

Probably on Christmas of 1270 (early 1271?), Thomas has been involved in a period of dispute with other theologians in Paris, and during this period he wrote *Quodlibet*– sometime before writing *De Aeternitate Mundi*. In *Quodlibet* 12 he proposes the question: "Utrum Deus possit facere infinita in actu", and his answer is "no": "Cum ergo quaeritur utrum sit possible Deo facere aliquid infinitum in actu, dicendum quod non"[76]. Then the Dominican Doctor makes a subtle distinction of two ways from which the divine agent can be repugnant, namely to its potency and its way of acting. Thomas concludes: "Primo modo non repugnant potentiae Dei absolutae, quia *non implicat contradictionem*"[77].

"The best and fullest discussion" Thomas offers on the issue of eternal world is found in *De Aeternitate Mundi* (his last work composed around 1271). In this work, Thomas, "maintains again and in detail that there is no intrinsic repugnance between being created by God and existing from eternity. He concludes that an eternally created world is *not impossible*", in summary, "an eternally created world is possible"[78]. One of the major questions was whether or not an actual infinity was possible. Thomas sustained an *actual infinite*, as he believes that it has not been proven that God could not create an actual infinite: "*Adhuc non est demonstratum quod Deus non possit facere ut sint infinita actu*".

"[Those men who contend against the possibility of an eternal world] bring forth in their defence arguments that the philosophers have touched upon and solved.

---

[75] Cf. BIANCHI in Introduction to BOEZIO DI DACIA, *Sull'eternità del Mondo*, 19-20; BIANCHI, *L'errore di Aristotele*, 121.

[76] *Quodlibet* 12, q. 2. a. 2 [3]. S. TOMASSO D'AQUINO, *Le questioni disputate. Questioni su argomenti vari* (*questiones quodlibetales*). Secondo tomo: Quodlibet 1-6 e 12, traduzione, a cura di P. Roberto Coggi, Studio Domenicano, Bologna, 2003, p. 687-688.

[77] *Quodlibetum*, 12, q. 2 [3], resp., 688.

[78] WIPPEL, "Creation and Preambles of Faith", 9-10; Cf. STEVEN BALDNER, "Albertus Magnus on Creation: Why Philosophically is Inadequate", in *ACPQ*, 1 (2014), p.75.

Among these, a more difficult one deals with an infinite number of souls. But this argument is not the point, for God could have made the world without men and without souls. Moreover, He could have made men at the point when he did make, even if He had made the rest of the whole world from eternity. In this case, after [quitting their] bodies, an infinite number of souls would not remain. And besides, up to now *it has not been demonstrated that God cannot make it be that an actual infinite number of things exist*"[79].

Bonaventure might respond by insisting that this is talking nonsense, as for him being created from nothing is inconsistent with existing from eternity; so the central point of difference between the two saints concerns the "paradox of infinite". In his first *Commentary of Sentences* – and other works as we will see later – after a brave response to the question "*utrum Deus potuerit facere mundum antiqttiorem*", he concludes that "*intelligendum est quod Deus potuit facere tempus ante hoc, et illo facere mundum*"[80]. In contrast, for Thomas, the eternity or non-eternity of the universe must remain an open question to the philosopher: only by faith do we know that it had a beginning in time, as it is entirely up to God's free will[81]. In this line of argument, as we have shown, Thomas believes that there is no logical contradiction when speaking of the beginning-less creation.

2.3. Bonaventure's Methodology

From the above presentation on Aristotle and his Commentators, we consider that all their positions "evidently problematic for monotheistic religions that believe

---

[79] SANCTI THOMAE DE AQUINO, *Opera Omnia*, *De aeternitate mundi*, Editori di San Tommaso, Santa Sabina - Roma, 1976, p. 89: "Addunt etiam rationes pro se, quas etiam philosophi tetigerunt et eas soluerunt, inter qua silla est difficilior que est de infinitate animarum: quia si mundus semper fuit, necesse est modo infinitas animas esse. Sed hec ratio non est ad propositum; quia Deus mundum facere potuit sine hominibus, vel tunc homines facere quando fecit, etia si totum mundum facisset ab eterno: et sic non remaneret post corpora anime infinite. Et pretera non est *adhuc demonstratum quod Deus non posit facere ut sint infinita actu*" (English trans., WALZ, "Bonaventure's Argument", p. 94-95).

[80] *I Sent.*, d. 44. a. 1. q. 4. concl. (I, 789).

[81] Cf. J. MCGINNIS, "The Eternity of the World: Proofs and Problems in Aristotle, Avicenna, and Aquinas", in *ACPQ*, 88 (2014), p. 281; A. MAURER, *Medieval Philosophy.An introduction* (edited by E. Gilson), Pontifical Institute PIMS, Toronto, 1982, p.173-175.

in a created universe"[82]. What then are the available interpretative strategies for a Christian theologian? According to Cross, "one could attempt to read Aristotle charitably, in such a way that he is not read as definitively positing a beginning-less universe, but merely as making a suggestion for dialectical purposes". Then Cross concludes: "In all of his works up to the last one including the prima pars of the *Summa theologiae*, completed by the middle of 1268, Aquinas takes this line"[83].

In the same line as the Aristotelian view, as we will note later, one can alternatively embrace the Aristotelian view about the factual eternity of the world – even recognizing a view incompatible with monotheism. This kind of position is known as "fideism": believing something even when it appears that there are good reasons against the belief. "One way of avoiding fideism on this question", says Cross, "would be to agree that the view is indeed Aristotelian, but to hold too that it can be shown to be false. This was the line followed by Bonaventure"[84]. In addition, one may easily categorize the dialectical position as *double truth*; positions embraced by some scholars, motivated by the view that faith and reason have nothing to do with each other, or are actually hostile to each other[85].

If the above observations are valid, I cannot fathom well the argument of Nieuwhenhove saying that "Bonaventure's theology" – unlike Thomas who respects the integrity of the philosophy as a discipline that pursues truth in valid manner – "origins the separation of faith from reason, theology from philosophy, as it attacks the human natural reason"; accordingly, "suggested the secularism in modern time"[86]. In fact Bonaventure's methodology can be formulated as follows:

"Bonaventure did not consider that reason by itself, although it could be useful, was an adequate instrument for the attainment of truth. Aquinas, on the other hand,

---

[82] Cross, *The Medieval Christian Philosophers*, 11-12

[83] CROSS, *The Medieval Christian Philosophers*, 12

[84] CROSS, *The Medieval Christian Philosophers*, 13.

[85] Cf. A. GISHALBERTI, "La controversia scolastica sulla creazione *ab aeterno*", 227-228

[86] R. VAN NIEUWHENHOVE, "Catholic Theology in the Thirteenth Century and the Origins of Secularism", in *ITQ*, 75 (2010), p. 339-354 (346, 350, 352).

considered that reason, rightly used, was completely competent within its own sphere and that it would never contradict faith, although some articles of faith were above reason and could not be demonstrated. Bonaventure does not confine himself to philosophy in his consideration of the eternity of the world, although he uses it where it seems appropriate. Still, he has no inhibitions about bringing elements from revelation or authority into his account. So, although he never claimed, or indeed implied, that he had strict demonstrations of the non-eternity of the world, he nevertheless felt that he had presented convincing and true discourses"[87].

The above quotation representatively says that, Bonaventure certainly attempts to provide us with a comprehensive and coherent account of the relationship between faith and reason. Indeed, if we place his view on the spectrum of philosophy and theology, we find that he is a moderate thinker. "Bonaventure regards philosophy as a means to wisdom"[88]. This methodology is a method of *perscrutatio* or *penetration*, which is the action of uncovering, searching out, penetrating; the most appropriate theological method for allowing the depth of the mystery to unveil itself without destroying it[89]. According to Hayes, the style leads Bonaventure neither to fideism nor skepticism, but to sound Christian criticism, that is "a wisdom style", as "its major concern is not simply to develop abstract philosophical concepts, distinctions, and proofs about matter […] but rather to deal more concretely with the questions related to the meaning of human life"[90].

---

[87] DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 101-102.

[88] CULLEN, "Bonaventure's Philosophical Method" (J. Hammond et al, eds.), 162.

[89] E. FALQUE, "The Phenomenological Act of *Perscrutatio* in *Proemium* of St. Bonaventure's Commentary on the Sentences", trans., Elisa Mangina, in *Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, 10 (2001), p. 1-2, 9. For more insight on Bonaventure's methodology, see I. DELIO, "Theology, Spirituality and Christ the Center" (Hammond et al., eds.), p. 361-402 (367-370). Delio underlines that this method is related to the method of *reduction* by which all things are returned to God through the light of faith. The very act of creation discloses the depth of divine mystery, which is concealed in the act of being reveled.

[90] HAYES, "Bonaventure of Bagnoregio: a Paradigm for Franciscan Theologians?", in ELISE SAGGAU (ed.), *WTU Symposium Papers 2001*, Saint Bonaventure, NY., 2002, p. 48-49; Cf. HAYES, "Beyond the Prime Mover", 13, 15.

3. Bonaventure on the impossibility of an eternal world

In the context of the debate noted above, Bonaventure writes his *Commentary on the Sentences* (1250-1254) of Pieter Lombard. Just like Christians in his time, he shared the almost universal opinion that it is impossible for anything which was made from nothing to be without a temporal beginning, since if it was made from nothing, it was after it was not, as was defined at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215[91]. In the *Second Commentary on Sentences*[92], Bonaventure placed a much greater importance on the question of the eternity of the world. In this section we present his series of arguments on the impossibility of an eternal world; and we choose to start it with a relevant question from the *First Commentary*.

3.1. Utrum Deus potuerit facere mundum antiquiorem

In his First *Commentary on the Sentences*, Bonaventure treats the old question much debated in antiquity derived from Augustine's *Confessions* XII, 29[93]. The question is whether God could have made the world older than he did, either without a beginning or with an earlier beginning[94]. After summing up the arguments on both sides, Bonaventure responds that this can either mean that the world was

---

[91] "Firmiter credimus et simpliciter confitemur quod unus solus est verus Deus... qui sua omnipotenti virtute simul ab initio temporis utramque de nihilo condidit creaturam, spiritualem et corporalem, angelicam videlicet et mundanam". H. DANZINGER, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, n. 800., Italian-Latin edition, P. HÜNERMANN (ed.), EDB, 2003, Bologna, p. 454.

[92] On the notion of creation, the Second Book of *Commentary on Sentences* has the following questions: II, d. 1, p. 1. a. 1, q. 1: "Utrum res habent principium causale"; II, d. 1, p. 1. a. 1, q. 2: "Utrum mundus productus sit ab aeterno an ex tempore"; II, d. 1, p. 1. a. 2, q. 1: "Utrum res productae sint in esse a plurali bus pincipiis"; II, d. 1, p. 1. a. 2, q. 2: "Utrum Primum Principium produxerit omnia seipso an mediante alio"; II, d. 1, p. 1. a. 3, q. 1: "Utrum creatio mutationem dicat"; II, d. 1, p. 1. a. 3, q. 2: "Utrum creatio dicat medium inter Creatorem et creaturum"; see G. H. TAVARD, "On a Misreading of St. Bonaventure's doctrine on creation", in *The Downside Review*, 217 (1951), p. 278-279. Our treatment on this section focus on the two first questions.

[93] SANT'AGOSTINO, *Le Confessioni*, introduzione, traduzione, note e indici a cura di Carlo Carne, CN., Roma, 1965, p. 442: "Si enim iam formatam velit universum, recte a beo quaeri poterit, si hoc primo fecit Deus, quid fecerit deinceps, et post universitatem non inveniet ac per hoc audiet invitus: Quomodo illud primo, si postea nihil?"

[94] Cf. *Sent.* I, d. 44, a. 1, q. 4 (I, 787).

without a beginning and thus older, or older than it is but by some finite amount. The first of these he disposes of quickly:[95]

> "I believe the first way to be impossible simply speaking because it implies a contradiction. For, because it is posited as being made, it is posited as having a beginning. Whence, this is the same as to ask whether God would have been able to make the world earlier in such a way that the world in having a beginning would not have a beginning. And this includes both parts of contradiction" [96].

Bonaventure then considers the two options as follows: The first option seems to be impossible by simply speaking about it because it implies a contradiction. Being posited as being made implies that it has a beginning. The Franciscan emphasizes that to posit *eternal* for any created reality, therefore, is a contradiction; "esse *creatum* et esse *aeternum* implicat contradictionem"[97].

Similarly, regarding the second option it implies a contradiction, for, according to Bonaventure, in eternity there is not a before and an after. And the time of necessity begins together with the world (*simul cum tempore*), just as location begins together with place, and place begins with the first sphere. That contradiction, according to Bonaventure, arises from a false imagination because we imagine that before the beginning of the world there was duration of time, in which the world could have been made earlier. On a relational view of time, time begins with the first event. And, just as, if we were asked whether the whole world could have been made outside the whole world, or above it or within it, it is a stupid question and it implies opposite things, and it comes from false imagination. But

---

[95] *Sent.* I, d. 44, a. 1, q. 4 concl. (I, 788): "Deus non potuit mundum sic facere antiquiorem, ut sit ab aeterno, nec sic, ut sit sine tempore; bene tamen potuit facere tempus ante hoc et in illo facere mundum". Cf. DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 88.

[96] *Sent.* I, d. 44, a. 1, q. 4 resp. (I, 788ab): "*Primum* credo *impossibile simpliciter*, quoniam implicat in se contradictionem. Ex hoc enim, quod ponitur *fieri*, ponitur habere principium. Ex hoc autem, quod ponitur *aeternus*, ponitur non habere principium. Unde idem est quaerere, utrum Deus potuerit ante mundum facere, quod mundus habendo principium non haberet principium; et hoc includit contradictionis utramque partem"; see translation of DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 88.

[97] A. COCCIA, "De aeternitate mundi apud S. Bonaventuram et recentiores", 282.

this argument amounts to absolutely nothing, because eternity is an utterly simple "now", in which there is absolutely no diversity[98].

3.2.   Utrum res habent principium causale

Whether things have a causal principle? In this question Bonaventure takes up a more basic inquiry as to whether things have a causal principle. Siding himself to the Saints and Philosophers, he starts the question *utrum res habeant principium causale* saying: "Since it is established according to the Saints and philosophers, that all mundane things have a productive principle on account of both the *variety* of things, and of the *mutability* of things"[99]. Quoting *libri de Causis*, Bonaventure describes the existence of the most perfect principle from which whole things are produced, as the Creator inflows into the things produced:

"As much as the one producing is prior and more perfect, so much more He does He inflows (*influit*) into the thing (produced): therefore the First and Most Perfect influences (*influit*) the whole and (inflows) unto the whole; and therefore, with this He produces the whole. But the Prime Agent is of this kind: ergo etc"[100].

For Bonaventure "the noblest agent will need nothing outside of itself"[101]. Acclaiming this principle, he inquires more profoundly, whether things have been *entirely* produced, that is according to (their) material and formal principles, or whether (they have been produced) according to only *one of* (these) principles[102]. In

---

[98] *Sent. I*, d. 44, a. 1, q. 4 resp. (I, 789): "Similiter quantum ad *secundum* sensum videtur *aliquibus* impossibile, quia implicat in se oppositionem, quoniam anterioritas sive antiquitas incipit simul cum tempore. Nam in aeternitate non est *ante* et *post*; et tempus incipit de necessitate simul cum mundo, sicut situs incipit simul cum loco, et locus cum orbe primo". Cf. DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 88-89.

[99] *Sent. II*., d.1, p. 1, q.1, a. 1 (II, 14a): "Cum constet secundum Sanctos et philosophos, quod omnes res mundanae habuerint principium productivum tum propter rerum *varietatem*, tum propter rerum *mutabilitatem*".

[100] *Sent. II*., d.1, p. 1, q.1, a. 1 (II, 14b): "Quanto producens est prius et perfectius, tanto plus influit in rem: ergo primum et perfectissimum influit totum et in totum; et si hoc, ergo totum producit. Sed primum agens est huiusmodi: ergo etc".

[101] *Sent. II*., d.1, p. 1, q.1, a. 1 (II, 14).

[102] *Sent. II*., d.1, p. 1, q.1, a. 1 (II, 14): "Utrum res sint productae *omnino*, hoc est secundum principium materiale et formale, an tantum secundum *alterum* principiorum".

his conclusion on the question, the Franciscan Saint emphasizes that "the world was produced from nothing but from both according to its whole self and according to its intrinsic principles"[103].

Bonaventure briefly delineates four basic positions of early Greek philosophers. We will reassume only some points: First, the Eleatic position that the world is God. However, there is something in this proposition that reason cannot admit, and that is the coexistence of all the forms in the heart of matter at the same time. For that reason this opinion was rejected by subsequent philosophers[104]. The second school is Anaxagoras' position that the world is produced from pre-existing principles (that is, pre-existing matter and form). The next school is the Platonist. According to Platonists the world is to be explained by the concurrence of three equally eternal causes – God, matter, and the idea. First of all matter existed separately and subsisted on itself from all eternity, until the time when God came to associate with it the forms or ideas, which were also separate; in sum, the world is produced from pre-existing matter. Lastly, Aristotle admits that matter has subsisted from all eternity in an imperfect state and that the same form can exist simultaneously in a state of separation and in combination with matter, to admit even that man can exist simultaneously in the three different modes of existence: as a natural man composed of matter and form, as man abstracted and conceived by thought, and as divine man subsisting eternally in the world of ideas. For Aristotle, the world was produces by god, but not from pre-existing principles[105].

Concerning the last position, Bonaventure admits his uncertainty concerning Aristotle's exact solution. Yet, whatever the Aristotelian stance, he does thin it marked a genuine progression toward the truth. "Whether Aristotle posited that form and matter were made from nothing", Bonaventure concludes his short sketch:

---

[103] *Sent. II*., d.1, p. 1, q.1, concl. (II, 16): "Mundus de nihilo est productus et secundum se totum et secundum sua principia intrinseca".
[104] See GILSON, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 168-169.
[105] Cf. GILSON, *The philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 169.

"this I do not know. I believe, however, that he did not arrive at this. And for this reason, even Aristotle himself fell short, though less than the others"[106].

For Bonaventure all things in the world exist non-independently, but from a first being. They are produced from a *primum principium* and they have beginning. On the conclusion of the question, he states that the creature is not a kind of extension of any first version; neither as variation of any other which already exists, but creature exist as being after non-being. The world has been led forth into 'being', and not only according to its whole self, but even according to its intrinsic principles, which have been produced not out of others, but from nothing[107].

Even the Philosopher (Aristotle) had his own logic to explain the beginning of everything, that is to speak, from *potency* to *actus*; but the argument is limited as it never helps to believe in God the Creator. Bonaventure then provides the Sacred Scripture's solution, for he believes that only through God's word are men able to discover the truth about the creation of the world. Philosophers could have never given the correct answer without revelation. Bonaventure relies for this certainty upon both faith and reason. When the philosophical virtue is weak, it must be helped by virtue of faith as written in the Holy Scripture:

> "Where the expertise of philosophers fails, there comes to our aid the Sacrosanct Scripture, which says, that all have been created and produced in 'being' according to everything which they are. And reason too does not discord from the Faith, just as has been shown in the opposing (side) above"[108].

---

[106] *Sent. II.*, d.1, p.1, a.1, q.1. (II,17); Cf. Walz, "Bonaventure's Argument", 78.

[107] *Sent. II.*, d.1, p.1, a.1, q.1 resp. (II, 16): "Dicendum, quod haec veritas est: mundus in esse productus est, et non solum secundum se totum, sed etiam secundum sua intrinseca principia, quae non ex aliis, sed de nihlio sunt producta". Cf. Walz, "Bonaventure's Argument", 78.

[108] *Sent. II.*, d.1, p.1, a.1, q.1 resp. (II,17): "Ubi autem deficit philosophorum peritia, subvenit nobis sacrosancta Scriptura, quae dicit, omnia esse creata et secundum omne quod sunt in esse producta. Et ratio etiam afide non discordat, sicut supra in opponendo ostensum est". Cf. Walz, "Bonaventure's Argument", 78-79.

Balder points out that "the whole force of Bonaventure's *quaestio* on the eternity of the world is simply to make the point that 'being created' and 'being eternal' are privative or mutually exclusive terms"[109]. Hence, the only valid answer concerning the coming-to-be of the world derives from Scripture, not reason. To be sure, although the answer of creation is not reasoned to, it is reasonable. For Bonaventure, the positive answer about the production of the world in existence depends on God's Word, not on philosophical reasoning[110].

3.3. Utrum mundus productus sit ab aeterno, an ex tempore

Having explained the basic concept of creation *ex nihilo*, we now treat the doctrine of temporality and time in Bonaventure. The question asked is whether it is possible to conceive the world or any contingent being in such a way that the duration of its existence, while actually determined here and now, would have had a beginning and would therefore be infinitely distant from the present moment. Deles notes that this issue is "central to the problem of an eternal world, but it was seldom addressed"[111], and Bigi[112] indicates that within this doctrine we can find Bonaventure's rich philosophical-theological intuition from which his fundamental *ratio* of creation is constructed. In the foregoing paragraphs, we will treat the question, showing how Bonaventure's perspective is akin to Augustine[113].

---

[109] Cf. STEPHEN BALDER, "St. Bonaventure on the Temporal Beginning of the World", in *the New Scholasticism* 63 (1989), 206-208.

[110] Cf. *Sent.*, *II*., d. 1, p. a. 1, q.1 (II, 16-17); Cf. Walz, "Bonaventure's Argument", 79.

[111] DALES, *Medieval Discussions on the Eternity of the World*, 11-13.

[112] My treatment on this section is indebted to the profound study of VINCENZO CHERUBINO BIGI, "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo in San Bonaventure" (hereafter "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo"), in *Ant*, 39 (1964), p. 437-488; ID, "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo in San Bonaventure" in *Ant*, 40 (1965), p. 96-151; ID, *Studi sul pensiero di San Bonaventure*, Edizione Porziuncola, Assisi, 1988, p. 154-247; see also: R. FOX, *Time and Eternity in Mid-Thirteenth-Century Thought*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006.

[113] Dales indicates some of Augustine's passages of idea on the subject of an anti eternal world: that the temporal creation does not require a change in God's will (*Conf.* 11, 10; *De civ. Dei* 12, 15); the presentness of God's eternal knowledge (*De civ. Dei* 11, 21); the false imagining of infinites stretches of space and time (*De civ. Dei* 11, 16, cf. 11, 13); that the infinites series of number is knowable to God (*De civ. Dei* 11, 20); and that some aspects of time are subjective (*Conf.* 11, 18-20). Cf. DALES, *Medieval Discussions on the Eternity of the World*, 11, 18-20.

3.3.1. **Temporality and Eternity**

The point we want to present in this section is Bonaventure's consideration of time as *aeternitatis vestigium*; and so, it is the measure of the mutation from non-being to being. Proceeds from the concept of time according to St. Bede, Richard of St. Victor and Augustine, Bonaventure classifies 'time' as one among the first creatures (heaven, earth and the angels), not according to material thing (*secundum rem*) but according to substance. Time is *mensure exitus de non-esse in esse*, but at the same time as one of the things to be measured. "Time was co-created by God with heaven, earth and the angels"[114], therefore, its distinction from created being is only a *minor* distinction. In this context, Bonaventure speaks of *passive* creation, not *active* creation[115]. From this general definition of time, Bonaventure then makes a clear distinction – or better an antithesis – between quality of eternity and quality of temporality (time), or between eternal and temporal being. Each one has essential difference of duration and measure[116]. Created things received their being from God; so being is twofold, namely created and uncreated. The uncreated essence which is unique and cannot be duplicated is first in respect to the created one[117].

> "The divine being is eternal in the sense that it is both simple and infinite. Because it is infinite, it lacks beginning and end; for, if it had either of these, in that respect it would have termination and limitation; and thus it would not have supreme immensity. Therefore, supreme simplicity involves total simultaneity; supreme immensity involves interminability; and when both of these attributes are joined together, they constitute eternity. For eternity is nothing other than the 'simultaneous and total possession of interminable life'. And since these two

---

[114] BIGI, "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo", 97.

[115] Cf. BIGI, "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo", 438-442, 453.

[116] Cf. BIGI, "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo", 442. Note that for Bonaventure, the question of the beginning of all things is subjected to three manners which have starting point of being in time: One manner the temporal is said (to be) that which has a starting-point and variation and an act in time; and in this manner the temporal is said (to be) that which is subjected to time and is corruptible and variable; second, the temporal is said (to be) that which has a starting-point of being in time, but not a variation, such as the soul; and third, the temporal is said (to be) that which has a starting-point in time, but an act outside of time and elevated above time; and in this third manner there is said (to be) a temporal procession and/or donation of grace (Cf. *I Sent*. d. 14. a. 1 q. 1 ad 5 (I, 246b). Our treatment in this section is the third manner.

[117] *I Sent*., d. 27, p. 1, a u. q. 2, ad 3 (I, 47a).

qualities – namely immensity and simplicity – are found together in no other being but God, therefore the quality of eternity cannot be communicated to any being other than God. Furthermore, since these two qualities are beyond our ability to imagine or to appreciate, therefore eternal duration cannot be understood correctly by anyone who does not first lay aside his imagination"[118].

If we are consistent with the model of antithesis presented above, it must be said that our natural category of time cannot be implemented perfectly to God. Bonaventure rightly realizes: "we speak of eternity hesitantly (*balbutimus*) in terms of various moments of time because our mind does not rise up to an understanding of eternal things unless it leads through time as long as we are wayfarers"[119]. Putting into consideration time as the *aeternitatis vestigium*, Bonaventure writes:

"In time, which is the vestige of eternity, present, past and future truly exists in such a way that, what is future later becomes present and then past, because it is rooted in mutable and fluid being, or in movement itself. Therefore, if the present is understood to be rooted in immutable and stable being which has neither beginning or end, that would be understood to be eternal"[120].

---

[118] *Myst. Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1, concl. (V, 89b-90a): "Dicendum, quod divinum esse est aeternum, eo ipso quod simplex et infinitum. Quia enim infinitum est, ideo caret principio et fine; nam si alterum horum haberet, utique ex illa parte haberet terminationem et limitationem, et ita non esset immensitatis summae. Quia vero simplex est, caret priori et posteriori, quae necessario inducunt diversitatem et aliquam compositionem. Summa igitur simplicitas ponit omnimodam simultatem; summa vero immensitas omnimodam interminabilitatem; quae duo simul iuncta constituunt aeternitatem. Nihil enim aliud est aeternitas nisi 'vitae possesio interminabilis et tota simuil'; et quia in nullo alio est simul haec duo reperire, scilicet immensitatem et simplicitatem, nisi solo Deo: ideo aeternitatis conditio non potest communicari alicui alii a Deo. Rursus, quia haec duo sunt supra nostram imaginationem et aestimationem; ideo aeternitatis duratio a nullo sane potest intelligi, nisi omni imaginatione postposita" (English trans., Hayes, 208).

[119] *Myst. Trin.* q. 5 a. 1, resp. ad 5 (V, 91a): […] "balbutimus autem aeternitatem per varia tempora, quia intellectus noster non conscendit ad intelligenda aeterna, nisi manuducatur per tempora, quamdiu sumus in via"; BIGI, "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo", 443.

[120] *Myst. Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1, concl. (V, 90ab): "In tempore vero, quod est aternitatis vestigium, est praesens, praeteritum et futurum, ita quod illud quod fuit futurum postea fit praesens et demum praeteritum, quia radicatur super esse mutabile et fluidum sive super ipsum motum. Si igitur praesens intelligatur radicari super esse immutabile et fixum, quod nec habet initium nec terminum, illud intelligetur aeternum" (English trans., Hayes, 209).

In summary, eternity does have neither principle nor end, as its proper measure is the absolute divine simplicity. There is a difference between temporal and eternity; and this is an essential difference: "*aeternitas enim et tempus sunt diversae mensure per essentiam*"[121]. God is simple in the fullest and most proper sense, since there is nothing prior to him. Though we attribute many different qualities to God, they are not separate and really distinct realities in God, but constitute one undivided divinity[122]. In this sense Bonaventure convinces that the qualities of eternity are *simultaneity* and *interminability*:

"Hence, eternity is defined as total and simultaneous because in it there are no elements which succeed one another, and not because there are various and diverse realities existing simultaneously in it. Therefore, simultaneity refers to nothing other than the supreme, simple, and undivided presence, and this involves no intrinsic diversity"[123].

In contrast to that eternal quality, the temporal measure can be neither simultaneous nor interminable. The ordinary concept of time – as measure of duration and mutation from non-being to being – designates the limitedness of temporal duration. This category explains that the temporal duration is not simultaneous, but successive: it has a passage or mutation from non-being to being (*esse post non esse*)[124]. Eternal being has the qualities of simultaneity and interminability duration, while temporal being has successive and finite duration[125].

---

[121] *III Sent.* d. 8. a. 2 q. 1 ad 6 (III, 193a).

[122] Cf. HAYES, Introduction to *Myst. Trin.*, 84.

[123] *Myst. Trin.* q.5 a. 1, resp. ad 11 (V, 92; Bonav. quoted *De Consol* of Boethius): "unde tota simul dicitur aeternitas, quia in ea nihil alteri prorsus succedit, non propter hoc, quod in ea diversa et varia simul existant. Unde simultas nihil aliud dicit quam praesentialitatem summum et indivisam, et haec nullam dicit diversitatem intinsecam"(English trans., Hayes, 212).

[124] *I Sent.* d. 5, dub. 9 (I, 123b).

[125] *Myst. Trin.* q. 5 a. 1, ad 1. 2 (V, 90b).

As we go on our discussion we will see that, created reality does not come from any pre-existence variable of matter, because it "*habet esse post non esse*"[126].

When we say "God *was* in the past", "God *is* now", and "God *will* in the future", we must consider that the temporal category of our mind is limited. Our temporal format of *was-is-will* is not an exact measure for God, as it functions only in connotative sense. "It must be said that this is not because there is any succession or variation in the divine being, but because of the connotation of coexistence in the past or future; in which there is variation to the extent that the past cannot be said to be future and the future cannot be said to be past"[127].

For Bonaventure, we may say *God was*, because we consider that his duration did not begin; *God is*, because his duration is not interrupted; and *God shall be*, because he does not stop nor is he corruptible[128]. Our category of temporal *nunc* is not univocal, but analogy of the eternal *nunc*[129]. All temporal terminology is to be understood as a type of logical ordering; but God is not subject of time. The immensity of eternity means that what we experience in a time framework as past, present and future is concentrated and compacted into one *now*[130].

3.3.2. Time and Creation

Proceeding from the difference between eternity and temporality, Bonaventure interprets the biblical phrase: "*In principio creavit Deus caelum et terram*" (Gen. 1, 1). The terminology "creature" reveals a relationship to the

---

[126] *I Sent*., d. 8. p. 1, dub. 2 (I, 162): "Nam creatum eo ipso quod creatum, habet esse post non esse, et ita esse vanum et possible; ideo habet esse premixtum cum possibilitate et propter hoc deficit a veritate, a stabilitate et simplicitate".

[127] *Myst. Trin.* q. 5 a. 1, resp. ad 6 (V, 91a): "[…] dicendum, quod hoc non est propter hoc, quod aliqua successio seu variatio sit in esse divino, sed propter connotationem coëxistentiae in tempore praeterito seu futuro, in quo tanta est variatio, ut nec praeteritum possit dici futurum, nec futurum possit dici praeteritum" (English trans., Hayes, 211).

[128] Cf. *I Sent.* d. 8, p. 1 db. 7 (I, 163b-164a); as quoted and paraphrased by BIGI, "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo", 447.

[129] Cf. BIGI, "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo", 447. Here Bigi is referring to *Sent. III* d. 8 a. 2 q. 1 ad 1 (III, 192ab); ad 6 (III, 193ab) .

[130] Cf. HAYES's introduction to *Myst. Trin.* (English trans.), 90.

Creator, that is, to the principle that produces the existence of the creature. For Bonaventure, creation in proper theological-metaphysical sense means production of the whole substance according to all that it is (*totius substantiae secundum totum*)[131]. As a unique and singular production, creation implies not only production of a reality from nothing, but also a *mutation* from non-being to being, meaning not from any material principle or preexisting subject, but the first Being. Something created means all that it has to be was produced by the principle authoring according to its omnipotence will, which is the will of God the Creator. God is the only principium of being, and all creatures have their being from him[132]. This is the fundamental *ratio* of Bonaventure's theology of creation.

Bonaventure then proceeds to make a clear distinction between creation as *passion* (*creatione-passione*), and creation as *action* (*creatione-actione*)[133]. It must be said, therefore, that when Bonaventure speaks of the impossibility of an eternal creation, he does not refer to the act by which God decides to create, or what in scholastic terminology is called *active creation*. Such an act, Bonaventure maintains with all other medieval scholars, must be eternal just as God himself is eternal because of his absolute simplicity and perfection; the act of creation is identical with the divine substance. The question concerns only *passive creation*, or creation perceived from the point of view of the world as the effect of the eternal decree of God that the world exists, not as a direct act from God's hands[134].

Thus, we are speaking of *creatione-passione* in consideration that creation is an act of production *transit extra*; there is a temporal duration between *non-esse* to *esse*, not in the sense of create but co-create. For Bonaventure, "such is the production, which is out of a material principle, in which the one produced, holds

---

[131] *II Sent.*, d. 1, p. 1, a. 2, q. 2 (II, 29): "Quia enim creatio est totius substantiae secundum totum, ideo *decuit* esse solius Dei, nec *potuit* esse alterius sive per alterum, ut probant rationes ad hanc partem inductae".

[132] Cf. L. IMMARRONE, "Creature" in *DizBon*, p. 285.

[133] *I Sent.*, d. 40 a. 1 q.1. fund. 2 (I, 730a); *I Sent.*, d. 1 p. 1 a. 3 q 1 ad 1 (II, 32b).

[134] Cf. BONANSEA, "Eternal World in St. Bonaventure", 11; Cf. BIGI, "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo", 448.

itself in every manner *now* and in no manner before; and such is the production, which is out of nothing" [135].

The creation is a *transit extra* event, as God produces something which actually did not exist before. Creation is production from nothing; it is the moment in which a created being receives its *nunc* (now) – the *nunc* that never existed before. This production from nothing has no reason of motion as it does not presuppose any matter; but it has reason of *mutation*, as it gets the form suddenly. It is produced from another efficient principle. This mutation is not a natural order, but a transition from non-being to being; it is production of a whole substance of thing. Bonaventure calls it "*supernaturalis mutatio*"[136]. In this sense, creation is wholly distinct from any motion one might encounter in the world. Creation presents a prior and supernatural mutation from which the *motus* and its mobile come into existence at once[137]. For Bonaventure, "It must be said, that a movement does not go forth into 'being' *through itself*, nor *in itself*, but *with another* and *in another*. And since God in the same instant made the movable (sphere) and as a mover in-flowed upon the movable (sphere); for that reason movement was created together [concreavit] with the movable"[138].

In a more technical sense, Bonaventure says that created being has its proper *habitudinem* (its proper situation and disposition – or better a synthesis of both)[139]. The proper *habitudinem* of creature is its total and essential dependence in God. It must be said that there is a proper *order* in creation, in which a created being

---

[135] *II Sent*., d. 1, p. 1, a. 3, q. 1 resp. (II, 32a); Cf. BIGI, "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo", 449.

[136] *II Sent*., d. 1, p. 1, a. 3, q. 1 ad 4, 5, 6 (II, 32b).

[137] *II Sent*., d. 1, p. 1. a. 1, q. 2 (II, 19). [Cf. WALZ, "Bonaventure's Argument", 80-81].

[138] *II Sent*., d. 1, p. 1. a. 1, q. 2 (II, 23a): […] "dicendum, quod motus non exit in esse *per se*, nec *in se*, sed *cum alio* et *in alio*. Et quoniam Deus in eodem instanti mobile fecit et ut motor super mobile influxit; ideo motum mobili concreavit".

[139] Cf. BIGI, "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo", 450-451.

receives its nature in a *succession*: a real *mutatio ad esse*. Creation simply marks the first event in time; and this is the *nunc primo esse* of creature[140].

"For (an act of) creation is said to be *from nothing* [de nihilo], nevertheless (an act of) creation is said to be *from God* ; wherefore it means a habitude of itself to '*not being proceeding*' and to *the One producing* its own 'being', from the reckoning of its own name. For 'to be created' does not principally signify '*to be*', but '*to go forth from not-being into being*', and this (is wrought) by something"[141].

Now, one may ask, if time is the first measure and there is no production without measure, from which then is time measured? To put the question in another way: is it possible for our mind to assign a precise initial point of creation?[142] As we have said previously, Bonaventure says that God is before the world by eternity, there is no *nunc* before creation. For him "in the *very production* of time was the first *now*, before which there was no other, which was the beginning of time, in which all (beings) are said to have been produced"[143]. In Bonaventure's view, time is *mensura exitus de non esse in esse*[144], *measure of mutation* from non-being to being. And measure is not substance but *habitude* of creature, or better *habitude concreata* with other creatures. Exactly, since there is no production without measure, therefore time, as the first measure, is at the same time measure and being measured in production. The beginning of time, therefore, is the beginning of mutation. This *nunc primo esse* is an intrinsic nature of creature. In this perspective, Bonaventure followed Augustine's world-view. While Aristotle's analysis indicated

---

[140] Cf. BIGI, "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo", 451.

[141] *II Sent.*, d. 1, p. 1, a. 3, q. 2 resp. (II, 34b): "Creatio enim dicitur *de nihilo* esse, creatio nihilominus dicitur esse *a Deo*; unde *habitudinem* dicit ipsius ad *non esse* praecedens et ad suum esse *producens*, de ratione sui nominis. Creari enim non significat *esse* principaliter, sed *exire de non-esse in esse*, et hoc ab aliquo"; Cf. BIGI, "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo", 451.

[142] That was the theological-metaphysical question, provoking our clear distinction. A physician on the contrary, needs a fixed and chronometric answer of (physical) things and a maximum and stabile answer even for the beginning of space and time.

[143] *II Sent.* d. 1. p. 1. a. 1. q. 2 ad 3 (II, 23a): "[…] in *ipsa productione* temporis fuit *nunc primum*, ante quod non fuit alliud, quod fuit principium temporis, in quo omnia dicentur esse producta"; Cf. FOX, *Time and Eternity*, 28 (footnote 24).

[144] *II. Sent.* d.1. p. 1. dub. 4 (II, 38b).

that time could have neither a beginning nor an end, Augustine had vigorously asserted that time began with the creation[145].

For Bonaventure, the relation between time in creation is understood from the logic of *creatione-passione* (*non-esse*, *mutatio ad esse*, *esse*), that is an extrinsic effect from God in time; not *creatione-azione* (*non-esse*, *esse*), known as intrinsic divine effect. In this aspect, there is difference between Bonaventure and Thomas for while both scholars agree in their understanding of creation as a production of a being from absolute nothing, Aquinas maintains that creation is essentially a relation of total dependence of the creature on its Creator (*non-esse*, *esse*), while Bonaventure holds that, in addition to the creature's dependence on God, creation marks also the beginning of creature existence (*non-esse*, *mutatio ad esse*, *esse*). Bonaventure lays greater emphasis than Aquinas does on the positive aspect of creation as a production from nothing[146]. Based on Augustine's view, Bonaventure considers that the first phrase of Genesis, "*In principio creavit Deus caelum et terram*" reveals the concomitance of measure and being measured, the universe and the earth being *with* time[147]. For the Franciscan, that biblical sentence "does not mean an order, but a concomitance of a measure to the measured, namely that heaven and earth undertook to be *with* the beginning of time". Time is not merely a neutral measure of change, as Aristotle thought. Together with the *caelum empyreum*, the *angelica natura*, and the *materia*, time is included among the four realities which are the first to be created[148].

---

[145] Cf. DALES, *Medieval Discussions on the Eternity of the World*, 256.

[146] See BIGI, "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo", 451-452, footnote n. 3; see also BONANSEA, "Eternal World in St. Bonaventure", 25-27.

[147] *De Civ. Dei*, XI c. 6 : "procul dubio non est mundus factus in tempore, sed cum tempore". (English trans., Vernon J. Bourke (ed.), Image, NY., 2014, p. 189 ; and in *Confession* XII, 29, he writes: "we cannot speak of *before* the creation, because the world and time were created together" (*temporibus simul animadvetitur*). God is *before* the world with respect to eternity, not by the extent of time". For Latin text see Latin-Italian version, translated by Carlo Carena, CN., Roma, 1965, p. 444); an example of study on Augustine's view is KATHERIN A. ROGERS, "St. Augustine on Time and Eternity", in *ACPQ*, 70. 2 (1996), p. 207-223.

[148] *II Sent*. d. 1. p. 1. dub. 2 (II, 37b): […] sed non dicit tunc ordinem; sed concomitantiam mensurae ad mensuratum, scilicet quod caelum et terra cum principio temporis esse coeperunt. Et sic patet illud". Cf. RATZINGER, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, 141-142.

"It must be said, noted, according to St. Augustine, it is different to say, that something is done on account of time [ex tempore], and in time [in tempore], and with time [cum tempore]. For *on account* of [ex] conveys an order, 'in' [in] conveys a continence (an ability to contain), "with" [cum] conveys a togetherness [simultatem]; and for that reason nothing was made in time, nor on account of time, except that which is exceeded by time. Therefore, because time and those, which were created in the first rise of time, are not exceeded by time, for that reason he says, that they have been created *with time*, not *in time*, nor *on account of time*"[149].

When Bonaventure uses the expression 'creation in time' he does not mean that creation took place at a particular moment of time, as though time preceded creation. There was no time when there was no creation, for time, according to then commonly accepted teaching of Aristotle, is the measure of motion in a changeable being. The proper expression for the temporal creation is therefore '*creation with time*', although this expression is not of common usage"[150].

With reference to the con-created creature, time is distinct from created reality not according to category of matter (*secundum rem*), but according to *habitudinem*. Between created substance and time there is only a *minor* difference. The first *nunc* cannot be exceeded, since the principle of time is coexisted (*concreata*) with creature as its first measure. For Bonaventure, if time has began, it began in time and there would follow the absurdity that there was time before time began[151]. At this point, it is emerged with the polemics of the temporal beginning of the world in contrary to the Aristotelian philosophical argument of an eternal world. This consist Bonaventure's position in his paradigm of order of causality[152].

---

[149] *II Sent*. d. 1. p. 1. resp. (II, 69-70): "Dicendum, quod differt dicere, secundum Augustinum, aliquid fieri *ex* tempore, et *in* tempore, et *cum* tempore. *Ex* enim importat ordinem, *in* importat continentiam, *cum* importat simultatem; et ideo nihil est factum *in* tempore, nec *ex* tempore, nisi quod exceditur a tempore. Quia igitur tempus et ea, quae in primordio temporis creata sunt, a tempore non excceduntur, ideo dicit, ea esse creata *cum* tempore, non *in* tempore, nec *ex* tempore"; Cf. BONANSEA, "Eternal World in St. Bonaventure", 22.

[150] Cf. BONANSEA, "Eternal World in St. Bonaventure", 11.

[151] Cf. BIGI, "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo", 453.

[152] See the treatment of BIGI, "La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo", 469-480.

3.3.3. Bonaventure's six arguments

Having seen the objections raised against the view on the eternity of the world, concentrating on the problem of time and duration, we now proceed to the series of arguments in Bonaventure's Christian position. Following are his six arguments contrary to the arguments of the eternal of the world[153].

"*Impossibile est infinito addi*"[154]. The first argument is that it is impossible to add to the infinite, for any addition to it would make the infinite greater, and this is against the very nature of the infinite. Nothing can be greater than the infinite. But if the world is without a beginning, it has existed for an infinite time. Therefore its duration cannot be added to. But this is false, because a revolution is added every day. Therefore the world is not without beginning.

If the world were eternal, there are infinitely many revolutions of the sun. But for every revolution of the sun there are twelve of the moon, and therefore more of the moon than of the sun. But there are infinitely many revolutions of the sun. Therefore, of infinites in the direction in which they are infinite, it is possible to find something greater. But this is impossible, for the infinite number cannot be added[155]. Evidently Bonaventure is speaking of measurement of time as the *real* time, not mere fiction. There have been real events, which took place within real,

---

[153] Cfr. *II Sent*., d. 1. p. 1. a. 1. q. 2. (II, 19-23). The six arguments were presented in various models. Dales and Bonansea present it more descriptive way. Brown and Walz propose to focus on any particular argument, then giving critical interpretation. Brown believes that the third argument runs, while Walz chooses the sixth as the 'main argument'. Each scholar gives space to compare Bonaventure and Thomas. In this study I prefer to read the argument in integral view, so I will feel free in my treatment, but respectful to there contribution. I believe that the sixth argument hinges upon each other, so it is better that they be read in an integral view respecting Bonaventure's metaphysical-theological world-view.

[154] ARISTOTLE, *De caelo*, I, 12, 283 a. 9; Cf. *II Sent*., d. 1. p. 1. a. 1. q. 2 (II, 20); see also RICHARD CROSS, "The eternity of the world and the distinction between creation and conservation", in *RS*, 42 (2006), p. 403.

[155] *II Sent*., d. 1, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2 (II, 21a): "Si dicas quod infinitum est quantum ad praeterita, tamen quantum ad praesens quod nunc est, est finitum actu, et ideo ex ea parte qua finitum est actu, est reperire maius; *contra*, ostenditur quod in praeterito est reperire maius: haec est veritas infallibilis, quod, si mundus est aeternus, revolutiones solis in orbe suo sunt infinitae; rursus, pro una revolutione solis necesse est fuisse duodecim ipsius lunae: ergo plus revoluta est luna quam sol; et sol infinities: ergo infinitorum ex ea parte, qua infinita sunt, est reperire excessum. Hoc autem est impossibile:ergo etc". Cf. DALES, *Medieval Discussions on the Eternity of the World*, 92.

definite periods of time. It is wrong, therefore, to compare the past to the future and make both purely mental constructs[156].

"*Impossibile est infinita ordinari*". The second argument states that it is impossible for infinity of things to be ordered. All order starts from a beginning, passes through a middle point, and reaches an end. Where there is no beginning, there can be no middle term and no end, and hence no order, at least as far as a whole series of events is concerned. But if the duration of the world, and consequently the revolutions of the heavenly bodies were infinite, these revolutions would have no starting point, nor would they follow one another, which is plainly false. There must therefore be a first term in the series of heavenly revolutions and hence a beginning of the world[157].

For Bonaventure a series of causes in which one depends on another for its existence as a cause, is a necessary series. For example the generation of an animal from another animal or of a man from another man is not merely accidental. Indeed, it is so essential that if any member of these series is missing, no final effect is possible. This goes to show why Bonaventure insist, that without a first man there would be no men in existence today[158].

We would simply say that the key term of this argument is *order*. As our discussion proceeds we will see that the production of creature by uncreated being in Bonaventure's view is a hierarchical order according to the will of God: The infinite Being alone can produce being, so all that does not exist of itself cannot

---

[156] Cf. BONANSEA, "Eternal World in St. Bonaventure", 14. Anyone who is familiar with modern mathematics and infinite set theory will immediately question this premise. We must begin by asking whether it is really true that the infinite cannot be added to. But we leave this question for another section.

[157] *II Sent.*, d. 1, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2. (II, 21).

[158] Cf. BONANSEA, "Eternal World in St. Bonaventure", 14-15.

have in itself the infinite power. In creation God gives to each creature according to the exigency of order (*secundum exigentiam ordinis*)[159].

Bonaventure's metaphysics shrinks from supposing a series of causes accidentally ordered, that is to say, without order, without law and with its terms following one another at random. Divine providence must penetrate the universe down to its smallest details; it does not then account only for causal series, but also for those of succession[160]. In addition, the created order is not simply a series of matter in juxtaposition. It is a series that moves to a goal, each reality carries a particular weight in carrying that order to its conclusion.

"*Imposibille est infinita pertransiri*". The third argument is very closely related to the second. This argument taken from Aristotle,[161] asserts that the infinite cannot be traversed. Bonaventure's argument on this is considered the strongest argument"[162] and it runs as follows: if the world had no beginning, there would have been an infinite number of revolutions of the heavenly spheres, and thus the infinite would have been traversed; but the infinite cannot be traversed; therefore, the world cannot be beginning-less. In other words, if the world were eternal, then some days must be infinitely distant from today and that an infinite series must have been actually traversed in order to arrive at today[163].

According to Benjamin Brown, Bonaventure's third argument is very closely related to the second; they are just different versions of the same argument. Therefore he categorizes both of them as "the traversal argument". Brown believes that the "traversal argument is valid", therefore "Bonaventure's conclusion that the world must have a beginning is correct"[164]. When Bonaventure speaks about an

---

[159] *II Sent*., d. 1, p. 2, q. 1 ad 5 (II, 43b).
[160] Cf. E. GILSON, *The philosophy of Bonaventure*, 174.
[161] ARISTOTLE, *Metaph*., X, 10; 1066 a 35.
[162] DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 101; Cf. also BIANCHI, *L'inizio dei Tempi*, 32: "the third argument is incisive one".
[163] Cf. *II Sent*., d. I, p. I, a. I, q. 2 (II, 21).
[164] BROWN, "Bonaventure on the Impossibility of a Beginning-less World", 389-400 (389).

'infinite number' it is clear that he does not mean a real number that is infinite. Rather this is short way for speaking about an infinite set as a whole. An infinite number is not a number, but a numberless multitude. God's knowledge is not limited to any number of objects, but is rather infinite. Even in mathematics, the infinity is a property of the collection as a whole, not of one number: there is no infinitieth number of the set, for infinity is by definition not a number[165].

"*Impossibile est infinita a virtute finite comprhendi*". The fourth argument, which is "not so significant"[166], is based once more on an Aristotelian principle, which assumes that it is impossible for a finite power to be grasped by an infinite, and that the world has never existed without a rational spiritual substance, which would then have comprehended an infinite number of heavenly revolutions and their effects[167].

"*Impossibile est infinita simul esse*". The fifth argument is that it is impossible that infinity of beings exists at one and the same time[168]. As Aristotle says, everything that exists is somehow related to man, the world would never have been without man. Since, however, man has only a temporal existence, there would then have been by now an infinite number of men. We know that for each man there is a rational soul, and that the soul as a spiritual substance is immortal. Consequently, if the world is eternal, just as there would have been an infinite number of men, so there would have been an infinite number of souls, which, because of their incorruptible nature, would all actually exist today. This is against the principle stated above; *impossibile est infinita simul esse*[169].This argument has ethical and psychological consequences, considering the impossibility of a diachronic relationship between history of the world and of the human being[170].

---

[165] Cf. BROWN, "Bonaventure on the Impossibility of a Beginning-less World", 401.
[166] BIANCHI, *L'inizio dei Tempi*, 32.
[167] ARISTOTLE, *Metaph*., II, 4, 999 a 27, in *II Sent*., d. 1, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2 (II, 21).
[168] ARISTOTLE, *Phys*. III, 5; *Metaph*., X, 10; 1066 b 11.
[169] *II Sent*., d. 1, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2 (II, 21).
[170] BIANCHI, *L'inizio dei Tempi*, 33.

"*Impossibile est, quod habet esse post non-esse abere esse aeternum, quoniam his est implicatio contradictionis*"[171]. While the five preceding arguments aim to show the impossibility of an eternal creation from the effect of God's creative act, the sixth and last of Bonaventure's arguments are based on the nature of creation itself. The crux of the matter is to show that it is impossible for something that has its being after its non being to exist from all eternity, since this implies a contradiction. That the world has being after non being is proved by the fact that it is produced by God totally, in a sense, its entire substance, and this can only be possible in terms of a production from nothing[172].

Walz takes this argument as "the main argument"[173] of Bonaventure. For him there are three premises in the argument: 1) It is impossible for what has existence after non-existence to have eternal existence, for here there is the implication of a contradiction. 2) But the world has existence after non existence. 3) Thus, it is impossible for it to have external existence. After an in-depth analysis of the argument, he concludes, "it becomes clear that almost every premise is proven". Obviously, it must be considered that the argument "can be verified only with reference to Scripture"[174]. Bonaventure's argument derives from his dependence on philosophical categories, but it must be verified theologically, from biblical datum.

4. Ratio Creationis

Bonaventure formulates a series of unsolvable logical puzzles that would result if we were to accept that an actual infinite chain of physical events could exist in the real world (and not just in the mind as a theoretical possibility). His fundamental world-view is that the world was produced in time and that an eternity world is not only theologically untrue but also a contradictory. To consider it

---

[171] *II Sent.*, d. 1, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2 (II, 22).
[172] Cf. BONANSEA, "Eternal World in St. Bonaventure", 22.
[173] WALZ, "Bonaventure's Argument", 85; see also CROSS, "The eternity of the world and the distinction between creation and conservation", 405.
[174] WALZ, "Bonaventure's Argument", 86.

profoundly, we will take to consideration his *ratio creationis*[175], considering the paradigm of "order in the created universe (*ordo universitatis*)"[176].

4.1. Creation as divine agent action

The first *ratio creationis* of the Seraphic Doctor is that creation is a production from divine intellect, where Creator God implements his divine idea. This is an intrinsic principle in God's project of creation: "It must be understood, therefore, that this name "*idea*" signifies the Divine Essence in comparison to or in respect to a creature"[177]. That is similar in saying that "in God an idea according to thing is the Divine Truth, according to the reckoning of understanding it is a similitude of the (thing) cognized"[178].

As we delve farther on, Bonaventure's metaphysical logic, we see that the order of the Trinity is reflected in the created universe. Any understanding of the world, therefore, becomes only complete in an understanding of the Trinity, the *lumen intelligendi* of all things. God is the *ordo perfectus*, so the *primum* of all that is. The order intrinsic of the *primum* being is reflected in the intrinsic structure within every creature that follows forth from it. And the final goal of all of creation is to achieve perfect order by sharing in the divine order within God[179].

The doctrine of divine ideas clarifies the relation between God and the world. God might be thought of as an artist. Bonaventure discusses the doctrine by distinguishing between *natural agents* and *rational agents*. Creation is divine action

---

[175] Cf. COCCIA, "De Aeternitate mundi", 283ss.

[176] The thesis was emerged from a profound study of WAYNE HELLMANN, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 85-104 (85-94).

[177] *I Sent.*, d. 35, a. u, q. 3. concl. (I, 608): "[…] nomen idea significant divinam essentiam in comparatione sive in respectu ad creaturam".

[178] *I Sent.*, d. 35, a. u, q. 4. concl. (I, 610): […] "idea in Deo secundum rem est divina veritas, secundum rationem intelligenti est similitudo cogniti".

[179] Cf. HELLMANN, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 85-86.

according to the divine intellect (*agens per intellectum*) independent of any created agent (*agens secundum natura*)[180].

The concept of rational agent is used analogously to speak of God as creator, refers to an agent who produces by means of forms which are not part of the object produced but are ideas in the mind. When used in reference to God, this suggests Ideas in the divine mind that serves as the models (*formae rerum aeternae*) for the objects that the divine creativity produces. For Bonaventure, there is an agent according to *nature*, and according to *intellect*. An agent according to *nature* produces through forms, which are truly of the nature, just as a man (produces) a man, and a donkey a donkey; an agent through *intellect* produces through forms, which are not anything of a thing, but ideas in the mind, just as a craftsman produces a chest; and thus have things been produced, and in this manner there are eternal forms of things, because they are God[181].

This passage verily makes reference to the difference between the Platonic and Aristotelian views on the problem of ideas and the theory of exemplary causality. Aristotle rejected the Platonic view on both issues, and Bonaventure himself was critical of Aristotle precisely on these points. For him there is a *ratio* in the divine mind corresponding to everything that God knows or does.

Taking this into account, then we would say that all creatures exist in the mind of God before they exist in their own right as realities external to God in the created world. Here one finds no difficulty in saying that the divine Word provided

---

[180] Cf. HAYES, in his commentary on *Sc. Chr.* (English trans.), 49.

[181] *II Sent.*, d. 1, p. 1, a. 1, q.1 ad 3 (II, 17): "[…] dicendum, quod est agens secundum *naturam*, et secundum *intellectum*. Agens secundum *naturam* producit per formas, quae sunt vere naturae, sicut homo hominem, et asinus asinum; agens per *intellectum* producit per formas, quae non sunt aliquid rei, sed ideae in mente, sicut artifex producit arcam; et sic productae sunt res, et hoc modo sunt formae rerum aeternae, quia sunt Deus". Cf. COCCIA, "De Aeternitate mundi", 285.

a point at which the world of Platonic Ideas could be introduced to express the relation between God's immanent self-awareness and his knowledge of creation[182].

4.2. Creation as an *order*: esse post non-esse

We have repeatedly said that created things have their being from God, the *Primum* Being. The terminology 'creation' in its strict sense, according to Bonaventure, means the production of all substances according to their existence. This thesis is confirmed by the authority of the Bible and *Credo*[183]. Creation is not only the production of a thing in its totality, that is from no pre-existent principle or element, but that it also involves a *transition*, as it were, from non-being to being, and consequently, the emergence into existence of the new reality[184].

Everything is made out of nothing, where 'out of' cannot be understood as signifying cause or matter, but as indicating an *order*. Therefore *creation ex nihilo* means that something being receives after non-being. As we have said above, in this context, the terminology 'order' is also important. Bonaventure's view of the created universe is also a vision of order. To say *ab alio* properly to the creature means it has "being from the one God" (*esse post Deum unum*)[185].

Bonaventure expresses *order* when he writes that the creature is *esse post Deum unum*, and he brings out another aspect of order when he writes that the creature is also a being from non-being (*esse post non-esse*). Being is twofold, namely created and uncreated. The uncreated essence is first respect to the created.

---

[182] Cf. HAYES, on Commentary on *Works of Saint Bonaventure*. *The reduction on the Art to Theology*, Saint Bonaventure University, NY., p. 19, 25.

[183] *II Sent.*, d.1, p.1. a. 2, q. 2 (II, 29): "Propter hoc dicendum, sicut dicit fides nostra, quod omnia in prima conditione immediate a Deo sunt producta. Quia enim creatio est totius substantiae secundum totum, ideo *decuit* esse solius Dei, nec *potuit* esse alterius sive per alterum, ut probant rationes ad hanc partem inductae".

[184] *III Sent.*, d. 11, a. 2, q. 1, ad 6 (III, 250): "Nam *creatio* dicit actum, qui potest in totam rei substantiam, unde quod creatur *simpliciter* incipit esse; nullam etiam determinatam naturam concernit; dicitur etiam respectu ipsius creantis, et exitum voluntarium importat". Cf. *II Sent.*, d. 1, p. 1. a. 1, q. 1, ad 6 (II, 18).

[185] *I Sent.* d. 8, p. 2, a. u. q. 2, resp. (I, 168 b): "Creatura autem compositae sunt nec vere semplices, […] quia habent esse *aliunde datum*, quia habet esse *post Deum unum*, a quo deficiunt".

The created being differs in essence from the *primum* since the first is unique and can no way be duplicated. The created proceeds from the *primum*, and it is thus from another (*ab alio*). Thus creation from nothing is necessary to preserve order. In other words, *order* demands creation from nothing. In Bonaventure's view, to say *esse post Deum* must also mean *esse post non esse*[186].

The creation must flow in an orderly way. The saint underlines "*omne quod non habet ordinem in universe, non est dicere quod est*"[187]. The eternity of the world, in Bonaventure's view, militated against the order of creation since, without a beginning and end; there could be no true order in creation. For him, *order* requires three terms – a beginning, middle, and an end. Without a beginning, the world would be meaningless because it would have no real relationship with God and, therefore, no God-intended purpose or destiny. Without creator, matter itself would be eternal and; and if matter is eternal, it can reflect nothing of God[188]. Everything is ordered not only *within* creation but also *oriented* toward a final goal (a *telos*): "*Duplex enim est ordo rerum: unus in universo, alter in finem*"[189].

The creation, therefore, is the act of peculiar production, so to speak, not only in sense 'from non-being to being', but also from none material principle or a pre-existent subject. God being form himself alone[190]. The creature existed according to the will of God. Creature never had existed by itself, as it is nothing absolute but comes from an absolute being. The creature exists only because of its total dependent on the will of God. Even God has intention for creatures before they were created. In this case Bonaventure speaks of *passive* creation. Creation is not a direct action from God: "Not so the *creation*, according to which there comes to be

---

[186] Cf. HELLMANN, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 85-88.
[187] F. DELORME, *S. Bonaventurae Collationes in Haexameron et bonaventuriana selecta*, ad Claras Aquas, Florentiae 1934, p. XXII (quoted in POMPEI, "Cosmologia: Scienza a Fede in Bonaventura da Bagnoregio", in *DrSer*, 67 (2000), p. 21).
[188] Cf. DELIO, *A Franciscan View of Creation: Learning to Live in a Sacramental World* (supplement of the FHS Vol. II), Saint Bonaventure, NY., 2003, p. 24-25.
[189] *I Sent*. d. 47, a. u. q. 3, concl. (I, 844a-b).
[190] *De donis*, II, 8 (V, 464).

the whole substance of the thing from Divine Virtue immediately, which (Virtue) creates the thing by willing, that it be for the first (time), when it is not"[191].

Bonaventure knows by faith that there can be no ultimate principle other than God. Contrary to the view of Greek philosophy like in Aristotle who holds the possibility of a beginning-less world, Bonaventure responds by insisting that this is talking nonsense. He thinks that such a view is so clearly opposed to reason that he does not think that any philosopher, even the most stupid, ever held such a view.

> "It has to be said that to maintain that the world is eternal or eternally produced by claiming that all things have been produced out of nothing is entirely against the truth and reason, as the last of the above arguments proves; and it is so against reason that I do not believe that any philosopher, however slight his understanding, has maintained this. For such a position involves an evident contradiction"[192].

4.3. Creation in time and from nothing

One of the most difficult problems in the investigation of the eternity of the world is how to deal with the durational relationships among the categories of eternity and time. If eternity is not involved in time, is simple and unchanging, how can it be related to the temporal, which is created and mobile?[193]

We note that Bonaventure brings forward one of Augustine's most characteristic doctrine concerning the subject time. "God is beyond all time, and all time is present to God[194]. There is no "before" in creation, and that God preceded the world only by nature and not by any duration of time. The creation and time are

---

[191] *II Sent*., d.1, p.1, a. 3, q. 2 ad 1 (II, 35a): "Non sic *creatio*, secundum quam fit tota rei substantia a virtute divina immediate, quae rem creat volendo, eam primo esse, cum non sit".
[192] *II Sent*., d. 1. p.1. a. 1. q. 2., resp. (II, 22ab): "Dicendum, quod ponere, mundum aeternum esse sive aeternaliter productum, ponendo res omnes ex nihilo productas, omnino est contra veritatem et rationem, sicut ultima ratio probat; et adeo contra rationem, ut nullum philosophorum quantumcumque parvi intellectus crediderim hoc posuisse. Hoc enim implicat in se manifestam contradictionem" (English trans., VOLLERT, *The Eternity of the World*, 109).
[193] Cf. DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 117-118.
[194] ROGERS, "St. Augustine on Time and Eternity", 208.

coexistent. It would be wrong to interpret Bonaventure's expression of 'being after non being' (*esse post non-esse*) to mean a sequence in time, as though creation would have taken place at a particular moment of time.

For Bonaventure, to the objection regarding now of time, it must be said that in the very production of time, there has been first 'now' before which there has been no other and which was the beginning of time in which all things are said to have been produced. But with respect to time after it has been made, it is true that it is the terminus of the past and it is in the fashion of a circle. But things have not been produced in this way in a time already complete. Thus it is clear that the Philosopher's arguments do not at all establish this conclusion. With regard to the statement that before every time is time, this is true in terms of dividing time from within, but not in the sense of proceeding as outside time[195].

When the world is said to be made, it means that it has a beginning (*principium*); when it is said to be eternal, it means that it has no beginning[196]. The negation of creation out of nothing, therefore, can be reduced to self-contradiction. Thus, in creation there is succession and time. Just as there can be no infinite regress in the succession of causes, there can be no infinite regress in the succession of moments. Creation must flow in an ordered way, and therefore there must be a first moment. The created being is imperfect and mutable whereas the uncreated is perfect and immutable. Created things are in time and the uncreated is in eternity. The order in eternity is the most perfect: What are past, present, and future in creation is reduced to total simultaneity in eternity, "*tota simul dicit aeternitas*"[197].

In other words, it is impossible that a creature be immense in duration. All creatures are measurable in every aspect and therefore measurable even in time. To

---

[195] *II Sent.*, d. 1, p. 1, a. 1. q. 2 resp. (II, 23a); WALZ, "Bonaventure's Argument", 82; Cf. also DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 95.

[196] *I Sent.*, d. 44, a. 1, q. 4. concl. (I, 788).

[197] *Myst. Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1, ad. 11 (V, 92a). Cf. HELLMANN, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 89-90.

say that the world exists from eternity is a contradiction. Eternity in creation would mean an infinite regress of moments and also an infinite number of human beings. This is irreconcilable with *ordo*, without which nothing can exist. This is the fundamental reason why Bonaventure teaches against the eternity of the world. On the one hand, an infinite creation is incompatible with the ordination of the universe toward God, the *primum*. On the other hand, an infinite number of moments or creatures prevent any order or unity within the universe[198].

In *Breviloquium* Bonaventure writes clearly that the universe was created in time and from nothing by the first principle of being. All creatures were created according to their measure, number, and weight: "[…] the entire world machine was brought into existence in time and from nothing by one First Principle, unique and supreme, whose power, though immeasurable, has arranged all things in measure, number, and weight"[199].

By saying this passage, Bonaventure refuted the errors of those who hold the eternity of the world, of Manicheans, and Neo-Platonic dualistic view:

> "By saying 'in time', we exclude the error of those who posit an eternal world. By asserting 'from nothing', we exclude the error of those who hold the eternity of a material principle. When we say 'by one First Principle', we exclude the error of Manicheans, who posit a plurality of Principles. When we say 'unique and supreme', we exclude the erroneous idea that God produces the lower creatures through the ministry of [created] intelligences. And finally, when we say in measure, number and weight, we indicate that creature is an effect of the creating Trinity by virtue of a three-fold causality: efficient, through which there is in the creature unity, mode, and measure; exemplary, from which the creature derives

---

[198] Cf. HELLMANN, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 90-91.

[199] *Brevil.*, pars. II, cap.1, n.1. (V, 219): "[…] videlicet quod universitas machinae mundialis producta est in esse ex tempore et de nihilo ab uno principio primo, solo et summo; cuius potentia, licet sit immensa, disposuit tamen *onmia in certo pondere*, *numero et mensura*" (English trans., Monti, 59). English translation of *Breviloquium*, see *Works of St. Bonaventure Breviloquium* (Introduction, Translation and Notes by Dominic V. Monti), Franciscan Institute Publications Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2005.

truth, form, and number; and final, from which it is endowed with goodness, order and weight. These, as vestiges of the creator, are found in all creatures, whether corporal, spiritual, or composites of both"[200].

For Bonaventure the existence of the first principle is necessary, so that it might grant rest to other things, and all of them must be led back to the one principle. There can be only one First Principle possessing such rest. And if this Principle produces the world, it must produce it out of nothing. Creation from nothing implies, on the part of creature, a state of being subsequent to non-being; and, on the part of the principle, a limitless productive power which is found in God alone, who acting by limitless power, by itself and without any intermediary[201].

Reassessing the argument, we would say that the whole strength of Bonaventure's argument against an eternal world is simply to stress the point that 'created being' and 'being eternal' are mutually exclusive terms. On one side, he applies very well the philosophical approach, but on other side his dependence on revelation is rather clear. The positive answer about the production of the world in existence depends on the Divine Word, not on philosophical reasoning. In this view the most that Bonaventure claims for reason is that it does not contradict faith. God is eternal but the creature is contingent, and another eternal being is impossible.

---

[200] *Brevil.*, pars. II, c. 1, n. 2 (V, 219): "Haec generaliter intelligenda sunt circa rerum productionem, ex quibus veritas colligitur, et error repudiatur. Per hoc enim, quod dicitur ex tempore, excluditur error ponentium mundum aeternum. Per hoc, quod dicitur de nihilo, excluditur error ponentium aeternum circa principium materiale. Per hoc, quod dicitur ab uno principio, excluditur error Manichaeorum ponentium pluralitatem principiorum. Per hoc, quod dicitur solo et summo, excluditur error ponentium, Deum produxisse inferiores creaturas per ministerium inlelligentiarum. Per hoc autem, quod additur *in certo pondere*, *numero et mensura*, ostenditur, quod creatura est efectus Trinitatis creantis sub triplici genere causalitatis: efficientis, a quo est in creatura unitas, modus et mensura; exemplaris, a quo est in creatura veritas, species et numerus; finalis, a quo est in creatura bonitas, ordo et pondus. Quae quidem reperiuntur in omnibus creaturis tanquam vestigium Creatoris, sive corporalibus, sive spiritualibus, sive ex utrisque compositis" (English trans., Monti, 60-61).
[201] Cf. *Brevil.*, pars. II, c. 1, n. 3 (V, 219).

5. Paradox of Infinity

The *ratio creationis* sustains that if a thing is created it must be placed out of an eternal horizon. Bonaventure recognizes acutely the contradiction in terms of "eternal creature", "an eternal world created *ex nihilo*", or "a temporal world without first moment". In fact, speaking on the difference between Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas, at least according to some contemporary scholars, this is not the last deal of the controversy. Precisely from here emerges another discussion.

We will take a brief consideration to this *lacuna* before proceeding to Bonaventure's thought. From various studies on the present theme, as we have seen, there emerged different sensibilities and interpretations, particularly the disagreement between Bonaventure and Thomas. In a certain sense, those who disagree with *ratio creationis* of Bonaventure, are favorable with Thomas' philosophical argument – as long as the Dominican Saint defended that there is no proof to say that *being created and being eternal imply an absurdity*; and accordingly, it is not necessary to neglect the existence of an actual infinite[202].

5.1. Theological-Historical sensibility

The study of Bonansea[203] on the present theme brings forward Bonaventure's fundamental intuition on the paradox of an actual infinite. He observes that – in this case he agrees with Steenberghen[204] – although Bonaventure's arguments do not have exactly the same value today, still their basic reasoning is sound; it shows clearly the absurd consequences that would follow if the notion of an eternal world were accepted. Such reason has convinced that in quantitative order, the infinite is the ideal limit toward which an indefinite series of additional units tends but which will never reach, since in the real order it is impossible to have an actual infinite.

---

[202] Cf. WALZ, "Bonaventure's Argument", 95.
[203] Cf. BONANSEA, "Eternal World in St. Bonaventure", 27-30.
[204] Cf. VAN STEENBERGHEN, "Saint Bonaventure contre l'éternité du monde", 273.

Bonansea underlines also some contributions on previous studies from which my treatment on this study is indebted. For example, the treatment of Bonaventure's notion of creation and time by Father Bigi is a solid and profound study[205]. Bigi's treatment was not a real tendency of polemics; therefore the theme of fundamental difference between Bonaventure and Thomas on the subject enough was indicated but not extensive. The similar tendency emerged in Gilson's study; his treatment of the theory of creation is confined to an objective presentation of Bonaventure's thought with no attempt to critically evaluate it.

From many aspects which we have seen, the issue of paradox of an actual infinity is more interesting. Bonaventure argues that producing an actually infinite effect would violate both the nature of God and the nature of creature"[206]. To the question "Can divine power produce an actually infinite effect?"[207], he writes:

"It seems that God cannot produce an effect infinite in intensity, because absolutely nothing is greater than the infinite. If God were to produce an infinite effect, then nothing would be greater than that effect. Therefore, God would not be greater. If part of God's supreme nobility is that nothing can be equal to him, then producing such an effect is contrary to the nobility of divine power. Therefore, etc"[208].

Then concluding the treatment on the question of actual infinite, Bonaventure compares between two kinds of infinite: the actually infinite and the potentially infinite (*scilicet in actu et in potentia*). For him, the potentially infinite God can produce, and does produce. On the contrary the actually infinite, God cannot produce, and does not produce. Then the Saint explains as follows:

---

[205] Cf. VAN STEENBERGHEN, "Saint Bonaventure contre l'éternité du monde", 265.

[206] HOUSER and NOONE, *Commentary on the Sentences*, 272 (footnote n. 30).

[207] *I Sent*., d. 43., a. u, q. 3 (I, 771)

[208] *I Sent*., d. 43., a. u, q. 3. concl. (I, 771b): "Quod non posit in effectum *intensione* infinitum, videtur quia infinito simpliciter nihil est maius: ergo si producit effectum infinitum, tunc ergo illo nihil: ergo Deus non est maior. Si ergo hoc est summae nobilitatis in Deo, quod nihil posit ei, aequari possit, producere talem effectum est contra nobilitatem divinae potentiae: ergo etc" (English trans., HOUSER and NOONE, *Commentary on the Sentences*, 262).

"God cannot produce an actual infinite, because that would be inconsistent with the nature of God and the nature of creature. It would be inconsistent with the nature of God: Since God is good in the highest degree; he cannot produce anything unless it is good. Consequently, he cannot produce anything unless it is ordered to him-self. Now order presupposes number, and number presupposes measure, since only things subject to number are ordered to something else, and they are not subject to number unless limited. Therefore, it is necessary that God produces all thing with 'number, weight and measure' (Wis 11: 21). God is not able to do otherwise, nor is he able to produce something actually infinite, or an actually infinite number of things. There is also a reason why this would be completely inconsistent with the nature of a creature. For the actually infinite must be pure act; otherwise, if it had any limit or constraint it would be finite. But what is pure act is essentially its own being (*suum esse per essentiam*), and this kind of thing does not receive its being from some other essence or from nothing. Therefore, if a creature, considered as creature, is from elsewhere (*aliunde est*), and is from nothing, in no way can it be pure act, and in no way can it be infinite"[209].

This shows that Bonaventure rejected an eternal creature as he thought it is an absurd hypothesis: "*impossibile simpliciter*, *quoniam implicat in se contradictionem*"[210]. On the Thomistic view, the answer of the question "whether divine power produces an actually infinite effect?" will be positive, as there is no

---

[209] *I Sent*., d. 43. a. u, q. 3 concl. (I, 772ab): "Infinitum in *potentia* Deus *potest* facere et facit; infinitum in *actu* non potest *facere* nec facit. Non potest, inquam, facere, quia nec convenit *sibi*, nec convenit *creaturae*. *Sibi* non convenit: cum enim summe bonus sit, non potest aliquid facere nisi bonum, et ita non potest facere nisi rem ad se ordinatam. Quoniam igitur *ordo* praesupponit *numerum*, et *numerus* praesupponit *mensuram*, quia non ordinantur ad aliud nisi numerata, et non numerantur nisi limitata; ideo necesse fuit, Deum facere omnia in *numero*, *pondere* et *mensura* (Sap. 11, 21), nec aliter facere potuit nec potest nec infinitum, nec infinita in actu. Ratio est etiam, quia hoc nullo modo convenit *creaturae*. Infinitum enim in *actu* est actus purus, alioquin, si aliquid haberet de limitatione et arctatione, esset finitum; sed quod est actus purus, est *suum esse* per essentiam, et nihil tale accipit esse ab alia essentia nec ex nihilo. Si igitur creatura, eo ipso quod creatura, aliunde est et ex nihilo, nullo modo potest esse actus purus, nullo modo potest esse infinita" (Eng. trans., HOUSER and NOONE, *Commentary on the Sentences* 263)*.

[210] *I Sent*., d. 43., a. u., q. 3. concl. (I, 778).

contradiction affirming the possibility of an actual infinite. But the consequence of the position is contradictive from the perspective of divine perfection[211].

According to Bertola, Aquinas himself was never really convinced that this is vague[212]. Considering the complicated academic conflict at University of Paris, sometime in 1269-1271 – the period when Thomas composed *De aeternitate mundi*, and the period when John of Peckham as regent professor in Parish – Bertola observes that "Thomas's position was clear, but surrounded by a suspicious and doctrinally conservative atmosphere, it would also appear *ambiguous*"[213].

5.2. Philosophical Sensibility

The study of Walz deals with a modern set of language theory. As indicated, he discovered that Bonaventure's sixth argument is strong, but Walz was not thoroughly satisfied, as he finds another option from Thomas's position. He makes a distinction of three possibilities on the problem of eternity of the world: a world created in time out of nothing (Bonaventure), an eternal matter position (Aristotle-Averroes), and an eternal world created out of nothing (Thomas). Then he adds that "this last option was absent from St. Bonaventure's account since, in his view, being created entails a finite past. By striking out this feature from natural reason's grasp of the *ratio creaturae*, St. Thomas confers on philosophy the ability to arrive at the genuine possibility of a beginningless world created out of nothing"[214].

---

[211] GISHALBERTI, "La controversia scolastica sulla creazione *ab aeterno*", 227: "Volendo trascrivere la posizione con termini nostri, la conclusione è questa: l'incidenza di una creazione infinita nell'atto creativo non è possibile dal punto di vista delle perfezioni divina: un infinito in atto è contro la potenza di Dio".

[212] Cf. GISHALBERTI, "La controversia scolastica sulla creazione *ab aeterno*", 224: "Ci pare che l'unica conclusione, nell'ambito del pensare tomista, sia quella che tiene per valida in ogni caso l'affermazione del *De aeternitate mundi*, sulla non impossibilità per S. Tommaso dell'esistenza di un infinito in atto. Lo stesso S. Tommaso non doveva essere pienamente convinto del suo argomentare contro tale possibilità, proprio perché non ebbe mai il coraggio di escludere perentoriamente la tesi dell'infinita durata del mondo". 228-229: "[…] la conclusione dell'indagine afferma allora che tutta la controversia è una pseudo questione, una discussione complicata nata da malintesi […] frutto di un'esigenza immaginativa piuttosto che teoretica".

[213] BERTOLA, "Tommaso d'Aquino e il problema dell'eternità del mondo", 344.

[214] WALZ, "Bonaventure's Argument", 93-94

In this case Walz considers that Thomas "upholds the Christian doctrine of creation out of nothing in time", but he also favors his philosophical speculation: Thomas, according to him, "shifts the debate by not having to refer to Revelation in order to find a wholly plausible answer […] St. Thomas recognizes that coherent positive answers to the eternal world question can be found in philosophy, even if philosophy cannot provide a definitive solution"[215]. From a scientific methodological perspective this opens a hermeneutic for the intellectual freedom in scientific research[216]. But on the other side, from that position emerges the precise questions: Does the actual infinite really exist? If the actual infinite is real, is it possible that God created an actual infinite number of things? Or is such an idea absurd as it implies contradictions?[217] If this is understood as a meaning that something beside God could have always existed, "this view is abominable not only in faith but also among the philosophers"[218]. If God creates the infinite, doesn't it mean that God is less omnipotent as the Creator and, being so, could not be consistently perfect in his divine project, being comported by any creature?[219]

Saint Bonaventure supposes that the absurdity is self-evident. His answer is negative, as this is contradictive. Considering the contradiction, Walz says that, "the basic argument that the Thomist must face, then, seems to be this: there cannot be an infinite number of things because each unit in the group is countable and thus the entire group is countable"[220]. But the debate does not end. As we have seen above, Walz observes that Thomas, with no doubt saw the difficulty of conceiving an actual infinite, yet he astutely realized the important fact that inconceivability by a

---

[215] WALZ, "Bonaventure's Argument", 94.
[216] Cf. GISHALBERTI, "La controversia scolastica sulla creazione *ab aeterno*", 227. GISHALBERTI, "La creazione nella filosofia di S. Tommaso d'Aquino", in *RFNS*, 61 (1969), p. 203: "Noi incontriamo il discorso di S. Tommaso nel momento idealmente più bello per la libertà della ricerca: S. Tommaso lascia impregiudicato il dogma e discute la creazione in tutte le sue implicazione, sin dove la ragione può arrivare per conto suo".
[217] Cf. WALZ, "Bonaventure's Argument", 95.
[218] DALES, *Medieval discussion of the eternity of the world*, 133.
[219] Cf. GISHALBERTI, "La controversia scolastica sulla creazione *ab aeterno*", 225.
[220] WALZ, "Bonaventure's Argument", 96.

mere human mind does not entail internal coherence[221]. In this line of argument, Walz indicates that the modern set theory promoted by German mathematician Georg Cantor (1845-1918), takes off exactly at his point. Among other things, Cantor discovered that there are species of infinite sets, just as there are species of finite number. The basic idea is that an infinite set can be added to, but will remain numerically the same (We will go back to this point later).

Then Walz observes also that Bonaventure's first and second Argument (*impossibile est infinito addi*, and *impossibile es infinito ordinari*) have some defects. In accordance with modern set theory he believes that there is no doubt of the correspondence between the way an actual infinity would work mathematically and in the real world. Based on this theory Walz believes that the existence of actual finite is real; and that actual infinite sets as a genuine possibility is real. The fundamental disagreement with Bonaventure is that, Thomas "at the very least, realized that man's inability to grasp an actual infinite entails neither its internal incoherence nor its impossibility […]. Thus, it seems that St. Bonaventure's position needs a correction from the Angelic Doctor"[222]. Based on this point, Walz concludes that Bonaventure spelling out the more traditional position, one that focuses on the limited nature of the creatures as a temporal being. On the other hand, Thomas's metaphysics conceives of a wholly-transcendent yet intimate Creator, whose possibilities far surpass what one can ever imagine.

5.3. Excursus: Cantor's letters to Ignatius Jeiler OFM

Speaking of Cantor's theory on infinite number in mathematics, we need to note that around the 1800s there has been correspondence between Georg Cantor and Friar Ignatius Jeiler OFM, who at that period was the second Director of the College of St. Bonaventure in Quaracchi (near Florence, Italy) and the main editor

---

[221] Cf. WALZ, "Bonaventure's Argument", 96.
[222] WALZ, "Bonaventure's Argument", 97-98.

of the *Opera Omnia's* critical edition. Cantor addresses him to share his personal opinion as a mathematician and wants to find out more about Bonaventure[223].

In connection with the present study, particularly the question of the infinite number, the most significant point that emerged from this exchange of letters is that Cantor explains his notion on *transfinitum*[224] in order to resolve some doubts of it and to demonstrate its relevance to Bonaventure's argument, contained in certain volumes of the *Opera Omnia* edited by Quaracchi editors, which Cantor has read. In a section of one of his letters, Cantor argues the notion of *transfinitum* in mathematical logic considering it as *finitum* in divine idea. He defences it saying, "Such *transfinitum*, both in practice as well as in the abstract sense, is not a contradiction idea, but a possibility and can be created by God as *finitum*". The mathematician explains that "in particular there are transfinite cardinal numbers, as well as types of transfinite order, which have a mathematical logic explored by man as the shapes with finite numbers". Saying this Cantor sustains that "All these particular ways of transfinite exist as eternal divine ideas in *intellectu divino*".

To make clear his opinion on the nature and attributes of *transfinitum*, Cantor further explains: "Like in the field of the finite, there is no maximum, so in *transfinitum* there is no manner that could not be embraced by other transfinites to whom it acts as *part of*". Then to make sure of the conformity to Bonaventure's doctrine, he addresses Jeiler, the friar, saying: "If you express this fact as well, saying 'every *transifinitum* is in potentiality to another and as such is a potential', then I have no reason to object to your opinion, because only God is *actus purus*".

Furthermore Cantor writes: "Nevertheless, the *transfinitum* cannot be considered a subsection of what is usually called 'potential infinite'. Since the

---

[223] In *Archivio Storico Generale OFM* (collocation: SM 1347, SQ 5, 3), there is a series handwriting letters sent by Giorg Cantor to Friar Ignatius Jeiler OFM: on 27 September 1887, 8 June 1888, 13 and 27 October 1895. The Archive is in the General house of the Order of Friars Minor in Rome, Italy (www.ofm.org).
[224] We refer particularly to the letter written in Halle 13 October 1895.

ultimum is not determined in a fixed and unchanging self (as every individual *transfinitum* and more generally anything that corresponds to a divine idea), but something done in a state of mutation of one in its current state has a finite size; for example the duration of time passed from the beginning of the world, which, in relation to any period, for example a year is over at any time, but grows above all final limits without actually becoming infinitely large". One of Cantor's letters concludes with more possibilities of future dialogue. He writes: "Perhaps these considerations help to remove the last doubts against *transfinitum*, not only for you but also for others who are interested in the question of *infinitum*. Yet, if some arise, I am gladly willing to clarify any questions on this subject".

6. William Craig[225] on Kālam Argument

From the preceding section it emerged that the question of the eternity of the world cuts across many disciplines: philosophy, mathematics, and physical science. This middle Ages issue involved a number of subordinate questions, which were often debated independently. For example, the questions whether the infinite can be added to, traversed, ordered, or exist in act[226]. For our purposes we will deal with Craig's argument in contraposition with the argument of actual infinite.

6.1. Not only logical but a real issue

The Kālam argument, derived from Muslim thought on the cosmological argument, was divided into two schools, each of which contributed one of the proofs: *kālam*, from which developed various forms of the argument from temporal regress, and *falsafa*, from which originated the argument from contingency, from possible and necessary being. Kālam may be simply defined as 'natural theology', while falsafa is the Arabic word used to denote philosophy. Ultimately kālam became the name of the whole movement within Arabic thought that might best be

---

[225] Cf. CRAIG, *The Kālam cosmological argument*, WIPF & STOCK, ix. Craig is research professor, particularly analytic philosophy and philosophy and religion. Actually is professor at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California. For more actual information and publication, see www.reasonable.org.

[226] Cf. DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, 254.

called Arabic scholasticism[227]. For argument of the study, I will not delve in detail on the theory, neither attempt to resolve the technical problem in the present discussion. I simply wish to highlight that Bonaventure's argument emerged in the thought of a contemporary scholar like Craig, who appeals to the big bang theory, and other scientific evidence, in his version of argument. In reality we are going to see how Craig interprets the set theory from the kālam perspective.

The central point of the argument is whether the temporal series of past events could be actually infinite. Proponents of the kālam argument contended that it could not and that the universe therefore had an absolute beginning; but since the universe could not have sprung into existence uncaused out of nothing, there must exist a Creator of the universe, or God. And as was introduced by Craig, "the kālam argument for the beginning of the universe became a subject of heated debate, being opposed by Aquinas, but adopted and supported by Bonaventure"[228]. Interpreting the *set theory* of Cantor (the mathematician mentioned above), Craig argues that although the infinite concept is useful in mathematics and set theory, these are *potential* infinites, *not actual* infinites; this crucial distinction, according to him, is often neglected by defenders of actual infinity. Below I inserted some points of the argument deemed relevant for the purpose of the study:

Modern theory, as legacy of Cantor, is thus exclusively concerned with the actual as opposed to the potential infinity. Cantor called the potential infinity a 'variable finite' and attached the sign ∞ to it; this signified that it was an 'improper infinite', and assigned the symbol $\aleph_0$ (aleph zero) to it. This represented the number of all the numbers in the series 1, 2, 3, …. And was the first infinite or transfinite number, coming after all the infinite numbers. A collection or set is infinite when a part of it is equivalent to the whole[229].

---

[227] Cf. CRAIG, *The Kālam cosmological argument*, 4. This argument is the classic argument for the existence of God in Islam, might have radix on the thought of great Muslim philosopher like al-Ghāzali, whose philosophical theism marks a high point of *kālam*. The argument even came from pre-Islamic era, namely, the Alexandrian commentator and Christian theologian John Philiponus (d. 580?), known in the Arab world as Yahyā al-Nahwī (Cf. p. 6-8).

[228] Cf. CRAIG, *The Kālam cosmological argument*, 18. Craig is speaking about the six argument of Bonaventure against an eternal world; see footnote no. 59, p. 55.

[229] Cf. CRAIG, *The Kālam cosmological argument*, 67.

Mathematicians have adopted the symbol $\aleph_0$ as the cardinal number of a denumerable infinite set and ω as its ordinal number. The purely theoretical nature of the actual infinite becomes clear when one begins to perform arithmetic calculations with infinite numbers. For example, ω is the ordinal number of the natural number series $(1, 2, 3, …)$. But suppose we add one to this series: $(1, 2, 3….1)$. Now the ordinal number of such a set is $\omega + 1$. And we can begin counting all over again $\omega + 1$, $\omega + 2$, $\omega + 3$, …..up to $\omega + \omega$ or $\omega.2$. This would be the ordinal of the set $(1, 2, 3, …., 1, 2, 3,….)$. But again, suppose we add one. Then we have $(\omega.2.) + 1$, and this can continue up to $(\omega.2.) + \omega$ or $\omega.3$, and this can go on until we reach $\omega.\omega$ or ω^2. This could be the ordinal of an infinite series of infinites. But although the mind boggles at such a concept, we may yet proceed and add one more: ω^2+1. Finally we will reach $\omega^2+ \omega$. But suppose we continue to add more: $\omega^2+ (\omega + 1)$, $\omega^2+ (\omega + 2)$, $\omega^2+ (\omega + 3)$, …. $\omega^2+ (\omega + \omega) = \omega^2 + \omega.2$. On and on…..…$\omega^3$… ω^4……. ω^ω $\omega^{\omega\omega}$, $\omega^{\omega..\omega}$, ….. .The sequent to this sequence is usually denoted by ε_0. Accordingly, ω^{ε_0} is the sequent of the sequence $(\omega.. \omega^\omega, \omega^{\omega\omega},....)$.

But if this leaves the mind reeling, the knock-out blow is yet to come. For all of the ordinals mentioned above belong to denumerable sets, sets whose cardinal number is $\aleph_0$. Any of these sets may be placed into one-to-one correspondence with the natural numbers, and so they have the same cardinal $\aleph_0$. Since each $\aleph_0$ set has $\aleph_0$ members, this serves to bring out the fact that $\aleph_0 + \aleph_0 = \aleph_0$, but $\omega + \omega \neq \omega$. […] Hence, no matter how many infinites of ω order type one may have, the number of elements in the totality is $\aleph_0$, for $\aleph_0 + \aleph_0 + \aleph_0 = \cdots \aleph_0$[230].

Looking back to the first argument of Bonaventure ("it is impossible for the infinite to be added") we can ask if it is really true that the infinite cannot be added. With the *set theory*, one can easily find that the argument has a defect. But on the other hand, it must be considered that while this system may be consistent within the mathematical world from which it springs, it is questionable whether it can describe anything actually existing. To say it explicitly, "this analysis of the actual infinity says nothing about whether an actual infinite can exist *in reality*"[231]. In this consideration, it can be said that in Bonaventure's arguments there are limits, but at the same time "these argument are hard to refute"[232].

[230] CRAIG, *The Kālam cosmological argument*, 75-76.
[231] CRAIG, *The Kālam cosmological argument*, 71.
[232] Cross, *The Medieval Christian Philosophers*, 14-15.

As emerged from the interpretation of Craig, it is to be considered the temptation to treat $\aleph_0$, $\aleph_1$, $\aleph_2$, …., like the series of finite numbers all over again, since the finite human mind cannot even begin to conceive of such magnitudes. Then he considered that "while such a system may be perfectly consistent in the mathematical realm, given its axioms and conventions, I think that it is intuitively obvious that such a system could not possible exist in reality"[233]. The infinity might be an important variable in mathematics or a model of expression to express the limit approach of our ordinary language, but it is far from actual world. Craig writes: "While the actual infinite may be a fruitful and consistent concept in the mathematical realm, it cannot be translated from the mathematical world into the real world, for this would involve counter-intuitive absurdities"[234].

> "The only legitimate sense in which one can speak of the infinite is in terms of potentiality: something may be infinitely divisible or susceptible to infinite addition, but this type of infinity is potential only and can never be fully actualized. For example, space is never actually infinite, but it is infinitely divisible in that one can continue indefinitely to divide spaces. Again number is never actually infinite, but it may be increased without limit. And time is susceptible to both infinite division and infinite increase. But while the processes of division and addition may be proceeding indefinitely, they never arrive at infinity: space and time are never actually infinitely divided, and number and time are never completed wholes"[235].

Why is it impossible to form an actual infinite by successive addition? "The reason is that for every element one ads, one can always add one more. Therefore, one can never arrive at infinity […]. A potential infinite cannot be turned into an actual infinite by any amount of successive addition[236].

[233] CRAIG, *The Kālam cosmological argument*, 82.
[234] CRAIG, *The Kālam cosmological argument*, 69-70.
[235] CRAIG, *The Kālam cosmological argument*, 65-66.
[236] CRAIG, *The Kālam cosmological argument*, 104.

6.2. Cosmological question

As well as appealing to logic to support his case Craig also appeals to the scientific research, especially the big bang theory. From observations and calculations about the expanding universe can be deduced that there must have been a time in the past when the big bang took place or in which the universe was born and in which there was an explosion that started expansion. Although it is fair to say that the big bang theory has not been fully established in its details, it nevertheless has supplanted the rival theory that preceded it, specifically that the universe is stationary. That is precisely what scientists tell us about the beginning and the structure of the universe. But what about it's ultimate origin? What caused the big bang itself to happen? This is a question that seems to be outside of science, and one that philosophers have been thinking about for centuries[237].

Speaking of the theory, the more particular question is how the first atoms were formed in the aftermath of big bang? We can give what philosophers sometimes call the local cause as the answer. This is the answer scientists would give, whereby the atoms were formed because the early matter had cooled enough so that the nuclei of atoms could capture electrons, aided by the strong nuclear force, and so forth. But the philosopher wants to know the ultimate cause of the first atoms, how atom got here in the first place[238]. This is a much more puzzling question, of course, yet it is a perfectly reasonable question to ask about the process that led to the beginning of the universe. In fact, we are invoking a chain of physical cause antecedents to explain the existence of atoms. But how did this chain of causes get started or where did it come from? There are two possible answers to this question: the chain either has a beginning in time, or it goes on forever backwards into the past, which would mean that the universe has an infinite past.

---

[237] STOEGER, "The Big Bang, quantum cosmology and creation ex nihilo", in DAVID B. et all (eds.), *Creation and the God of Abraham*, Cambridge Univ., Cambridge, 2010, p. 155-157.
[238] Cf. B. SWEETMAN, *Religion and Science*: *An Introduction*, 175.

Bonaventure argued that the latter view is logically impossible, and therefore the universe must be a beginning, a first event. The big bang model of science suggests that, huge as it is the whole of the cosmos comes originally from one point. Hence, all things as we know them in this cosmos go back to a common source. Development and change (evolution) is the stuff of our history, but finally it all comes from one root foundation. It is not difficult to relate this to Bonaventure's descriptions of God as the inexhaustible source of all that is. It signals an awareness of the unity and fecundity of God in Bonaventure's thought[239].

7. The Sense of Debate

The problem of controversy of the theme we are dealing with in this study is a theological-metaphysical problem. We know that a physician, on the one side, needs a fixed and chronometric answer of (physical) things and a maximum and stable answer even for the beginning of space and time. On the other side, a theologian needs this distinction to understand well the problem of *creation ex nihilo*. The affirmation is not a short demonstration of the first moment of creation, as the human reason is incapable of discovering with its own resources the true nature of the creative act. One might ask does Bonaventure ever give any *standard* argument to demonstrate the truth of the impossibility of a beginning-less world.

We have seen that for Bonaventure, speaking of *passive creation*, the temporal beginning of the world is demonstrable question: "*intelligendum est quod Deus potuit facere tempus ante hoc, et illo facere mundum*"[240]. When he treats the question of the creation out of nothing, formally he makes no claims for philosophy on doctrine. Rather, he says that philosophers have in fact failed to understand creation out of nothing and that reason does not disagree with the faith. It is important to note that the Franciscan does not claim that reason *proves* the doctrine

---

[239] Cf. HAYES, "Is creation a window to the divine? A Bonaventurian response", 94.
[240] *I Sent.*, d. 44. a. 1. q. 4. concl. (I, 789).

of faith, but only that reason is not in disagreement with faith; and he shows this by refuting the contrary arguments which appear to disagree with the faith[241].

Considering this, we need to take note of the six significant arguments of Bonaventure, on the distinctions as presented by Balder: He classifies the arguments into three types: Type *A*: *demonstrative* argument (1-3). "Bonaventure thinks that he has philosophically demonstrated that the world could not have been eternal in the past, and yet Bonaventure also allows that Aristotle was correct, on Aristotle principle, to hold the contradictory of what Bonaventure has demonstrated"[242]. Type *B*: *good probable/dialectical* argument (4-5). Balder notes that it is not clear whether Bonaventure regards these arguments as demonstrative; there is not sufficient evidence to show this argument as demonstrative argument[243]. Type *C*: *self-evident* argument (6). It is self-evident, because a world created from eternity is flatly contradictory, thus an eternal world is impossible. Like what many studies have shown, when we talk about demonstrative argument, we need to consider that Bonaventure's contribution is not the final word of the whole debate.

We have seen that Bonaventure's "traversal argument is valid" (Brown) and "every premise of the six arguments is proven", so that it can be placed as "the main argument" (Walz); and lastly, we have indicated the plausibility of Bonaventure's argument in dialogue with contemporary cosmological theory (Graig). But we also know quite well that Bonaventure's argument must be verified theologically, solely from biblical datum. His argument must be placed as an integral part of his theological world-view; and this is the scope of the next section of this first chapter.

---

[241] For some notes on the sense of debate, see J. B. M. WISSINS (ed.), *The Eternity of the World in the Thought of Thomas and his Contemporaries*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1990, p. 20-38; DALES, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World*, particularly the epilogue, 224-261.

[242] BALDENER, "St. Bonaventure and the Demonstrability…", 233.

[243] Cf. BALDENER, "St. Bonaventure and the Demonstrability…", 235-236.

8. A New Paradigm: Metaphysics of Exemplarity

Having seen Bonaventure's argument and its point of difference from Thomas' philosophical world-view, let us now go back to Bonaventure's own words. The fundamental point aim at in this section is in line with the statement of Gilson which says that "we can never in any case disassociate the explanation of things from the consideration of their *raison d'être*"[244].

A great metaphysical system must be faced with the problem of the first origin of things. Considering this fundamental point Gilson continues: "That is the reason why, in spite of all the resistance, and occasionally even violent opposition, of modern science and philosophy to the idea of finality, Christian thought has never yet renounced it, and never will"[245]. God the Creator is the first principle of beings. Based on this conviction, we have shown that, before approaching the problem of creation, "we need a series of conclusions which are decisive on the existence of God as the Creator of the universe"[246], thus, the world is not eternal.

We have seen the question of the eternity of the world even extended to modern perspectives. From the discourse of Bonaventure's *ratione creatione* we have said that there is no independent *ratio aeterna* in the creatures, it is derived only from God the Creator. That is to say that "Bonaventure's view draws on the Platonic tradition of exemplarity"[247]. In this line of interpretation, we have seen that Bonaventure's argument did not coincide to the philosophical speculation of the existence of any *actual infinite* other then God. The bellow treatment still holds the contra position of an eternal world, but with a larger world-view, that is Bonaventure's concept of exemplarity, a new *ratio* which is fundamental for his whole theological-system. We will start with the influence of Augustine.

---

[244] GILSON, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 104.
[245] GILSON, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 104.
[246] Cf. GILSON, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 167.
[247] Cf. HAYES, in his introduction to *Sc. Chr.* (English trans.), 50.

8.1. The Influence of Augustine

The view that the Trinity in general, and especially the second person, as the *Word*, provides the basis and pattern for human cognition is firmly rooted in Augustine's *On the Trinity*, was built upon by Anselm and others, and eventually achieved the status of doctrine among the Franciscans of the fourteenth century[248].

8.1.1. Augustine on Verbum Mentis

On the ninth book *On the Trinity*, Augustine goes to great lengths to develop metaphors for the mystery of the Trinity by turning to the world of human consciousness and interiority. It is there that we encounter the triads: mind-knowledge-love; and memory-intelligence-will[249]. This triadic dynamic in our selves is expressed through the vocal sound known as "word".

The vocal sounds of our speech are signs of the things we are thinking of. The word which makes a sound outside is the sign of the word which lights up inside. In sum, *word*, draws from the experience of human knowledge and self-consciousness, became a widely-used metaphor for the self-expressive character of God[250]. Augustine writes:

> "Thus in a certain fashion our word becomes a bodily sound by assuming that in which it is manifested to the senses of men, just as the Word of God became flesh by assuming that in which it too could be manifested to the senses of men. Just as our word becomes sound without being changed into sound, so the Word of God became flesh, but it is unthinkable that it should have been change into flesh. It is

---

[248] Cf. RUSSELL L. FRIEDMAN, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and NY., 2010, p. 50-93.

[249] Cf. ST. AUGUSTINE, *De Trinitate*, book IX (English translation, introduction and notes, by Edmund Hill OP, edited by John E. Rotelle O.S.A), New City Press, NY., 2012, p. 270-285. Latin text from Italian be-language version: AGOSTINO, *La Trinità* (traduzione, note e apparati di Beatrice Cillerai, a cura di Giovanni Catapano e Beatrice Cillerai), Bompiani, Milano, 2012. Hereafter the quotations are indicated by the translators (Hill, Cillerai) and page number.

[250] HAYES, in his introduction to *Sc. Chr.* (English trans.), 49.

by assuming it, not by being consumed into it, that both our word becomes sound and that Word became flesh"[251].

The main point to underline here is that, the expression of God's all-embracing knowledge is the divine *Word*. As Word reveals the divine intellect so man's knowledge is illuminated by an everlasting idea: In our act of knowledge, "we gaze (*intuemur*) upon the inviolable truth from which we define as perfectly as we can, not what kind of thing any particular man's mind, but what kind of thing by everlasting ideas it ought to be"[252]. Augustine investigates the knowledge which the mind has of things, and concludes that it essentially consists in a judgement of truth, which can properly be called a mental word, or *verbum mentis*[253].

8.1.2. Word as Ars Patris

In the context of Trinitarian life, the Word provided a point at which the world of Platonic Ideas could be introduced to express the relation between God's immanent self-awareness and His knowledge of creation. In this Word, God expresses all that will be created. Everything is created through the Word in the sense that God has the plan for all of creation in this immanent Word.

"So the Word of God, the only-begotten Son of the Father, like the Father and equal to him in all things, God from God, light from light, wisdom from wisdom, is exactly and absolutely what the Father is, and yet is not the Father, because this one is Son, that one Father. And thus, he knows everything that the Father knows, but

---

[251] *De Trinitate*, XV, c. xi, n. 20: "Ita enim verbum nostrum vox quodam modo corporis fit assumendo eam in qua manifestetur sensibus hominum; sicut *Verbum* Dei *caro factum est* assumendo eam in qua et ipsum manifestaretur sensibus hominum. Et sicut verbum nostrum fit vox nec mutatur in vocem, ita *Verbum* Die *caro* quidem *factum est*, sed absit ut mutaretur in carnem. Assumendo quippe illam, non in eam se consumando, et hoc nostrum vox fit et illud caro factum est". (Cillerai, 918; Hill, 411-412).

[252] *De Trinitate*, IX, c. vi, n. 9: "[…] intuemur inviolabilem veritatem ex qua perfecte quantum possumus, definiamus, non qualis sit uniuscuiusque hominis mens, sed qualis esse sempiternis reationibus debeat" (Cillerai, 526; Hill, 277-278).

[253] *De Trinitate* (see Hill's note, 277).

his knowing comes to him from the Father just as his being does. For here knowing and being are one and the same[254].

Echoing Augustinian's idea of *Word* as *"aliquid et ars quaedam omnipotentis atque sapientis Dei"*[255], Bonaventure places exemplarism at the very core of theological truth, as the necessary condition of a Christian ontology, epistemology, and ethics. By his ideas God becomes for us *causa subsistendi*, *ratio intelligent*, *et ordo vivendi* (the cause of our subsisting, the reason of our understanding, and the order of our living)[256].

In Bonaventure's world-view, the Word, as expression of divine ideas, provides the model and guarantor for human knowledge[257]. The divine ideas are appropriated to the Word and are considered to be inseparable from him. Accordingly, the Father produces the Word, and in understanding creatures as caused by him, he naturally produces the divine ideas. These two, Word and divine Idea, are completely synonymous and inseparable[258].

8.1.3. Word: Artist *par excellence*

From this perspective, we see an attempt to give expression to the relation between the mystery of the Trinity and the reality of creation[259]. This relation emerges with even richer significance in another stream of Western theological tradition. This tradition brings together such names as Pseudo-Dionysius, Richard of St. Victor, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure. It is a style of Trinitarian reflection which chooses not to take its metaphors merely from the experience of

---

[254] De Trinitate, XV, c. xiv, n. 23: "Verbum ergo Dei Patris unigenitus Filius, per omnia Patri simili set aequalis, Deus de Deo, lumen de lumine, sapientia de sapientia, essentia de essentia; est hoc omnino quod Pater, non tamen Pater quia iste Filius, ille Pater. Ac per hoc novit omnia quae novit Pater, se ei nosse de patre est siccut esse. Nosse enim et esse ibi unum est" (Cillerai, 934; Hill, 417).

[255] *De Trinitate*, VI, c. x, n.11 (Cillerai, 400; Hill, 215).

[256] GILSON, *Christian Philosophy* (Eng. trans., by A. Maurer), Toronto, 1993, p. 108.

[257] ROBERT - LONGSHORE, "The Word and Mental Words", 101-102.

[258] ROBERT - LONGSHORE, "The Word and Mental Words", 105.

[259] An example of study on Augustine's theology of creation from the Trinitarian perspective is SCOTT A. DUNHAM, *The Trinity and Creation in Augustine. An Ecological Analysis*, State Unity of New York Press, Albany, 2008.

human interiority. Instead it looks at the Neo-Platonic understanding of the primal realities as the Supreme Good, and attempts to relate this philosophical tradition to the biblical conviction: "No one is good but God alone" (Lk 18: 19). This tradition will involve the interaction of the Neo-Platonic idea of the good and scriptural idea of the primal love which is so important in the Johannine material[260].

The Triune God is seen as the maker and Artist *par excellence*. Trinity is the mystery of God's dynamic fecundity, his eternal self-diffusion that manifests in the divine persons, who are united in the most intimate mutuality. The Trinitarian dynamism overflows into creation, where God is manifested in his vestige, image and similitude. All creatures flow out of God's self-diffusing fecundity and, through the metaphysics of exemplarism, manifest God and lead men back to God[261].

Following the authority of Augustine, Bonaventure uses the image of exemplar to show that Christ is the eternal exemplar of the creatures. Following from God and from the eternal Exemplar is such richness of being and of grace that no one creature can possess all or express all. A rich diversity of creatures flows from God, giving expression to the richness of God's goodness[262]. This passage anticipates the point we will see more profoundly on the next chapter.

8.2. Paradigm of Exemplarity

Having seen a panorama of Augustine's idea of *verbum mentis*, from which Bonaventure was greatly indebted, we come now to Bonaventure's own argument. Naturally the texts of Bonaventure's *Disputed Questions* and *Conferences* which we are going to present can be read for various and even for different purposes. It is not easy, therefore, in this study, to completely avoid that variability. The main object of this section, nevertheless, is to present Bonaventure's metaphysical-theological

---

[260] Cf. HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 64.
[261] Cf. COUSINS, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, xv-xvi.
[262] HAYES, *The Hidden Center*, 133.

view as a new paradigm replacing the Aristotelian philosophical paradigm, which, according to Bonaventure's assessment is an "error"[263].

8.2.1. Questiones disputatae de Scientia Christi: Ratio aeterna

This *Disputed Questions*[264] provide important parameters for understanding Bonaventure's doctrine of illumination. The first question deals with the infinity of God and the nature and extent of God's knowledge. The main issue that emerges in the question is that God's knowledge encompasses an infinite number of thing. It is in terms of this knowledge that God knows the infinite divine being: "God knows and comprehends an infinite number of things with the knowledge of simple intelligence"[265]. But it does not follow that if God knows an infinite number of objects, there must be an infinite number of actual beings, but only that for God there is infinite possibilities[266]. "God knows an infinite number of things in the divinity itself. However, they are not in actuality but only potentially infinite"[267].

For Bonaventure, to say that God has knowledge means that it is something other than God. "But in this case it does not follow that it is infinite in fact, for the fact that God has actual knowledge of an infinite number of objects does not require that they exist in fact, it is sufficient that they should be potentially infinite in themselves"[268]. This passage introduces the reader into the fascinating problem of the nature of number and the puzzle of 'infinite' numbers which, in fact, turns out to

---

[263] For specific study on this issue see M. BETTETINI, L. BIANCHI, C. MARMO, P. PORRO, *Filosofia Medievale*, Raffaello Cartina Editore, Milano, 2004, p. 201ss: "Bonaventura da Bagnoregio e Pietro di Giovanni Olivi. L'itinerario della mente verso Dio e gli 'errori' dei filosofi", particularly p. 209-210: "Bonaventura da Bagnoregio: gli errori di Aristotele". See also the book of L. BIANCHI, *L'errore di Aristotele*, from which our previous sections are indebted.

[264] English translation of the disputation, see *Works of St. Bonaventure. Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ* (introduction, translation and notes by Z. Hayes), Franciscan Institute Publications Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2005.

[265] *Sc. Chr.*, I, concl. (V, 4).

[266] *Sc. Chr.*, I, resp.1 (V, 5b).

[267] *Sc. Chr.*, I, resp.7 (V, 6ab): "Ad illud quod obiicitur: aut scit infinita nobis etc.; dicendum, quod scit infinita in se, non quidem actu infinita, sed in potentia; quae autem sunt in potentia sunt actu a Deo scita". (English trans., Hayes, 81).

[268] *Sc. Chr.*, I, resp. 9 (V, 6ab): "[…] sed tunc non seguitur, quod sit infinitum actu, quia ad hoc, quod infinita sint actu scita a Deo, non oportet, quod sint actu infinita, sed sufficit, quod sint infinita in potentia in proprio genere" (English trans., Hayes, 81).

be infinity of infinities. The discussion of number provides the context for discussing the 'infinite possible', which God knows as distinct from the limited number of actualized possibilities that constitute the reality of creation and history in the present world order[269].

Based on the authority of Scripture and Augustine, Bonaventure claims that God possesses actual infinity, and that God knows things by their likeness. First, on the authority of Scripture: "All that came to be had life in Him" (John 1: 3). Therefore, all created beings existed in God's knowledge prior to their actual existence. In God's mind things did not exist in their true essence since no created things existed as yet. Therefore, they were in God in a likeness. Second from Augustine, as we have seen above, he uses various symbols to underline the idea that the Son is *coeternal* with the Father: the Son is the light, the perfect Image, the eternal Word, or the full art of all the living and unchanging reasons of things[270]. But, we know that in art the reasons are nothing other than the likeness of the objects that are to be produced as they are known by the artist[271].

The second question of *De scientia Christi* deals clearly on the concept of exemplar as the central point. "God knows creatures by means of eternal reasons which are the exemplary likeness of creatures"[272]. As we have seen above, in line of Augustinian Neo-Platonic thought, Bonaventure claims that the divine Word is the perfect exemplar of creatures. He is the divine idea, the eternal reason that remains in the mind of God, but at the same time is the perfect expression of the Creator, and it is the supreme light, the full truth, and pure act[273]. The symbol of light is significant in the present theme. In Bonaventure's language it opens our intuition to the Divine Truth. "When we say that God knows creatures in a manner internal to the divinity as in a likeness, we are saying nothing other than the fact that God

---

[269] Cf. HAYES, in his introduction to *Sc. Chr.* (English trans.), 48.
[270] Cf. *De Trinitate* VI, c. ii, n. 8-11 (Cillerai, 376, 378, 380 ; Hill, 212-214).
[271] *Sc. Chr.*, II, aff. 1-3 (V, 6-7ab).
[272] *Sc. Chr.*, II, concl. (V, 8).
[273] *Sc. Chr.*, II, concl. (V, 8).

knows creatures in a manner internal to the divine nature in their Truth, or in that supreme light which *expresses* other things"[274]. The term *express* in the quotation "indicates the act of creation"[275]; and this act designates that "the divine truth itself that is the light, and its expressions in creatures, as it were, the luminous rays which, though intrinsic to God, yet lead to and are directed to that which is expressed in a determinate matter"[276].

Proceeding from the authority of Augustine, Bonaventure claims that above all human mind's activities; there is an absolute and eternal truth. In *On the True Religion*, Augustine says: "It is clear that above our minds there is a law which is called truth. And it cannot be debated that this immutable nature, which is above the human mind, is God. For this is that unchanging truth which is rightly called the norm of all the arts and the art of all powerful Artisan"[277]. In the ninth book of *On the Trinity* chapter six, Augustine writes: "When we approve or disapprove of something rightly, we are shown the approval or disapproval by virtue of other rules which remain altogether unchangeable and above our mind"[278]. Again in chapter seven of *On the Trinity* Augustine writes:

> "Thus it is that in that eternal truth according to which all temporal things was made, we observe with the eye of the mind the form according to which we are and according to which we do anything with true and right reason, either in ourselves or in bodies. And by this form we conceive true knowledge of things, which we have

---

[274] *Sc. Chr.*, III, concl. (V, 13): "Dicere ergo, quod Deus cognoscit res se ipso ut similitudine, non est aliud quam dicere, quod Deus cognoscat res se ipso ut veritate sive ut summa luce res ceteras exprimente" (English trans., Hayes, 105).

[275] E. MIRRI, "La verità, l'uomo e la storia nel pensiero di san Bonaventura", in *DrSer*, 59 (2011), p. 9.

[276] *Sc. Chr.*, III, concl. (V, 13) […] "ipsa divina veritas est lux, et ipsus expressiones respectu rerum sunt quasi luminosae irradiationes, licet intrinsecae, quae determinate ducunt et dirigunt in id quod exprimitur" (English trans., Hayes, 107).

[277] *Sc. Chr.*, IV, 2 (V, 17a): "Apparet, supra mentem nostrum legem esse, quae veritas dicitur; nec iam illud ambigendum est, incomutabilem naturam, quae supra mentem umanam est, Deum esse. Nam haec est illa incommutabilis veritas, quae lex omnium artium recte dicitur et ars omnipotentis arficis" (English trans., Hayes, 115).

[278] *Sc. Chr.*, IV, aff. 6 (V, 17b); Cf. *De Trinitate* (Cillerai, 526; Hill, 278).

with us as a kind of word that we beget by uttering inwardly, and that does not depart from us when it is born"[279].

And Bonaventure writes: "From these authoritative arguments of Augustine it is manifestly clear that everything is known in the eternal reasons"[280]. This claim brings us to the concept of illumination in Bonaventure, that is, that God illumines our mind through the divine being itself. For him, "there is nothing above our mind other than God and the *eternal truth*. Therefore, the divine truth and the eternal reason is that by which knowledge come to be"[281].

For the question "whether that which is known by us with certitude is known in the eternal reasons themselves"[282], Bonaventure shows a particular sense of illumination in the knowledge saying: "nothing can be understood at all unless God immediately illumines the subject of knowledge by means of the eternal, divine truth […]. Therefore, nothing enters the intellect except by means of the supreme truth". For Bonaventure, "everything known with certitude is known in the light of the eternal reasons"[283]. In order to understand what has been said above about eternal reason, Bonaventure makes the forgoing distinction. The claim that everything known with certitude is known in the light of the eternal reasons (theory of illumination) can be understood in three ways:

The *first* way is understood to mean that, in the case of certain knowledge, the evidence of the eternal light concurs as the *total* and sole cause of the knowledge. This understanding is the least acceptable, for it allows no knowledge of reality except in the Word. In this case, there would be no difference between

---

[279] *Sc. Chr.*, IV, aff. 7 (V, 17b): "In illa aeterna veritate, ex qua temporalia facta sunt omnia, formam, secundum quam sumus et secundum quam vel in nobis vel in corporibus vera et recta ratione aliquid operamur, visu mentis aspicimus" (English trans., Hayes, 117); Cf. *De Trinitate*, IX, c. vii, n.12 (Cillerai, 530, 532; Hill, 279).
[280] *Sc. Chr.*, IV, aff. 8 (V, 17a).
[281] *Sc. Chr.*, IV, aff. 17 (V, 19a).
[282] *Sc. Chr.*, IV (V, 17).
[283] *Sc. Chr.*, IV, concl. 24-26 (V, 19-20).

knowledge in human state and heavenly knowledge, between knowledge in the Word and knowledge of things in themselves[284].

The second way maintains that certain knowledge requires the influence of the eternal reason to concur in such a way that in the act of knowing, the subject attains not the eternal reason itself but only its influence (as its created effect). But this way of expressing is inadequate. For Bonaventure, in the case of certain knowledge the mind must be regulated by unchangeable rules which operate not by means of a habit of the mind but by means of themselves as realities which are above the mind in the eternal truth[285].

Having excluded these two extremes, he attempts to describe a *third way*: For certain knowledge, the eternal reason is necessarily involved as the regulative and motivating principle, but certainly not as the sole principle nor in its full clarity. But along with the created reason, it is continued by us in part as is fitting in this life. It is necessary, therefore, to turn to the Lord as the light which illuminates the human knowledge, as the light of the creature is not completely infallible by virtue of its own power, since each light is created moving from non-being to being. The nobility of knowledge and the dignity of the knower necessarily require that, in the case of certain knowledge, our mind must in some way attain to those rules and unchangeable reasons[286].

In a more explicitly way, Bonaventure sustains that the human intelligence is a given. He shows a particular consideration of *de dono scientiae*. Both philosophical and theological knowledge are gifts of God (*donum*): "God established the rational nature and added grace beyond that"[287]. For Bonaventure,

---

[284] *Sc. Chr.*, IV, concl. (V, 22-23).
[285] *Sc. Chr.*, IV, concl. (V, 23).
[286] *Sc. Chr.*, IV, concl. (V, 23); Cf. *De Trinitate* XIV, c. xv, n. 21 (Cillerai, 850; Hill, 389).
[287] *De donis*, IV, 2 (V, 474). For English translation of *De donis*, see *Works of St. Bonaventure. Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (introduction and translation by. Z. Hayes, notes by Robert J. Karis), Franciscan Institute Publications Saint Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY., 2008.

there are three radiances of knowledge: The radiance of philosophical knowledge is great in the view of worldly people, but it is slight in comparison with the radiance of Christian knowledge. The radiance of theological knowledge seems slight in the view of worldly people, but in reality, it is great; it is knowledge of grace; it is greater than the first, but the greatest (*maxima*) radiance is knowledge of glory[288].

The last way is a *reward* (*praemium*) in its proper sense: "It is true that philosophical and theological knowledge are gifts of God. But strictly speaking the gift of God is knowledge of grace. It is not only a gift, but also a reward"[289]. In other words, as observed by Hayes, in the Bonaventurian-Augustinian epistemology, the fact of certain knowledge can be accounted for only if the eternal truth is in some way involved in the cognitive processes. The eternal truth, or light, must be presented and must be exercised in some sort of influence on the human object. The theory of illumination, therefore, is an attempt to articulate the mode of divine presence as the light and norm by means of which the human mind can know with certitude. The intellect does not see eternal reason directly, but *contuits* (*contutio*)[290] them as it looks directly at the created object[291].

8.2.2. Collationes in Hexaëmeron: Christus Medium

The basic contours of this last and the most important work of Bonaventure is that he takes the scriptural account of the *Hexaëmeron*[292] as lens through which to consider the six kinds of vision which lead to wisdom. The development order of

---

[288] *De donis*, IV, 3 (V, 474): "Hic notandum est, quod est claritas scientiae philosophicae, scientiae theologicae, scientiae gratuitae, et claritas scientiae gloriosae. Claritas scientiae philosophicae est magna secundum opinionem hominum mundialium, parva tamen est in comparatione ad claritatem scientiae christianae. Claritas vero scientiae theologicae parva videtur secundum opinionem hominum mundialium, sed secundum veritatem magna est. Claritas scientiae gratuitae est maior, sed claritas scientiae gloriosae est maxima" (English trans., Hayes, 85).

[289] *De donis*, IV, 4 (V, 474).

[290] *Contuitio* refers to a concomitant insight into the relationship of everything to God who is the *primum*. For Bonaventure, all knowledge is concomitant because it is the concurrent recognition of both the created and the uncreated. Cf. HELLMANN, *Divine and Created Order* (see appendix by J. Hammond), 209. I will get back on this theme in the third chapter.

[291] Cf. HAYES, Introduction to *Sc. Chr.* (English trans.), 57-58.

[292] English translation: BONAVENTURE, *Six Days of Creation* (English trans., José De Vinck), Saint Anthony Guild Press, Peterson N.J., 1970.

cosmos is mirrored in the human capacity to become aware of the cosmos and its creator as intelligible[293]. This exemplaristic-view goes hand in hand with a renewed concept of a *sapientia Cristiana*.

The central point of these *collationes* (*conferences*) is that Bonaventure thought that for a good scientist, to know Christ is necessary, because in Him lies hidden all God's treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Even the Saint considered that Christ is the medium (*medio*), from which his conference must be started (*quod incipendum est a medio*, *quod est Christus*). Christ is necessary as he is the starting point for all those who search for the Christian wisdom: "*Unde ab illo* (*Christus*) *incipendum necessario, si quis vult venire ad sapientiam christianam*"[294]. Christ is the center of all knowledge: metaphysics, physics, mathematics, logic, ethics, politics and theology. He is the mediator between God and man (*mediator Dei et hominum*); and in this position, he is the *medium* of all reality and must be the final scope of human science[295]. Only in Christ one can arrive at the Christian wisdom; which is both the starting and the final point of the Christian wisdom[296]. In this

---

[293] KEVIN L. HUGHES, "St. Bonaventure's Collationes in *Hexaëmeron*: Fractured sermons and Prophetic discourse", in *FrancStud*, 63 (2005), p.108.

[294] *Hexaëm.*, I, 1, 10 (V, 329, 330).

[295] *Hexaëm.*, I, 11 (V, 331): "Propositum igitur nostrum est ostendere, quod in Christo *sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae Dei absconditi*, et ipse est medium omnium scientiarium. Est autem setiforme medium, scilicet essentiae, naturae, distantiae, doctrianae, modestiae, iustitiae, concordiae. Primum est de consideratione metaphysici, secundum physici, tertium mathematici, quartum logici, quintum ethici, sextum politici seu iuristarum, septimum theologici". There are various studies on *Christus Medium*: H. VAN DER LAAN, "The idea of Christian Philosophy in Bonaventure's Collationes in *Hexaëmeron*" in *S. Bonaventure 1274-1974, Vol. III*, p. 38-56; C. COLT ANDERSON, *A Call to Piety: Saint Bonaventure's Collations on the Six Days*, Franciscan Press Quincy University, Quincy, 2002; HUGHES, "St. Bonaventure's Collationes in *Hexaëmeron*", in *FrancStud*, 63 (2005), 107-129; HAYES, "The meaning of *Conventientia* in Bonaventure", in *FrancStud*, 34 (1974), p.75-100; ID. "Christology and Metaphysics in the Thought of Bonaventure" in *Journal of Religion*, 58 Supplement (1978); ID. "Christ, Word of God and Exemplar of Humanity", in *Cord*, 46.1 (1996); I. DELIO, "Theology, Metaphysics, and the centrality of Christ", in *TheolStud*, 68 (2007), p. 254-273; B. DE ARMELLADA, "Medium", in *DizBon*, p. 549-552.

[296] *Hexaëm.*, I, 10-11 (V, 330-331); I, 17: "Verbum ergo esprimit Patrem et res, quae per ipsum factae sunt, et principaliter ducit nos ad Patris congregantis unitatem; et secundum hoc est lignum vitae, quia per hoc medium redimus et vivificamur in ipso fonte vitae"; Cf. HUGHES, "St. Bonaventure's Collationes in *Hexaëmeron*", 119-121.

Christological perspective, it is considered, that the main aim of science is not only for the curiosity of a scientist but for wisdom, thus the glory of the Lord[297].

The answer to the primary metaphysical question raised, indeed by philosophy, is finally a Christological answer. Christ was generated from the Father – the original principle of being, and throughout him all the creature will arrive at their consummation in the Holy Spirit. One might see that Bonaventure's theology of creation links to Trinitarian life: "*Pater in ratione originantis principii*; *Filius in ratione exemplantis medii*; *Spiritus sanctus in ratione terminantis complementi*". The Triune God is the principle being of human understanding. One knows nothing without considering the eternal Being, the true metaphysic[298]. The Triune God is the first Being, but Christ, the second Person, places the position of the medium within the Trinity, and being so, the exemplar par excellence for all the creatures.

> "From all eternity the Father begets a Son *similar* to Himself, and expresses Himself and a likeness similar to Himself, and with this, He expresses the totality of His power. He expresses what He can do, and most of all, what he wills to do. And He expresses everything in Him, that is, in the Son or in that very Centre, as in His Art. And this centre is Truth"[299].

This metaphysical-theological framework gives a highlight of Christological-Trinitarian vision of Bonaventure's metaphysics, even his whole theological system. It is important to consider that Bonaventure describes the role of the second Person or the Word with the terminology "coeternal" (*coaeternum*) or "similitude" (*similitudinem*)[300]. In other words, "the core of metaphysics is the knowledge of

---

[297] *Hexaëm.*, I, 8 (V, 330).

[298] *Hexaëm.*, I, 12-13 (V, 331).

[299] *Hexaëm.*, I, 13 (V, 331): "Pater enim ab aeterno genuit Filium similem sibi et dixit se et similitudinem suam similem sibi et cum hoc totum posse suum; dixit quae posset facere, et maxime quae voluit facere, et omnia in eo expressit, scilicet in Filio seu in isto medio tanquam in sua arte"; see HAYES, "The Metaphysics of Exemplarity and the Itinerarium" (hereafter "The Metaphysics of Exemplarity"), in *Cord*, 59 (2009), p. 413.

[300] *Hexaëm.*, I, 16 (V, 332): "Pater enim, ut dictum est, similem sibi genuit, scilicet Verbum sibi coaeternum, et dixit similitudinem suam, et per consequens espressit omnia, quae potuit".

being as reasonable cause that functions as original pattern for all things"[301]. Putting in evidence the Christian truth, Bonaventure guides us to consider the errors of philosophical theory of an eternal world. He writes:

"And all this is against those who believe that the world was created from eternity. Indeed, since our minds are sharpened by the eternal light, they thought that as things were produced or described according to the eternal art, so they are from eternity created in the world; and more, as world was described from eternity in the eternal art they thought that it was shaped also in material things"[302].

On the contrary, the Franciscan Doctor gives a definition of what a true metaphysics must be about. With the phrase "*haec es tota nostra metaphysica*", he introduced a neat list of topics delineating the proper field of study for the ideal philosopher. There are three main pillars of Bonaventure's theological-metaphysical system: *emanation*, *exemplarity*, and *consummation*. He writes:

"Such is the metaphysical centre that leads us back, and this is the whole of our metaphysics; namely, it is concerned with *emanation*, *exemplarity*, and *consummation*; that is to be illumined by means of spiritual light and back to the Highest Being. And in this you will be a true metaphysician"[303].

In such a metaphysical view, Christ is the center of reality, and it is from that center that man should begin his inquiry concerning the nature of reality. Beginning at the center, the inquirer can come to know how all things come forth into being and how they are to be brought to consummation. In other words, "Bonaventure's

---

[301] *Hexaëm.*, I, 13 (V, 331): "Sed ut considerat illud esse in ratione omnia exemplantis, cum nullo communicat et est verus metaphysicus"; Cf. HAYES, "The Metaphysics of Exemplarity", 413.

[302] *Hexaëm.*, I, 16 (332): "Et hoc est contra errores eorum qui credunt mundum ab aeterno creatum. Quia mentes nostrae cognatae sunt aeternis luminibus, putant, quod sicut res productae sunt seu descriptae in arte aeterno, sic ab aeterno in isto mundo creatae sunt; et sicut mundus ab aeterno descriptus est in arte aeterna, sic descriptum putant in meteria" ; Cf. HAYES, "Bonaventure of Bagnoregio", 50.

[303] *Hexaëm.*, I, 17 (V, 332): "Hoc est medium metaphysicium reducens, et haec est tota nostra metaphyisca: de emanatione, de exemplaritate, de consummatione, scilicet illuminari per radios spirituales et reduci ad summum. Et sic eris verus metaphysicus"; see HAYES, "The Metaphysics of Exemplarity", 412.

metaphysics is concerned with how all creatures take their origin in the creative love of God; how they reflect something of the richness of the divine reality in the created order; and how they will be brought to their final fulfilment in loving union with the God from whom they have come"[304].

That metaphysical world-view recalls the discussion of whether there exists an actual infinite. From Bonaventure's view, one should say that no other being exists as co-infinite of the Infinite Being. Only the divine Word is coeternal with Father and therefore is the perfect masterpiece of all creatures. Christ the Medium is the radix of our knowledge. The final scope of the scientific activity, therefore, is to have knowledge on divine wisdom, the person of Christ. But this finality cannot be reached if not by the Divine Light who descend from the Father throughout the Son in the Holy Spirit[305]. Seen in this way, Bonaventure criticizes the scientists who in their research reduce knowledge only to serve their curiosity without any desire to contemplate the true wisdom, instead of getting away from it[306].

8.2.3. Triplex Verbum

The role of divine Word, therefore, is the key of knowledge to obtain into the contemplative goal of intellect. Further the Saint says that the characteristic of this key is threefold (*triplex intellectus*), identified as the knowledge of *Verbum increatum*, the medium of production of all creatures; the knowledge of *Verbum incarnatum* for the purpose of reparation of all creature; and *Verbum inspiratum*, for the purpose of the revelation of all creatures[307]. The entire Trinity is at work in the generation, purpose and the goal of creation. This knowledge is central of all other knowledge; and since it is so necessary, Bonaventure recommends: "Any person

---

[304] Cf. HAYES, "The Metaphysics of Exemplarity and the Itinerarium", 412.

[305] Cf. *Hexaëm*., II, 1-2 (V, 336).

[306] Cf. *Hexaëm*., II, 21 (V, 340): "Quando enim per curiosam perscrutationem creaturarum dat se quis ad investigandam istam sapientiam; tunc longius recedit".

[307] *Hexaëm*., III, 2 (V, 343): "Calvis ergo contemplationis est intellectus triplex, scilicet intellectus Verbi increati, per quod omnia producuntur ; intellectus Verbi incarnati, per quod omnia reparantur; intellectus Verbi inspirati, per quod omnia revelantur". A helpful introduction on this theme is ANDREA DI MAIO, *Piccolo glossario bonaventuriano. Prima introduzione al pensiero e al lessico di Bonaventura da Bagnoregio*, Aracne, Roma, 2008, p. 35-44.

who is unable to consider how things originate, how they are led back to their end, and how God shines in them, is incapable of achieving true understanding"[308].

The first key is the knowledge of *Verbum increatum* is a guaranteed way to understand that the Word of God is the cause of all things. The divine Word is the radix of the intelligence of all the creatures; they cannot exist without having their being from the First Being. If one understands the Word, he understands all knowable things. The Word is the entrance of knowledge; it is the representation of all things as they were produced. Every creature is a shadow of its Creator, thus the real coming into existence of a thing does not imply any change in God[309].

The second key is to know the *incarnated Word*. In the last chapter of his writing the evangelist Luke narrated that at the end of his conversation with the two disciples during the way to Emmaus, Jesus opened their intelligence so they understood the Scripture (cf. Lk 14: 44-45). And in the first chapter of John we read: "And The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (Jn. 1: 14). God became man! This is the greatest miracle, because in Jesus incarnated one finds the unity of multiform nature: between divine and corporal, between eternal and temporal, lower and supreme, exactly between God and man[310].

The *third key* stresses the role of the Holy Spirit. Bonaventure has a clear consciousness of the human need for spiritual eyes – and that's why the theme of light is very central in most of his conferences on the *Hexaëmeron*. Man cannot

---

[308] *Hexaëm.*, III, 2 (V, 343): "Nissi enim quis possit considerare de rebus qualiter originantur, qualiter in finem reducuntur, et qualiter in eis refulget Deus; intelligentiam habere non potest".

[309] Cf. *Hexaëm.*, III, 3-8 (V, 343-344), at III, 7: "Et Verbum exprimit Patrem ut Principium principians da se, et sic est explicans et repraesentans productionem Spiritus sancti et suam sive aeternorum. Exprimit etiam Patrem ut principiantem aliquid de nihilo, et sic representat productionem aeviternorum, ut Angelorum et animarum".

[310] Cf. *Hexaëm.*, III, 10, 13 (V, 345).

contemplate the splendour revelation of Word in the creature from his own knowledge. Only by illumination of the Holy Spirit he can see it clearly[311].

For Bonaventure, the ontological background of the possibility of philosophy is the light of God. What man should know is that Triune God is the first Being, and this is the light of our soul. On the first day of creation God created the light - the light never knows the darkness, because it is the eye of the Creator. By the illumination of light in our soul, we can have a splendid vision of the creature. This light is the truth for human soul (*Lux anime veritas est*), the undoubtable truth imprinted in our soul[312]. The truth in its proper sense is undoubtable even in any atheistic argument, *si veritas non est*, *veritas est.* The divine Light enlightens the soul in such a way that it cannot think about non-being of the Truth[313].

8.3.   Christ, the true Metaphysician

Although Bonaventure values philosophy, he does not accept each philosopher and each philosophical idea. For example he denied Aristotle, who was the leader of those who denied the existence of ideas[314]. In contrary the Saint shows his new horizon to see the nature of the true metaphysics. Allan Wolter writes: "Christ the Son of God, not Aristotle, is the metaphysician par excellence"[315].

8.3.1. Aristotle's Errors

Referring back to the problem of creation, in the fourth conference of *Hexaëmeron*, Bonaventure quotes a particular counter-argument against creation

---

[311] Cf. *Hexaëm*., III, 28 (V, 347). We will be back on the theme of the *triplex intellectus* with greater analysis, but for now we just give it a highlight.

[312] Cf. A. SPEER, "Illumination and Certitude: The Foundation of Knowledge in Bonaventure", in *ACPQ*, 85 (2011), p. 128-141.

[313] Cf. *Hexaëm*., IV, 1-2 (V, 349), at IV, 1: "Lux anime veritas est: haec lux nescit occasum. Ita enim fortiter irradiat super animam, ut etiam non posit cogitari non esse nec exprimi, quin homo sibi contradictat: quia, si veritas non est, verum est, veritatem non esse: ergo aliquid est verum; et si aliquid est verum, verum est, veritatem esse: ergo si veritas non est, veritas est"; Cf. SPEER, "Illumination and Certitude", 139.

[314] Cf. VAN DER LAAN, "The idea of Christian Philosophy, 48.

[315] A. WOLTER, "Bonaventure, St", in *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy vol. 1 & 2* (Paul Edward, ed.), Macmillan Publishing, NY/ Collier Macmillan Publisher/ London, 1972, p. 340.

and disapproves it. The basis of the argument is the distinction between substance and accident and the thesis claiming that a substance cannot be reduced to an accident. Then, the argument asserts that if an accident must be reducible to a substance, creation is impossible.

Bonaventure rejects this reason pointing out that creation must be understood as the passion of created thing, not as an accident but a relation to the Creator: "On the contrary I say: creation is passion, not an accident, because the relation between Creation and the Creator is not an accident but is essential"[316].

This thesis recalls his argument against an eternity world: to attribute a created being the existence of God must be an error, because a created being came after non-being[317]. As we have said, the role of exemplarity is pervasive in Bonaventure's theology. It enters into his theology of creation as a way of distinguishing between the action of an agent that produces an effect simply and purely by reason of its nature and hence out of a type of necessity (Aristotle), and the action of an agent that produces something by way of art (*per artem*)[318].

In the sixth conference, the Saint points out again the errors of Aristotle. The first is that he rejects Plato's doctrine of ideas. Aristotle's god knows only himself, does not need knowledge of any other thing; he denies the existence of the idea of the highest good. Consequently, he defends the eternity of the world. Again here we see Bonaventure's inclination toward the Platonic philosophical tradition, and echoes his early problem with Aristotle's rejection of the Ideas. He writes:

> "For some denied that exemplars of things existed in this Cause: the leader of these
> seems to have been Aristotle who, in the beginning and end of his *Metaphysics*, and
> in many other places, strongly condemns the ideas of Plato. Therefore he says that

---

[316] Cf. *Hexaëm.*, IV, 8 (V, 350a): "Dico, quod creatio, quae est passio, accidens non est, quia relatio creaturae ad Creatorem no est accidentalis, sed essentialis".
[317] Cf. *Hexaëm.*, IV, 12-13 (V, 351).
[318] HAYES, "The Metaphysics of Exemplarity", 413-414.

God knows only Himself, and does not need the knowledge of any other thing. [...] But this supposes that God knows nothing or there's no individual being [...]. And the reasons he gives for this are worthless"[319].

The Aristotelian creator does not have within himself any imprinted idea as the exemplar for the participation of the creature in their creator. He does not have within himself the intelligibilities (*rationes*) of things through which he might know them. In this creator, there is nothing about foreknowledge and providence, because all things come necessarily – at least as the Arab commentators understood[320].

It is meaningful to consider how Bonaventure makes clear the distinction between Aristotle and Plato. Based on the testimony of the Greek Fathers and Arabic Aristotelian commentators, he expresses his surprise that Aristotle could have been wrong on such an important issue denying Plato's philosophy of idea: "Indeed, you never find that he (Aristotle) sustained the world had a principle or a beginning; mostly he reproached Plato". In this case Bonaventure states his clear preference for the view of Plato on this issue: "Plato is the only one who seems to have assumed that time had a beginning". In contrary Aristotelian view on the eternity of the world is a *repugnant lumini veritatis*[321].

The Franciscan Saint, therefore, has good reason to say that the error of the eternity of the world is an error against essential cause (*contra causam essendi*)[322], because there is no divine providence for creation, but a fatal necessity. He considered that from that error emerged three more serious errors – *sunt pessimi*

---

[319] *Hexaëm.*, VI, 2 (V, 360): "Nam aliqui negaverunt, in ipsa esse exemplaria rerum; quorum princeps videtur fuisse Aristoteles, qui et in principio *Metaphysicae* et in fine et in multis aliss locis exsecratur ideas Platonis. Unde dicit, quod Deus solum novit se et non indiget notitia alicuius alterius rei […]. Ex hoc ponunt, quod nihil, vel nullum particulare cognoscat […]. Et nihil valent rationes suae"; see HAYES, "The Metaphysics of Exemplarity", 413.

[320] Cf. *Hexaëm.*, VI, 2-3 (V, 360-361).

[321] Cf. *Hexaëm.*, VI, 4 (V, 361): "Nunquam invenies, quod ipse dicat, quod mundus habuit principium vel initium; immo redraguit Platonem, qui solus videtur posuisse, tempus incepisse. Et istud repugnat lumini veritatis".

[322] *De donis*, VIII, 16 (V, 497b).

errors, *tenebris*, namely: the unity of intellect, the incorruptible of the soul, and consequently the truth of final happiness or judgment is obscured[323].

8.3.2. Creatione per Artem

In the tenth conference of *Hexaëmeron*, Bonaventure shows more theological aspect of his metaphysics. God the Trinity is the first Being and, as the Creator He is the exemplar of all things. The divine Being is the first metaphysical starting point of knowledge: "*Esse enim divinum primum est, quod venit in mente*"[324]. God is the First Principle of creation, reparation and the final consummation. His name, *Ego sum qui sum* (Ex 3, 14), must be the first thing to be contemplated. The first thing to be contemplated is God's being. The first name of God is Being, that is the most manifested and perfect, and being so, is the first; therefore, nothing is more evident; this is the real and proper name of God. The fact that God is the first Being is the most manifested, for from whole disposition, both affirmative and negative, is derived that God exists; even if you say that God does not exist, it follows that if God does not exist, He is"[325].

An important explanation of exemplarism, which is significant to understand the production of creature, is derived from the analogy of the relation between artisan and artefact. The artisan studies a pattern or model carefully before producing the artefact and then produces the object as planned. Moreover, the artisan produces an external work bearing the closest possible resemblance to the interior exemplar. And if it were possible to produce an effect which could know and love the artisan, the artisan would certainly do this. And if that effect could

---

[323] Cf. *Hexaëm.*, VI, 4-5 (V, 361): "Ex isto sequitur alia caecitas de unitate intellectus, quia, si ponitur mundus aeternus, necessario aliquod istorum sequitur: vel quod animae sunt infinitae, cum homines fuerint infiniti; vel quod anima est corruptibilis; vel quod est transitio de corpore in corpus; vel quod intellectus sit unus in omnibus, qui error attribuitur Aristoteli secundum Commentatorem. Ex his doubus sequitur, quod post hanc vitam non est felicitas nec poena. Hi ergo ceciderunt in errores nec fuerunt divisi a tenebris; et isti sunt pessimi errores". About the error of Aristotle see also *De septem dones*, VIII, 16-17.

[324] Cf. *Hexaëm.*, X, 6. 8 (V, 361-362).

[325] Cf. *Hexaëm.*, X, 10-12 (V, 378).

know its maker, this would be by means of the similitude according to which it came to the hands of the artisan[326]. Moving ahead, Bonaventure writes:

> "In like manner, understand that no creature has proceeded from the most high Creator except through the eternal Word, 'in whom God has disposed all things', and by which Word, God has produced creatures bearing not only the nature of a vestigial but also that of an image so that through knowledge and love, creatures might become like God"[327].

If God is thought of as the eternal, unmoved mover, and if the mover is eternal and unchanged, then the movement must be eternal. And if that is the case, then the effect of the movement must be eternal. Then the conclusion seems inescapable: the world is necessarily eternal. Bonaventure contrasts this with the possibility that God, the Creator, be thought not as one who produces simply by virtue of divine nature as such, but as one who acts intentionally. The key word to express the act of creation is *per artem*; not simply *agens* but as *agens et volens*[328].

This is to say that God is not only the first cause. God creates like an artisan who implements an artifice project in the mind. The creation is the realization of divine intellect design according to the logic of perfect providence and justice. As the exemplar of all creatures, God realizes his project independently and freely – not necessarily[329]. Even more important for our study, as we have seen, is Bonaventure argument that the final answer to metaphysical question is a

---

[326] Cf. *Red. art.*, 12 (V, 322-323)

[327] *Red. art.*, 12 (V, 323): "Per hunc modum intellige, quod a summo Opifice nulla creatura processit nisi per Verbum Aeternum, 'in quo omnia disposuit', et per quod produxit non solum creaturas habentes rationem vestigii, sed etiam imaginis, ut eidem assimilari possint per cognitionem et amorem" (English trans., Hayes, 51).

[328] Cf. HAYES, "The Metaphysics of Exemplarity", 414.

[329] *Hexaëm*., XII, 2-3 (V, 385): "Supponendum enim est per fidem, quod Deus est conditor rerum, gubernator actuum, doctor intellectum, iudex meritorum. Et ex hoc intelligitur, quod est causa causarum et ars praestantissime originans, dux providentissime gubernans, lux manifestissime declarans vel repraesentans, ius rectissime praemians et iudicans.Primum ostenditur sic. Creatura agreditur a Creatore, sed non per naturam, quia alterius naturae est: ergo *per artem*, cum non sit alius modus emanandi nobilis quam per naturam, vel per artem sive ex voluntate; et ars illa non est extra ipsum: ergo est agens per artem et volens: ergo necesse est, ut habeat rationes espressas et expressivas"; Cf. Roberts-Longshore, "The Word and Mental Words", 117.

Christological answer. The second divine Person of the Trinity is the Center of all things. According to Bonaventure, the perfect realization of divine intellect is the Word of God. It is like the interior illumination in God the Creator. Christ is the Doctor of all creation, the most perfect exemplar and the masterpiece of God's artistic project. By faith Bonaventure believes that Christ is the Light to conduct all creatures. In Christ we see the perfect revelation of the First Being[330].

> "[...] the first cause is also at the same time the first and immediate; as the first, it came from no other, because it possesses everything by itself; it is immediate because to be an immediate cause is most noble than a mediator. In addition, inasmuch as the first, it is also powerful, therefore omnipotence; and as an immediate, it is the most actual as the immediate cause is in acts; furthermore, it is the most actual because it is immediate, since the act is most immediate than potency. However, it is the most actual neither according to efficiency nor extrinsic act, but according to the way of intrinsic act, namely to say (*qui est dicere*). From eternity it was something to do and it happened in time. The fact that this cause is one, reveals that it is the most simple; and as the most simple it is infinite, since 'when the virtue or the cause becomes more unity and simple, it becomes infinite'[331], not according to the extension of size, but according to the virtue"[332].

8.3.3. Divine Will in Creation

The doctrine of exemplarity becomes a means of explaining both the freedom and the intentionality of God's creative activity; and it emphasizes that Christ is the center of all beings. As the one through whom all things were made, the eternal

---

[330] Cf. *Hexaëm.*, XII, 5-8 (V, 385).

[331] Bonaventure is quoting *Liber de Causes*, prop. 17.

[332] *Hexaëm.*, XII, 10 (V, 386): "causa prima et est prima et immediata; quia prima, ideo nihil habet ab alio, sed omina ab ea; et est immediata, quia causa immediata nobilior est quam mediata. Quia ergo prima, ideo potentissima: ergo multa potest; item, quia immediata, ideo est actualissima, quia causa immediata in actu est; est etiam actualissima, eo quod immediata, quia actus immediator est quam potentia. Non autem est actualissima secundum efficientiam sive secundum actum extrinsecum, quia non facit statim quid quid potest: ergo est actualissima secundum actum intrinsecum, qui est dicere. Unde ab aeterno dixit hoc fiendum, et hoc in tempore. Haec etiam causa, quia est una, est summe simplex; et eo quod summe simplex est finita, quia 'virtus vel causa, quanto magis unita et simplex, tanto magis infinita' non quidem distensione molis, sed virtutis"; Cf. Roberts-Longshore, "The Word and Mental Words", 117.

Word is the exemplary cause of creation. "Bonaventure, thus avoids the Avicennan dilemma of the eternal necessity of God's activity with respect to the world by developing the doctrine of the trinity as a way of showing how God can be thought of as supremely self communicative without the necessity of communicating being to the created world"[333]. To know any created thing most properly is to know it in the Word. The Word holds this position because it is, within the Trinity, the expressive likeness of the Father; the self-expression that the inner logic of the Trinity becomes the locus for the intelligibility of creation. Therefore, it is not God simply who is the subject of theology, but precisely God as self-expressive in the eternal, uncreated Word, which becomes the principle of other manifestations of the Word, known as inspired, incarnated, and crucified[334].

This perspective announces the key point of the Truth in Christian faith: "The reason I was born, the reason why I came into the world, is to testify to the truth. Anyone commited to the truth hears my voice" (Jn 18: 37). The Word is the testimony of the truth. Since the uncreated Word is the causal agent in creation, one must understand how the Word as the exemplar, containing all that the Father is able to do. The Word is the truth that illuminates our understanding. In the third conference of *Hexaëmeron* he writes: "And as the sun shining manifests the truth of things and the variety of colours, so from the Word derives the truth of things. One cannot, therefore, come upon the understanding but through the Word"[335].

Bonaventure, therefore, did not remain in philosophical syllogisms. His way of treatment on the metaphysics of being opens a new horizon: The point of departure is no longer pure rational and speculative idea but a paradigm of *creative freedom* (*libertà creative*). His doctrine of creation demands the existence of divine Ideas in God, for as Creator, God is seen to be an intelligent and free artist without

---

[333] HAYES, "The Metaphysics of Exemplarity and the *Itinerarium*", 414.

[334] Cf. ANDREA DI MAIO, "La divisione bonaventuriana delle science: Un'applicazione della lessicografia all'ermeneutica testuale (1)", in *Greg*, 81 (2000), p.1001-36 (124).

[335] *Hexaëm*., III, 9 (V, 344-345): "Et sicut sol lucens facit varietatem et multiformitatem colorum; sic ab illo Verbo est veritates rerum. Unde non contingit intelligere nisi per Verbum".

necessity. This is Bonaventure's theological world-view, as stated by Todisco, "la libertà è volto originario dell'essere"[336]. Here we can deduce some understanding of Bonaventure's voluntaristic concept of reality; for Christ is the embodiment of divine love, a love that is utterly free in relation to every creation[337].

The world gets its existence from God the Creator, its logic of existence comes neither from any external being nor in itself, but from the free will of God the Creator. The world is a fruit of divine logic; therefore its existence depends on the Creator. The created reality is contingent. Since all creation flows from the free, creative love of the Trinity, nothing in the world nor in history can be designated strictly, neither as the fact of existence, nor as to its actual mode of existence. "No created world is necessary"[338]. Granted that there is a world, it does not have to be this kind of world. Since the primal will of the Creator is also an *orderly* will, that which emerges from it appears with factual relations, harmony and coherence[339]. The universe is the cosmological appearance of God's creative freedom and from the part of God, there is no determinism in relation with creatures[340].

What is the new content of faith? The Trinity is the theme that unites the whole metaphysics. This is to say that, the Father gives to the Son all his power (*tottum posse suum*), communicating all that the Son can and want to do in a maximum way (*maxime quae voluit facere*), because the Son is the Supreme manifestation of the art of the Father. Father is the fountain of life (*Pater quia generat*), and He manifests himself in the Son, not in any other way, but by

---

[336] "La libertà creative" is one of the main intellectual project on Franciscan theology in dialogue with modern philosophy and science developed by Father ORLANDO TODISCO OFM Conv. That's available in his various studies. For example: TODISCO, *La libertà creative. La modernità del pensare francescano*, Messaggero, Padova, 2010; ID. "Il pensare Bonaventuriano", in *DrSer*, 61 (2013), p.13-41; ID., "Sacrificium intellectus? Bonaventura contro la tirannia della ragione", in *StudFranc*, 1-2 (anno 111 gennaio-giugno 2014), p.47-87; ID. "La libertà creativa fonte francescana della verità e della carità", in *Città di vita* (Gennaio-Febbraio 2014), p. 3-22 (11, 14-15). This thesis is indebted to Todisco's various contributions.
[337] HAYES, "The meaning of *Conventientia* in Bonaventure", 75.
[338] HAYES, "The meaning of *Conventientia* in Bonaventure", 100.
[339] Cf. HAYES, "Beyond the prime mover of Aristotle", 12-13.
[340] Cf. BIANCHI, *L'errore di Aristotele*, 169, 171.

generation. Generation is the reason of the paternity of the Father[341]. If the universe was made by a Creator who does not remain in himself but manifesting in the world, it must be said that the created reality is more than only a 'thing' (*res*); it is also a 'meaning' (*signa*), because it reveals the abundance of divine project. Bonaventure develops a semiotic metaphysics to explain how all things are intentional sign from God: "*creaturae possunt considerari ut res vel ut signa*"[342].

What we think of as a Platonic idea, therefore, is taken to be a transcendent form that is reflected in a limited way in an empirical being. When this theory is used by Bonaventure, it is used to express the conviction that all of created reality is grounded in the transcendent mystery of God's knowledge of love[343].

Bonaventure comprehends God as the Creator through the medium of creation, because every reality is an epiphany of God, and is oriented to ascend to the Creator[344]. Light places an important metaphor of divine reality; the creatures are guided by the Light, which brings them toward the original source of light[345].

"In every creature something of the divine exemplar shines forth, but it is mixed with darkness; hence there is a sort of darkness mixed with the light. There is, then, in every creature a pathway leading to the exemplar. Like the ray of light that you notice coming in through the window is colored according to the different colors of

---

[341] Cf. TODISCO, "Il carattere cristiano del pensare Bonaventuriano", 25-26. Orlando interprets *Hexaëm*., I, 13 (V, 331): "Pater enim ab aeterno genuit Filium similem sibi et dixit se et similitudinem suam similem sibi et cum hoc totum posse suum; dixit quae posset facere, et maxime quae voluit facere, et omnia in eo expressit, scilicet in Filio seu in isto medio tanquam in sua arte".

[342] *III Sent.* d.11. a. 2, q. 1, ad 6 (III, 250).

[343] Cf. HAYES, "The Metaphysics of Exemplarity and the *Itinerarium*", 412.

[344] Cf. L. IAMMARRONE, "Il valore dell'argomento ontologico nella metafisica Bonaventuriana" in *San Bonaventura Maestro di Vita Francescana e di Sapienza Cristiana. Atti del Congresso internazionale per il VII centenario di San Bonaventura da Bagnoregio* (a cura di A Pompei), Pontificia Facoltà Teologica 'San Bonaventura', Roma, 1976, p. 67-110. The same article was published also in *DivThom*, 78 (1975), p. 3-40.

[345] *II Sent.*, d.13, a. 2, q. 2, fund. 3 (II, 319): "Lux inter omnia corporalia maxime assimilatur luci eterna […] et maxime in virtute et afficacia".

the many glass panes, so the divine ray of light shines differently in each creature and in the various properties of the creature"[346].

In consideration that created reality is *signa*, consequently, the key word to describe the divine presence is 'to manifest' (*manifestere*) or to display, and not 'to demonstrate' (*dimostrare*)[347]. It is to say that, before man talks about and/ to God (theologizing), God has manifested himself (revelation); and in Christian tradition, "Christ is not only a revelation, but *the* decisive revelation; his person becomes the fundamental clue to the nature of reality"[348]. In *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure writes: "any person who is not illumined by such great splendour in created things is blind. Anyone who is not awakened by such great outcries is deaf. Anyone who is not led from such effects to give praise to God is mute. Anyone who does not turn to the First Principle as a result of such sign is a fool"[349].

Conclusion

For Bonaventure, the world could not have failed to have a beginning, a first moment of existence, and he relies for this certainty both through faith and reason; the Franciscan holds that it pertains to the very nature of creation to have a first moment of existence. For him, the term *cratione ex nihilo*, is a theological attempt to express the conviction that God is the sole source of all existence. God as Creator is the mystery of Absolute Origin; God is the ground of existence as such. In this theological-metaphysical conviction is grounded the Christian confidence in the

---

[346] *Hexaëm.*, XII, 14 (V, 386): "In qualibet enim creatura est refulgentia divini exemplaris, sed cum tenebre premixta; unde est sicut quaedam opacitas admixta lumini. Item, est via ducens in exemplar. Sicut tu vides, quod radius intrans per fenestram diversimode coloratur secundum colores diversos diversarum partium; sic radius divinus in singulis creaturis diversimode et in diversis proprietatibus refulget"; see translation and commentary by HAYES, "The Metaphysics of Exemplarity", 409-410.

[347] Cf. TODISCO, "Il carattere cristiano del pensare Bonaventuriano", 28; Cf. ID. "Sacrficium intellectus", 48-49; Cf. ID., "La libertà creativa fonte francescana della verità e della carità", 11, 15. See also HUGHES, "St. Bonaventure's *Collationes in Hexaëmeron*, 119.

[348] HAYES, "The meaning of *Conventientia* in Bonaventure", 74.

[349] *Itin.*, I, 15 (V, 299): "Qui igitur tantis rerum creaturarum splendoribus non illustratur caecus est ; qui tantis clamoribus non evigilat surdus est; qui ex omnibus his effectibus Deum non laudat mutus est; qui ex tantis indiciis primum principium non advertit stultus est" (English. trans., HAYES, 61).

goodness of life: Because God is good, we exist. God is noe cause among causes, or an extension of inner worldly cause; God is the cause of being as such[350].

Bonaventure's argument on this issue was substantiated enlarged in *Hexaëmeron*. From the theme of metaphysics of exemplarity, one might simply consider that human investigation to the creature is an unfinished research for divine wisdom itself. What should a human being know through his intelligence? Bonaventure's answer is clear, that is to know the Word of God, the eternal *ratio* of knowledge. The universe was created through the divine Word in the Holy Spirit. In *Hexaëmeron*, he said that, one who doesn't realize the original and finality of his existence cannot have the intelligence. It is his view that at the level of God's primal Word of self-expression, there is but one Word. In that one Word is contained all that the divine mystery is within itself as a mystery of self-communicative love, and all that can come to be should the divine determine to communicate it-self externally[351].

The exemplartistic doctrine of creation, then, is a technical way of expressing the conviction that God is a mystery of creative love[352]. That is the new paradigm which we learn from Bonaventure. *Hexaëmeron* shows, how he finally presents his complete catalog of errors attributable to Aristotle. The rejection of *exemplarism* - which he explicitly associates with Plato – that the rejection of the doctrine of Ideas is the first cause of the following errors: the rejection of divine knowledge of the world, since if God does not know the world, all things happened either by chance or by absolute necessity; the rejection of eternal life where reward or punishment is found; the eternity of the world; and the existence of a single intellect for men[353].

---

[350] For more insight on the term *creatio ex nihilo*, see Z. HAYES, "A New Reading of the Sources", in *The Franciscan Theology of the Environment* (Dawn M. Nothwehr, OSF, ed.), Franciscan Press Quincy University, Quincy, 2002, p. 9-22, at 17-19.

[351] Cf. Introduction of HAYES into *Red. art.* (English trans.), 7.

[352] HAYES, "The Metaphysics of Exemplarity and the *Itinerarium*", 419.

[353] Cf. CULLEN, *Bonaventure*, 18-19; see also RATZINGER, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, 134-136.

In Bonaventure's view, an eternal world is logically a contradiction. His fundamental insight is that if something is produced by God, then it must have its beginning and finality; or as we have said, its proper *order*. Taking this into account, the issue of impossibility of an eternal world presents that human intellect is limited; therefore it needs to be illuminated by the Light. It is one thing to say that the Son comes from the Father but he does not begin to be, for the Son is eternal, who is not subject to duration. He has always come from the Father in the simplicity of eternity. Once the concept of production *ex nihlo* is explained in terms of exemplarity in the proper sense of the terminology, the question of the possibility of an eternal word does not even arise. One might see the *ratio* of the incarnation of the eternal Word who becomes visible in Jesus of Nazareth.

CHAPTER II
FROM METAPHYSICS OF BEING AND GOOD
TO METAPHYSICS OF LOVE

Introduction

We have noted that, for Bonaventure, the doctrine of exemplarity refers to relation between God and creation. The basis of this doctrine is the rule of the Son, the divine Word. He is *ratio aeterna* of the universe. The relation between the Father and the Son is the first and primal relation and, therefore, the basis for all other relations. This Christological point inspires us to state evidently that "verbum divinum est omnis creature"[354]. In this line of logic, Bonaventure asserts: "For any person who is unable to consider how things originate, how they are led back to their end, and how God shines forth in them, is incapable of achieving true understanding"[355]. Acknowledging the divine presence in the beauty of the universe, he warns that "any person who is not illumined by such great splendours in created things is blind; anyone who is not awakened by such great outcries is deaf; anyone who is not led from such effects to give prise to God is mute; anyone who does not turn to the First Principle as result of such signs is fool"[356].

We have also read some central texts from which derived important clues of the structure of Bonaventure's theology of creation. In *Breviloquium*, for instance, he states: "the whole of universe has been produced in being, in time, from nothing, by one, supreme principle alone, whose power, though immense, had disposed all

---

[354] *Brevil.*, II, 12 (V, 230).
[355] *Hexaëm.*, III, 2 (V, 343).
[356] *Itin.* I, 15. (V, 299).

things with a *certain measure*, *number* and *weight*"[357]. It indicates a vague triadic structure: 'measure, number, and weight', so implies a very distant echo of Trinitarian source of creation[358]. We repeat these texts to underline that in Bonaventure's theology, the question of the first being is a fundamental point of departure for a metaphysical system of thought. Metaphysics, according to him, is first of all the study of Being in itself and its properties and attributes; *Metaphysicus enim assurgit ad illud esse considerandum in ratione principii omnia originantis*[359]. Bonaventure has never wrote any particular tractate of metaphysics, but his way of thinking shows his concern on Being in itself, that is uncreated being, absolute being, from which came all created being[360].

For him, "metaphysics is concerned with the knowledge of all beings according to their ideal causes, tracing them back to the one first Principle from which they proceeded, that is, to God, in as far as God is the *beginning*, the *end*, and the *exemplar*"[361]. We have said that these terms are key words of Bonaventure's theological-metaphysical system. He writes: "This is the whole of our metaphysics: it is about *emanation*, *exemplarity*, and *consummation* (*return*); that is, to be illumined by spiritual rays and to be led back to the Supreme Being"[362].

The term *emanation* designates how creation proceeds from God. The term *exemplar* is the philosophical term from which derived the central point that Christ is the *ratio aeterna* of the entire universe. And *consummatio* (*reductio*) concerns a

---

[357] *Brevil.* II, 1 (V, 219).

[358] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 75.

[359] *Hexaëm.*, I, 13 (V, 331b); see ALFONSO POMPEI (a cura di), *Scritti di Leone Veuthey OFMConv (+1974)*; *raccolti e selezionati da Ernesto Piacentini*; *La Filosofia Cristiana di S. Bonaventura*, *MF*, Roma, 1996, p. 68. Hereafter we will write the name of the editor (Pompei) and sub-title of the volume, "*La Filosofia Cristiana di S. Bonaventura*".

[360] Cf. POMPEI (a cura di), *La Filosofia Cristiana di S. Bonaventura*, 67-68.

[361] *Red. Art.*, 4 (V, 321a): "Metaphysica (*se abet*) circa cognizione omnium entium quae reducit ad unum primum principium, a que exierunt secundum rationes ideales; sive ad Deum in quantum principium, finis et exemplar". English translation of *Red. Art.*, see *Works of St. Bonaventure. On the Reduction of the Arts* (translation, introduction and commentary by Z. Hayes), Franciscan Institute St. Bonaventure University, NY., 1996.

[362] *Hexaëm.*, I, 17 (V, 332).

creature's fulfilment of its destiny by returning to God[363]. Here one might see evidently that in Bonaventure's system, "the Neo-Platonic sound is unmistakable"[364]. In the first *Commentary on the Sentences*, Bonaventure indicates a philosophical point of departure from which he speaks of the primacy of the Father: "The more primary a thing is, the more fecund it is and the principle of others"[365]. Here one sees that "emanationism is a common form of Neo-Platonic explanation of the move from the One to the many"[366].

In large historical context, one might say that Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology is much closer to that of the Greek Fathers, which takes its point of departure from the Father as dynamic source of the Trinitarian processions (the *primitas* of the Father). The tradition flowed into the West through Scotus Erigene and his translations of the Pseudo-Dionysius. It passed through the Victorians and Alexander Hales to Bonaventure. Bearing in this explicit echoes, Bonaventure was able to develop the doctrine of divine multiplicity which fore-grounded the Godhead's intrinsic need to irradiate consubstantially out of a fecund power and fullness, unfolding in a perfect Trinity of persons[367].

If the philosophy of Bonaventure must be tagged with a label, it might more correctly be classified as a quasi-original synthesis of Augustine and Aristotle[368]. Incorporating Augustine, Bonaventure's theology is regarded with good reason as the supreme example of Medieval Augustinian[369]. Therefore, Von Balthasar states

---

[363] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 61-79.

[364] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 51.

[365] *I Sent*. d. 27, a. u., q. 2, concl. (I, 471a): "Movet etiam verbum Philosophi, qui dicit, quod principia quanto sunt priora, tanto potentiora – et quod causa prima plus influit – et quae simpliciter prima, summe habet influere per omnem modum".

[366] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 51-52.

[367] Cf. T. A. PINO, "Continuity in Patristic and Scholastic Thought: Bonaventure and Maximos the Confessor on the Necessary Multiplicity God", in *FrancStud*, 72 (2014), p. 107.

[368] THOMAS R. MATHIAS, "Bonaventurean ways to God through Reason", in *FrancStud*, 6 (1977), p. 203. Sileo indicates Bonaventure's original style as the 'Franciscan-philosophical' style (Cf. L. SILEO, "Il contesto culturale del duecento e Bonaventura", in introduction to *DizBon.*, 50).

[369] Cf. GILSON, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 490.

that "Bonaventure's cathedral-like theology unites Augustine and the Areopagite in the spirit of Saint Francis"[370].

From this historical point of departure, this chapter will examine how the Neo-Platonic is transcended by a theological assessment of the divine goodness[371]. For this aim, we need to place the influence of the Pseudo Dionysius, Saint Anselm, and Richard of St. Victor in Bonaventure's theological system. Our treatment will give particular attention to chapter five and six of *Itinerarium*. We hope to be able to make clear that Bonaventure's combinatory logic is his synthesis of the tradition he inherits, but as he works the tradition he transforms it into a new synthesis[372]. In this case we are talking of Bonaventure's thought on the Trinitarian God.

1. Christianization of *Being* and *Good*

Having seen the general vision of this chapter, we need to explain the reason of choosing the two terms of the title, 'being' and 'good'. We simply do not know enough about the details of the tradition to be able to write the history of its development or to offer a full philosophical-theological appraisal of it. What is important for us is to show the change of the meaning from pure philosophical view into Christian sense. We will try then, to show the correlation between the two terms, particularly from Bonaventure's view.

---

[370] VON BALTHASAR, *The glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, *II*: *Studies in Theological style: clerical style*, (English translation, edited by John Riches), Ignatius Press, San Francesco, 1984, p. 21.

[371] This section is merited also by the study of BOUGEROL, "Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite", in *ÈtFranc Actes du Colloques Saint Bonaventure* 9-12 Septembre (1968), 33-123; LAURE SOLIGNAC, "Bonaventure: de l'étude des noms divins à la fabrication de miroirs trinitaires, in *ÈtFranc*, 4 (2011), 49-66.

[372] See BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the works of Bonaventure*, 23-49.

1.1. Transcendental Notions in the Thirteenth Century

In the Thirteenth Century language, it was known that the term "transcendens" (*termini transcendent*)[373] was intended to some notions or qualitative terms which take place as the foundation of the absoluteness concept in metaphysical speculative of human mind. They are: *being*, *one*, *true*, *good* (*ens*, *unum*, *verum*, *bonum*). The terms also can be categorized as concepts, in which case they are the concepts of *being*, *unity*, *truth*, and *goodness*[374]. God can be named analogically from creatures, as goodness, truth, unity, and so on, but only if we take into account the negation of the real distinction that applies to him alone, making our ascription of being to him unique among all others[375]. Speaking of the transcendental notions, we are referring to Scot MacDonald's collected essays on being and goodness, in which the author(s), generally sustain the following vision: "A long and rich philosophical tradition, steaming from ancient Greek philosophy, running through the Middle Ages, has been guided by the intuition that there is some sort of interesting necessary connection between Being and Goodness"[376].

The historical point which guides the thought of the contributors to this volume (the collected essays) is the fact that the Christian Platonists such as Augustine and Boethius took the Christian God, who is Goodness itself, and

---

[373] For a study on this theme with an overview of its bibliography, see JAN. A. AERTSEN, "The Medieval Doctrine of the transcendentals. The current state of research", in *SIEPM*, 33 (1991), p. 130-147: "What is transcended are the special modes of being that Aristotle called 'categories', in the sense that the transcendental are not restricted to one determinate category. *Being* and its concomitant conditions, such as one, true, good, go through (*circumeunt*) all the categories" (130); see also L. M. DE RIJK, "The Aristotelian Background of Medieval *transcendentia*: A Semantic approach", in *MiscMed*, *30. Die Logik des Transzendentalen. Festschrift für Jan A. Aertsen* (hereafter: *MiscMed*, *30*), Berlin-NY., 2003, p. 4-22.

[374] Cf. L. SILEO, "L'esordio della teologia universitaria: i maestri secolari della prima metà del Duecento", in *Storia della Teologia nel Medioevo II* (G. D'Onofrio, dir.), Casale Monferrato, 1996, p. 606 (hereafter other articles are indicated by the title and the director of the volume).

[375] THOMAS JOSEPH, "Divine Simplicity and the Holy Trinity", in *IJST*, 18.1 (2016), p. 79-80; see also YONGHUA GE, "The one and the many: a revisiting of an old philosophical question in the light of theologies of creation and participation", in *THJ*, 57.1 (2016), p. 109-121.

[376] SCOT MACDONALD (ed.), *Being and Goodness. The concept of the Good in Metaphysics and Philosophical Theology*, Cornell University Press, NY., 1991, p. 1. Hereafter the quotation of other articles of the volume is sorted as follow: the title of article, (the editor), then page number.

explained the goodness of created things in terms of their participation in their Being, that which is Good itself. The convergent point of the various studies on this volume, therefore, is to demonstrate that *being* and *good* are interchangeable (*ens et bonum convertuntut*)[377]. This tradition in metaphysics has its roots in classical Greek philosophy; it first came into the mainstream of medieval philosophy not directly through Plato and Aristotle but through the late ancient and early medieval thinkers, even the anonymous authors, educated in the classical tradition. The varieties of Neo-Platonism that find expression in the Church Fathers, especially Augustine, and influential philosophers of early medieval period, such as Boethius and the Pseudo-Dionysius,[378] provided medieval philosophers with the conceptual foundations for metaphysics of goodness[379]. In the forgoing paragraphs we will highlight some significant medieval authors who were proponents of this theme.

Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius (480-524/5)[380] was one of the representative figures on this subject. In his tractate, *De hebdomadibus*[381], he explicitly takes up a variant of the universality thesis declaring that in the actual world, things have flowed from the First Good, and so they are secondary goods that are good in virtue of their flowing from the First Good. They exist in virtue of having been created by God, who is the First Good, and so they are necessarily dependent for their existence on the First Good and they themselves good in virtue of this relation to the First Good[382]. Aquinas made his commentary on *De hebdomadibus*, but on a broader scope. He criticized it because the transcendental character of the good is found to be not incompatible with the transcendence of

---

[377] Cf. MACDONALD (ed.), *Being and Goodness*, 2, 31.

[378] Cf. J. A. AERTSEN, "Good as Transcendental and the Transcendental of the Good" (MacDonald, ed.), 57-58. See also a lovely thesis of E. J. MARIE SPARGO (Allan B. Wolter, ed.), *The Category of the Aesthetic in the Philosophy of Saint Bonaventure*, Franciscan Institute Publication, NY., 1953 (rep. 2012).

[379] Cf. SCOT MACDONALD (ed.), *Being and Goodness*, 4.

[380] JOHN MAGEE, "Boethius", in JORGE J. E. GRACIA and T. B. NOONE (eds.), *A companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Blackwell, 2006, p. 217-226.

[381] The text was translated by MacDonald in the collected-volume (see p. 299-304).

[382] Cf. SCOT MACDONALD (ed.), *Being and Goodness*, 8.

God; there is not one place in the metaphysical framework for the property of goodness, but two[383].

An author who elaborated systematically on this issue was William of Auxerre (1140-1231), a master of Theology at Paris who developed the first great synthesis of Christian theology and the philosophy of Aristotle. His *Summa Aurea*[384] shows that his use of the transcendental concepts such as *being*, *goodness*, *truth*, and *unity* to express the divine attributes, was very influential among thirteenth-century theologians, and then these transcendental concepts were further developed by Philip the Chancellor, Alexander of Hales, and Thomas Aquinas[385].

Deviating from Boethius' category of good, William of Auxerre made the distinction between good *in essential* and good *per partecipationem*. Attributing that only in God, essence is identical with existence, he then confirms that only God is the most simple being, as in him the good is identical with his goodness (*est sua bonitas*); while good in creature is designed only on a particular good (*quid bonum*). This particular good is first of all a long distance imitation and representation of divine good (*habet particularem bonitatem et valde a longe imitantem et repraesentatem bonitatem divinam*). Only in God, the Supreme Good, goodness is identical with its being (*ipsa est summum bonum, et ita est Deus*), while in other beings the good is participant as it is created good (*quid bonum creatum*)[386]. Seen in this way we consider that William "reconciles a principal names of God *Que est* and

---

[383] For Aquinas' critical commentary on *De hebdomadibus*, see the article of Aertsen indicated above, but particularly the article of R. MCINERNY, "Saint Thomas on *De hebdomadibus*" (McDonald, ed.), p. 74-97. A recent study on Aquinas' view on transcendental: ALAIN CONTAT, "A Hypothesis about the Science of the Transcendental as *Passiones Entis* according to Saint Thomas Aquinas", in *AO*, 17 (2014), p. 213-266. On Aquinas' concept of Good, see also B. BLANKENHORN, "The Good as Self-Diffusive in Thomas Aquinas", in *Ang*, 79 (2002), p. 803-837.

[384] MAGISTRI GUILLELMI ALTISSIODORENSIS, *Summa Aurea*, (J. RIBAILLIER, cura et studio), Paris - Grottaferrata, 1986 (4 vol.).

[385] Cf. J. ZUPKO, "William of Auxerre" (Gracia and Noone, eds.), p. 688.

[386] Cf. L. SILEO, "L'esordio della teologia universitaria" (D'Onofrio, dir.), 611-612.

Bonum, convincing that the first name is from the doctrine of Damascene and the second is the axiom of Pseudo-Dionysius"[387].

Other important contributor of this medieval theory was Philip the Chancellor (1165/85-1236). He was a truly 'Renaissance' figure: poet, preacher, master of theology, ecclesiastical politician[388]. His main work called *Summa de Bono*[389] was a metaphysical, theological and moral doctrine, written around 1228-1230. He began his *Summa* (prologue) with the scholastic treatment of the transcendental. For him, *being*, *one*, *true*, and *good*, have two sides: They are truly universal (*communissma autem haec sunt: ens*, *unum*, *verum*, *bonum*) and predicable of all things[390]. But they are also 'appropriated' to God, because their own proper natures are found only in God: Thus, first there is the absolute good; and in others, there is relative good (*secundum quid*). For Philip 'being', 'one', 'good' and 'true' are predicates that in Scripture are attributed to God.

Substantially, it can be said that for Philip, these terms take place in a property which constructs the mental capacity to stabilize an adequate relation between abstraction and the experience of any particular being. It consisting of: being (*esse est*), the unity is one (*unitas est unus*), the truth is true (*veritas est verum*), the goodness is good (*bonitas est bonum*). The series shows that each property presents a particular being, so categorical that each one is presented in such a way that our mind cannot go beyond it. The category is so transcendental which presents in maximum way the speculative capacity of our mind, and therefore represents a transcendental reality, which can be said clearly as God. For being,

---

[387] WALTER HENRY PRINCIPE, *William of Auxerre's Theology of the Hypostatic Union*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, 1963, p. 19.

[388] Cf. R. E. HOUSER, "Philip the Chancellor" (Gracia and Noone, eds.), p. 534. See also A. AERTSEN, "Good as Transcendental and the Transcendence of Good" (MacDonald, ed.), 56-73.

[389] FILIPPO IL CANCELLIERE, *Summa de bono*, N. WICKI (ed.), Bern, 1985 (2 vol.).

[390] *Summa de Bono* (ed. Wicki), p. 4 (quoted in M. DE RIJK, "The Aristotelian Background of Medieval *transcendentia*", 8).

truth, goodness, perceived in any being, cannot be perceived in its ultimate meaning without the Being, Truth, and Goodness, which are the instruments of God[391].

Philip was greatly influenced by William of Auxerre, on the theme of ontological 'identification' – or to define in negative way: 'un-division'[392] – between the property *one* (the transcendental property which was derived from Aristotle, the Arabic philosopher and Averroes) and the property *good* (a notion which is alluded frequently by both the Latin and Greek authors). This ontological identification was understood by Philip in such a way that it presents the transcendence of God Creator, the first and final principle of all creatures. For Philip, the author of *Summa de Bono*, the mental representation of God has a consistence of identity as being and as good (*bonum et ens convertuntur … et dico quod bonum est immediatum ad ens*). Seen in this perspective, the idea became the principle of the theological speculation. The final point of this speculation is that God is the *Sumum Bonum*, creator, exemplar, and final end of all creatures[393].

Considering the transcendental properties, *unity-truth-goodness*, as the first and simple terms, meaning the result of being became the most universal and concrete idea of being. It can be said that unity-truth-goodness also constitute the maximum trans-categorical of theological-philosophical abstraction within Christian biblical testimony of the primordial revelation of God to Moses in Ex 3, 14: "*Ego sum qui sum*" and "*Qui sum misit me ad vos*". Taking the correspondence between transcendental properties and the biblical text as the nucleus of his orientation, Philip gives some characteristics for the term *good* as follows: *ontological* character in Aristotelian sense, as it is an undivided being, the *actus purus*, that is the perfection of being; *moral* character in Dionysian-Neo-Platonic sense: *bonum est diffusivum, auto communicativum, auto multiplicativum esse*.

---

[391] Cf. SILEO, "L'esordio della teologia universitaria" (D'Onofrio, dir.), 607-608.
[392] AERTSEN, "The Medieval Doctrine of the transcendental", 133.
[393] Cf. SILEO, "L'esordio della teologia universitaria" (D'Onofrio, dir.), 625-626.

As shown in the first two characters, it is evident that Philip understood goodness as the efficient cause of universe. Finally he made a correlation between Aristotelian and Dionysian nuances, saying that all creature have the desire to arrive at final goodness. Having characterized the term good in this manner, Philip concludes that good and being, for their common individuation in the subject of being, are convertible; they were distinguishable, therefore, only according to their basic concept[394]. Seen in this way, to say that God is the Supreme Good does not mean that to add any property to his being, as he is *Ego sum qui sum* (Ex. 3, 14:). Instead, it is a notion of the first good which postulates His intrinsic absolute simplicity of the absolute *actus* without any potency, the ontological original of undivided potency and act. In addition, when we say that God is the Supreme Good, we should consider also that He creates the world freely, and that goodness is the disposition of will that results to producing efficient cause[395].

Philip's *Summa de Bono* is historically important, not only because it is the first treatise of its kind, but also because it serves as a model for subsequent thirteenth-century discussion. With him the transcendental property was considered as a doctrine, thus making it a theological direction: All things considered, it is beyond doubt that the *termini transcendents* can be used to stand for creatural being as well as Divine Being. And as a doctrine, it is developed commonly by the medievalist, nevertheless with different interests.

Philip's view on the doctrine of transcendental had a considerable influence on the older Franciscan School in Paris, like Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure[396]. The Summa theological, attributed to Hales, contains an extensive account of the first determinations of being, which are the one, the true and the good[397]. There were various commentaries of the issue. The authors of that period like Robert Grosseteste (1175-1253), Bonaventure, Albert the Great (1193-1280),

---

[394] Cf. SILEO, "L'esordio della teologia universitaria" (D'Onofrio, dir.), 626-627.
[395] Cf. SILEO, "L'esordio della teologia universitaria" (D'Onofrio, dir.), 627.
[396] AERTSEN, "The Medieval Doctrine of the transcendental" (MacDonald, ed.), 134.
[397] Cf. AERTSEN, "The Medieval Doctrine of the transcen dental", (MacDonald, ed.), 133.

Thomas Gallus (1200-1226), and Thomas Aquinas, made their commentaries on it. At the end of the thirteen century, the doctrine was elaborated also by Henry of Ghent (1217-1293) and Duns Scotus (1266-1308)[398].

In the early Middle Ages this essentially Platonist approach to understanding the relation between being and goodness characteristically lead to the direction of a theological conception of goodness: God is the first and highest good, and created being is good in virtue of participating in the first and highest good[399]. As like as other medievalists, Bonaventure sees the transcendental notions are so universal that they apply to all things. Consequently, they do not necessarily connote imperfection in their very nature. When the transcendental are predicated to God, then, "this is the way of knowing God through his superlative perfection. For every property of creature that is fine (*nobile*) is attributed to God in superlative degree"[400]. Bonaventure, in the *Itinerarium*, addresses the general ontic notions as covering *ens* and its conditions. In summary, the Franciscan saint emphasizes that being in itself is only known to its conditions: one, true and good:

> "The intellect understands the meaning of terms when it comprehends that each thing is by means of a definition. But a definition is formulated by using broader terms; and these, in turn, are definied by still broader terms. Thus it goes until we arrive at the highest and most general terms. If these are not known, it is impossible to understand the less general terms by means of definition. Therefore, if we do not know the meaning of *being per se*, we cannot fully know the definition of any

---

[398] Cf. L. SILEO, "L'esordio della teologia universitaria" (D'Onofrio, dir.), 609. Sileo observes that the issue of the transcendental theory provoked academicals reaction at thaht time. This atmosphere which has been developing at the University of Parish was a reaction of the masters of the university on the influence of Neo-Platonic, from which emerged the discourse of unity and goodness in cosmological sense. The reason of their reaction was simply to answer the question of a dialog between metaphysics and theology developed within the university circle and outside of it (610).

[399] Cf. MACDONALD (ed.), *Being and Goodness*, 5-6.

[400] HOUSER and NOONE, *Commentary on the Sentences*, xxvii-xxviii.

particular substance. And we do not know the meaning of being *being per se* unless we know it together with all its properties such as: unity, truth, and goodness"[401].

1.2.   Why Good Diffusive of itself?

We can understand clearly now that there is profound difference between Greek and Christian notions of being. The medieval philosophers, Albert the Great, Thomas, Bonaventure, and Duns Scotus[402], as they approached the Aristotelian treatise, were already equipped with the belief in a God whose very name was Being: *Ego sum qui sum* (Ex. 3: 14). That was the way in which God had revealed himself to Moses[403]. According to the words of Gilson, the Exodus text is "the acid test which infallibly detects the true nature of being in any Christian philosophy"[404]. From this text, one finds no hint of metaphysics, but God speaks, *cause finita est*. The text lays down the principle from which henceforth the whole of Christian philosophy will be anchored. From this moment it is understood once and for all that the proper name of God is Being and that, as taken up later again by Bonaventure, is the name that designates God's very essence[405].

For the medieval Christian thinkers, therefore, God is the primary and perfect instance of being; God is the particular case of being. On one side we should consider that in medieval contexts, there is no philosophical treatise on *being* in the

---

[401] *Itin.*, III, 3 (V, 304a): "Capit autem intellectus *terminorum significata*, cum comprhendit, quid est unumquodque per definitionem. Sed definitio habet fieri per superiora, et illa per superiora definiri habent, usquequo veniatur ad suprema et generalissima, quibus ignoratis, non possunt intelligi *definitive* inferiora. Nisi igitur cognoscatur quid est *ens per se*, non potest *plene* sciri definitio alicuius specialis substantiae. Nec *ens per se* cognosci potest, nisi cognoscatur cum suis conditionibus, quae sunt; *unum*, *verum*, *bonum*" (English trans., Hayes, 85). For English translation of *Itinerarium*, see *Works of St. Bonaventure. Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* (Translation by Z. Hayes; introduction and commentary by P. Boehner), Franciscan Institute Publications Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2002.

[402] JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *A Treatise on God as first principle* (Latin text and English translation by Allan B. Wolter), Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 1966; see also Allan's study on Scotus' metaphysics: A. B. WOLTER, *The Transcendental and their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus*, St. Bonaventure, NY., 1964.

[403] Cf. GILSON, *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy* (English trans., by A. H. C. Downes), University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1991 (reprinted 2007), p. 51-52.

[404] E. GILSON, *Being and Some Philosophers*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, 1949, p. 33.

[405] Cf. GILSON, *The Spirit f Medieval Philosophy*, 51.

Bible, but everyone remembers the famous passage of Exodus: 3, 14. No Christian needs to draw from this statement any metaphysical conclusions, but if he does, he can draw only one, namely, that God is Being. The Christian God is the supreme principle and cause of the universe. If the Christian God is first, and if he is Being, then Being is first, and no Christian philosophy can posit anything above Being[406]. Among all divine names the one is eminently proper to God, namely *qui est*, precisely because this *qui est* signifies nothing other than being itself (*ipsum esse*). There is but one God and this God is Being, that is the cornerstone of all Christian philosophy. In this principle, as we will see more in this chapter, lies an inexhaustible metaphysical fecundity[407].

Plato's disciple, Plotinus, views that the first principle can rightly be called the Good. Thus, the principle is both the One and the Good, as being the cause of 'that which comes after the One, namely, multiplicity[408]. One of the important figures of Neo-Platonic is the Pseudo-Dionysius: He knows that God has claimed for Himself the name of Being, but since, as a Platonist, he knows that God is even above being, all he can do is to see in this highest of all 'divine names' the supreme denomination of God as known from his effects. According to him "God himself is not being, but he is the Being of beings"[409]. What is it that accounts for the Being of all beings? It is the Goodness[410].

In connection with the above explanation we take note of this: But if the good is the last reason for creation, how are we to account for this good itself? According to Gilson, the answer to such a question could not be found in Plato, neither in Dionysius. It is true that in Dionysius we find the idea that good, in its

---

[406] Cf. GILSON, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 30.
[407] GILSON, *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy* , 51.
[408] GILSON, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 21.
[409] *De divinis nominibus*, 590C (English trans., Luibheid, 51). For the complete work of Dionysius in English see section 3 below.
[410] GILSON, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 34.

nature is diffusive and communicative, but he has no reason for the exercise of this causal power[411].

The perfection of the Christian God is that perfection which is proper to being as being, that which being posits along with itself. Considered in its metaphysical root the good is being itself as desirable, that is to say it is being considered as the possible object of a *will*. To say that being is at once act and good, is not merely to indicate that it may act and cause, but it also suggest at the same time that it contains the reason for the exercise for this causal power. The perfection of its actuality, conceived as good, invites it to communicate that actuality *freely* to the being of its possible effect. The generosity, with which goodness gives of itself, is a free manifestation of the energy by which that being exists[412].

"From Augustine onwards, the works of God *ad extra* were understood to be from God as from one principle"[413]. What makes the greatness of the saint in the history of Christian philosophy is that, deeply imbued with Neo-Platonism as he was, he has never yet made the mistake of devaluating being, not even in order to extol the One. There is a great deal of Neo-Platonism in Augustine, but here is a point, and it is decisive one, at which he parts company with Plotinus: there is nothing above God in the Christian world of Augustine, and, since God is Being, there is nothing above Being. True enough that, the God of Augustine is also the One and the Good, but he is, not because He is both one and good; rather, he is both one and good because he is *He who Is*"[414]. The insights of Augustine would be of far-reaching significance down to the present. He clearly reflects the idea of creation from nothing. And his theology of creation reflects also the biblical sense of the goodness. We find this in a text of the *Confessions*:

---

[411] Cf. GILSON, *The Spirit f Medieval Philosophy*, 93-94.
[412] Cf. GILSON, *The Spirit f Medieval Philosophy*, 94.
[413] HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 61.
[414] GILSON, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 31.

"In the beginning, which is of you, in your Wisdom, which born of your own substance, you created something, and that something you created from nothing. You did not make heaven and earth out of yourself, for then they would have been equal to your Only-Begotten, and through this equal also to you. But in no way was it right that anything which was not of you should be equal to you. There was nothing beyond you from which you might make them, o God, one Trinity and threefold Unity. Therefore you created heaven and earth out of nothing; a great thing and a little thing. For you are almighty and good, to make all things good, the great heaven and the little earth; two beings, one near to you, the other near to nothingness; one to which you alone would be superior, the other to which nothing would be inferior"[415].

It is very clear in this text, as commented by Hayes[416], that the God who is good, creates out of nothing. And all things that the good God creates are also good. This includes heaven and earth. But hardly after Augustine has said this, he went on to say that, while heaven is close to God, earth is close to nothing. The sense of Plotinian emanationism is unmistakable here, and with it the distrust of materiality. Thus, this text gives expression to tension that will remain in Christian Neo-Platonism well into the Middle Ages and beyond and will become a common element in Christian spirituality[417].

We can say then, as all Christian philosophers (Bonaventure, Aquinas) have said it, that the reason for creation lies in the goodness of God. In St. Augustine's phrase, it is because God is good that we exist: *quia Deus bonus est*, *sumus*. The Platonic origin of this Idea is beyond doubt. The *Timeus* already expounds that the

---

[415] See Latin text in SANT' AGOSTINO, *Le Confessioni*, XII, 7 (introduzione, traduzione, note: a cura di Carlo Carena), CN., Roma, 1965, p. 410: "In principio, quod est de te, in sapientia tua, quae nata est de substantia tua, fecisti aliquid et de nihilo. Fecisti enim caelum et terram non de te: nam esset aequale unigenito tuo ac per hoc et tibi, et nullo modo iustum esset, ut aequale tibi esset, quod de te non esset. Et aliud praeter te non erat, unde faceres ea, Deus, una trinitas et trina unitas: et ideo de nihilo fecisti caelum et terram, magnum quiddam et parvum quiddam, quoniam omnipotens et bonus es ad facienda omnia bona, magnum caelum et parvam terram. Tu eras et illud nihil, unde fecisti caelum et terram, duo quaedam, unum prope te, alterum prope/ nihil, unum, quo superior tu esses, alterum, quo inferus nihil esset" (English trans., HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 44).

[416] Cf. HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 44.

[417] HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 44.

ordering activity of the divine Demiurge is attributed to his liberality, his freedom from envy[418].

But that mystery of primal goodness which for philosophy was an impersonal good can be seen in Christian theology to be the mystery of divine, personal love. In Bonaventure's view, as we will explore more in this chapter, it is considered that, if we think of the emanation of creation as a great chain of being, that chain closes back finally on its point of origin. The divine Trinity can be seen as the fountain-fullness from which the river of reality flows, both within the mystery of God in the triune life of love, and outside the divinity in the form of creation[419].

In Christian theology we can find the consideration of metaphysical root of good, that is as being desirable itself, and that is to say it is being considered as the possible object of will; and if it is true we would understand why it spontaneously tends to be diffusive and to communicate itself. Here we can deduce the process by which Christian thought achieves clear consciousness of its own metaphysical principles, rises out of the level of Hellenism, and elaborates at least in definitive form what we may call the metaphysics of Exodus[420].

In other words, the imagination of the Christian thinkers was given free rein in this field. Besides seeing the universe as the entire world sees it, admits the need of another standpoint peculiar, which is the relation between the Supreme Good and Creator. Just as it is by His goodness that He makes causes to be causes, thus delegating to them a certain participation in His power, along with a participation in His actuality, He confers the one in conferring the other. In mind of Christian thinkers, particularly in Bonaventure, the physical world offers a face which is the reverse of its physician itself, a face where all that was read on the one side in terms

---

[418] Cf. GILSON, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, 93.
[419] Cf. HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 65-66.
[420] GILSON, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, 94.

of force, energy, and law, is now read on the other in terms of participations and analogies of divine being[421].

1.3.   Metaphysics of Light in "Franciscan School"

Bonaventure's theological system was influenced by the founders of a "Franciscan school"[422] derived from the University of Parish, Bologna and Oxford. The first master of the Order was Antony of Padua. In succession there were other friars: John of Rupella, Odo Rigaldus, William Militona, Alexander Hales, Robert Grosseteste, and Richard of Rufus. For the aim of this study we will simply present briefly the contributions of Alexander Hales and Robert Grosseteste. In generally way they expounded on the theme of diffusion of light and goodness, by demonstrating the exemplar of the Triune God, the Creator. The Primal Light is God; and that Light is identical with Truth. From the divine source, light and truth radiate outward in the direction of creation and to the finite mind[423].

Speaking of the theme light, first, let me delve on Alexander Hales. For him there are two biggest mystery of truth of the universe: creation and redemption. Both of them manifest the presence of God in the creature. Not only because God enters in their ontological definition, but first of all because, throughout this, man has direct experience of God who participated according to man's experience. Acknowledging the precedent Franciscan masters, Hales accepted the Neo-Platonic principle, *bonum diffusivum sui*, applying it in the mystery of Incarnation and Trinity. Redemption is realized independently from Adam's sin, as God's love expressed freely, without any external condition[424].

---

[421] GILSON, The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy, 100.

[422] For a detail issue of the question 'is existed a Franciscan School?', see G. MARCIL, "The Franciscan School thorough the Centuries" (K. Osborne, ed.), p. 312-330; For a historical and contemporary perspectives on this question, see PIETRO MARANESI (ed.), *Teologia Francescana? Indagine storica e prospettive odierne su di una questione aperta,* Cittadella, Assisi, 2010.

[423] A good example of study on Bonaventure's doctrine of light is C. BIGI, "La Dottrina della luce in S. Bonaventura", in *DivThom*, 64 (1961), p. 396-442.

[424] Cf. SILEO, "L'esordio della teologia universitaria" (D'Onofrio, dir.), 653.

Hales adopts also the concept of communication of Richard of St. Victor to explain the Trinity *ad intra*; his approach to Trinitarian thought set the stage for the Franciscan scholars of the next three centuries, mainly in Bonaventure[425]. It seems that he was the first who used the expression of *ordo naturalis* in theology of Trinity. In this way, the *Summa* set up to the thesis of intrinsic auto-communication of the *Summum Bonum* which is God, adducing it as the explanation of perfect communication per *modum naturae* et per *modum voluntatis*, referring to the Greek Fathers. Bonaventure latter modified it as *ordo originis*, making distinction between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* order of auto-communication[426].

Second, let me cite Robert Grosseteste[427]. The most relevant point we can say about Grosseteste is his doctrine of *light*. His cosmological masterpiece, *De luce*, presents something like the 'big bang' conception of genesis of the physical universe. He speaks of metaphysics of light (*lux*) and the doctrine of creation. Light (*ab intra*) and illumination (*ab extra*) are two pillars holding the speculative theology, cosmogony, metaphysics, and knowledge of natural phenomena into one integrated perspective. This idea came under the influence of the authors of Patristic and Medieval centuries, both Arabic and Latin.

In his tractate *De luce* he states that the light is the first and unique start point which contain the totality of the first formless matter. The light is diffuse in itself, so to be multiple forms. For him, this thought is a point of view by which to interpret the biblical text of creation, Gen 1, 3: "*Dixitque Deus: 'fiat lux'*", and Gen 1, 2 which said that the light, as it is illuminating and auto-diffusing, gives form to unextended matter, thus the empty and deform matter[428].

---

[425] Cf. K. OSBORNE, "Alexander of Hales" (K. Osborne, ed.), 28.
[426] Cf. SILEO, "L'esordio della teologia universitaria" (D'Onofrio, dir.), 656-657.
[427] A good example of study on Grosseteste's cosmology and its influence in story of the experimental science, see A. C. CROMBIE, *Robert Grosseteste and the Origins of Experimental Science*, At the Clarendom Press, Oxford, 1961.
[428] Cf. SILEO, "L'esordio della teologia universitaria" (D'Onofrio, dir.), 675.

The physical universe has light within, and all its components – space, time, inanimate, and living entity, spheres and starts – are the multiplication of energy emanating from light. Derived from divine act of creation these components are expended to each other, as they are illuminated by the divine light. This doctrine emerged particularly in Grosseteste's maturity work, *Hexaëmeron*, written two or three years before he became Bishop of Lincoln, approximately 1232 to 1235[429]. According to him God is light, and if God is light, all who came from him are his imagine[430]. For him one reason for making light the fundamental component in cosmology is that light seems capable of self-diffusion, and thus to explain the multiplication of objects by the extension of matter[431].

With this logic of the diffusion of light, he speaks about the Triune God. Light diffuses but at the same time remains identical in itself. From the fact that in light there are three factors: *light*, *splendor*, and *heat* (*lux*, *splendor*, *fervor*), he convincing asserted that it can be demonstrated, in an exemplary way nevertheless (*demonstratio per exemplum*), the existence of the Triune God: the first is expressed in the second, the second is reflected into the first and at the same time expressed from itself his reflection to the first; and inasmuch as the first is reflected in itself for the second, the same reflection proceeds simultaneously from the first and the second onto the third. In this analogy, the concept of intra divine movement is emerged, that is *generation* of the Son and *spiration* of the Holy Spirit[432].

---

[429] ROBERT GROSSETESTE, *Hexaëmeron* (Richard C. Dales, Servus Gieben, eds.), Oxford, NY., 1982; see Introduction of the editors, p. xiv.

[430] Cf. SILEO, "L'esordio della teologia universitaria" (D'Onofrio, dir.), 677.

[431] Cf. CROSS, *The Medieval Christian Philosophy*, 78.

[432] ROBERTO GROSSTESTA, *Hexaëmeron*, VIII, 3, 5, ed. DALES [quoted in SILEO, "L'esordio della teologia universitaria" (D'Onofrio, dir.), 677]: "Unus enim de se esprimit secundum; secundum autem se reflectit in primum et exsprimit de se suam reflectionem in primum. Immo etiam primus per secundum in se ipsum reflectitur, proceditque, haec reflectio a primo simul et secundo". For a recent study on Grosseteste's thought, see MAURA O'CAROLL, ed., *Robert Grosseteste and the Beginnings of a British Theological Tradition. Papers delivered at the Grosseteste Colloquium held at Greyfriars, Oxford on 3rd July 2002*, Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, Rome, 2003.

2. Bonaventure on *Being* (*Itinerarium* V)

Having seen the general panoramic view on the transcendental theory and the contribution of Franciscan School, we arrived now on Bonaventure's own perspective. As the title of this chapter indicates, between four expressions or divine properties commonly known in medieval period, we choose the terms 'being' and 'good' as the two key words of the discussion. We start now with the term 'being'.

2.1. The influence of ontological argument

The first name of God, according to Bonaventure is *esse*[433] (*being*). This is the first modus on which to focus our attention. This is the most manifested name, the most perfect, therefore the first one. Under the influence of Anselm's ontological argument[434], he states that God is the perfect of all perfections, "*est ipsum esse quo nihil melius cogitari potest*"[435].

God is seen as the object of the *truth* which nothing greater can be thought. This truth is the divine property which is Being in itself, that is the Highest Truth[436]. The existence of God is the truth that *per se notum*[437]. For Bonaventure, the existence of God, considered in itself, is absolutely evident[438]. In *Proslogion*, speaking of divine nature, Anselm states clearly that "God is whatever it is better to

---

[433] *Itin.*, V, 2 (V, 308): "Primus modus primo et principilater defigit aspectum in ipsum esse, dicens quod, *qui est* est primum nomen Dei" (English trans., Hayes, 111).

[434] For more detail study on Anselm's influence on Bonaventure see BOUGEROL, *Saint Bonaventure et saint Anselme*, in *Ant*, 47 (1972), p. 333-361; IAMMARRONE, "Il valore dell'argomento ontologico nella metafisica Bonaventuriana", in *San Bonaventura Maestro di vita Francescana e di Sapienza Cristiana* (a cura di A. Pompei), p. 67-110; on the same volume, GIUSEPPE CENACCHI, "L'argomento intuitivo di S. Anselmo in S. Bonaventure", p. 111-125; For a comparison between Augustine, Anselm and Bonaventure, see TRAVIS E. ABLES, "The Word in which all things are spoken: Augustine, Anselm and Bonaventure on the Christology and the Metaphsics of Exemplarity, in *TheolStud*, 76. 2 (2015), p. 280-297.

[435] *I Sent.*, d. 8, p. 1 a. 1, q. 2, concl. (I, 155a).

[436] Cf. IAMMARRONE, "Il valore dell'argomento ontologico nella metafisica Bonaventuriana", 76-77.

[437] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 54.

[438] *I Sent.*, d. 8, p.1, a. 1, q. 2 (I, 153a): "Et quod sic, videtur per Anselmum, qui dicit, quod Deus secundum communem animi conceptionem est quo nihil maius cogitari potest; sed maius est quod non potest cogitari non esse, quam quo potest: ergo cum Deo nihil maius cogitari posit, divinum esse ita est, quod non potest cogitari non esse".

be than not to be and that, existing through himself alone, he makes all other beings from nothing" [439].

Our intention here is not to examine the ontological argument itself. Rather, we want to trace out the argument's Trinitarian function in Bonaventure's broader theological system. In *Itinerarium* chapter three, he gave a new point to the argument, identifying God as *supreme good*: "The power of supreme Good (*summi boni*) is so great that nothing else can be loved by creature except through a desire for the supreme Good"[440]. And as we will see more in the chapter six, the ontological argument is at the very heart of Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology.

Anselm's argument can be reassumed in three central points as follows: The Saint describes the existence of God as: 1) "something-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-conceived"[441]. In this definition, God, which is "something-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-conceived", must be existed both in mind and in reality: 2) "And surely that-than-which-a-greater cannot-be-conceived cannot exist in the mind alone. For if it exists solely in the mind, it can be thought to exist in reality also, which is greater"[442]. "Therefore: 3) "there is absolutely no doubt that something-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought exists both in the mind and in reality[443].

---

[439] ANSELMO, *Prosologion* V : "Quod dues sit quidquid melius est esse quam non esse; et solus existens per se se omnia alia faciat de nihilo". For latin text see ANSELMO D'AOSTA, *Monologio e Proslogio. Gaunileno Difesa dell'insipiente Risposta di Anselmo a Gaunilone* (introduzione, traduzione, note e apparati, a cura di Italo Sciuto), Bompiani, Milano, 2002, p. 322. English text is taken from ANSELM OF CANTERBURY, *The Major Work* (English translation, edited by Brian Davies & G. R. Evans), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998, p. 89.

[440] *Itin.*, III, 4 (V, 305a): "Tanta est vis summi boni, ut nihil nisi per illius desiderium a creatura possit amari, quae tunc fallitur et errat" (English trans., Hayes, 89, 91).

[441] *Prosologion* II: "aliquid quo maius nihil cogitari possit" (I Sciuto, 316; English trans, Davis & Evans, 87).

[442] ANSELMO, *Prosologion* II: "Et certe id quo maius cogitari nequit, non potest esse in solo intellectu. Si enim vel in solo intellectu est, potest cogitari esse et in re, quod maius est" (I Sciuto, 316; English trans, Davis & Evans, 87).

[443] ANSELMO, *Prosologion* II: "Existit ergo procul dubio aliquid quo maius cogitari non valet, et in intellectu et in re" (I Sciuto, 318; English trans, Davis & Evans, 88).

The arguments sustains that God's being is un-derived; that is, God has being so necessarily as to be in some sense being itself. What makes the ontological argument intriguing is its insistence not simply that God is a necessary being, but that God's existence is necessary for thought[444]. Bonaventure is not interested in any deductive argument to demonstrate the existence of God; he takes for himself the fact that it is so, and he immediately explains in the most obvious way, that it is the being itself, the first being, that manifests in our mind[445]. The existence of God is evident in itself, and is immediately known in the proposition: God exists. In this contemplation, our intellect is illuminated by the divine light, and being so we cannot think that God does not exists"[446].

Here we obtain the shortest formula of the evidence of the existence of God: *Si Deus est Deus*, *Deus est*[447]. If we have in us the idea of God, we are sure that he exists, for we cannot negate to think of him as existent. In Bonaventurian view, the first principle is such that once we understand the terms in which it is stated, we accept its truth: it does not require proof, because in such a proposition, the predicate is implied in the subject. The proposition *God is*, is of such a sort; for God, the supreme truth, is being itself, and as such, there is nothing more perfect than can be conceived: therefore He cannot not-be, and the intrinsic necessity of his being is such that in some way it is reflected in our thought[448].

In the second *Commentary on the Sentences*, based on the authority of Saint Anselm, Bonaventure answers positively the question: "*utrum divinum esse sit adeo verum, quod non possit cogitari non esse*"[449]. For Bonaventure, our intellect knows nothing except through the first light and truth. Therefore, every act of the intellect

---

[444] Cf. E. ABLES, "The Word in which all things are spoken", 290.
[445] See the commentary of BOEHNER on *Itinerarium* (English trans.), 208.
[446] BOEHNER, in commentary on *Itinerarium* (English trans., 210).
[447] *De Myst. Trin.*, q. 1, a. 1., fund. 29 (V, 48). Similarly in *Hexaëmeron*, the Saint states that it is evidenced that the truth is the light of the soul, it shines so powerfully on the soul that it cannot be thought not to exist without inner contradiction (Cf. *Hexaëm.*, IV, 1 [V, 349]).
[448] Cf. GILSON, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 115.
[449] *I Sent.*, d. 8, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2 (I, 153).

which consists in thinking that something does not exist would take place through that first light. But it is not possible, by means of the first light, to think that the first light or truth does not exist. Therefore in no way can the intellect think that the first truth does not exist[450].

At the conclusion of the question, he states: "*Nam Deus sive summa veritas est ipsum esse*, *quo nihil melius cogitari potest: ergo non potest non esse nec cogitari non esse*"[451]. From this point of view, it is declared that as the *actus purus*, God is "*esse primo occurrit menti*". In this context, we are in the line of thinking of the Platonic system, which states that "those who deny the *one* - the absolute, the necessary - falls into a *regressus ad infinitum*"[452]. Bonaventure writes:

> "Therefore, if we don't know the meaning of *being per se*, we cannot fully know the definition of any particular substance. And we don't know the meaning of *being per se* unless we know it together with all its properties such as: unity, truth and goodness. […], our intellect does not come to a full analysis of any particular created being unless it is aided by an understanding of the most pure, most actual, most complete, and absolute being, which is being simply and eternally, in which the principles of all creatures are found in their purity"[453].

Just as *Being* alone can produce beings, so all that does not exist of itself but receives its existence from another, cannot have in itself the infinite power which alone can make being arise out of nothing[454]. As the perfect being, the divine power attaches himself to a pure act. It can be said that "the supreme being is both actual and habitual. Actual, because it is always and everywhere the totality of what it is;

---

[450] *I Sent.*, d. 8, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2. (I, 153a).
[451] *I Sent.*, d. 8, p. 1, a. 1, concl. 5 (I, 155a).
[452] TODISCO, "Esse", in *DizBon.*, 349.
[453] *Itin.*, III, 3 (V, 304a): "Nisi igitur cognoscatur quid est *ens per* se, non potest *plene* sciri definitio alicuius specialis substantiae. Nec *ens per se* cognosci potest, nisi cognoscatur cum suis conditionibus, quae; *unum*, *verum*, *bonum*. […], non venit intellectus noster ut plene resolvens intellectum alicuius entium creatorum, nisi *iuvetur* ab intellectu entis purissimi, atucalissimi, completissimi et absloluti; quod est *ens simpliciter* et *aeternum*, in quo sunt rationes omnium in sua puritate" (English trans., Hayes, 85).
[454] Cf. GILSON, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 178.

habitual, because it possesses of itself, and always present in itself, the infinity of the effects that it can produce"[455]. At this juncture, we arrive at Bonaventure's conception of the divine essence and the infinity of its profundity, considering the contradictive idea of actual infinity.

"There is an infinite and it can be only one. This infinity is possible because its perfect simplicity allows it to establish an infinity of intelligible acts, simultaneous and yet ordered. […]. The very idea of infinite number is charged with essential unintelligibility and contains contradiction; there is no actual infinity except that it contains contradiction; there is no actual infinity except that of God and His power, because His infinity is not that of number but that of simplicity"[456].

For Bonaventure, there is only one primacy in God, that of God himself. At the source and, as it were, the root of all, there is Being, that is perfect *primum*: ee acts by himself, he knows himself and wills himself, knows things and wills things. The first being is "pure and absolute being: *ego sum qui sum*, primary, simple, and necessary, with a necessity such that it cannot even be conceived as not existing"[457].

To be blind to the *primum* is an intellectual blindness which Bonaventure finds most disturbing: "How remarkable, then, is the blindness of the intellect, which does not consider that which it sees first and without which it can know nothing"[458]. The *primum* is without origin (*origo*). It is the origin and it is therefore from itself (*ens a se*), which means it can in no way be conceived as from something (*ens de aliquot*) or as from nothing (*ens de nihilo*)[459]. In summary, the

[455] Cf. *I Sent*., d.43, a. u. q. 2, concl. (I, 768).

[456] Cf. *I Sent*., d. 43, a. u. q. 3, ad 6 (I, 773); see quotation and paraphrase by GILSON, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 165.

[457] *Hexaëm*., II, 21 (V, 340); Cf. GILSON, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 165.

[458] *Itin*., V, 4 (V, 309a): "Mira igitur est caecitas intellectus, qui non considerat illud quod prius videt et sine quo nihil potest *cognoscere*" (English trans., Hayes, 115).

[459] *Itin*., V, 5 (V, 309a): "Vide igitur ipsum purissimum *esse*, si potes, et occurrit tibi, quod ipsum non potest cogitari ut *ab alio acceptum*; ac per hoc necessario cogitur ut omnimode *primum*, quod nec de nihilo nec de aliquo potest esse" ; HELLMANN, *Divine and created order*, 36.

ontological is "the surest argument of all", because it expresses "the culmination of one's thinking about God"[460].

2.2.   The primordial revelation

Everything that can be said about God is derived from the Being[461]. "The being, therefore is the proper name of God": "Ego sum qui sum" (Ex. 3: 14). In the tenth conference of *Hexaëmeron*, based also on the same biblical text, it is sustained that: "The first thing to be contemplated is the being of God. The first name of God is being (*esse*); nothing therefore is more evident, as anything is said about God is reduced into being; this is really the proper name of God"[462]. The name being designates particularly God as the Creator of the universe[463]. Bonaventure affirms that the name, which is derived from divine revelation to Moses, according to John Damascus is the proper name of God. Bonaventure writes: "*Damascenus igitur sequens Moysen dicit, quod qui est est prmum nomen Dei*"[464]. Based on the text of Ex. 3: 14, the Damascene explains the doctrine of divine simplicity, calling God's identification on this passage: "the most proper of all the names given to God"[465].

---

[460] GREGORY LANAVE, "Bonaventure's Arguments for the existence of God and an 'independent' *de deo uno*", in *Thomist*, 74 (2010), p. 68.

[461] Cf. *Hexaëm.*, X, 10 (V, 378b): "Quidquid de Deo dicitur reducitur ad esse".

[462] *Hexaëm.*, X, 10 (V, 378b): "Primum nomen Dei est esse, quod est manifestissimum et perfectissimum, ideo primum; unde nihil manifestius, quia quidquid de Deo dicitur reducitur ad esse; hoc est proprie proprium nomen Dei. Deus non dixisset Moysi sive latori Legis : *Ego sum qui sum*, nisi esset primus". Cf. METSELAAR, "Bonaventure's Doctrine of God as First Known", 70.

[463] *Hexaëm.*, X, 15 (V, 379a): "Alio modo omnis creatura dicit, Deum esse secundum rationem originis: ut si est ens creatum, est ens increatum; et si est ens per participationem, est ens per essentiam; si est ens per compositionem, est ens per simplicitatem; si est ens per multiformitatem, est ens per uniformitatem vel identitatem"; Cf. METSELAAR, "Bonaventure's Doctrine of God as First Known", 70-71.

[464] *Itin.*, V, 2 (V, 308b).

[465] *De Fide Orthodoxa* 9, 2: "Igitur videtur quidem omnibus principalius eorum quae in Deo dicuntur nominibus esse 'qui est', quemadmodum 'ipse oraculo loquens Moysi in monte', ait: "Dic filiis Israel: Qui est misit me" […] Sicut autem sanctus Dionysius ait: *bonus*. Non enim est in Deo dicere primum esse, et ita bonum". Cf. ORTLUND, "Divine Simplicity in Historical Perspective: Resourcing a Contemporary Discussion", in *IJST*, 16. 4 (2014), p., 441. Latin text is taken from SAINT JOHN DAMASCENE, *De Fide Orthodoxa* (versions of Burgundio and Cerbanus, edited by Eligius M. Buytaert OFM), The Franciscan Institute St. Bonaventure, NY., 1955, p. 48-49. Hereafter the quotations will be indicated as follow: the title with chapter and number, page number of the version we are using in parentheses.

In the seventh century, John of Damascus represented the maturating of the Eastern strand of thought concerning divine simplicity. John divided all reality into two classes: the created (mutable) and the uncreated (immutable). Divine simplicity was utilized in this context in order to distinguish God from creation, and demonstrate the necessity of his existence as the source of creation, and demonstrate the necessity of his existence as the source of creation[466]. In this context, divine simplicity was emphasized primarily in terms of a lack of spatial composition. He claimed, for example, that God is infinite, and boundless, and formless, and intangible, and invisible, in short, simple and un-compound[467].

For the Damascene, "the Deity is invisible, being everywhere wholly in His entirety and not divided up part by part like that which has body, but wholly in everything and wholly above everything"[468]. Divine simplicity is ultimately swallowed up into divine incomprehensibility and hiddeness, for it concerns his unknown, hidden essence. As noted by Gavin, "this version of divine simplicity stands in stark contrast to that which developed in the West, which strongly emphasized the identity of God's essence and attributes"[469].

2.3. *Being* as an organic principle

The notion of being is the first we discover in the least of our acts of knowledge, for it is implied in every concept. Whenever we think of being or our mind holds knowledge of any given being, this thought is an image of the eternal Being that has left upon us the stamp of his word[470].

---

[466] Cf. GAVIN ORTLUND, "Divine Simplicity in Historical Perspective", 440.
[467] *De Fide Orthodoxa* 4, 1 (19): "Qualiter enim corpus est 'quod infinitum et indeterminatum, et informabile et inpalpabile, et invisibile, et simplex et incompositum'"; see ORTLUND, "Divine Simplicity in Historical Perspective", 440.
[468] *De Fide Orthodoxa* 13, 2 (57): "Igitur Deus quidem immaterialis existens et incircumsriptibilis, in loco non est. Ipse enim sui ipsus locus est, omnia implens et super universa existens et ipse continens omnia".
[469] ORTLUND, "Divine Simplicity in Historical Perspective", 441.
[470] Cf. BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the works of Bonaventure*, 124.

In this logic, we may deny God's existence, but denial is not evident and cannot be evident. If we go to the bottom of our knowledge and conceive God as the *ipsum esse*, there is no possibility of giving our assent to the denial of God's existence[471]. It is clear that while talking about being, Bonaventure has in mind the First Being. He is talking not about neither limited nor analogous being, but the divine Being[472]. This is the pure Being, which does not exist through another being, and being so, it is totally lacking of non-being, exactly it is the eternal Being[473], the most perfect and supreme one, without defect and without diversity.

> "Since it is being with no qualification, it is first in an unqualified sense. Since it is first in an unqualified sense, it is not made by another, nor is it made by itself. Therefore it is eternal. And since it is first and eternal, therefore it is not composed from others. Therefore it is supremely simple. Then, because it is first, eternal, and most simple, therefore is in it no potentiality mixt with act. It is most actual. Then, because it is first, eternal, most simple, and most actual, it is also most perfect. Such a being lacks absolutely nothing, and nothing can be added to it. Because it is first, eternal, most simple, most actual, and most perfect, it is supremely one. For whatever is said with an all-embracing superabundance is said with respect to all things. But 'that which is said with an unqualified superabundance can apply to one being alone'[474]. Hence, if God name that which is first, eternal, most simple, most actual, and most perfect, then it is impossible to think of God as not existing"[475].

---

[471] See commentary of BOEHNER on *Itinerarium* (English trans), 212.

[472] *Itin.* V, 3 (V, 308b).

[473] *Itin.* V, 4 (V, 309a).

[474] ARISTOTLE, V *Topic*. c. 3 (c. 5).

[475] *Itin.* V, 6 (V, 309b): "Nam quia simpliciter est *esse*, ideo simpliciter *primum*; quia simpliciter primum, ideo non est ab alio factum, nec a se ipso potuit, ergo *aeternum*. Item, quia primum et aeternum; ideo non ex aliss, ergo *simplicissimum*; Item, quia primum, aeternum et simplicissimum; ideo nihil est in eo possibilitatis cum actu permixtum, et ideo *actualissimum*. Item, quia primum, aeternum, simplicissimum, actualissimum; ideo *perfectissimum*; tali omnino nihil deficit, neque aliqua potest *fieri additio*. Quia primum, aeternum, simplicissimum, actualissimum, perfectissimum; ideo *summe unum*. Quod enim per omnimodam superabudantiam, dicitur respect omnium. 'Quod etiam simpliciter per superabundantiam, dicitur respectu omnium. Quod etiam simpliciter per superabudandtiam, dicitur, impossibile est, ut conveniat nisi uni soli. Unde si Deus nominat esse primarium, aeternum, simplicissimum, actualissimum, perfectissimum; impossibile est, ipsum cogitari non esse" (English trans., Hayes, 117).

Bonaventure's thought gets even more profound when he says that the root and final explanation of the *ultimum* is the *primum* itself. The *ultimum* is the *ultimum* precisely because it is the *primum*: "Bonaventure's deep insight into the *primum* reveals that the *primum* is in itself a closed circle. The *primum* and the *ultimum* are identical. So here, perfect order is realized. However, only in revelation of the *ordo divinarum personarum* can that order, and thus, the *primum* itself be fully understood"[476].

In divine person, property of simplicity becomes strictly idea of plurality. The idea of the *primum* as status, therefore, does not imply a static relationship, but it implies the contrary: Bonaventure's view on being is an "organic concept"[477]. The first being is continually overflowing to sustain and keep all things in existence. This perspective brings out the dynamic relationship between the *primum* and all that comes forth from it. The first Being is the status of all things; it embraces all plurality, the principle of all in all.

> "Since it is first, it does all things for its own sake. Thus the first being is of necessity the final end, the beginning and the consummation, the *Alpha* and the *Omega*. Therefore because it is eternal, it is also most present. Because it is eternal, it does not come from another, and of itself, it does not cease to exist, nor does not it move from one state to another. Therefore it has neither past nor future, but it's being is only in the present. It is the greatest because it is most simple. Since it is most simple in essence, it is greater in power, since the more unified a power is the more intense it is. Because it is most actual it is most immutable. Because it is most actual, it is pure act. [...]. Because it is most perfect, it is immense. And because it is most perfect, nothing can be thought of beyond it that would be better, more noble, or of greater dignity. Hence nothing is greater than it. Anything of this sort is

---

[476] HELLMANN, *Divine and created order*, 37.
[477] ROMANO GUARDINI, *Opera Omnia XVIII. Bonaventura* [hereafter *Bonaventura*] (Italian translation, edited by Ilario Tolomio), Morcelliana, 2013, p. 657.

immense. Finally because it is supremely one, it is all-embracing. That which is supremely one is the universal principle of all multiplicity" [...][478].

In *Itinerarium*, therefore, as the above quotation indicated, Bonaventure gives grounding to God's transcendence in his immanence. Precisely, because God transcends the world through his actualized self diffusion in the Trinity, he can be immanent in the world without being dependent on the world. Since God does not need the world to activate his fecundity, his transcendence and immanence can coincide in his self-diffusiveness[479].

"[...] and therefore it is the origin and consummating end of all things. Because it is *the eternal* and *most present*, it embraces and enters into all things that endure in time, simultaneously existing as their centre and circumference. Because it is *most simple* and *greatest*, it is within all things and outside all things, and hence it is an intelligible sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference in nowhere. Because it is *most perfect and immense*, it is within all things but is not contained by them; and it is outside all things but is not excluded; it is above all thing but not distant; and it is below all things, but not dependent. Because it is *supremely one* and *all-embracing*, it is *all in all*, even though all things are multiple and this is simple one. And because this is *most simple unity*, most *peaceful truth*, and *most sincere goodness*, it is all power, all exemplarity, and all *communicability*.

[478] *Itin.* V, 7 (V, 309b-310a): "Quia enim est primum, omnia operatur propter se ispum; et ideo necesse est, quod sit finis ultimus, initium et consummatio, *alpha et omega*. Ideo est *praesentissimum*, quia aeternum. Quia enim aeternum, non fluit ab alio nec deficit a se ipso nec decurrit ab uno in aluid: ergo nec habet praeteritum nec futurum, sed esse praesens tantum. Ideo *maximum*, quia simplicissimum. Quia enim simplicissimum in essentia, ideo maximum in virtute, quia virtus, quanto plus est unita, tanto plus infinita. Ideo *immutabilissimum* quia actualissimum. Quia enim actualissimum est, ideo est actus purus. [...]. Ideo *immensum*, quia perfectissimum. Quia enim perfectissimum, nihil potest cogitari ultra ipsum melius, nobilius nec dignius, ac per hoc nihil maius; et onme tale est immensum. Ideo *omnimodum*, quia summe unum. Quod enim summe unum est, est omnis multitudinis universale principium; [...]" (English trans., Hayes, 119).

[479] Cf. COUSINS, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, 106.

Therefore from him and through him and in him are all things, for he is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good. And to see him perfectly is to be blessed, as it was said to Moses: *I will show you all good*"[480].

3. The Pseudo -Dionysius on the *Divine Name*

The discovery of Pseudo-Dionysius intellectual context in the thirteenth century was of great significance in the medieval formulation of theology and spirituality[481]. Influenced not only by the Aristotelian revolution of the thirteenth century, but also by the Dionysian renaissance, Bonaventure was aided in this reconfiguration by the concept of super-essential goodness. God is goodness itself, and the good is self-diffusive[482].

How can we speak of the divine names? How can we do this if the Transcendent surpasses all discourse and all knowledge? The questions deal with the central point of the work of the Pseudo-Dionysius, *On the Divine Names*[483]. For the purpose of the study we will deal with this theme, as it has interaction to

---

[480] *Itin.* V, 8 (V, 310a-b): "Rursus revertentes dicamus: quia igitur *esse* purissimum et absolutum, quod est simpliciter *esse* est *primarium* et *novissimum*, ideo est omnium *origo et finis consummans*. – Quia *aeternum* et *praesentissimum*, ideo omnes durationes ambit et intrat, quasi simul existens earum centerum et circumferentia. – Quia *simplicissimum* et maximum, ideo totum intra omnes et totum extra, ac per hoc 'est sphaera intelligibilis, cuius centrum est ubique et circumferentia nusquam'. Quia *actualissimum* et *immutabilissimum*, ideo est intra omnia, non exclusum, supra omnia, supra omnia, non elatum, infra omnia, non prostratum. – Quia vero est *summe unum* et *omnimodum*, ideo est *omnia in omnibus*, quamvis omnia sint multa et ipsum non sit nisi unum; et hoc, quia per semplicissimum *unitatem*, serenessimam *veritatem*, et sincerissimam *bonitatem* est in eo omnis *virtousitas*, omnis *exemplaritas* et omnis *communicabilitas*; ac per hoc, *ex ipso et per ipsum et in ipso sunt omnia*, et hoc, quia *omnipotens*, *omnisciens*, et *omnimode bonum*, quod perfecte videre est esse beatum, sicut dictum est Moysi: *Ego ostendam tibi omne bonum*" (English trans., Hayes, 121).
[481] Cf. BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the works of Bonaventure*, 39.
[482] Cf. ALEXANDER PINO, "Continuity in Patristic and Scholastic Thought", 110; see also DARIO SCHIOPPETTO, "Diffusio" in *DizBon*, 325-326.
[483] English translation: PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS, *The complete work* (translation by Colm Luibheid, forward, notes, and translation collaboration by Paul Rerom, preface by Rene Reques, introduction by Jaroslav et al), Paulist Press, NY.,1987. Latin quotations is taken from S. DIONYSII AEROPAGITAE, *Opera Omnia Quae Extant*, et comentarii quibus illistrantur, studio et opera Balthasaris Corderii, Apud Garnier Fratres, Editores set J. P. Migne Successores, Parisiis, 1889. (Hereafter, quotation of some central section will be indicated as follow: the title, number of page and column of Latin text following by English translator and page number).

Bonaventure's metaphysics of the good. Quoting the Pseudo-Dionysius, Bonaventure hailed him as "the prince price of mystics"[484].

3.1. 'Good' diffusive himself

In the Dionysian view, 'good'[485] is the preeminent attribute of God. For the author, it is "the most important name of God, which shows forth all the processions of God"; this divine attribute presents the Triune God, "the source and indeed, the superior of what is good[486]. The name surpasses every name and descriptions of every sort[487], and which "the sacred writers have preeminently set apart for the supra-divine God from all other names", and so, became the essential one[488]: Jesus said: "None is good but God alone" (Mt. 17: 17). In fact the absolute good says of himself: "I am good" (Mt. 20: 15)[489].

Dionysius uses the name good to explain that God the Creator is the Triune God. He said clearly that Good itself, that is, the Triadic Unity, possessing the same divinity and the same goodness[490]. The Triune God is "the source and, indeed, the superior of what is good"[491].The Transcendent Good is "the cause of everything"[492]; and as it is the source and destiny of all things, so it is "all in all"[493]. The Good

---

[484] Cf. J. LECLERCQ, introduction to PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS, *The Complete Works*, 29.

[485] There are various names for the divine, such as 'I am being', 'life', 'God', the 'truth', 'wise' 'beloved' 'good', 'being' 'beautiful', 'power', 'light', etc. We interest in two names, namely 'good' and 'being' [595A, 5978 (English trans., Luibheid, 54-57)]. Nevertheless the divine itself is beyond out horizons. "It is the supra-being beyond every being. It sets the boundaries of all sources and orders and yet it is the rooted above every source and order. It is the measure of all things. It is eternity and is above and prior to eternity" (647C [English trans., Luibheid, 66]).

[486] *De Divinis Nominibus*, 679B: "Ac primum, si videtur, perfectum, et quod omnes Dei emanationesboni nome expendamus, invocata Trinitate, quae boni princium est, et bonus superat, et optimas quasque suas providentias explanat" (English trans., Luibheid, 68).

[487] *De Divinis Nominibus*, 598A, 8 (English trans., Luibheid, 57).

[488] *De Divinis Nominibus*, 694B (English trans., Luibheid, 71).

[489] Cf. *De Divinis Nominibus*, 638A (English trans., Luibheid, 58).

[490] Cf. *De Divinis Nominibus*, 594B (English trans., Luibheid, 53).

[491] *De Divinis Nominibus*, 679B (English trans., Luibheid, 68).

[492] *De Divinis Nominibus*, 594D (English trans., Luibheid, 54).

[493] *De Divinis Nominibus*, 595C, 7 (English trans., Luibheid, 56).

produced everything and it is the ultimately perfect cause, and all things are returned to it as their own goal; all things desire it[494].

All being derives from, exists in, and is returned toward the Good[495]. Throughout the term *good*, he shows a dynamic characteristic in the creation. The character is derived from a process named the "divine differentiation" (*distinctionem divinam*). The creation is dynamic where the goodness of God diffuses into the creatures within their quality of unity and multiple. To say it analogically, the created universe mirrors their Creator.

"The term 'divine differentiation' is given to the benevolent processions of the supreme Godhead. This Godhead is granted as a gift to all things. It flows over and shares goodness to all. And it becomes differentiated in a unified way. It is multiplied and yet remains singular. It is dispensed to all without ceasing to be a unity. Since God is a 'being' in a way beyond being, he bestows existence upon everything and brings the whole world into being, so that his single existence is said to be manifold by virtue of the fact that it brings so many things to be from itself. He remains one amid the plurality, unified throughout the procession, and full amid the emptying act of differentiation. […]. He is one and He dispenses his oneness to every part of the universe as well as to its totality, to the single as well as to the multiple. He is one in an unchanging and transcendent way. He is not one part of a plurality nor yet a total of parts. […]. Rather, He is one in a manner completely different from all this. He transcends the unity which is in beings. He is

[494] Cf. *De Divinis Nominibus*, 699A-B (English trans., Luibheid, 74-5).
[495] Cf. *De Divinis Nominibus*, 706D-707A (English trans., Luibheid, 79).

indivisible multiplicity, unfilled over-fullness which produces, perfects, and preserves all unity and all multiplicity"[496].

3.2. "Good" and "Being"

The divine name "good" tells us of all the processions of the universal cause; it extends to beings and non-beings and that cause is superior to being and nonbeings. The name "being" extends to all beings which are, and it is beyond them. In the Dionysian view, these two attributes express the same God. Dionysius writes: "I do not think of the *Good* as one thing, *Being* as another, Life and Wisdom as yet other […]. No. But I hold that there is one God for all these good processions and that he is the possessor of the divine names of which I speak and that the first name tells of the universal providence of the One God, while other names revel general or specific ways in which he acts providentially"[497]. Dionysius has a good reason to coincide the two names, since goodness gives rise to being:

"The first gift of the absolutely transcendent goodness is the gift of being, and that goodness is praise for those that first and principally have a share being. From it and in it are being itself, the source of beings, all beings and whatever else has a portion of existence. This characteristic is in it as in irrepressible, comprehensive, and singular feature"[498].

---

[496] *De Divinis Nominibus*, 650B-C: "Atque ut plane de omnibus deinceps explicemus, distinctionem divinam esse dicimus, quemadmodum dictum est, benignissimas Dei emanationes. Dum enim rebus omnibus ubertim bonorum omnium consortia impertit et infundit, tum conjuncte quidem distinguitur, amplificatur autem unice, multiplexque fit ex uno, nec ab unitate discedit: ut puta, quoniam Deus superessentialiter est essentia, cunctasque producit essentias, secundum illud umum quod est multiplicari dicitur, dum multas ex se producit entitates. […] Quinetiam cum quid unum ipse sit, omnique parti et toti, et uni et multitudini, unius sui consortium largiatur, vel ut sic etiam supra substantiam exsistit unus, cum neque par sit multitudinis, neque ex partibus totum; […] sed longe ab his alia ratione quid unum est, supra unum, quod rebus unum est, et multitudo individua, inexplebilis superplenitudo, omne unum multitudinemque producens ac perficiens atque complectens" (Eng. trans., Luibheid, 66-67).

[497] *De Divinis Nominibus*, 815D (English trans., Luibheid, 97).

[498] *De Divinis Nominibus*, 819C: "Primum igitur donum per se esse cum per se illa supraquam bonitas producat, merito ab antiquiore et prima omnium participationum laudatur; et est ex ipsa et in ipsa ipsum per se esse, et rerum principia, et omnia quaecunque sunt; idque incomprehense, et copulate, et singulariter" (English trans., Luibheid, 99).

Dionysius also pointed clearly that "the good is called the substance of the first beings" (*substantia esse*)[499]. Moving forward on the theme of good, Dionysius pointed the name of good in a larger sense as the expression of divine abundance which gives being to everything else; it is God who transcends everything, the cause and maker of being. In this perspective, God is understood in a horizon completely beyond our logical category:

> "He is the source and the measure of the ages. He is the reality beneath time and the eternity behind being. He is the time within which things happen. He is being for whatever is. He is coming-to-be amid whatever happens. From him who comes eternity, essence and being, come time, genesis and becoming. He will not come to be. No. He is not. Rather He is the essence of being for the things which have being [...]. All eternity and time are from him. The Preexistent is the source and is the cause of all eternity, of time and of every kind of being"[500].

3.3. Being and Plurality

God is the absolute Being, and all other beings exist by virtue of their participation in the Being. As the first source of everything alive, the first Being is the perfect model of the qualities of the creatures, namely their unity, plurality, order, and variation[501]. From this idea emerged the term 'exemplar'[502], which is derived from the thought of Greek Fathers. For Dionysius, the term is a particular expression to reveal God as the Creator of all other beings. He illustrates the presence of the divine trace as light which illuminates various things. This idea recalls the dynamic of 'good' as the expression of divine differentiation which illuminates our knowledge to see the creatures as exemplar of the divine presence.

---

[499] *De Divinis Nominibus*, 955A (English trans., Luibheid, 68125).

[500] *De Divinis Nominibus*, 818C-819A: "Qui est, universae essentiae possibilis supertanturalis causa substantialis existit, et effector entis, existentiae, personae, substantiae, naturae; principium et mensura saeculorum, et temporum entitas, et entium aevum, tempus eorum quae fiunt, esse iis quae quoquomodo sunt, generatio, quomodo genitis. Ex eo qui est, aevum, et substantia, et existentia, et tempus, et generatio, et quod gignitur. [...] Atque omne quidem aevum ac tempus ex ipso, omnis vero aevi ac temporis, reique cujuslibet principium ac causa is est qui praeexistit" (English trans., Luibheid, 98-99).

[501] Cf. *De Divinis Nominibus*, 819B-819C (English trans., Luibheid, 99).

[502] Cf. *De Divinis Nominibus*, 823C (English trans., Luibheid, 102).

"We give the name of 'exemplar' to those principles which preexist as a unity in God and which produce the essence of things. Theology calls them predefining, divine and good acts of will which determine and create things and in accordance with which the Transcendent One predefined and brought into being everything that is. […]. Starting with being and initiating the creative procession of goodness, reaching out to fill all things with being as a gift from itself, rejoicing in all things, it anticipates all things in itself. In total simplicity it shakes off all duplication and it embraces everything in its transcendent infinity" [503].

The quotation indicates the limitless of the Supreme Being. He is presented to all and he is everywhere, according to the one and the totality of everything: "The categories of eternity and of time do not apply to him, since he transcends both and transcends whatever lies within them. Eternity itself and beings and the measure of beings and the measured world exist through him and from him"[504]. God is the cause of all time and eternity; yet he is before time and beyond time and is the source of the variety of time and of seasons. He proceeds the eternal ages, for he is there before eternity and above eternity[505].

4. Beyond the 'Dionysian Corpus'

We have seen that for Dionysius, goodness is the preeminent attribute of God; it is the very definition of the super-essential Godhead and the deepest basis for His creative activity. This divine attribute presents the Triune God, "the source and indeed, the superior of what is good[506].

---

[503] *De Divinis Nominibus*, 823C, 826A: "Exemplaria vero dicimus esse rationes in Deo substantificas rerum et unite praeexistentes, quas divinus sermo vocat praedefinitiones, et divinas atque bonas voluntates, rerum definitrices et effectrices: sequndum quas qui est supra substantiam, omnia quae sunt praedefinivit et produxit […] Quamobrem universa ipsientia secundum unam omnibus eminentem copulationem sunt attribuenda; quandoquidem dum ab ipsamet essentia substantificae promanationis ac bonitatis exordiens per omnia dimanat" (English trans., Luibheid, 102).

[504] *De Divinis Nominibus*, 826B; 939A (English trans., Luibheid, 102-3; 121).

[505] *De Divinis Nominibus*, 939A (English trans., Luibheid, 121)

[506] *De Divinis Nominibus*, 679B: "Ac primum, si videtur, perfectum, et quod omnes Dei emanationesboni nome expendamus, invocata Trinitate, quae boni princium est, et bonus superat, et optimas quasque suas providentias explanat" (English trans., Luibheid, 68).

Now, in this section, we will show how Bonaventure brings forward 'the Dionysian Corpus' in his theological system, modifying it. Our point of departure is the historical fact that "it was Bonaventure, together with Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas[507], who introduced Dionysius as a constructive element into Occidental theology"[508].

4.1.   The concept of *egressio-reductio*

In 'the Dionysian Corpus' we find also *The Mystical Theology*, *The Celestial Hierarchy* and *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy.* All these works "are clearly Neo-platonic in character"[509]. Studying the Corpus, Bougerol indicates 284 citations on the various works of Bonaventure, and about 142 citations are derived from *The Divine Names*[510].

Under the Dionysian influence, Bonaventure, and the medieval thinkers in general, see the symbolism as an expression of the metaphysics of emanation; for example, the symbol of light. In *The Celestial Hierarchy*, Dionysius linked the effusion of light with the rhythm of the procession and analogical return. Indeed, the Dionysian spirit is essentially mystical, and Bonaventure, since his *Commentary on the Sentences*, "knew him primarily as the originator of the doctrine of

---

[507] On Thomas's view, see ELEONORE STUMP and NORMAN KRETZMAN, "Being and Goodness" (Macdonald, ed.), 98-128., BERNHARD-THOMAS BLANKENHORN, OP., "The good as self-diffusive in Thomas Aquinas", in *Ang*, 79 (2002), 803-837.

[508] BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the works of Bonaventure*, 41.

[509] BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the works of Bonaventure*, 40: "Yet it is almost impossible to give a determinate meaning of the expression "Neo-Platonism", or to point out the successive additions by which this meaning was enlarged. Augustine and Dionysius drew (upon Plato) in different ways, from entirely different sources. Most of what the Middle Ages received of Platonism came from the *Timeus* in its various interpretations, including that of Dionysius".

[510] BOUGEROL, "Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite", 36 and 41. In this article, Bougerol firstly presents a detail distinction in Bonaventure's quotations according to various translation of *Corpus Dionysian* he used: the version of John Scotus Euriugena (E) – which is the basic version, the version of Sarazzin (S), Robert Grosseteste (R), and the version of Thomas Gallus (V) [Cf. p 39-80]. Without entering in detail discussion of this historical question, our study is more interested to the second part of the article on theme of *bonum diffusivum sui.*

hierarchy"[511]. The intelligible reality to which Dionysius tends by way of hierarchical ascent is the actual goal of all contemplation. Dionysius writes:

> "'Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights'. But there is something more. Inspired by the Father, each procession of the Light spread itself generously toward us, and, in its power to unify, it stirs us by lifting us up. It returns us back to the oneness and deifying simplicity of the Father who gather us in. For, as the sacred Word says, 'from him and to him are all things'"[512].

The last quotation gives light that "from the very beginning of his thought "Bonaventure's image of the world is dominated by the paired concepts of *egressio-reductio* which remind us strikingly of the thought-forms of the Areopagite"[513]. The paired concepts "is the specific idea in Bonaventure", so to speak, "the spirit that commands his metaphysics and theological vision of the relationship between God and its creation"[514]. In this line the Bonaventure expresses the image of the intelligible circle: it started from God and back to God. This dialectical motion can be reassumed in term *Reductio*. For Bonaventure *reductio* is a "methodology", it is like a "technique" of soul to go back to God. But more than just a technique, "it is a whole synthesis that tends to define how the entire creation that started from God returns to Him in the manner of an intelligible circle"[515].

---

[511] RATZINGER, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, 89.

[512] *De Coelesti Hierarchia*, 120B-121A: "Omne datum bonum, et omne donum perfectum desursum est, dessendens a Patre luminum (Jac. 1, 17) : quin et omnis a Patre motae illustrationis emanatio, in nos benefice exundans, denuo ceu unifica vis, ad supere nos revocando simplificat, et convertit ad congregantis Patris unitatem, et ad deificam simplicitatem. Quoniam ex ipso et in ipsum sunt omnia (Rom. 11: 36), ut sermo sacer ait" (English trans., Luibheid, 145).

[513] RATZINGER, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, 89: "At the same time, we are not justified in concluding that Bonaventure had a personal contact with the works of Dionysius beyond that would normally be the case of time. It must remain an open question as to how this pair of concepts attained such a dominant role".

[514] BOUGEROL, "Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite", 114 (cf. 118).

[515] BOUGEROL, "Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite", 14; BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the works of Bonaventure*, 75. For particular study on methodology of reductio, see also GUY-H. ALLARD, "La technique de la 'reductio' chez Bonaventure", *in S. Bonaventure 1274-1974. II*, p. 396-416; see also LANAVE, "Bonaventure's Theological Method" (Hammond, et al., eds.), p. 114-115.

Evidently, this 'methodology' is derived from the Dionysian definition and the concept of *hierarchy*. For Dionysius the term means "a divine order, a state of understanding and an activity approximating as closely as possible to the divine. And it is uplifted to the imitation of God in proportion to the enlightenment divinely given to it"[516], and its goal is "to enable beings to be as like as possible to God and to be at one with him"[517].

Seen in this world-view, Bonaventure, as Rorem observes, "provides a striking example of a medieval theologian who transposed the Dionysian dynamics of local hierarchy into several broad and interlocking domains, indeed into a fully hierarchical universe. He is perhaps the most interesting representative of hierarchical thinking in the Middle Ages"[518]. Bonaventure uses the term to describe the illumination of the soul in conformity to Christ through grace[519].

The Neo-platonic influence in Dionysius's style of hierarchy appears significantly in Christology of Bonaventure. The present study would consider that "the Christology of Dionysius is Neo-platonic in form. It brings close together the redeeming Incarnation and that operation by which the One or Good spreads itself out generously to constitute the hierarchy of beings"[520]. But with Bonaventure, we should have more profound consideration: He would have been inclined in direction, not only as he knew Dionysius, but "already by reason of his Franciscan view which attributed a higher value to the *effectus* rather than to the *intellectus*"[521].

---

[516] *De Coelesti Hierarchia*, 163D: "Est hierarchia, meo quidem judicio, sacer ordo, et scientia, et actio quae ad deformitatem, quantum fas est, accedit, atque insitis sibi divinitus illustrationibus proportione quadam ad Dei subvehitur imitationem" (Eng. trans., Luibheid, 153).

[517] *De Coelesti Hierarchia*, 166A: "Scopus igitur hierarchiae est, Dei, quanta fieri potest, assimilatio conjunctioque" (English trans., Luibheid, 154).

[518] PAUL ROREM, *Pseudo Dionysius. A commentary on the texts and an introduction to their influence*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1993, p. 31-31.

[519] Cf. DELIO, "Theology, Spirituality and Christ the Center" (Hammond et al., eds.), 378.

[520] BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the works of Bonaventure*, 41.

[521] RATZINGER, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, 90.

In Bonaventure's view the category of hierarchy does not remain in terrestrial and celestial level: he identifies Christ as the true hierarchy; He is Hierarch in the ecclesiastical and the angelic hierarchy; and so, is the middle person of the super-celestial hierarchy of the Blessed Trinity[522]. Such a hierarchy is a divine order which is perfect in itself. The universe is made in accordance with it. In other words, the universe is created to be able to participate in the super-celestial hierarchy, the supreme Good[523].

Those who follow Ratzinger's study on Bonaventure's theology of history will recognize easily that he draws the vision of *egressio-reductio* in history. After presenting the difference between Aristotelian view on time and history, Ratzinger concludes that for Bonaventure, "the history of the world is ordered in an *agressus* and a *regressus*; and in the center of these stands Christ"[524]. In this vision, time is understood not as a neutral measure of duration as the Aristotelian view suggests, but as *measure* in God's creative power, thus in order of the emergence of things from the creative power of God. Time is the measure of going-forth. History is seen in the vision of salvation: it "consists of the two corresponding movements for the very beginning: *egressus-regressus*. Christ stands as the turning point of these movements and as the center that both divides and unites"[525].

To be a creature means to be situated somewhere on the circular line of emanation from and return to God. And events that take place in the time are not just random occurrences but are order to a particular end which God has established

---

[522] *Brevil.*, prol. sec. 3, n. 2-3 (V, 205): "et hoc totum per illum unum hierarcham, Iesum Christum, qui non tantum ratione naturae humanae assumtae est hierarcha in *ecclesiastica* hierarchia, verum etiam in *angelica* et media persona in illa *supercaelesti* hierarchia; beatissimae Trinitatis; ita quod per ipsum a summo capite Deo descendit unctionis gratia non solum *in barbam*, verum etiam *in oram vestimenti*, quia non tantum in Ierusalem supernam, verum etiam usque in Ecclesiam militantem" (English trans., Monti, 12-13).

[523] Cf. LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità Creatrice*, 47.

[524] RATZINGER, The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure, 141.

[525] RATZINGER, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, 142-143; see also HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 66.

for creation. For the beginning, creation unfolds as history, and time is the measure of where one stands in the historical movement toward God[526].

Taking the Pseudo Dionysius' general contribution, and having his vision of *egressus-regressus* in dialectic of hierarchy, we want to place the metaphysics of goodness as the central point of this chapter. For this aim, we will allow our self to affirm the following important consideration: For Bonaventure, "God is good; and the good is essentially defined by two properties, productivity and finality. Good tends naturally of itself to expand itself, to outpour itself, to diffuse itself; and it is at the same time the end to which everything else is ordered: bonum est propter quod omnia"[527]. In sum, the contours of the Christian faith are cast within the Neo-Platonic circle of emanation, exemplarity, and return as this philosophical metaphor is reshaped by the Christian vision[528].

4.2.   The *primitas* of the Father

In the Neo-Platonist's *Liber de Causis*, a famous aphorism which has been quoted and commented upon by countless medieval thinkers, it is written that "the more primary a thing is, the more fecund it is, and it is, therefore, the principle of other: "*quanto aliquid prius, tanto fecundius est et aliorum principium*"[529]. The *First* (ἀρχή, πρῶτον) and the *One* (ἕν) are two of the outstanding attributes in the highest being of Plotinus and Proclus. Departed from this category, Bonaventure states: "Because the one principle from which the multitude among things originates is the absolutely the first principle, it is therefore productive and capable of an infinite and immense fecundity"[530].

---

[526] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 66.

[527] GILSON, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 163.

[528] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 62.

[529] *Liber de causis*, prop. 1 et 17, as quoted in *I Sent.*, (I, 53, footnote n. 6).

[530] *II Sent.*, d.1, p. 2, a.1, q. 1, concl. (II, 40a): "Quia enim est principium simpliciter *primum*, ideo fecundum et potens est fecunditate infinita et immensa". An example of study on *primitas* of the Father is ROBERT J. WOŹNIAK, *Primitas et Plenitudo. Dios Padre en la teologia trinitaria de San Buenaventura*, Universidad de Navarra, Pamlona, 2006; see also the recent study of J. ISAAC GOFF, *Caritas in Primo. A study of Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of Trinity*, Academy of the Immaculate, New Bedford, 2015.

While this concept is grist for the philosopher, Bonaventure was apparently impressed by the notion of ultimate divine goodness. He states the basic principle under the aspect of fecund primordial of the Father; his approach to discussing the Trinity is, for the most part, to begin with the person of the Father, rather than with the divine substance. The person of the Father is the foundation of the Trinitarian metaphysics. As the first absolute, God in itself is the fullness of fecundity (*fontalis plenitude*), and from this first fecundity is derived the most high being of principle: "*Quanto aliquid prius, tanto fecundius est et aliorum principium*"[531].

To perfection belongs the power to produce one such as itself in nature. For Bonaventure, the term *innascibilitas* (literally 'not born' from another) is understood as the property of the Father; and it is synonymous with unbegottenness (*voco hic primitatem innascibilitatem*[532]). By his being ingenerate, the Father is the cause of others, since the more *primus* a thing is, the greater is its responsibility for bringing others into being[533]. In fact Bonaventure is the most typical and vigorous Latin proponent of understanding the term *ingenitus* with a positive sense that is the reason underpinning paternity. The Father's *innascibilitas*, according to him, is intra-Trinitarian fecundity and his creative power[534].

Bonaventure identifies the Neo-Platonic One with the Father or first person of the Trinity: "The Father is properly the One without an originator, the un-begotten One; the Principle who proceeds from no other; the Father as such"[535]. Having stated this as a universal principle, he proceeds to apply it as fecund source of creatures. The reason why many things can proceed from this one principle lies for Bonaventure in two facts, namely that God is the *first* principle, and that he is a

---

[531] *I Sent.*, d. 2, a. u., q. 2, resp., 1 (I, 53b) [LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità Creatrice*, 73].
[532] *I Sent.*, d. 2, a. 1., q. 2, concl., 1 (I, 54).
[533] Cf. A. PINO, "Continuity in Patristic and Scholastics Thought", 111-112 (note n. 22).
[534] MATEO-SECO, "The Paternity of the Father and the procession of the Holy Spirit: Some Historical Remarks on the Ecumenical Problem" (Woźniak et al., eds.), p. 96; see also FRIEDMAN, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought*, 17-30.
[535] *Brevil.*, pars I, c. 3 (V, 212).

singular way *one*: "Et ideo est positio recta, quod multitudo in rebus est a principio uno, quia est *primum* principium et unice *unum*"[536].

With regard to the first point, Bonaventure briefly states: "Because the one principle from which the multitude among things originates is the *absolutely first* principle, it is therefore *productive* and capable of an infinite and immense *fecundity*"[537]. Using two examples from Dionysius, namely *number one* and *geometric point*, Bonaventure illustrates the notion of the first principle which includes an unlimited fertility: The number one is basic unit and first principle for all numbers; and the geometric point is the basic and origin of an unlimited number of possible lines[538]. "This absolute primacy is the deeper reason why God can be and actually is the one source of an unlimited multitude of creatures"[539].

Bonaventure then offers more profound metaphor: Using the metaphor of an artist of immensely rich resources, Bonaventure believes that so rich is the divine creative source that no one creature is capable of reflecting it fully. Therefore, it is appropriate that there should be an incredible diversity of creatures, each reflecting something particular about the mystery of the divine. And even more significant is the depth of interrelationship between these diverse creatures. In this line, the dynamic role of the Father is explained as follows:

"There is a multiplicity of beings coming from a single principle because, in fact, there is a first principle, and that first principle in one. Because that principle is simply first, it is fruitful and powerful with a fertility that is immense and infinite. [...]. That which is simply first is, for that reason, totally immense. Because of its immensity, it is infinite. And because of the manifestation of its immensity, it shows many of its treasures, but not all of them, since the effect cannot be equal to the power of the first cause [...]. Because of its supreme *power*, it can produce many

---

[536] *II Sent*. d.1 p. 2. a. 1. q. 1 concl. (II, 40a); see SCHAEFER, "St Bonaventure on Man in Creation", 281.
[537] *II Sent*. d.1 p. 2. a. 1. q. 1 concl. (II, 40a).
[538] Cf. *De Divinis Nominibus*, 822A-823B (English trans., Luibheid, 99-100).
[539] SCHAEFER, "St Bonaventure on Man in Creation", 282.

things. Because of its supreme *wisdom*, it knows many things. And because of its supreme *good*, it wishes to communicate itself to many things and to produce many things. Therefore, a multiplicity of things emerges from one principle precisely because the principle is first and single"[540].

The Father, therefore, is the ultimate, transcendent source of all being. Bonaventure's doctrine lies in his conception of the Father as dynamic, fecund source of the Trinitarian processions. The Father as unbegotten (*innascibile*) is the source of the good insofar as his unbegottenness is the abyss of the good. As the fountain fullness of the good, the Father is self-diffusive good or love. The Father is necessarily fecund and self-communicating; the very nature of the good is to share itself with another. Thus, there is in God one in whom resides the fullness of divine fecundity with respect to the persons. The Father is that person who is *non ab alio*, and therefore is first with respect to the other persons. Bonaventure emphasizes the Father as the fountain fullness (*fontalis plenitudo*) of the self-diffusive good because the Father is un-originate and un-begotten[541].

One of the central texts which many scholars refer to as the foundation of the passage is the eighth question of the *Mysterion Trinitatis*, where the Saint asked whether *summa primitas* can co-exist with *trinitas*. The first object situates the problem in an argument that is usually used to speak of God's unicity. Bonaventure

---

[540] *II Sent.* d.1, p. 2, a.1, q.1 (II, 40ab): "Tertii dixerunt, quod multitudo rerum erat a principio unico propter multitudinem et infinitatem *reflexionum* quibus divinus intellectus supra se reflectitur et intelligit se, et intelligit, se intelligere; et sic usque in infinitum. Sed illud nihil est. *Primum*, quia falsum est, quod in Deo sit multitudo reflexionum, cum Deus sit suum intelligere. *Item*, ex hoc nunquam proveniret nisi diversitas secundum numerum. Et ideo est positio recta, quod multitudo in rebus est a principio uno, quia est *primum* principium et unice *unum*. Quia enim est principium simpliciter *primum*, ideo fecundum et potens est fecunditate infinita et immensa. Si enim unitas, quae est prima in *genere numeri*, est principium, a quo possunt infiniti numeri egredi, et punctus, a quo infinitae lineae; quod est *simpliciter* primum est ita potens, quod omnio immensum. Propter ergo immensitatem infinita potest, sed propter immensitatis manifestationem multa de suis thesauris profert, non omnia, quia effectus non potest aequari virtuti ipsius primae causae. Quia vero unice *unum*, ideo *simplicissimum* et *spiritualissimum* et *perfectissimum*: quia *simplicissimum*, maximae *potentiae*; quia *spiritualissimum*, maximae *sapientiae*; quia *perfectissimum* est, *bonitatis* summae; quia maximae *potentiae*, multa potest; quia maxime *sapientiae*, multa novit; quia summae bonitatis, multa vult producere et se communicare. Et ideo a principio uno, quia primum et unum, exit multitudo" (Eng. trans.,HAYES, *The Gift of Being*,48-49).
[541] COUSINS, *The Coincidence of opposites*, 101-102.

reminds that *primitas in essential* necessarily excludes any other essence. The absolutely first essence necessarily excludes equality with another, because otherwise neither of them would be the first. This category is coincidence with the negative concept of *pure privation*[542]. But he points also the positive aspect: "*primitas non solum non excludit trinitatem, verum etiam eam includit*"[543].

> "Supreme primacy in the supreme and highest principle demands the highest actuality, the highest fontality and the highest fecundity. For the first principle, by virtue of the fact that it is first, is the most perfect in producing, the most fontal in emanating, and the most fecund in germinating [...] The most perfect production is not realized except with respect to equals, and the most fontal emanation is not realized except with respect co-eternals, and the most fecund germination is not realized except with respect to consubstantial beings [...]"[544].

Mateo-Seco observes that the saint is logically thinking of "God the Father as the source and origin of the entire Trinity and his fecundity comes precisely from the fact of his being un-begotten, since this characteristic signifies his full possession of his being, and consequently of the fullness of goodness"[545]. In this case, primacy does not only require solitariness in the first principle, but it includes the plurality of persons. The reason that the Father's fecundity includes the plurality of person in itself is found in the fact that the production of the first principle is a fully perfect production. The diffusion of the first good must be a full and perfect diffusion. The fontal perfection of the first principle does not exclude the Trinity of persons, but instead requires complete equality between them[546].

---

[542] M. MELONE, "La vita di Dio. 'Summa Bonita et Caritas', nel Mistero della Trinità": Il fondamento della comunione della creazione, in *DrSer*, 62 (2014), p. 11.

[543] *Myst. Trin.*, q. 8, concl. (V, 114).

[544] *Myst. Trin.*, q. 8, resp. (V, 114a): "Nam primitas summa in summo et altissimo principio ponit summam actualitatem, summam fontalitatem et summam fecunditatem. Primum enim principium, hoc ipso quod primum, est perfectissimum in producendo, fontalissimum in emanando, fecundissimum in pullulando […] Et quia perfectissima productio non est nisi respect aequalium, fontalissima emanatio non est nisi respectu coaeternalium, fecundissima pullulatio non est nisi respectu consubstantialium" (Eng trans., Hayes, 263).

[545] MATEO-SECO, "The Paternity of the Father…" (J. Woźniak et al., eds.), 97.

[546] MATEO-SECO, "The Paternity of the Father…" (J. Woźniak et al., eds.), 98.

According to Bonaventure, "unity which can remain one in many subjects is more excellent that unity which can maintain its unity only in one person. But the divine unity is the one excellent unity. Therefore it must stand together with a plurality of persons. Therefore, there is no contradiction"[547]. This passage shows that, the structure of the Trinity proposed by Bonaventure, did not following the principle of *unum in uno*, but *unum in pluribus*; his doctrine of the *patrocentrism* (*primitas* of the Father), therefore, is a "moderate *patrocentrism*". This proposition implicates the denial of a monadic monotheism, meaning the denial of radical uni-personal God. Bonaventure's God is the most simple = the most communication= the most plural=the most tri-personality, in sum, *circumincessio*[548].

According to Wozniak, *primitas* can be understood in this formulation: "the mystery of the Father includes the entire Trinitarian mystery in itself. The logic and dynamics of the divine life as a whole is found in it"[549]. Wozniak underscores the fact that, according to Bonaventure, the negativity of the Father's *innascibilitas* is a sign of something very positive, which is in fact a properly paternal reality, thus his primacy in the intra-Trinitarian life[550]. The term *primitas* which is the property of the Father is the same reason of the divine procession and the distinction of *ab origine* of the persons. The *innascbilitas* of the first person, therefore, designate not only the lack of origin, but also a positive and noble sense as well: "*Non esse ab alio est esse primum, et primitas est nobilis positio*"[551].

Having seen Bonaventure's view on the *primitas* of the Father, we can consider that the thought of the ancients (Neo-Platonism) was heavily influenced by the primacy given to the concept of One; and this is the classical problem of the

---

[547] *Myst. Trin.*, q. 2. a. 2. fund. 6 (V, 64b): "Item, excellentior est unitas, quae in pluribus manet una, quam quae non potest sui unitatem servare nisi in una persona; sed divina unitas est excellentissima: necesse est igitur stare cum personarum pluralitate; ergo non habet oppositionem" (English trans., Hayes, 150).

[548] Cf. A. GANOCZY, *Il Creatore Trinitario. Teologia della Trinità e Sinergia*, Queriniana, Brescia, 2003, p. 99-106.

[549] Cf. WOZNIAK, *Primitas et Plenitudo*, 89.

[550] Cf. WOZNIAK, *Primitas et Plenitudo*, 97.

[551] *I Sent.*, d. 27, p. 1, q. 2 ad 3 (I, 70a); LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità Creatrice*, 70.

theology of Trinity. One would say that Bonaventure, under the influence of Richard of St. Victor, goes beyond that difficulty. Ancient philosophy had no concept that could satisfactorily express the union between unicity and difference or the one and multiple as required in the realm of dogmatic theology. We have seen that since the Transcendental Theory in the thirteenth century, for example with William Auxerre and Philip the Chancellor, it was initially revolutionary on this difficulty. And, as we will see more, Richard of St Victor applies the Neo-Platonic axiom *bonum est commuicativum sui*, and gives a Trinitarian theological twist to it.

For the purpose of this study we intend to say that progress on this line of theological reflection is found in Bonaventure. With him, the perfection of goodness, which "produces" consubstantial persons, is identified as *fecundity* proper to the Father, whose *primitas* grants him a "fontal plenitude"[552]. This fecundity is the explanation (*ratio*) of divine self-communication[553]. To be good means to communicate oneself, and the highest form of this activity is achieved in producing an equal from oneself and giving one one's being (*esse*). Bonaventure connects self-communication and perfection. It would be less then worthy of God, and God would be less than worthy of the name, if he were conceived as something either begrudging of his nature or incapable of sharing it with another. For him "it belongs to perfection to produce such a one as it itself is in nature"[554].

Saying the last passage, let us reflect for a moment on the concept of *communio*. Gisbert Greshake, a contemporary scholar who considers the classical problem on theology of Trinity, that is the relationship between *one* and *multiple*, tried to suggest a solution[555]. After having considered this classical difficulty of theology of Trinitarian during it historical debate, analyzing the etymological sense

---

[552] *I Sent*., d. 2, a. u., q. 2, fund. 1 (I, 54).
[553] *I Sent*., 1, d. 6, a. 1, q. 1 ad 4 (I, 126).
[554] ALEXANDER PINO, "Continuity in Patristic and Scholastic Thought", 111.
[555] The complete study on this issue is available in G. GRESHAKE, *Il Dio Unitrino*, Queriniana, Brescia, 2008[3]. For some significant of passages of Bonaventure in Greshake, see M. MELONE, "La vita di Dio, "Summa Bonita set Caritas," 13.

of *Communio/Communicatio*,[556] he proposes a new perspective based on the experience of God in the New Testament. He writes:

> "Now, on the other hand, the new experience of God in the New Testament from within century-long theological reflection has led to a new understanding of reality, and thereby also of *Communio*. For if God in Himself is not one immutable Monad, but Life that shares of itself, relationality, *Communio*, then, that which for Aristotle is the least and the most insignificant part of being, i.e. 'relation', is therefore the true nature of all beings. Being is relationality, to-be-with, being-with-others, interconnectedness, in short: *Communio*"[557].

A transcendental Monad is no longer the ultimate reference point of all reality, but a God, who is both unity as well as including personal difference within; a God, who is at once a relational unity and realizing in himself (*as actus purus*) *communio*. In this way the supremacy given the one substance in theological thinking gives way to a more personal, communication-oriented thinking. A person-centered take on the horizon of thought and human experience would displace the cosmocentric thinking of antiquity[558]. On the aspect of communion, the writer interprets Bonaventure's theology of Trinity with reference to some works of the Saint, considering the influence of Richard of St. Victor. We choose to present his paragraph verbatim:

> "Bonaventure understands the Trinitarian God as 'that unit, which remains one in several; (and this form of oneness) is higher than that which can guarantee its oneness, only in one person[559]. For this very reason, the divine nature due to its simplicity can be communicated and can *be* in several[560]. Valid here is a norm form the theory of communication: the simpler something is, the more communicable it

---

[556] GRESHAKE, "Trinity as Communio", 333-334. Greshake indicates that there are some leading scholars accepted the communicative view of the Triune God even if their opinions differs in specific area. To name only a view: Hans Urs von Balthasar, Walter Kasper, Jűrgen Motlmann, W. Pannenberg, Piero Coda, Gonzalo J. Zarazaga (337).
[557] GRESHAKE, "Trinity as Communio" (Woźniak et al., eds.), 335.
[558] GRESHAKE, "Trinity as Communio" (Woźniak et al., eds.), 335-336
[559] *De Myst. Trin.*, II, 2, 6 (V, 64b).
[560] GRESHAKE, "Trinity as Communio" (Woźniak et al., eds.), 336.

is; and the reverse is also valid: the more communicable (regarding the difference) something is the greater the unity it attains. And as the second rule, Bonaventure adds: Where the most perfect Act is (meant is the *actus purus* of being), there should also be the most perfect communication. In other words, perfection in Being, Being-as-real, is in the long run identical to *Communio* and *Communicatio*"[561].

This passage, in fact, brings us back to the great Cappadocian theologians of the fourth century who already saw things in this light[562]. Gregory of Nazianzus (329-390) for example, presented the life God as a kind of 'pulsating' in accordance with which from Unity comes Trinity, and from Trinity comes Unity. This was later taken up in theological concept of the *Perichoresis* (reciprocal encompassing and interpenetration). The term is originally a word, which comes from the world of dancing (to dance around). Applied to the Trinity, this would mean, metaphorically speaking: the three divine persons are in such communion with each other that they can be presented only as 'common dancer' in one dance.

Only in so far as the Father, Son, and Spirit are in each other, and are 'no other' as the mutual relationship and a 'being-in-each-other', is the one, same and indivisible divine nature in them[563]. The theme of *perichoresis* is very relevant for our present study. But at this juncture, we just make a short passage about it. However, we will explore it more from Bonaventure's view as presented in the subtopic 'Bonaventure on Good' (*Itinerarium* VI).

---

[561] GRESHAKE, "Trinity as Communio" (Woźniak et al., eds.), 336.
[562] An example of study on the influence of the Cappadocian on Bonaventure, is GANOCZY, *Il Creatore Trinitario*, chapter II and III, 29-57.
[563] Cf. GRESHAKE, "Trinity as Communio" (Woźniak et al., eds.), 338-340.

4.3. Beyond Diffusion of Good

In addition to the influence of Dionysius, on the theme of diffusion, Luc Mathieu observes that[564], Bonaventure is faithful in his master Alexander Hales. For Hales, the Father is *principium totius divinitatis*[565]; he is the supreme Goodness (*summum bonum*), and so, is the original of intra divine relationship. Considering this point, Hales speaks of two diffusions: *per modum naturae* and *per modum voluntatis*. The first term is intended to the generation of the Son, and the second term is for the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. In all these, the principle that goodness is diffusive of itself is evident. One can say that Alexander's approach to Trinitarian thought set the stage for the Franciscan scholars of the next three centuries. Bonaventure, for instance, deliberately and clearly advances this Hales's conception of God as Trinity[566].

Under the influence of Hales, Bonaventure sustains that the diffusions is the reason for the communication between the divine persons in Trinity. For the Seraphic Doctor, communication is the perfect expression of the diffusion of goodness. The diffusion of goodness is realized as a *bonum communicativum*[567]. If there is communication in the supreme goodness, it must be the supreme communication. This is realized in communication of the Trinity. The Father who is un-begotten begets the Son who is generated *per modum naturae* or by the very nature of the self-diffusive goodness of the Father. The Spirit is generated *per modum voluntatis* or by the will of the Father and is the gift or bond of personal love between the Father and Son[568].

---

[564] For the influence of Hales as the first protagonist of Franciscan school, particularly in Bonaventure's view of dvine diffusion, see LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità creatrice*, 28-38.

[565] *Summa Halensis*, I, n. 297 ad 10 (I, 427a); LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità creatrice*, 38.

[566] Cf. K. OSBORNE, "Alexander of Hales" (K. Osborne ed.), 28.

[567] LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità creatrice*, 33.

[568] HAYES, in his introduction to *Myst. Trin*. (English trans.), 44-45, 55.

To say that the Son is generated per *modum naturae* is, as interprets Delio, to say that the Father's self-diffusive goodness is "not a free choice"[569]; rather, goodness constitutes the person of the Father who is un-originated and fecund. As ultimate, self-diffusive goodness, the Father *must* do what is intrinsic to his nature; namely, communicate his goodness to another, the Son. Indeed, for Bonaventure, the Father is *Father* precisely in the eternal generation of the Son through personal love. While this love is necessarily communicative, it is nevertheless free, because there is nothing other than the Father's own nature as good that impels the Father to diffuse goodness to another.

In this respect the freedom of the Father's self-diffusive goodness is necessary to the nature of the Father's un-originate. For the Father to be Father, everything of the Father must be communicated to another, hence, to the Son. The Son is both generated by the Father and, together with the Father as one principle, breathes forth the Spirit, who is that eternal bond of love between the Father and Son. The Spirit proceeds from Father and Son in an act of full freedom (*per modum voluntatis*), the procession of the Spirit being the act of a determinate loving volition on the part of Father and Son[570].

It is obvious that the God of Bonaventure is no other than the one of Saint Francis that is the Triune God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, with whom he has been making his intensive dialogue. Saint Bonaventure wants to know the divine essence than on its subsistence, so he takes the Dionysian axiom, *bonums est diffusivum sui*[571] as the point of departure to reach the con-tuition of the divine persons themselves in their original relationship. From this idea, he then discovers

---

[569] DELIO, "Theology, Metaphysics, and Centrality of Christ", 259.
[570] Cf. HAYES, introduction to *Myst. Trin.* (English trans.), 45-46.
[571] According to Bougerol, there are 26 quotations of the axiom in various Bonaventure's work: *I Sent* (11), *II Sent* (6), *III Sent* (2), *IV Sent* (2), and each one times in *Myst. Trin.*, *Itin.*, *Hexaem.*, *Com. Sg.*, and *Com. Luc*. See BOUGEROL, "Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite", 85-86.

that the Triune God manifests himself in created world, reveals in history, particularly through human being as the image of God[572].

"From this point of view", concluded Bougerol, *"nous sommes très loin de Denys"*[573]. Bougerol observes that "the God of Dionysius is distant and hidden; his Christ is not the Master speaking to the soul"[574]. Bonaventure takes from Dionysus a very pious and very high sense of transcendence. But the Scripture and the great masters (Augustine, Richard of Saint Victor) elevate this static contemplation to an essential synthesis of dynamics of Triune God. It is too simplistic therefore, to conclude that Bonaventure is indebted to the Dionysian view of the Father as plenitude fontal. It is true that this idea of Greek theology has influenced the thirteenth century. But Bonaventure explored more extensively the fecundity of the Father. The primacy of Father lies at the heart of Bonaventure's doctrine of God. The Father reveals himself to the world in the incarnated Word, the only medium person of the Trinity[575].

Although goodness became the essence of what God *is* for Bonaventure, goodness alone does not explain the Trinity of persons. In order to understand God as Triune, Bonaventure turned on the writings of Richard of St. Victor. The core of Richard's argument for a plurality of divine persons is not the Dionysian concept of good *per se* but of *charity*, and charity cannot exist in God without some sort of plurality in God-self[576].

The principle of diffusive became a point of reference of Bonaventure's Christological-Trinity theology; but he did not remain in Neo-Platonic scheme, the idea of good became a historical person, incarnated Word. As noted Bougerol, "the contribution of Bonaventure is to unite Saint Francis and the Pseudo Dionysius,

---

[572] Cf. BOUGEROL, "Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite", 117-118.
[573] Cf. BOUGEROL, "Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite", 118.
[574] BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the works of Bonaventure*, 41.
[575] Cf. BOUGEROL, "Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite", 118.
[576] Cf. DELIO, *Simply Bonaventure*, New City Press, NY., 2001, p. 42.

firstly by giving a metaphysical consciousness and secondly by establishing a solid history of Christianity for both of them"[577]. In other words, "the Dionysian idea of bringing back everything to the unity with Father was Christianized by St. Bonaventure"[578].

We have said that this principle has its real source in the Neo-Platonic doctrine of which it is an essential part. Plotinus and Proclus, on whom Dionysius largely depends in his whole system, explain the existence of the universe as an overflowing and outpouring of the fullness of perfection in the First Being and Absolute Good. But the Scholastics, as observed Schaefer, "received this idea with the only difference that this diffusion of the Divine Goodness in creation is not considered a necessary process, as the Neo-Platonists understood it, but depends in its activation entirely on the *free will* of God"[579].

Bonaventure also uses it with a certain variation and freedom of expression. He speaks in the present argument not only about a diffusion of the good, but also about a communication; and he has a definite reason for adding this second term, since this notion of communication is to be the central idea of his argument and the specific sign that manifests God's goodness in creation. His next step is now to show what the Divine Goodness actually communicates[580]. Richard's thought, therefore, is a crucial contribution for the Franciscan Doctor.

5. Influence of Richard of St Victor

In this section we will highlight some central points from Richard of St. Victor's concept of Trinity[581], in order to have a more clear idea of his influence on

---

[577] BOUGEROL, "Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite", 118.
[578] BOUGEROL, "Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite", 119.
[579] Cf. SCHAEFER, "St. Bonaventure on Man in Creation", 307-308.
[580] Cf. SCHAEFER, "St. Bonaventure on Man in Creation", 308.
[581] A good example of study on *De Trinitate* of Richard of St. Victor is M. MELONE, *Lo Spirito Santo nel De Trinitate di Richard di S. Vittore*, Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, Roma, 2001; see also RICCARDO DI S. VITTORE, *La Trinità* (traduzione e introduzione, note e indici, a cura di Mario Spinelli), CN., Roma, 1990; and Angelici's English translation we are using here.

Bonaventure. Our treatment will merit from his mine main work, *On the Trinity*[582]. As we have said above, influenced by Richardian tradition, Bonaventure has taken the operation of love as manifested first of all in the holy Trinity.

5.1. God is absolutely One

The first book concerns the unity of God. It can be said that, here Richard speaks of eternity in the true sense of the word. God is eternal, the perfect one, the most high, the most power, and there is nothing eternal receiving its origin from outside itself. Hence, conceiving something that is better than God is absolutely impossible, even for God. Richard claims that: "If even God is incapable to conceive with his intellect something that higher than God, human speculation can do much less"[583].

> "Thus, since God is powerful, he cannot be such by the effect of the participation in the power: the fullness of power is identified with God. It is clear, then, that God is powerful through fullness of power. But where there is fullness of power, no power can lack. To conclude, then, God possesses omnipotence and he really is omnipotent, because in him all power resides"[584].

On the Second book, Richard says that "God is in himself his own good; he is the highest good and the highest good is absolutely perfect"[585]. God is "the highest good", and being so his goodness is not derived from another being. "He is,

---

[582] RICHARD OF SAINT VICTOR, *On the Trinity*, Synopsis of Book I, (English Translation and Commentary by Ruben Angelici), Cascade Books, Eugene, 2011. The Latin text is taken from RICHARD DE SAINT-VICTOR, *DE TRINITATE*, Texte critique avec introduction, notes et tables, Publié par JEAN RIBAILLIER, Paris, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, Sorbone, 1958. In our treatment, every Latin quotation will be followed by English translator and page number.

[583] *De Trinitate*, Synopsis of Book I, cap.19: "Si Deus ipse non potest per intellectum attingere aliquid melius Deo, multo minus humana cogitatio" (English trans, Angelici, 72).

[584] *De Trinitate*, I, 24: "Quod igitur Deus omnipotens est, potentie participatione esse not potest; siquidem potentie plenitudo non est aliud aliquid quam ipse. Constat itaque eum potentem esse potentie plenitudine. Ubi autem plenitude potentie est, nullum posse deesse potest. Consequens ergo est omnipotentiam habere et veraciter omnipotentem esse, cui inest omne posse" (English trans., Angelici, 89).

[585] *De Trinitate*, Synopsis of Book II, cap.16: "Quod Deus ipse sit suum, quo ipse sit summum bonum, et quod summum bonum sit universaliter perfectum" (Eng. trans., Angelici, 91).

thus, good because of himself, and blessed because of himself. He is very good, he is the very highest good"[586].

Here Richard is saying that goodness is the expression of God's total perfection. And as the total perfect God, his goodness is perfect, therefore he is also blessed. For him, the goodness of God is supreme, one which is of supreme simplicity. It is necessary for the highest good, therefore, to be a supreme one, and to be singularly supreme[587]. In God we find true unity, supreme simplicity. "Thus, this is more than extraordinary, for one finds true unity with absolute fullness, highest simplicity together with an incommensurable perfection; and supremely simple identity with infinity of every excellence"[588].

5.2. The Charity-Love

Up to this point, we must examine that which should be thought regarding the multiplicity of the divine persons. The questions are: if there can only be one omnipotent, and there can only be one immense, the simplest one, how could we speak of divine plurality? How can we convince that more than one person can be found where there is only one substance?[589] Here the key word is 'charity-love' (*caritas*). This divine attribute presents another dimension of the attribute for the perfection of goodness, as God alone is the highest goodness. The exact name for the perfect good is *charity-love*. Richard states:

> "After all, true and highest love cannot be absent where fullness of all goodness is found, since nothing is better or more perfect than charity-love. Yet, none is said to possess charity-love in the true sense of the world if he loves himself exclusively. It

---

[586] *De Trinitate*, II, 16 (English trans., Angelici, 104).

[587] Cf. *De Trinitate*, II, 17-20 (English trans., Angelici, 104-107).

[588] *De Trinitate*, II, 20: "In illo itaque summo bono universaliterque perfecto vera unitas, in illo summa simplicitas, in illo vera et summe simplex identitas. Ibi, quod adhuc mirabilius est, vera unitas cum plenitudinis universitate; ibi summa simplicitas cum perfectionis inmensitate; ibi summe simplex identitas cum totius consummationis infinitate" (English trans., Angelici, 107).

[589] Cf. *De Trinitate*, III, 8-9 (English trans., Angelici, 122-123).

is, thus, necessary that love be aimed at someone else in order to be charity-love. If a multiplicity of persons is absent, there can be no place for charity love"[590].

For Richard the "perfect manifestation of charity-love demonstrates that the Trinity is found in a real unity and that there is authentic unity in the true Trinity"[591]. The explanation of this thesis can be reassumed as follow: There is an order on the expression of charity-love. The principle is that the supreme divine person could not conceive supreme charity-love towards a created person or another person who was not worthy of supreme love. The reason is that it would be "a disorderly charity-love, and it is impossible that disorderly charity-love be found in the highly wise goodness"[592]. In sum, divine person would have no one to love as worthily as himself if he had absolutely no other person with his same dignity.

> "It is certain that God alone is supremely good; so only God must be supremely loved. Therefore, a divine person could not show supreme love towards another person lacking divinity. Besides, fullness of divinity could not have subsisted without fullness of goodness. Fullness of goodness, on the other hand, could not have been present without fullness of charity-love; and fullness of charity-love could not have existed without plurality of divine beings"[593].

Just as nothing better than charity-love, similarly there is nothing more joyful than charity-love. To want to be much loved by him who is much loved is nature of love. However, in order for charity-love to be present also in the supreme good, there must be someone who can demonstrate this charity-love and someone to

---

[590] *De Trinitate*, III, 2: "Ubi autem totius bonitatis plenitudo est, vera et summa caritas deesse non potest. Nichil enim caritate melius, nichil caritate perfectius. Nullus autem pro privato et proprio sui ipsius amore dicitur proprie caritatem habere. Oportet itaque ut amor in alterum tendat, ut caritas esse queat. Ubi ergo pluralitas personarum deest, caritas omnio esse no potest" (English trans., Angelici, 116).

[591] *De Trinitate*, Synopsis of Book Three (English trans., Angelici, 113-114).

[592] *De Trinitate*, III, 2 (English trans., Angelici, 116).

[593] *De Trinitate*, III, 2: "Certe solus Deus summe bonus est. Solus ergo Deus summe diligendus est. Sumam ergo dilectionem divina persona exibere non posset persone que divinitate careret. Plenitudo autem divinitatis non potuit esse sine plenitudine bonitatis. Bonitatis vero plenitudo non potuit esse sine caritatis plenitudine, nec caritatis plenitudo sine divinarum personarum pluralitate" (English trans., Angelici, 117).

whom this charity-love can be shown. If this is not possible, there absolutely cannot be love. Consequently, in that fullness of happiness a plurality of persons cannot be absent. The very fullness of glory in supreme majesty requires someone with whom to share this glory[594]. According to Richard, the charity love which can only exist in plurality of persons, as Richard notes, is the highest love: "there is certainly nothing better, nothing more joyful, absolutely nothing more splendid than true, genuine and highest charity-love (*sincere et summa caritate*), which, could not even exist without a multiplicity of persons"[595].

As we have noted, there is an intrinsic relationship between goodness and charity-love. "And supreme goodness is not able to subsist without perfect charity-love, and perfect charity-love cannot be produced without plurality of persons. After all, complete happiness cannot be realized without a true immutability, and true immutability cannot be without eternity"[596]. Richard convinced that a perfect charity-love proposes a reciprocal relationship. If one of them is omnipotent, the other one is omnipotent; if one is immense, the other one is immense, as well; if one is God, the other one is God too. "Actually, nothing is more precious and more admirable in reciprocal, burning love than one's desire for someone else to be loved in the same fashion by him who is supremely loved, and by whom one supremely loved. Therefore, the witness of the perfect-charity love consists in desiring to share with someone else that love of which one is the object"[597].

---

[594] *De Trinitate*, III, 4-5 (English trans., Angelici, 118-119).

[595] *De Trinitate*, III, 5 (English trans., Angelici, 120).

[596] *De Trinitate*, III, 6: "Summa autem bonitas, sicut dictum est, non potest esse sine perfecta caritate, nec perfecta caritas sine personarum pluralitate. Plena vero felicitas non potest esse sine vera incommutabilitate, nec vera incommutabilitas sine eternitate. Personarum pluralitatem exigit vera caritas, personarum coeternitatem vera incommutabilitas" (English trans., Angelici, 121).

[597] *De Trinitate*, III, 11: "Sane summe diligenti summeque diligi desideranti precipuum gaudium solet esse in desiderii sui adinpletione, optate videlicet dilectionis adeptione. Probat itaque se in caritate perfectum non esse, cui necdum potest in precipui gaudii sui communione complacere" (English trans., Angelici, 125).

5.3. Communication and Co-love (*condilectio*)

In other words, reciprocal relationship between the two divine persons, is derived from the act of communication between them. But to be in communication with another it is needed that each of them has will and power to be shared. The highest degree of charity-love and, together with this, the fullness of goodness cannot be present if a lack of will or power prevents someone else from being associated with this love and prevents communication of the great joy.

When everything that is universally perfect is present, neither absolute charity-love nor the very Trinity can be absent. Without a doubt charity-love that cannot permit a community of love is deeply lacking. In charity-love there must be single wisdom and single power[598].

"If we want both of them to be able to communicate delights as such, they necessarily have to have another one to be loved in the same manner. Consequently, if the two (persons) who love each other are so generous to be willing to communicate every perfection of theirs, it is necessary that both of them require with equal desire and for the same reason a third person to be loved in the same fashion. (It is also necessary that they) possess him, according to their desire, in the fullness of their power"[599].

The above citation shows how the Victorian anticipates the risk of duality of a person between two persons, as in a certain duality of persons there would be no one to whom each of the two could transmit the greatest delights of his joy. In fact, he clearly concludes that "the highest level of goodness cannot have a place in the divinity, if a third person were absent in that plurality of persons"[600]. From this point then is derived the idea of *co-love* (*condilectio*). The idea of co-love is

---

[598] *De Trinitate*, III, 11,13,15 (English trans., Angelici, 126-127, 129).
[599] *De Trinitate*, III, 15: "Nam ubi se duo mutuo diligentes summo desiderio amplectuntur, et in alterutro amore summe delectantur, summum gaudium istius est in intimo amore illius, et e converse precipuum gaudium illius est in amore istius. Quamdiu iste ab alio solus diligitur, precipue dulcedinis sue delicias solus possidere videtur; similiter et alius quamdiu condilectum non habet, precipui gaudii communione caret. Ut autem uterque posit istiusmodi delicias communicare, oportet eos condilectum habere" (English trans., Angelici, 130).
[600] *De Trinitate*, III, 18 (English trans., Angelici, 132).

"ultimately the central theme of Richard's argumentation. Co-love is neither self-addressed love, nor reciprocal love, but it is ultimately what makes plurality harmoniously coexist in unity. It is love in harmony between the first and the second person cannot but be directed also at a third person"[601].

When one feels love for someone else and he alone in loves another, single one, he certainly has love but he has no co-love. If two people mutually love each other and reciprocally demonstrate a very intense desire, this affection – going from the first one to the second, and from the second to the first one – is dispersed and, so to say, turns in various direction; there is love on both sides, but there is no co-love. Richard then shows a more profound consideration as follows:

"On the other hand, we rightly speak of *co-love* (*condilectio*) when a third person is loved by the two, in harmony and with a communitarian spirit. We rightly speak of co-love when the two persons' affects are fused so to become only one, because the third flame of love. From this, it is clear that not even divinity would have co-love if only two persons were present and a third one was missing. In fact, we are not dealing with any type of co-love, but we are talking about supreme co-love, of such a nature that no creature will ever be able to deserve from the Creator ore ever be worthy of it"[602].

Richard is talking about supreme co-love, of such nature that no creature will ever be able to deserve from Creator or ever be worthy of it. What else is the intimate and supreme co-love if not the joining together of the most profound goodness and the highest concord?[603] The charity-love is communitarian love, it is

---

[601] See Angelici's commentary on foot note n. 10, p. 132.

[602] *De Trinitate*, III, 19: "Condilectio autem jure dicitur, ubi a duobus tertius concorditer diligitur, socialiter amatur, et duorum affectus tertii amoris incendio in unum conflatur. Ex his itaque patet quod in ipsa divinitate condilectio locum non haberet, si duobus tantum consistentibus tertia persona deesset. Non enim hic de qualicumque sed de summa condilectione loquimur, et qualem creatura a Creatore nunquam meretur, nunquam digna invenitur" (English trans., Angelici, 133).

[603] *De Trinitate*, III, 19 (English trans., Angelici, 133).

never exclusive[604]. Therefore, in the Trinity, wisdom coincides with power, and power is identical to essence, and so forth[605]. The three divine persons have the same power, the same wisdom, and the same goodness[606]. They are all in the same being, and so in eternity in which there can be no before or after[607].

5.4. Person as an existence

To understand well the idea of *condilectio*, we need also see the Richard's view on 'person'. For him the term is implied with an individual, singular, incommunicable property. The term 'person' indicates someone who is unique, distinct from all the others. In Trinitarian communion it is necessary that each of them has an individual existence *per se* and is distinct from the other two on the basis of it own singularity and of his particular identity. But all the persons have the highest and supremely simple being in common, and that none of them is something different from any of the others[608].

How do we reconcile these two modalities? Here Richard places the importance of the concept of 'existence', the word which comes from the Latin verb *ex-sistere*. When we say that someone exists, we consider two realities: *ex* (from) and *sistere* (exists). For Richard, someone exists because he enjoys being one to any other subject.

"The term *ex-sistere*, on its part, not only expresses the possession of being, but also the being coming from outside. It expresses the fact that one possesses being because of someone else. Indeed, this is shown in the compounded verb, by the proposition that is added to it. What does *exsistere* mean, in fact, if not *sister* from (= *ex*) someone? That is, what does it mean if not receiving one's own substantial being from someone else? Consequently, with this single verb *exsistere* − or with

---

[604] *De Trinitate*, III, 20 (English trans., Angelici, 133).
[605] *De Trinitate*, III, 22 (English trans., Angelici, 134-135).
[606] *De Trinitate*, III, 23 (English trans., Angelici, 135).
[607] *De Trinitate*, III, 25 (English trans., Angelici, 137).
[608] Cf. *De Trinitate*, IV, 6-9 (English trans., Angelici, 146-149).

the single noun *existence* – we can intend both that which has to do with the object's nature and that which refers to its own origin"[609].

In Trinity the plurality of persons is required[610]. In the divinity, the number of persons is equal to the number of the incommunicable existences[611]. If we ponder on this more carefully, one person in God is nothing else but an incommunicable existence. A divine person is nothing else than an incommunicable existence[612]. Richard writes: "As a consequence, in God we have unity with regard to the essence, plurality with regard to the existence. We have unity of essence because there is a single and undifferentiated being, whilst we have plurality of persons because we have a plurality of existences"[613].

Here we see that the highest expression of goodness is communication of love. "Indeed, where there is fullness of divinity, there is also fullness of goodness and – consequently – fullness of charity-love. Fullness of charity-love, for its part, wants each person to love the other as each person loves himself"[614].

Perfection for all persons is attained or exists only through mutual communion with other persons, for it is proper to the person to love and to be loved by another person. But God is personally perfect in his Goodness. Therefore God must possess personal communion within God's own self. There must exist a communion of persons in God[615]. According to Richard, "Plurality of divine

---

[609] *De Trinitate*, IV, 12: "Quod autem dicitur existere, subintelligitur non solum quod habeat esse, sed etiam alicunde, hoc est ex aliquot habeat esse. Hoc enim intelligi datur in verbo composito, 'ex' adjunct sibi prepositione. Quid est enim existere, nisi ex aliquo sistere, hoc est, substantialiter ex aliquo esse? In uno itaque hoc verbo existere, vel sub uno nomine existentie datur subintelligi posse et illam considerationem que pertinet ad rei qualitatem, et illam que partinet ad rei originem" (English trans., Angelici, 151-152).

[610] *De Trinitate*, IV, 15 (English trans., Angelici, 151-152).

[611] *De Trinitate*, IV, 17 (English trans., Angelici, 151-152).

[612] *De Trinitate*, IV, 18 (English trans., Angelici, 157).

[613] *De Trinitate*, IV, 19: "Unitas itaque ibi est juxta modum essendi, pluralitas juxta modum existendi. Unitas essentie quia unum et indifferens esse, plures persone quia plures existentiae" (English trans., Angelici, 159).

[614] *De Trinitate*, V, 7 (English trans., Angelici, 179).

[615] T. JOSEPH, "Divine Simplicity and the Holy Trinity", 83.

persons necessarily requires union in the most harmonious beauty and distinction in the most orderly balanced otherness. It is necessary, then, that in the divine plurality of persons – which is supremely good and most orderly balanced – a harmony in distinction and a difference in harmony may reign in this reciprocal relationship"[616].

6. Bonaventure on 'Good' (*Itinerarium* VI)

Bonaventure has a predilection for the name *bonum*. It is a name par excellence for him[617]. In the sixth chapter of *Itinerarium*, as we have indicated, he said that the name is derived from Dionysius[618]. The main interest of this section is to explore the meaning of the name, and its influence on the doctrine of Trinity, which finally moves into Bonaventure's doctrine of creation. But to arrive on this goal, we need first to state more explicitly that in Bonaventure, *being* and *good* are two inseparables names of God.

6.1. Correlation between Being and Good

Human understanding vis-à-vis God is examined in the first book of Commentary on the Sentences, where Bonaventure dedicates an article to *De nominibus divinis*[619]. The first question he takes up from the article concerns the capacity to name God and is aptly entitled *Utrum Deus nominabilis*[620]. When referring to the perfect expression of the divine name, Bonaventure begins by affirming God's privileged self-knowledge;[621] even Dionysius affirmed that God cannot be named[622]. But later the third question, *Utrum omnia divina nomina dicantur translative*, allows for Bonaventure the opportunity to differentiate

---

[616] *De Trinitate*, IV, 14 (English trans., Angelici, 188).

[617] SOLIGNAC, "Bonaventure: de l'étude des noms divins à la fabrication de miroirs trinitaires", 52. For a good clue to have a panoramic view on the term, see TODISCO, "Bonum", in *DizBon*, p. 221-227.

[618] *Itin.*, V, 2 (V, 308) : "Dionysius sequens Christum dicit, quod *bonum* est primum nomen Dei" (English trans., Hayes, 113).

[619] *I Sent.*, d. 22, a. u. (I, 390a-401b).

[620] *I Sent.*, d. 22, a. u. q.1 (I, 390a-391b).

[621] *I Sent.*, d. 22, a. u. q. 1 concl. 1-2 (I, 390a-401b).

[622] "Dei neque nomen est neque verbum, neque ratio, neque opinio, neque phantasia" [vers. Scotus Eriugene, PL 122, 1116b] (quoted in LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità creatrice*, 26).

between the proper names enunciated by God and the names we attach, metaphorically, to God[623].

In the case of *Itinerarium*, while the name 'Being' looks the unity of divine essence, the name 'Good' determines the plurality of Persons by baptizing "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 28: 19). In this consideration Bonaventure writes: "Therefore, Christ, our Master, wishing to raise to the young man who had observed the Law, attributed to God principally and precisely the name of Goodness saying: *Nemo bonus nisi solus Deus* (Luk 18: 19). Damascene, following Moses says that, *The One Who Is*, is that first name of God. Dionysius, following Christ, says that *Good* is the name of God"[624].

How do we reconcile Damascene and Dionysius? How is the name 'goodness' supposed to reveal the plurality? These questions do not come as a surprise. It is clear that "Bonaventure forthrightly identifies God as the single difference of 'being' and 'goodness' in his own version of the central theses"[625]. He wholeheartedly and insightfully identifies the single referent of 'being' and 'goodness' as God himself in the Old and New Testament conceptions of God[626].

Speaking of the name 'good', to enter the sixth stage of the journey, the Christian must know that the very best good is simply that than which nothing better can be thought. Making the transition to the sixth stage, the Franciscan Doctor says that *being* is the radical principle of our contemplation of God's

---

[623] *I Sent.*, d. 22, a. u. q. 3, concl. (I, 394a-396b). See TIMOTHY J. JOHNSON, "Reading between the Lines: Apophatic Knowledge and Naming the Divine Name in Bonaventure's Book of Creation", in *FrancStud*, 60 (2002), p. 151.

[624] *Itin.* V, 2 (V, 308b): "Ideo magister noster Christus, volens adolescentem, qui servaverat Legem, ad evangelicam levare perfectionem, nomen bonitatis Deo principaliter et praecise attribuit. Nemo, inquit, bonus nisi solus Deus. Damascenus igitur sequens Moysen dicit, quod *qui est* est primum nomen Dei; Dionysius sequens Christum dicit, quod *bonum* est primum nomen Dei" (English trans., Hayes, 113).

[625] STAMP & KRETZMANN, "Being and Goodness" (MacDonald, ed.), 122 (footnote n. 69).

[626] KRETZMANN, "A general problem of creation. Why would God create anything at all?" [hereafter "A general problem of creation"] (MacDonald, ed.), 224.

essential properties, whereas *good* is the deepest foundation of our contemplation of the personal God properties of the Trinity[627].

According to Luc Mathieu[628], as a metaphysician, Bonaventure agreed with Damascene in saying that Being is the first name of God, as all beings are reduced to this first name. As a theologian and mystic, he contemplates the Being through the name of Good. Being is the first name which expresses the divine absolute; and Good expresses its perfection. As Timothy Jonson notes, "Bonaventure reconciles the two positions by affirming both names as proper to God"[629]. In fact, in Chapter three of *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure notes the goodness as one of the properties of *being per se*. He writes: "We do not know the meaning of *being per se* unless we know it together with all its properties such as unity, truth, and goodness"[630].

The object of the name *being* is the divine essence, thus the maximum way to express the unity of God. The object of the name *good*, on the other hand, presents a theological argument; it concerns to the property of the divine persons and its communicative dimension that is the procession of divine persons in Trinity. In other words, Bonaventure's proposed affirmation is not only God *in se*, but also God *pro nobis*,[631] thus, a revelation.

In the primordial revelation of Exodus, God reveals to Moses as a person with its name and personality: "I". This is a bi-dimensional revelation, as the Supreme Being opens himself, speaking to another person, and it designates that

---

[627] Cf. JOHN FRANCIS QUINN, *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure's Philosophy*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Tronto, 1973 p. 826-827.

[628] Cf. LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità creatrice*, 28.

[629] Cf. *I Sent.*, d. 22, a. u. 3 (I, 395): "Si loquamur de nominibus, quae Deus sibi imposuit, cum ipse se proprie intelligat, huiusmodi nomina sunt propria; et talia dicuntur esse *bonum* et *qui est*. Unde Dionysius videtur velle, quod illud nomen *bonum* solum sit proprium et principle; Damascenus vero, quod illud nomen *qui est* solum est proprium et principale; et unus attendit in nomine perfectionem, alter absolutionem, uterque tamen proprietatem" (English trans., JOHNSON, "Reading between the Lines", 151).

[630] *Itin.*, III, 3 (V, 304a): "Nec ens *per se* cognosci potest, nisi cognoscatur cum suis conditionibus, que sunt; *unum, verum, bonum*" (English trans., Hayes, 85).

[631] Cf. TODISCO, "Il pensare Bonaventuriano", 18.

there is intercommunication within him. And the most supreme expression of the communication is to offer its goodness[632]. To be good means to communicate oneself, and the highest form of this activity is achieved in producing an equal from one self and giving one's own being.

As a metaphysician, Bonaventure is agrees with Damascene for the first name, and as a theologian and mystic, he follows Dionysius for the second name[633]. While the name *being* introduces God the One of Old Testament, the name good introduces the Triune God. In this line of interpretation, if we consistently say that the New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old Testament, we could also say that good is the fulfillment of being, that is, reveals itself from the bottom. We are speaking of God the Creator according to the logic of goodness, so that the world exploded from the goodness of God. The name good therefore is not just an alternative of the name *being*; instead it is the expression of its truth[634].

In Bonaventure's view we con conclude that, "the concept of being has to be completed and understood in terms of goodness"[635]. Both of the names, therefore, are the proper and primordial names of God, nevertheless the first designs the absoluteness dimension of God; while the second expresses His perfection[636]. For Bonaventure, the Supreme Being is not from any other being, it's the most simple and perfect. Strictly as the first being, and therefore the first principle, God offers himself totally, and as the omnipotent he express his being in the goodness, thus in a total communication of itself.

---

[632] Cf. PRENGA, *Il Crocifisso via alla Trinità*, 216, 224.
[633] Cf. LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità creatrice*, 28.
[634] TODICSO, "Lo sguardo Francescano alla riscoperta del creato oltre la volontà di Potenza", in MF, 114 (2014), 322. On the question of relation between being and goodness see also MACDONALD (ed.) *Being and Goodness*, particularly in introduction and article of MacDonald in this volume, "The Metaphysics of Goodness and the Doctrine of the Transcendentals", p. 31-55.
[635] KRETZMANN, "A general problem of creation" (MacDonald, ed.), 225.
[636] Cf. LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità creatrice*, 28.

The Seraphic Doctor writes: "and because this is the most simple unity, most peaceful truth, and most sincere goodness, it is all power, all exemplarity, and all communicability; […] for he is all-powerful, all knowing, and all-good"[637]. At this point it is relevant to repeat the words of Todisco, "il bene è la fonte dell'essere, non vice versa o, comunque il suo volto più significato"[638]; which were reaffirmed by Prenga saying, "per Bonaventura, 'essere' è semplicemente 'bene'"[639].

In this point of view, we see that Bonaventure gives new insight "that was unavailable to Anselm"[640] which derived from Dionysius. As Bonaventure puts in the *Hexaëm.*, the first Principle express itself perfectly in the Word, and this *perfect production* is the principle of *perfect diffusion* of the divine nature: "Therefore by necessity, such diffusion in the fullness of its possibilities can exist only in something greater than which nothing can be conceived […]. If the Father also did not diffuse himself in the most final way, he would not be perfect"[641].

In the other words, if for Anselm, God is *something-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-conceived*, Bonaventure affirms that *the highest good in an qualified sense is that than which nothing better can be conceived*. The core of ontological argument receives a Trinitarian-Christological articulation: "bonum est ens

---

[637] *Itin.*, VI, 2 (V, 308): "et hoc, quia per simplicissimum unitatem, serenessimum veritatem et sincerissimam bonitatem est in eo omnis virtuositas, omnis exemplaritas et omnis communicabiltas; […] et hoc, quia omnipotens, omniscines et omnimodo bonum" (English trans., Hayes, 125).

[638] TODISCO, "Esse", in *DizBon*, 348.

[639] PRENGA, *Il Crocifisso via alla Trinità*, 219.

[640] ABLES, "The Word in which all things are spoken", 293-294: Analyzing the distinction on the idea of exemplarism between Augustine, Anselm, and Bonaventure, Ables writes: "The key is Bonaventure's reception and reworking of metaphysics that was unavailable to Anselm: Dionysius' idea of the *bonum diffusivum sui*, the self-diffusive good. What Dionysius gives Bonaventure is a way of articulating Anselm's key insight in the ontological argument that combines it with the Augustinian metaphysical exemplarism of Monologion. This Dionysius inflection of the ontological argument involves picking up from Augustine and Anselm just at the point where their exemplarism left off: the Augustine-Anselmian Verbum is the self-expression of the good, but neither is clear how this Verbum, the exemplar of all creatures, is expressed christologically. Nor do they fully link this relationship to their illuminationist epistemology".

[641] *Hexaëm.*, XI, 11 (V, 381-382): "Ergo necesse est, ut haec diffusio secundum totum posse sit in aliquo, quo maius cogitari non potest; […] Si ergo Pater etiam ultimate diffusione non se diffunderet, perfectus non est"; Cf. ABLES, "The Word in which all things are spoken", 294.

communicabile"[642]. In the *Itinerarium*, "the idea of the necessary being is claimed to be inherently Trinitarian"[643]:

> "[…] the highest good in an qualified sense is that than which nothing better can be thought. And this is of such a sort that it cannot be thought of as not existing, since it is absolutely better to exist than not to exist. And this is a good of such a sort that it cannot be thought of unless it is thought of as three and one. 'For the good is said to be self-diffusive'. The supreme good, therefore, is supremely self-diffusive. But the highest diffusion does not exist unless it is actual and intrinsic, substantial and personal, natural and voluntary, free and necessary, lacking nothing and perfect. In the supreme good there must be from eternity a production that is actual and consubstantial, and a hypostasis as noble as the producer, and this is the case in production by way of generation and spiration"[644].

In the same line of argument, Bougerol states that in Bonaventure, "the idea of good, which is, of being extending and offering itself, lifts us even higher, to the contemplation of the Trinity, whose fruitfulness is its supreme explanation"[645]. The final goal of the *Itinerarium* proposed by Bonaventure, therefore, as Prenga claimed, "è un itinerario di ascese che ha come traguardo la Trinità in Sé"[646]. From the Trinitarian theology, therefore, the name *being*, even though it underlines particularly the divine unity, in itself is triadic. Considering that this is the central point of Bonaventure's theology, Solignac writes, "ce nom n'est pas neutre par

---

[642] LEXICON BONAVENTURIANUM. Opera et Studio PP. ANTONI MARIAE A VICETIA et JOANNIS A RUBINO, Ex Typographia Aemiliana, Venetiis, MDCCCLXXX, p.10.

[643] E. ABLES, "The Word in which all things are spoken", 294.

[644] *Itin.*, VI, 2 (V, 310-311): "[…] quoniam optimum quod simpliciter est quo nihil melius cogitari potest; et hoc tale sic est, quod non potest recte cogitari non esse, quia omnio melius est esse quam non esse; sic est, quod non potest recte cogitari, quin cogitetur trinum et unum. Nam 'bonum dicitur diffusivum sui'; summum igitur bonum summe diffusivum est sui. Summa autem diffusio non potest esse, nisi sit *actualis* et *intrinseca*, *substantialis* et *hypostatica*, *naturalis* et *voluntaria*, *liberalis* et *necessaria*, *indeficiens* et *perfecta*. Nisi igitur in summo bono aeternaliter esset productio *actualis* et *consubstantialis*, et *hypostatis* eaque nobilis, sicut et producens per modum generationis et spirationis" (English trans., Hayes, 123).

[645] BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the works of Bonaventure*, 124.

[646] Cf. PRENGA, *Il Crocifisso via alla Trinità*, 218.

rapport à la Trinité, de même que l'unité et la simplicité divines ne sont pas étrangères à la pluralité des personnes"[647].

6.2. Is there plurality of persons in God?

Based on the points indicated above, let us consider the following question of Bonaventure: "*Utrum in Deo ponenda sit personarum pluralitas?*"[648]. We have said that the divine essence, because it is first (*primitas*), is the principle of other essences. Bonaventure applies the principle to the Father in the Trinity. Just as the divine essence is fecund because of its being first, "so the person of the Father, since he is the first, and as he comes from no other being, is the principle and has fecundity in regard to other persons"[649]. As *innascibilis*, the Father is unborn and unbegotten; he has neither origin nor source. As we have said, *innascbilitas* has a negative and positive aspect. Negatively it means that the Father comes from no source; and positively means the Father is the fecund as he has the power to generate. Thus the Father begets precisely because he is unbegotten[650].

Bonaventure would positively answer this question, indicating four elements: there is plurality of persons in God, because He is the supreme beatitude, the supreme perfection, the supreme simplicity, and the supreme primary. Bonaventure considers that one may ask whether there is plurality of persons in God, if it is in the supreme beatitude[651]. In Bonaventure's view, as Bougerol reassumes, "wherever there is the supreme *beatitude*, there are also the supreme goodness, the supreme *charity* and the supreme *joy*. But if there is the supreme goodness, there is also the communication of supreme good, in maximum way, by producing an equal to

---

[647] SOLIGNAC, "Bonaventure: de l'étude des noms divins à la fabrication de miroirs trinitaires, 54. Regarding these two proper names of God, the author considers that […] "le nom préféré est non seulement une révélation sur la nature divine – ce qui suffit à en asseoir l'importance – mais également une révélation sur Bonaventure lui-même, sur le cœur de sa pensée, et sur sa propre conception de la théologie et de son rapport avec la métaphysique" (51).

[648] *I Sent.*, d. 2, a. u., q. 2 (I, 53).

[649] *I Sent.*, d. 2, a. u., q. 2, resp. 1 (I, 53b).

[650] In Cousins' thesis, "such a mutual interpretation, which is a mutual affirmation, is an example of the type of coincidence of opposites" in Bonaventure. See E. COUSINS, *Coincidence of opposites*, 104.

[651] Cf. BOUGEROL, "Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite", 90.

oneself and giving his proper being to him"[652]. Here Bonaventure refers to Richard of Saint Victor. For Richard, as we have seen, in the highest being there must be the fullness of the true goodness; and when there is true goodness, it is necessary that there is also supreme happiness charity-love.

> "Thus, just as it is impossible for something than which nothing is better to be absent in the fullness of true goodness, it is likewise impossible for something than which nothing is more joyful to be absent in the fullness of the supreme happiness"[653].

Bonaventure then sustains that "*si summa caritas, cum caritas non sit amor privatus, sed ad alterum*: *ergo requirit pluralitatem*"[654]. Related to this quotation, it is necessary to underscore that when one talks about gratuitous love, it is never intended to be an exclusive attitude. Nobody is said to possess charity-love in the true sense of the world if he loves himself exclusively. This idea of *summa caritas* is derived clearly also from Richard's thought. After all, true and highest love cannot be absent where fullness of all goodness is found, since nothing is better or more perfect than charity-love.

> "Yet, none is said to possess charity-love in the true sense of the world if he loves himself exclusively. It is, thus, necessary that love be aimed at someone else in order to be charity-love. If a multiplicity of persons is absent, there can be no place for charity love"[655].

---

[652] *I Sent.*, d. 2, a. u., q. 2, fund. 1 (I, 53a): "ubicumque est *summa beatitudo*, est *summa bonitas*, summa caritas et *summa jucunditas*. Sed si est summa bonitas, cum bonitatis sit summe se communicare et hoc est maxime in producendo ex se aequalem et dando esse suum".

[653]*De Trinitate*, III, 3: "Sicut igitur in plenitudine vere bonitatis non potest deesse quo nichil est melius, sic in plenitudine summe felicitatis deesse non potest quo nichil est jocundius. Necesse est itaque in summa felicitate caritatem non deesse" (English trans., Angelici, 117-118).

[654] *I Sent.*, d. 2, a. u., q. 2, fund. 1 (I, 53a).

[655] *De Trinitate*, III, 2: "Ubi autem totius bonitatis plenitudo est, vera et summa caritas deesse non potest. Nichil enim caritatem melius, nichil caritate perfectius. Nullus autem pro privato et proprio sui ipsus amore dicitur proprie caritatem habere. Oportet itaque ut amor in alterum tendat, ut caritas esse queat. Ubi ergo pluralitas persona rum deest, caritas omnio esse non potest" (English trans., Angelici, 116).

Another important key point in Bonaventurian-Richardian thought needed to explain the plurality of divine persons is the word *joyful*: "*si summa jucunditas, cum nullius boni sine socio sit jucunda possessio, ergo ad summam jucunditatem requiritur societas et ita pluralitas*"[656]. For Richard, there must be a reciprocal love, and this is possible if there is a plurality of persons. In that fullness of happiness a plurality of persons cannot be absent.

> "Therefore, there can be no joyful love that is not also reciprocal. Thus, in that true and supreme happiness, neither joyous love nor reciprocal love can be absent. Absolutely, both he who donates love and he who returns it must be present in reciprocal love. Then, he who donates love is other to him who returns it. But there, where one and 'an-other' are certainly present, true plurality is detected. Consequently, in that fullness of happiness a plurality of persons cannot be absent"[657].

As quoted above, for Bonaventure in the supreme goodness, in plurality of persons, there must also be the supreme communication. There must be a supreme expression of communication between persons, in such a way that the Supreme Being produces an equal to oneself and giving his proper being to him. "[…] *si est summa bonitas, cum bonitatis sit summe se communicare, et hoc est maxime in producendo ex se aequalem et dando esse suum*"[658]. The foregoing quotation shows clearly that Bonaventure's foundation of the supreme communication in Triune God is derived from Richard's principle of charity-love of Richard. It goes:

> Finally, a divine person could have not shown supreme charity-love towards another person, who was not worthy of supreme love. A divine person, however, would have no one to love as worthy as himself, if he had absolutely (no other)

---

[656] *I Sent.*, d. 2, a. u., q. 2. fund.1 (I, 53a).

[657] *De Trinitate*, III, 3: "Non potest ergo esse amor jocundus, si non sit et mutuus. In illa igitur vera et summa felicitate, sicut nec amor jocundus, sic nec amor mutuus potest deesse. In amore autem mutuo oportet omnino ut sit et qui amorem inpendat, et qui amorem rependat. Alter itaque erit amorem inpendens, et alter amorem rependens. Ubi autem unus et alter esse convincitur, vera pluralitas deprehenditur. In illa itaque vere felicitatis plenitudine pluralitas personarum non potest deesse" (English trans., Angelici, 118).

[658] *I Sent.*, d. 2, a. u., q. 2, fund. 1 (I, 53a).

person with his same dignity […] It is certain that God alone is supremely good; so only God must be supremely loved. Therefore, a divine person could not show supreme love toward another person lacking divinity. Besides, fullness of divinity could not have subsisted without fullness of goodness. Fullness of goodness, on the other hand, could not have been present without fullness of charity-love; and fullness of charity-love (could) not (have existed) without plurality of divine beings"[659].

6.3. Supremely Self-diffusive

In section nine of the first Commentary on Sentences, the following question appears: *Utrum in divinis generatio ponenda sit?*[660] To answer this question we serve the property of *summa bonitas*, as it designates the relational character in God[661]. Bonaventure argues that the divine nature is supremely good and absolutely *actus*. Therefore it can and wants to communicate, but the first and supreme right to communicate is the generation. It is necessary, therefore, to put in God the act of generation[662]. One can observe easily that in his metaphysics of the good, Bonaventure not only makes a definition of God's name, but also expresses it in the most blessed Trinity. It is significantly indicated in chapter six of *Itinerarium*: "Speculation on the most blessed Trinity in its name, which is the good"[663]. Following his mentor Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure turns to the Dionysian axiom *bonum diffusivum sui* to ground the emanation of the highest good in the supreme communication of the Trinitarian Love[664].

---

[659] *De Trinitate*, III, 2: "Sed persona divina profecto non haberet quem ut seipsam digne diligeret, si condignam personam omnino non haberet. Divine autem persone condigna non esset persona que Deus non esset […] Certe solus Deus summe bonus est. Solus ergo Deus summe diligendus est. Summam ergo dilectionem divina persona exibiere non posset persone que divinitate careret. Plenitudo autem divinitatis non potuit esse sine plenitudine bonitatis. Bonitatis vero plenitudo non potuit esse sine caritatis plenitudine, nec caritatis plenitudo sine divinarum personarum pluralitate" (English trans., Angelici, 116-117).

[660] *I Sent.*, d. 9, a. u.,1, fund. 4 (I, 180):

[661] Cf. MELONE, "La vita di Dio, 'Summa Bonita et Caritas', nel Mistero della Trinità", 10.

[662] Cf. BOUGEROL, "Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite", 90.

[663] *Itin.* cap. VI. "*De speculatione Beatissimae Trinitatis in eius nomine, quod est Bonum*"

[664] On Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure's appropriation of Dionysius' thought, see L. MATHIEU, *La Trinità creatrice*, 25-32.

Bonaventure acknowledges the primacy of good as the most basic foundation for the consideration of the divine emanation. To be good, the divinity cannot remain a subsistent monad, since this would be a deficiency in goodness. Rather it must go out of itself and produce another which is in no way inferior to itself[665]. "For the good is said to be self-diffusive. The supreme good, therefore, is supremely self-diffusive. But the highest diffusion does not exist unless it is actual and intrinsic, substantial and personal, natural and voluntary, free and necessary, lacking nothing and perfect"[666]. In this passage, we can point out that the first adjective in each paring is more readily associated with static self-sufficiency, or the being side of the being-goodness relationship, whereas the second adjective brings out dynamic self-diffusion, or the goodness side: *Static*: intrinsic, substantial, essential, necessary, perfect; *dynamic*: active, personal, voluntary, free, lacking nothing (unceasing)[667]. Considering the interpretation, we can continue to read the paragraph were in the triadic dimension is evidently demonstrated, that in the Triune God, the supreme-diffusive is expressed in *generation* and *spiration*:

> "In the supreme good there must be from eternity a production that is actual and consubstantial, and a hypostasis as noble as the producer, and this is the case in production by way of generation and spiration. This is understood to mean that what is of the eternal principle is of the eternal co-producer. In this way there can be both a beloved and a co-beloved, one generated and one spirated; that is, Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit. If this were not the case, it would not be the supreme good since it would be supremely self-diffusive"[668].

---

[665] Cf. T. ALEXANDER PINO, "Continuity in Patristic and Scholastic Thought", 110.

[666] *Itin.*, VI, 2 (V, 310):"Nam 'bonum dicitur diffusivum sui';summum igitur bonum summe diffusion est sui. Summa autem diffusion non potest esse, nisi sit *actualis* et *intrinseca*, *substantialis* et *hypostatica*, *naturalis* et *voluntaria*, *liberalis* et *necessaria*, *indeficiens* et *perfecta*" (English trans., Hayes, 123).

[667] Cf. KRETZMANN, "A general problem of creation", 225.

[668] *Itin.*, VI, 2 (V, 310): "Nisi igitur in summo bono aeternaliter esset productio *actualis* et *consubstantialis*, et *hypostasis* aeque *nobilis*, sicut est producens per modum generationis et spirationis – ita quod sit aeternalis principii aeternaliter comprincipiantis – ita quod esset dilectus et condilectus, genitus et spiratus, hoc est Pater et Filius et Spiritus sanctus; nequaquam esset summum bonum, quia non *summe* se diffunderet" (English trans., Hayes, 123, 125).

Under the influence of the Richardian viewpoint[669], Bonaventure suggests that if one sees God as supreme love, one is also led to a plurality of persons, since perfect love is unthinkable without a plurality of persons. The almost impersonal tone of the Dionysian definition of the good was modified by the Victorian mysticism of ecstatic love[670]. As we have said, Richard claimed that the highest good is love, and love is personal and communicative[671]. The highest form of divine self-diffusive is to communicate himself from the proper being. It can be said that, if God did not communicate himself in a perfect manner, i.e. if He did not communicate his entire substance in a perfect diffusion, He could not be considered the highest Good.

For Richard, charity is the supreme form of the good and the basis for showing the necessity of a plurality of persons in Godhead. Since charity necessarily involves a relation to another, there can be no charity where there is no plurality. The perfect communication of love, according to Richard, must involve no less than three persons, since a perfect self-communication would not be possible if God were only one person, and two persons could only share love for one another. Hence, if love by nature involves a relation to another, the highest perfection of love demands that each of the two persons in love share that love with yet another[672]. For Richard, "there must be in God not only a *dilectum* but *condilectum* as well. *Condilectio* is found where a third is loved by two in harmony"[673].

In a way that reflects this Victorian argument as well as the Dionysian vision of the good as 'naturally' self-diffusive, Bonaventure describes the first Trinitarian

---

[669] See M. MELONE, "La recezione della teologia trinitaria di Riccardo di San Vittore nel "Commento alle Sentenze" di Bonaventura da Bagnoregio, in *Religioni et doctrinae*. Miscellanea di studi offerti a Bernardino de Armellada in occasione del suo 80° compleanno, a cura di Aleksander Horowski, Roma, Istituto storico dei Cappuccini, 2009 (Bibliotheca Seraphico Capuccina 89), p. 141-174.

[670] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 56.

[671] Cf. *De Trinitate*, III, 14-19 (English trans., Angelici,. 128-132)

[672] See HAYES, introduction to *Myst. Trin*. (English trans.), 15-17.

[673] HAYES, introduction to *Myst. Trin*. (English trans.),17.

procession, firstly as an *emanatio per modum naturae*. Secondly, reflecting on the Victorian tradition is called an *emanatio per modum voluntatis* or *per modum liberalitatis concomitante nature*. The primary principle of the first emanation is the divine nature precisely as the good; the primary principle of the second is the will as free and generous[674].

> "Therefore, if, with the eyes of your mind you are able to reflect (*contueri*) on the purity of the goodness which is the pure act of the principle that in charity loves with a love that is free, and a love that is due, and a love that is combination of both, which would be the fullest diffusion by way of nature and will and which is found in the diffusion of the Word in which all things are spoken and the diffusion of the Gift in which all goods are given, you will be able to see that supreme communicability of good demands necessarily that there be a Trinity of Fathers, Son and Holy Spirit"[675].

6.4. Supreme Communicability (*circumincessio*)

The idea of *summa diffusio* then applies more precisely on the category of communication. The divine self-diffusive is realised perfectly in communication, and so, the self-diffusive of the Good becomes *Bonum communicativum*[676].

The key concept we need to underline here is *circumincessio*. The term is originally Greek, *perichṓrēsis* (περιχώρησις). It means one Person's action of involvement with the other two. Each divine Person permeates the other and allows itself to be permeated by that person. This penetration expresses the love and life that constitutes the divine nature[677]. Found in various Christological writings of

---

[674] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 58.

[675] *Itin*., VI, 2 (V, 311): "Si igitur potes mentis oculo contueri puritatem bonitatis, quae est actus purus principii caritative diligentis amore *gratuito* et *debito* et *ex utroque premixto*, quae est diffusio plenissima per modum *naturae* et *voluntatis*, quae est diffusion per modum *Verbi*, in quo omnia dicuntur, et per modum *Doni*, in quo cetera dona donantur; potes videre, per summam boni communicabilitatem necesse esse Trinitatem Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti" (English trans., Hayes, 125).

[676] L. MATHIEU, *La Trinità creatrice*, 33.

[677] See LEONARDO BOFF, *Holy Trinity, Perfect Community* (English translation by Phillip Berryman), Orbis Books, NY., 1988, p. 14-15.

Gregory of Nazianzus, the term was used for the first time in Trinitarian theology, as appeared in *De Fide Orthodoxa*[678] of John of Damascene: He probably was inspired by an anonymous writer, the Pseudo-Cyril who utilizes the term to indicate the inexistence of the divine persons and their reciprocal immanence.

In the second half of the twelfth century the term is known in the West through a Latin translation of *De Fide Orthodoxa*. The expression refers to Johannine verses that witness to the mutual immanence of Jesus and his Father, Jn. 10: 38: "the Father is in me and I'm in the Father", and Jn. 14, 10-11: "I'm in the Father and the Father is in me"[679]. Bonaventure is known to have been given the distinction of placing *circumincessio* in his theology of Trinity. In the Commentary on the Sentences[680], he explained that the expression means the reunion of personal distinction and unity of essence in a single concept, so the term is the key to understand the mutual immanence, the reciprocity, and communion among the divine persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Bonaventure writes:

> "[…] you will be able to see that the supreme communicability of the good demands necessarily that there be a Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And in these persons, because of the supreme *goodness*, it is necessary that there be supreme *communicability*. And because of supreme communicability, there must be *consubstantiality*; and from consubstantiality there must be supreme *configurability*; and from these must be supreme *co-equality*; and because of this there must be supreme *co-eternity*; and from all of the above, there must be supreme *mutual intimacy* by which each is necessarily in the others by reason of

---

[678] GIOVANNI DAMASCENO, *De fide Orthodoxa. Esposizione della fede* (testo critico di B. Kotter, introduzione, commento filosofico, bibliografia, traduzione e notte di M. Andolfo), Edizione San Clemente e Studio Domenicano, Bologna, 2013, p. 241, 243

[679] Cf. M. MELONE, "Circumincessio", in *DizBon.*, p. 230-231; ID., "La vita di Dio, 'Summa Bonita et Caritas', nel Mistero della Trinità", 17-18; J. BOUGEROL, *Lexique Saint Bonaventure*, 33. See detail study of this theme, see E. DURAND OP., "Perichoresis: A Key Concept for Balancing Trinitarian Theology" (J. Woźniak et al., eds.), p. 177-192; C. L. ROSSETTI, "La pericoresi: una chiave della teologia cattolica a proposito della recente riflessione trinitaria", in *Lateranum*, 72.3 (2006), p. 553-575.

[680] *I Sent.*, d. 19, p.1, a. u., q. 4 (I, 349a) [Cfr. L. MATHIEU, "Trinitas", in *DizBon.*, 825]: "*Circumincessio*, qua dicitur, quod unus est in alio et e converso; et hoc proprie et perfecte in solo Deo est, quia circumincessio in essendo ponit distinctionem simul et unitatem".

their supreme interpenetration (*circumincessionem*), and one acts with the others in a total unity of substance, power, and activity within the most blessed Trinity itself"[681].

These six personal attributes (*italic*) speak to the nation of *primitas*, the perfect self-communication of the *primum* within God. *Primitas* embraces the order of persons, the divine *circumincessio*[682]. For Bonaventure "one can no longer talk about being as the ground of reality without talking about God, and one can no longer talk about God who is Trinity without talking about the good. In *Itinerarium*, he shifts from a metaphysics of being (ontological argument) to metaphysics of the good and thus establishes the basis of a theological metaphysics"[683]. The Triune God is "super-excelling goodness" (*superexcellentissimam bonitatem*), and only in the Triune God there is "supreme communication and true diffusion, true origin and true distinction"[684]. Since God is good and since the good is by nature self-diffusive, it follows that God is necessarily self-communicative.

Conclusion

We have stated that goodness is an attribute that can only be fully given to God. This attribute of God seems an appropriate point from which to start when trying to understand the Trinity[685]. We cannot think of goodness in the abstract; it is always manifested by a reaching out to another person. Goodness always reaches out and wants to share itself with another; goodness by its very nature needs to be communicated to another. If this is true of human goodness, then how much more must it be true of the Goodness of God? If God is good, then God must have an

---

[681] *Itin.* VI, 2 (V, 310-311): "[…]; potes videre, per summam boni communicabilitatem necessse esse Trinitatem Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti. In quibus necesse est propter summam bonitatem esse summam *communicabilitatem*, et ex summa communicabilite summam *consubstantialitatem*, et ex summa consubstantialitate summum *configurabilitatem*, et ex his summam *coaequalitatem*, ac per hoc summum *coaeternitatem*, atque ex omnibus praedictis summam *cointimitatem*, qua unus est in altero necessario per *summam circumincessionem* et unus operatur cum alio per omnimodam indivisionem *substantiae* et virtutis et *operationis* ipius beatissimae Trinitatis" (English trans., Hayes, 125).

[682] Cf. HELLMANN, *Divine and Created Order*, 42.

[683] DELIO, "Bonaventure's Metaphysics of Good", 231.

[684] *Itin.* VI, 3 (V, 311).

[685] Cf. HAYES, "The Meaning of *Convenientia*", 99-100.

object that God can reach out in goodness; otherwise it would be meaningless to speak of being good. God's goodness must be the most perfect goodness because of God's own perfection. When God communicates goodness, God's communication must be the most perfect communication of goodness that is possible[686].

It is clearly shown that the root of Bonaventure's doctrine lies in his conception of the Father as dynamic, fecund source of the Trinitarian processions. In the metaphysics of the good, the logic of the created order is rooted in the self-diffusive goodness of God. The philosophical definition of the good designates that it is the nature of the good to pour itself out or to diffuse itself. If God is thought to be the good in this purely philosophical sense, but not in Trinitarian sense, then some form of self-diffusion is necessarily implied in this definition of the nature of good. In this case, the emanation of creation appears to be a necessary implication of the very nature of good. But seen in this way, the creation of the world would be necessary and not free. Viewed in this manner, it is not harmony with the biblical and theological tradition. Therefore, we must look at the philosophy of defining the nature of good from the scriptural understanding of love[687].

Precisely because the Father is un-begotten, he is the fountain fullness and therefore the principal source of origin of the other two divine emanations, namely, the Son and the Spirit. The Father is constituted as Father in the full sense of the act of generation (*Ideo Pater, quia generat*)[688]. The totality of who God is, for Bonaventure, is grounded in the nature of the Father un-begotten self-communicative goodness. The Father, who is primal and self-diffusive, diffuses himself to one other who is equal to but other than the Father. In sum, Bonaventure does not only make use the principle of Augustine, but chooses rather the doctrine of Richard of Saint Victor, itself inspired by the Greek traditions of Pseudo-

---

[686] P. YATES, "A Sermon on the Trinity Inspired by St. Bonaventure", in *Cord*, 47. 6 (1997), p. 281-282.
[687] Cf. HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 64.
[688] *I Sent*. d. 27, p. a. u., q. 2, concl. (I, 469).

Dionysius[689].The Dionysian axiom that the good is self-diffusive leads Bonaventure to conceive of the divine essence as infinitely good, an overflowing fountain of life, which gives rise to two procession, one per *modum naturae* in the Generation of the Son, the other *per modum voluntatis* in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit[690].

The almost impersonal tone of the Dionysian definition of the good was modified by the Victorine mysticism of ecstatic love. It was Richard of Saint Victor who first utilized *caritas* understood as self-diffusive love to provide a faith-based *ratio neccesaria* for why there are three persons in the Trinity. From these two sources Bonaventure built his own vision of the Trinity in the form of a metaphysics love[691]. The origin of the divine self-diffusion is the key by which Bonaventure explains how the first principle (the *primum*), shares the highest actuality, highest fontality, and highest fecundity as the Father who perfectly and completely communicates to the Son and Spirit. The Father is *primitas*, the fecund order of origin within Trinity[692].

In summary, for Bonaventure, because God is supreme blessedness, he must also be the highest goodness, love and joy. But if God is the highest goodness, since it is the nature of the good to communicate in the highest way, this will be especially the case in producing an equal from himself and in giving it its existence[693]. If the most sublime being that exists is Being-with, and reciprocal sharing, in brief, *communio*, then the whole creation is newly understood in terms of interconnectedness. Thus, the understanding of God as *communio* is a new key toward understanding the whole of reality[694].

---

[689] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 74: "The model of Augustine has a stronger contemplative tone and suggests the divine mind resting in itself. The model of Bonaventure, with its Dionysian and Victorian background, suggests that the self-consciousness of God is that of a being who is by nature self-communicative love. The divinity is aware of itself, then, precisely as fruitful, expensive love".
[690] Cf. LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità creatrice*, 35.
[691] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 56.
[692] Cf. HELLMANN, *Divine and Created Order*, 43-44.
[693] Cf. MCGINN, "The Dynamism of the Trinity in Bonaventure and Eckhart", 142-143.
[694] GRESHAKE, "Trinity as Communio" (J. Woźniak et al., eds.), 344-345.

This vision provides the possibility to speak of "creative synergy"[695] in Bonaventure's theology of creation; it opens a new horizon to see the "entangled trinity"[696] in the cosmos, at least analogically. We will treat the perspective of analogy in the next chapter of this study.

---

[695] GANOCZY, *Il Creatore Trinitario*, 110.
[696] See ERNEST L. SIMMONS, *The Entangled Trinity. Quantum Physics and Theology, Fortress Press*, Minneapolis, 2014.

CHAPTER III
ANALOGY OF TRIADIC MODALITY IN CREATION

A Christological-Trinitarian Paradigm

Introduction

In the second chapter, we have seen that from the perspective of Trinitarian theology one might say that, if the divine mystery were not supremely communicative in itself, it could not communicate being to the finite. The diffusion must be supreme, so that the One producing gives whatever he can give. That is to say that "the good of creation adds nothing to the goodness of the Creator, because the finite adds nothing to the infinite"[697]. Now, the questions are this: If God "has no internal need of the world, and it is not motivated by anything outside the divinity itself"[698], how is the creation of the finite being possible? If God does not need the world in order to be God, why does God call the world into being?

In the first section of this chapter, we will sustain that creation is divine communication *ad extra*. God reveals himself, so that man will have knowledge of God, at least analogically. The writer of the book of Wisdom says: "For from the greatness and the beauty of created things, their original author, by analogy, is seen and known" (Wis. 13: 5)[699]. Saint Paul writes: "Since the creation of the world, invisible realities, God's eternal power and divinity have become visible,

---

[697] *Hexaëm.*, XI, 11 (V, 382): […] "bonitas creaturae bonitati Creatoris nihil addit, quia finitum infinito nihil addit" (English trans., De Vinck, 163).

[698] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 61.

[699] Cf. *Itin.*, I, 9 (V, 298b): "A magnitudine namque speciei et creaturae cognoscibiliter poterit Creator horum videri" (English trans., Hayes, 53).

recognized through the things he has made" (Rom. 1: 20)[700]. In this contemplation, the second section will deal on the modality of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in creation. This triadic vision shows that creation is the expression *ad extra* of divine will. As we will see in the third section, Bonaventure explains the divine expression *ad extra* through the metaphor of *book*; and his utilizing of the term *contuitio* proposes the role of the divine Word as the *ratio aeterna* and proper mediator between God and created beings. From this metaphor we then turn to the next section on the universal analogy: *vestige* (expressing the Trinity in a distant and unclear way), *image* (reflecting the Trinity in a closer and more distinct way) and *similitude* (reflecting most intensely in every sanctified creature which is found in the rational spirit that is conformed to God through grace). Through this triadic structure, the point we want to show is that, the itinerary of the soul *ascensus in Deum*[701] through Jacob's ladder (Gen. 28: 12), departs from the sensible world into a communion with God the highest Good, is enabled by the grace of God.

This three-fold structure in Bonaventure's method of *reductio* or *consumatio*, as we have seen earlier is his method which designates the re-unity of all creatures in the Trinitarian community. How the human soul can be united in God the Creator? To answer this question, we will show that Bonaventure's way of *reductio* has a Christological characteristic. Jesus has said: "I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. He will go in and out, and find pasture" (Jn. 10: 9). As far as we follow this way of interpretation, we believe that "to understand Bonaventure, one must recognize that the Trinity and Christology form the basis of his theological synthesis"[702].

---

[700] *Itin.*, II, 13 (V, 303): "[…] quod invisibilia Dei a creatura mundi, per ea quae facta sunt, intellecta conspiciuntur" (English trans., Hayes, 79).

[701] See MARIA L. MASSANI, "Lo slancio creaturale verso Dio in sant'Agostino, san Francesco e san Bonaventura: la fede nell'*adhaerere Deo* e nell'*ascensus in Deum*", in *DrSer*, 61 (2013), p. 83-106.

[702] The quoted phrase reassumes the studies of Ewert Cousins on Bonaventure's theology. For example, COUSINS, "The Two Poles of Bonaventure's Theology" in *S. Bonaventure*, *1274-1974. Vol. IV*, 153-176; COUSINS, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposite*, 49-67.

We have given sufficient discussion on the pole of Trinity in the preceding chapters. In the last two sections of this chapter, we will focus on the Christological pole. Some contemporary studies show that *De scientia Christi*, *Breviloquium* and *Itinerarium*, in a certain sense, offer a similar order: a seven-fold and three-fold structure, each one with an intense Christological vision. Bonaventure's convincingly shows that the theology of creation is internally related to Christology. In fact, from the first moment of creation, its proper meaning is irreducibly Christological.

1. Divine Diffusiveness

To answer the questions posed in the beginning of this chapter it is of prime importance that we consider the relationship between Good *ad intra* (*Trinity*) and Good *ad extra* (*its effects into creature*)[703]. If the mystery of Trinity is the *locus* of emanation of Good (*ad intra*), the world is the place of participation of good (*ad extra*). We emphasize that the Trinity is the locus or source of maximum diffusion of the supreme God. We take note of the word maximum; it is not the exact word for the diffusion is immense and limitless. Its expansion in time into creature cannot therefore be a comparison of the immensity of eternal goodness. Bonaventure expresses the supreme diffusion with metaphorical language.

1.1. Between the Trinity and Creation

God's love to creatures must be understood according to the logic of communication, not affection. God loves not because of any external effect, but because he communicates the goodness. The creatures are loved not because they

---

[703] See T. SZABÒ, "Trinità e Creazione. Riflessione sull'attualità del pensiero di San Bonaventure", in *San Bonaventura Maestro di Vita Francescana e di Sapienza Cristiani: atti del Congresso internazionale per il VII centenario di S. Bonaventura da Bagnoregio Roma 19-26 settembre 1974* (a cura di A. Pompei), Pontificia Facoltà Teologia 'S Bonaventura', Roma, 1976, p. 223-231; LUCA DE ROSA, *Dalla Teologia della creazione all'antropologia della Bellezza. Il linguaggio simbolico chiave interpretativa del pensiero di San Bonaventure da Bagnoregio*, Cittadella, Assisi, 2011, chap. II; ID., "La teologia della creazione nelle opere di San Bonaventura", in *Rivista di scienza religiose*, 24 (2010), p. 239-258; I. MALEÒN-SANZ, "La creación como arte de la Trinidad en san Buenaventura", in *Scripta Theologia*, 47. 3 (2015), p. 579-605.

are good; they are good as they are loved[704]. Creation can be conceived as communication *ad extra* of the Triune God. The language of God is the language of love, and he expresses it thoroughly and comprehensively through divine *logos*, that is the Word of God became man, Jesus Christ. This communication comes from divine *habitus*, that is goodness; and the goodness in itself tends to communicate. The communication is derived from an act of will, for what God wants, he does and it happens. The reason to communicate, therefore, comes from the will and kindness. God loves us according to his will, as he and his goodness are one. While communicating himself, he loves us[705]. The Trinity is paradigm of all creatures.

In Bonaventure's circular symbol, the Triune God is the source of all emanation (*emanation*). The emanation follows the movements of creation, which is circular thus it leads back to God[706]. "Bonaventure uses the term *emanation* to describe the birth of creation from the womb of the Triune God of love"[707]. If God is seen to be the supreme Good, it follows that God can be thought as free to create or not to create. The internal divine emanations are the presupposition for the external emanations which produce creation. But any emanation external to the divine is free on the part of God[708].

The self-diffusive nature of the divine love can be perfectly fulfilled within the Godhead through its free and creative expression amongst the persons of the Trinity. In this view, "creation is not needed for God's love to fully express itself, and so creation is not ontologically necessary for God"[709].

---

[704] *III Sent.*, d. 32, a. u., q. 1 (III, 697-698) : "Utrum Deus dilexerit creaturaes aeternaliter […] Rispondeo dicendum quod […] dicitur Deus aliquem *diligere*, vel quia actu *communicat* ei bonum, vel quia *proponit communicare* […] verbum diligendi impositum est ab ipsa liberalitate affectionis se ipsam alteri communicantis" (Cf. TODISCO, "Bonum", in *DizBon*, 221-222).

[705] Cf. BOUGEROL, "Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite", 101.

[706] Cf. HAYES, Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 53.

[707] DELIO, *A Franciscan view of creation*, 22.

[708] Cf. HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 64-65.

[709] Cf. DON SCHWEITZER, "Aspects of God's Relationship to the World in the Theologies of Jürgen Moltmann, Bonaventura and Jonathan Edwards" in *Religious and Theology*, 26.1 (2007), p. 5-24 (15-16).

The divine love fully expressed within the Trinity (*ad intra*) is open to further expression in the story of the universe (*ad extra*). Similarly, two key words for this discourse stand out: *manifestare* and *participare*. The first keyword is the description of what is commonly referred to as 'objective glory'. The second keyword is the description of what is commonly spoken of as 'subjective glory'. The two statements are internally related to each other[710]. In the act of creating, God calls forth a world that would manifest the divine glory. God creates beings that are capable of participating in that glory.

If the world is truly an objective expression of goodness, truth, and beauty that resides in the mystery of God, then the world cannot exist without saying something about the one who produced it. But this needs to be related immediately to the second aim, subjective glory. If a world that is a manifestation of the glory of God exists, but does not include some creatures capable of perceiving and reveling in that glory, it would make little sense. A world that 'manifested' without moving on to *participare* or the possibility of 'participating', would, indeed be a sort of selfish whim on the part of God. The idea of God who creates for the sake of 'objective glory' invariably awakens the feeling that such a God must be terribly selfish or self-centered[711].

In Bonaventure's theology, as observes Cullen, "everything is an effect of the creating Trinity; everything that exists is brought about by the Trinity, which is the efficient, exemplar, and final cause"[712]. For the saint, "whatever path one takes to God, whether scriptural or philosophical, one will find the Trinity Persons. Everything that exists proclaims the Triune God"[713]. Trinity in the fullest sense of

---

[710] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 64.
[711] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 65.
[712] CULLEN, *Bonaventure*, 130.
[713] CULLEN, *Bonaventure*, 118.

the word is a structural principle of Bonaventure's thought[714]. Hence, it is legitimate to say that there is "a congruent relationship between the Trinity and creation[715].

Creation and redemption are other finite actualizations of what is already infinitely expressed within the Trinity. We have seen that in engendering the Son, Father expresses himself wholly and eternally produces the ideas, the origin of which is thus traced to the original productivity of being. We therefore see that the creation of the world is only another manifestation of this diffusion of divine goodness. The creation of finite beings in time is already actual within the immanent Trinity in the generation of the Son[716].

God is in no way compelled to create the world because of a lack of something or of an unfulfilled desire. Yet the act of creation, while free, is in keeping with the divine nature and a further expression of it[717].To put it directly, God acts not as an actor but as a lover in relationship. Love not only indicates to us what God is but who God is for us. Love can never be isolated without in some way sharing itself[718]. We cite Bonaventure's own metaphor, creation is like a beautiful song (*pulcherrimum carmen*) that flows in the most excellent of harmonies. It is a song that God freely desires to sing into the vast spaces of the universe[719].

Bonaventure also describes creation as like a river that flows from a spring, spreads throughout the land to purify and fructify it, and eventually flows back to its point of origin. This metaphor, according to Delio, "not only speaks to us of Bonaventure's appreciation for the beauty of creation, but also indicates how Bonaventure sees the deep intimate relationship between creation and the Triune

---

[714] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 56.
[715] Cf. DENIS EDWARD, *The God of Evolution*, Paulist, NY., 1999, p. 30-31.
[716] GILSON, The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure, 165.
[717] DON SCHWEITZER, "Aspects of God's Relationship to the World", 15.
[718] Cf. DELIO, "Is creation eternal?", in *TheolStud*, 66 (2005), p. 283.
[719] *I Sent*., d. 44, q. 1, a. 3, concl. (I, 786b): "Similiter optime ordinatae sunt res *in finem*, salvo ordine universi, quia universum est tanquam pulcherrimum carmen, quod decurrit secundum optimas consonantias"; Cf. DELIO, *A Franciscan View of Creation*, 23.

God"[720]. And as we have said, the most beautiful expression of this relation is the mystery of Incarnation.

Reading *Hexaëmeron*, we have seen that the key to Bonaventure's theology of creation is in the eternal generation of the Word from the Father. Hayes writes:

"As the Father's self-expression, the Word is the openness of the Father to the other in all its forms. The second person is God precisely as expressive being. God's being as self-communicative love gives expression to its entire fruitfulness in the generation of the Son, so that in generating the Son, the Father speaks one Word immanent to himself in which is expressed the possibility of creation"[721].

This Christological perspective, strongly speaks of the mystery of divine self emptying: The Father is fountain-fullness of goodness and totality of self-communicative or self emptying (*kenotic*) by nature of the good. The mystery of the Father, therefore, is fullness and emptiness, richness (in goodness) and poverty (by the nature of diffusion or *kenosis*). Incarnation is the mystery of God's bounding down to the world[722].

We have seen also that Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology springs from the *primitas* of the Father. The Father, innascible meaning with no beginning and fecund meaning fertile, is totally self-communicative and communicates the entirety of his ideas to others than himself. The Father is the principle, the prime foundation of the Trinity and hence the source of creation. The self-communicative goodness of the Father is literally God giving God-self away, but in such a way that fecundity marks the Trinity's dynamism power. The indispensability of God to give God-self away is realized in the Son[723]. Only a dynamic self-communicative God can be a creator God, and the weight of that self-communication falls upon the Word as the

---

[720] *I Sent.*, prooem. I, 1-6 (quoted in DELIO, *A Franciscan View of Creation*, 22). On the theme of kenosis of Christ, see also E. PRENGA, *Il Crocifisso via alla Trinità*, 162.
[721] HAYES, "Incarnation and Creation in the Theology of St. Bonaventure", 314.
[722] DELIO, *Simply Bonaventure*, 45.
[723] Cf. DELIO, "Theology, Metaphysics, and Centrality of Christ", 260-261.

necessary condition for any created being. Hayes sums it: "God speaks but one Word in which the world and its history are co-spoken"[724].

The possibility of God's creative activity, therefore, rests in God's being as Triune, which is to say that "God could not communicate being to the finite if he were not supremely communicative in himself"[725]. Evidently the fecund self-diffusiveness of the infinite God cannot be exhausted by creation, since such diffusion will make creation equal to God. However, it is directed toward the divine Word who is the exemplar of creation. According to Bonaventure, "the diffusion in time in creation is no more than a center or point in relation to the immensity of the divine goodness"[726].

1.2. Creation: divine diffusion and will

We have repeatedly said that the axiom *bonum diffusivum sui* is clear in itself. The more something is good, the more it is diffusive. Therefore it must be said that the highest good is supremely diffusive. And God acts with supreme goodness, therefore it is supremely diffuse. Everything he does is done as the expression of goodness, both on the substance itself and its properties. To strengthen his position, on the axiom Bonaventure makes a clear distinction between two manners of diffusion: diffusion by nature (*diffusion in the Trinity*) and diffusion by creation (*diffusion in the creation*)[727].

Natural diffusion is the production of persons as expressed properly in the axiom: 'the highest good is supremely diffusive. In contrast, the diffusion by creation is derived from free will, that is to say, the design of the divine will. In the latter case, this means that God really wants to do something. This passage of divine will brings us back to the question which emerged in the first *Commentary on*

---

[724] HAYES, "Christology and Metaphysics", 92.
[725] HAYES, "The meaning of *Convenientia*", 90.
[726] *Itin.*, VI, 2 (V, 310): "Nam diffusio ex tempore *in creature* non est nisi centralis vel punctualis respectu immensitatis bonitatis aeternae" (English trans., Hayes, 125) .
[727] Cf. BOUGEROL, "Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite", 101.

Sentences, when Bonaventure delved on the causality of the divine will: *Is the will of God, considered generally, the general cause of things*?[728]

Based on the authority of Augustine and Hilary, Bonaventure sustains that God is the cause of things (*Deus est causa rerum*). The issue that surfaces here is whether creation is a function of God's will or is it dependent on another aspect of the divine nature, such as God's essence, knowledge, or power. Bonaventure's arguments point at the divine will as the cause of created things. In this case the saint stresses the primacy of free will in God[729].

As created beings, we understand God in many ways, and express our understanding of God using different terms. But in reality the divine essence is one. All the things we have which differ from each other are found in God in a finer way, in complete identity, which nonetheless exhibits complete perfection and truth. The way we understand the wisdom, power and will of God is limited. While in us, wisdom, power and will, truly are a being (*ens*) and a cause (*causa*) of the things which derive from us, in God these attributes are one. Even though they are one, but because our intellect cannot comprehend the infinity of God's substance, nor express them in one word, we understand God in many ways[730].

Then, when we say that God is good, we are not speaking of eternity. Therefore, since we understand God in one way when we say God is good and in another way when we say God is eternal, we grant that he diffuses himself because he is good, not because he is eternal. For this is a property of goodness, not of duration. "Hence it is, that when we understand, that there is truly a Will in God, and the property of a will is to produce those which go forth (from it) through the manner of liberality, (we understand) that we are saying, that God, inasmuch as he

---

[728] *I Sent.*, d. 45, a. 2, q. 1 (I, 803): "Utrum voluntas Dei sit causa rerum in generali". My treatment on this section is indebted to the study of HOUSER and NOONE, *Commentary on the Sentences*, p. 67-86.

[729] HOUSER and NOONE, *Commentary on the Sentences*, 295 (footnote n. 2).

[730] *I Sent.*, d. 45, a. 2, q. 1 concl. (I, 804).

is *a will*, is the Cause of things"[731]. At this point we take note of the heart of Bonaventure's response to the above question (*italic*). He combines the Neo-platonic side of the good, that the good is beneficial, showing the new point that is the will of God. Here we quote a text as an example:

> "Now the reason why causality is attributed to the will is this, namely, that the reason for causing things is goodness, both by reason of producing effects and by reason of being an end. For the good is said to be diffusive; and the good is that for the sake of which all things are. What produces effects, however, only becomes an efficient cause in actuality for the sake of an end. Therefore, what describes the conjunction of the efficient principle with the end is the reason for causing and effect. But the will is an act, in which a good is turned back to a higher good or to goodness itself. Therefore, the will unites the efficient cause with the end. This is why the will is the reason why causing produces an effect. Therefore, we attribute causality to God by reason of the will, not for any other reason"[732].

Therefore we clearly see that for Bonaventure, an effective principle is not made effective as an effect on account of an end. Rather, it is the union of an effective principle with the end is the reason for the cause in the effect. Thus when we understand that there is a will of God and the nature of the will is to produce those things which go forth from it through liberty, and then we can say that God, inasmuch as he is a will, is the cause of things[733].

---

[731] *I Sent.*, d. 45, a. 2, q. 1 concl. (I, 804b): "Hinc est, quod cum intelligimus, vere voluntatem esse in Deo, et proprietas voluntatis sit producere ea quae exeunt per modum liberalitatis, quod dicimus, Deum, in quantum *voluntas* est, esse causa rerum"; Cf. BOUGEROL, "Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite", 102-103.

[732] *I Sent.*, d. 45, a. 2, q.1 concl. (I, 804b): "Ratio autem, quare voluntati attribuitur causalitas, haec est, quia causandi est *bonitas* et in ratione *effectivi* et in ratione *finis*. Nam 'bonum dicitur diffusivum', 'et bonum est propter quod omnia'. *Effectivum* autem non fit efficiens in effectu nisi *propter finem*. Illud ergo quod dicit coniunctionem principii effectivi cum fine, est ratio causandi in effectu; sed voluntas est actus, secundum quem bonum reflectitur supra bonum sive bonitatem: ergo voluntas unit effectivum cum fine. Et hinc est, quod voluntas est ratio causare faciens in effectu; et ideo attribuimus Deo rationem causalitatis sub ratione voluntatis, non sic sub aliis rationibus" (English trans., HOUSER and NOONE, *Commentary on the Sentences*, 288).

[733] Cf. BOUGEROL, "Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite", 103.

This affirmation is based on two Dionysian axioms: *bonum diffusivum sui* which indicates the Creator as effective principle, and *bonum est propter quod omnia* which indicates the finality of all creation[734]. In *Divine Names*,[735] Dionysius says: "All things desire goodness as containing all and as principle and as end: as the principle from which they are, as what contains them and through which they are saved, as the end to which they end. Consequently, "divine love is a kind of eternal cycle, from the best, through the best, to the best". Interpreting this passage Bonaventure sustains the aspect divine will in creation:

> "Dionysius speaks about conjoining principle with end, and, therefore, an actual cause, when it wills to do something. So actuality in causing is referred to the will, not just at the instant in which one wills, but in what one wills to do. For example, I will hear mass tomorrow, and my will makes me (do it) tomorrow is an act with respect to the thing willed. The same thing is true of God, in his own manner"[736].

1.3. God's communication and man's happiness

The diffusion is actual communication of the inherent divine nature. The diffusion of goodness in God is not necessary. It cannot be understood that, as God is good, and goodness diffuses, so God grants it. Rather the diffusion must be understood in the sense that God is supreme fecundity of good. God as intrinsic Goodness spreads himself as his Wisdom and Power. The supreme goodness is produced in God by the act of communication. This diffusion is nature because the goodness is his nature; it is voluntary because in him, the will is intrinsic; it is free because freedom is amended following his will; but it is also necessary because it

---

[734] Cf. Luc Mathieu, *La Trinità Creatrice*, 54.
[735] Cf. *De Divinis Nominibus*, 697C/74.
[736] *I Sent.*, d. 45, a. 2, q. 1, resp. (I, 805a): "Ex quo colligitur, quod dicit coniunctionem principii cum fine, et ideo causam actu, quando vult facere; ita quod actualitas in causando referatur ad voluntatem, non pro instanti, in quo habet voluntatem, sed in quo facere vult. Sicut ego volo cras audire missam, et voluntas faciet, me cras esse in actu respectu voliti; sic suo modo est in Deo" (English trans., Houser and Noone, *Commentary on the Sentences*, 288).

presents eternally, and God cannot communicate his supreme good without giving it; and it is perfect because it gives to all those who can receive it[737].

Here we find the real foundation of creation theology. The diffusion in creation comes from the will of God to spread out his goodness, by creating as efficient principle; all created come from God and goes back to him. In this consideration, one can say that "creation is just the logical spatiotemporal consequence of God's eternal goodness"[738]. To be creature means to be limited in a particular space and time. But in this status, it remains an intrinsic strength, because creation is a 'movement', not an indifferent 'suddenly making exist', but a 'real creation from love', a 'creation for happiness'[739].

God's goodness is the cause of creation, and his glory and the sharing in his life are its purpose. This is the most fundamental principle of the happiness of human being, which is the interior happiness or happiness within. For Bonaventure "happiness is nothing other than the enjoyment of the *summum Bonum*". As this happiness comes from above, "we cannot find happiness without rising above ourselves; but we cannot be elevated above ourselves unless a superior virtue lifts us up"[740]. As the image of God, human being is "not merely *res cogitans*, but *res cogitata*"[741]. God's initiative for a gratuitous project of creation is the *ratio* for mans' freedom in the journey to the union with the most high Good.

The doctrine of creation, for Bonaventure, presupposes the doctrine of the immanent emanations that constitute the mystery of the Trinity. This in turn, is the explication of the mystery of God as the Supreme Good which is fecund and productive both within the Godhead, producing the Trinity, and without the

---

[737] Cf. BOUGEROL, "Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite", 104.

[738] H. ENNIS, "The place of love in Bonaventure", in *S. Bonaventure 1274-1974. IV*, p.144.

[739] Cf. GUARDINI, *Bonaventura*, 698.

[740] *Itin.*, I, 1 (V, 296).

[741] TODISCO, "La Carne Abitata Alla fonte della grandezza delle creature con Bonaventura e Duns Scoto", in *MF*, 115 (2015), p. 11; ID., "Nella Gratuità la Felicità. Spunti bonaventuriani", in *ItalFranc*, 90 (2015), p. 357-359; Cf. DE ROSA, "La teologia della creazione", 242.

Godhead, producing the cosmos as a reflection of the Triune God. In Bonaventure's metaphysical-system, the causality of the creative principle is three-fold, it must act from itself (efficient cause), in accordance with itself (exemplary cause), and because of itself (final cause)[742].

This triple causality is related to God's power, wisdom, and goodness, which, in turn, are appropriated to the persons of the Trinity. By power, God creates; by wisdom, God rules; and by reason of goodness, God brings creation to completion"[743]. In *De decem praeceptis*, the Franciscan Saint writes:

> "Uncreated being is the cause of all things, that is, the efficient, formal-exemplary and final cause, and has power, wisdom and benevolence and brings all things into being (*esse*). And these three attributes are appropriated to the three persons of the Trinity; power or majesty is appropriated to the Father, wisdom or truth is appropriated to the Son, benevolence or goodness to the Holy Spirit"[744].

This three-fold character provides another important point for our theme. It shows that everything is ordered not only within creation but is also oriented and directed toward a *telos*, thus a final goal. The eternity of the world, therefore, in Bonaventure's view, militated against the order of creation since, without a beginning and end, there could be no true order in creation. This is the real sense of word *ordo* in Bonaventure's ratio of creation, as we have pointed out in the second chapter. He writes: "*Duplex enim est ordo rerum: unus in universo, alter in finem*"[745]. Delio interprets that by reason of its lack of form and its imperfection, matter might cry out for perfection. That is, God could have created the world as it

---

[742] Cf. *Brevil*., p. II, c.1, n. 2-4 (V, 219a-b).

[743] *Hexaëm*., XVI, 9 (V, 404).

[744] *Decem Praec*., II, 4 (V, 511b): "Ens autem increatum est causa omnium rerum, causa, dico, efficiens, *formalis-exemplaris* et *finalis*, et habet potentiam, sapientiam et benevolentiam et producit omnia in *esse*. Et ista tria appropriantur tribus personis in Trinitate: *potentia* sive maiestas appropriatur Patri, *sapientia* sive veritas Filio, *benevolentia* sive bonitas Spiritui sancto". For English translation of *Decem Praec*., *see Works of St Bonaventure. Collations on the Ten Commandments* (introduction and translation by Paul J. Spaeth), The Franciscan Institute St Bonaventure University, NY., 1995, 31-32

[745] *I Sent*., d. 47, a. u. 3, concl. (I, 844a-b).

was intended to be; however, God chose to create it in such a way that it would be perfected glory. Herein the notion of freedom plays an important role[746].

2. Trinitarian Modality of Creation

Notwithstanding all the passages that we have discussed right now, there is only one point we really want to make clear. That is, to use Bonaventure's words in Breviloquium, "*creatura est effectus Trinitatis creantis sub triplice genere causalitatis*"[747]. Rightly, having presented the mystery of the Triune God, the Saint started the second part of *Breviloquium* saying: "Now that we have presented a summary review of the Trinity of God, we need to give a view on things about the creation of the world"[748]. Following this method, we now present the Triune modality of creation, without repeating what we have said early on.

2.1. Modality of the Father: *primitas*

"Dixit Deus: fiat lux!" (Gen 1:3). This is what is written in the book of Genesis. The text says that God creates, speaking (*dicere*). At the beginning, God the Father who speaks, and the *word* which comes out of his mouth is divine Word. The proper modality of Father is that he creates in the Word. Luc Mathieu[749] makes distinction between 'to speak' as an actual effect (*in actu*) and 'to speak' as a habitual effect (*in habitu*). The first is a divine manifestation, similarly, to produce an effect (in time); while the second designates the interior divine act (eternal). The Word is in Father eternally (*ad intra*), so to speak, means to generate the Word, in and through whom the Father creates all creatures. Creation is not a direct effect from Father to the creatures, as it was happened through and in the Word.

We have said that the *primitas* of the Father expresses the *auctoritas* in the order of origin. As the first person, Father is *fons vitae*, as a person the only one without origin, and being so receives nothing from the other two persons. The

---

[746] Cf. DELIO, *A Franciscan view of creation*, 26.
[747] *Brevil.*, pars. II, c. 1 n. 2 (V, 219).
[748] *Brevil.*, pars. II, c. 1 n. 1 (V, 219).
[749] Cf. LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità Creatrice*, 115.

Father, as the proper first principle, is the fecund within Trinity, because to personal is to be essentially capable of relationship[750]. The reason why many things can proceed from this one principle for Bonaventure depends on two aspects, namely that God is the first principle, and that he is in a singular way one[751].

According to Schaefer, "this absolute primacy is the deeper reason why God can be and actually is the sole source of an unlimited multitude of creatures. The combination of primacy and fecundity is nothing else but an application of that same notion of 'fountain fullness' which is so fundamental and typical for the Seraphic Doctor"[752]. Here we are in the most original aspect in Bonaventure's view: For him the oneness means not only the absence of any plurality or a negation of division, but includes also a positive element, which is considered to be the greater, the more perfectly a being is one[753]. Since God possesses this oneness in a far higher degree than any creature, it must have in God an eminently more positive meaning, so much so that it is now taken in a positive sense only.

> "St. Bonaventure then immediately emphasizes the positive side by saying that 'this oneness is the most perfect, the most supreme, and infinite'. It exists in this highest degree only in God and is therefore truly singular. Although expressed in the form of privation, it assumes the character of a very positive perfection and contains, like the other notion of primacy with its accompanying 'fountain-fullness', an intrinsic dynamic element which makes the being that possesses it an all-perfect and all-powerful principle"[754].

---

[750] *Myst. Trin.*, q. 8, resp. ad 7 (V, 115b).

[751] *II Sent.*, d. 1, p. 2, a. q. 1, concl. (II, 40a): "Et ideo est positio recta, quod multitudo in rebus est a principio uno, quia est *primum* principium et unice *unum*"; Cf. SCHAEFER, "St. Bonaventure on Man in Creation", 283.

[752] SCHAEFER, "St. Bonaventure on Man in Creation", 282.

[753] *I Sent.*, d. 24. a. 1, q. 1, resp. ad 3 (I, 422a): "[…] unum dicit *privationem* multitudinis secundum generalem nominis rationem; sed illa privatio, etsi nomine tenus sit privatio, tamen realiter est *positio*; quia quanto magis est privatio divisionis in aliquo, tanto illud est completius et perfectius"; see SCHAEFER, "St. Bonaventure on Man in Creation", 284.

[754] SCHAEFER, "St. Bonaventure on Man in Creation", 284; Cf. M. CALISI, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 19-27.

From that positive dimension of divine unity, Bonaventure derives a series of attributes from it. Because God "is in a singular way one, he is therefore the most *simple*, the most *spiritual*, and the most *perfect*. These three attributes are then laid in three other divine attributes: Because God is most simple, he has the greatest *power*; as the most spiritual Being, he possesses the greatest *wisdom*; and finally, since he is most perfect, he is the highest *goodness*[755]. These three attributes present the special nobility in God and quite often are applied to the three divine Persons[756].

Since God has the greatest and absolute *power*, he is able to produce an unlimited number of creatures. Because God possesses the greatest *wisdom*, he knows many things, and this divine knowledge is not a knowledge of something that precedes God, but is the knowledge of an unlimited number of things that can be created by him. As the highest *goodness*, God tends to pour forth and diffuse his perfection; he wants to produce many things and to communicate himself of others. Because this divine goodness is infinite, the number of beings to which it can be communicated has no limit[757]. For Bonaventure, as the supreme one, God is "the universal principle of all multiplicity", and as supremely unified in its essence, God is "supremely infinite and multiple in its effects"[758].

2.2. Modality of the Son: *exemplar*

Bonaventure's understanding of exemplarity operates at two inter-related levels: first, there is a Trinitarian exemplarity; and second, there is the specifically christological exemplarity. The basis for both types of exemplarity is rooted in the doctrine of divine Ideas. The Son is *medium* person of the Trinity, the exemplar par

---

[755] *II Sent*. d. 1, a. 2. q. 1 (II, 40b): "Quia *simplicissimum*, maximae *potentiae*; quia *spiritualissimum*, maximae *sapientiae*; quia *perfectissimum* est, bonitatis summae" (English trans., HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 48-49).

[756] Cf. *Decem praec*., 2, 4 (V, 511b); *Hexaëm*., XXI, 5 (V, 432a).

[757] *II Sent*., d. 1. a. 2. q. 1, concl. (II, 40b): "Quia maximae potentiae, multa potest; Quia maximae sapientiae, multa novit, Quia summae bonitatis, multa vult producere et se communicare"; Cf. SCHAEFER, "St. Bonaventure on Man in Creation", 279-281.

[758] *Itin*., V, 7 (V, 310a): "Quod enim summe unum est, est omnis multitudinis universale principium; […] cuius virtus, quia summe unita in essentia, ideo summe infinitissima et multiplicissima in efficacia" (English trans., Hayes, 119).

excellence of relation between God and all creatures. We have seen enough of the meaning of exemplar in the function of triple *Verbum*. The point we want to make clear now is the hypostatic union of Christ, thus a more Christological dimension. In *Apologia Pauperum*, for example, Bonaventure writes that: "since Christ is the Word both uncreated and incarnate, in him is found the two-fold principle of exemplarity, one eternal and the other temporal"[759].

First, as the uncreated Word, Christ is the eternal exemplar. This is grounded in Trinitarian metaphysics. God is dynamic, loving, fruitful sprit, fully self-conscious as loving goodness and knowing in one, eternal, perfect act of self-knowledge and all he is in himself and all he can call into being outside himself in the created universe. This self-knowledge is his Word. Hence, the Word contains all things that God can and does create. He is the exemplar or model of all things. Second, as the incarnate Word, Christ is the temporal exemplar. The self-knowledge of God is his inner Word. When God 'vocalizes' that inner Word, the world comes to be; and within the world, humanity comes to be, and within the human race, Christ. His human nature is the most perfect, the fullest vocalization of God's inner Word. The inner human nature of Christ exists in a dialectical relation to the eternal Word. So intimate and perfect is this union that Bonaventure refers to Christ as a "*uno aeterno exemplari indiviso*"[760], possessing an eternal side and a temporal side.

The exemplarity of Christ is perfect and indivisible. No single creature, and not even the entire ensemble of grace creatures, can duplicate the perfection of Christ. The incarnation is not just the meaning of and fulfillment of creation, but it is the very foundation and exemplar, as well. The vestiges of the Trinity in creation and in rational likeness are a consequence of the generation of the Word from the

---

[759] *Apol. Paup.*, II, 12 (VIII, 242): "[…] quod cum Christus sit Verbum *increatum* et *incarnatum*, duplex est in eo ratio exemplaritatis, *aeternae* videlicet et *temporalis*"; HAYES, *The Hidden Center*, 131. For English version, see Works of ST. BONAVENTURE (XV), *Defence of the Medicants* (translation by José de Vinck and Robert J. Karris, introduction and notes by Robert J. Karis), Franciscan Institute St Bonaventure University, NY., 2010.
[760] *Apol. Paup.*, II, 12 (VIII, 242); HAYES, *The Hidden Center*, 132.

Father. This perfect and proportionate self-communication is the first principle of the self diffusion of good in creation[761].

The exemplar in a preeminent sense is the Word who lives at the very center of God, and who, as incarnate, is the center of all created reality[762]. "Exemplarism is the matrix for Bonaventure's study of the relation between the world to God, of all things emerging out and returning to God"[763]. This Platonic world of archetypal realties was placed inside God and became identified with the eternal, creative Ideas in the mind of God. God was understood to be an intelligent Creator who produced things through Ideas like a human artisan who produces an artifact that reflects an idea in the artisan's mind. For Bonaventure, the divine Ideas are closely related to the emanation of the divine Word within the Trinity. In reality there is only one Idea. It is simply identical with the full act of God's self knowledge. As the presentation of God and the model of all that God can and will in fact produce, the divine Idea is called the Word of God[764].

We have seen, in this perspective that Bonaventure speaks of the Word as the eternal Art, the perfect expression of God's self self-communicative love. God is subsistent self-communication, the first moment of which is the generation of the Son, in whom the eternal ideas reside in the *Verbum* or self expression. God's first speaking is the Word, and in this sense that Word is the one in which all things are spoken[765]. We may conclude from this that the true fullness of perfection is the richness of deiform being that is found only in Christ[766].

---

[761] Cf. E. ABLES, "The Word in which all things are spoken", 297; see also HAYES, *The Hidden Center*, 133.
[762] Cf. HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 72-73.
[763] E. COUSINS, *Coincidence of opposites*, 99.
[764] Cf. HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 73-74.
[765] Cf. E. ABLES, "The Word in which all things are spoken", 293, 296-297.
[766] HAYES, *The Hidden Center*, 133.

2.3. Modality of the Holy Spirit: *donum*

"Whatever the Father does or the Son suffers is nothing without the Holy Spirit. The Spirit unites us to the Father and the Son"[767]. This passage indicates that the third person in the Trinity receives love both from Father and Son. In him the reciprocal love between Father and Son becomes one, or to repeat the words of Richard of St. Victor, the Holy Spirit is *condilectio* of Father and Son. In regard to the emanation of the Holy Spirit, Bonaventure appropriates the argument of love from the Victorian tradition and understands the Holy Spirit as "bond of love"[768]. The Holy Spirit is the third person, "from which another does not proceed since it holds the last and complete place"[769]. The Spirit completes the divine order, and in this role the Spirit is called *nexus*.

In Bonaventure's view, to be a gift is "constitutive property"[770] of the Holy Spirit. This property is a fundamental role, both within Trinity and his mission in the story of the universe. We have seen that in Bonaventure, the role of the Holy Spirit is associated with the second procession according to the divine will (*per modum voluntatis*), as in God the supreme Good, the communication is realized in perfect way. If in God there is supreme communication, we can say that the production of creation is realized according to a perfect free will (*per modum liberalitatis*); and that means a perfect gratuitously gift. In Bonaventure's language

---

[767] *De donis.*, I, 7 (V, 458b): "Quidquid igitur agat Pater et patiatur Filius, sine Spiritu sancto nihil est. Ipse enim iungit nos Patri et Filio" (English trans., Hayes, 32).

[768] For a detailed discussion of Bonaventure's understanding of the Holy Spirit as the bond of mutual love of the Father and Son, see W. PRINCIPE, "St. Bonaventure's Theology of the Holy Spirit with reference to the Expressions 'Pater et Filius diligent se Spiritu Sancto", in *S. Bonaventure 1274-1974. IV*, p. 243-269; JOHN F. QUINN, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in St. Bonaventure's Theology", in *FrancStud*, 33 (1973), p. 273-284.

[769] HELLMANN, *Divine and Created Order*, 78.

[770] M. MELONE, "'Donum in quo omnia alia dona donatur'. Aspetti di teologia dello Spirito Santo in Bonaventura da Bagnoregio", in *RT*, 17.1 (2006), p. 52. For a specific study on the Holy Spirit in Bonaventure's view, see also M. MELONE, "Lo Spirito Santo, Dono di Carità e Guida alla Verità, in San Bonaventura", in *DrSer*, 58 (2010), 57-73.

the expression gratuitous intrinsically means to love. A perfect gift is realized when one loves another (*per modum amoris*)[771].

The Holy Spirit is an original gift within Trinity. And for the reason that God is the supreme love, which is realized already in the Holy Spirit, we can consider a *ratio* of freedom in the case of divine relation to the universe through creation. The fact that God is perfect communication is a condition for divine liberty *ad extra*, that is, gratuitous relationship between the divine persons and the universe. The proper modality of the Holy Spirit in activity of creation is to give freely and gratuitously. To say that the Holy Spirit is the original gift means that in him we see that the Father and the Son want to create the world freely. And what they want together is a primordial gift for us[772]. The gift of the Holy Spirit to the universe is a gift of possibility to participate in the fulfillment of salvation[773]. No more person proceeds from the Spirit, so the Spirit alone is the last. In the Spirit one finds the final reason (*ratio finiendi*)[774], all things end in love. All which come forth from the fecundity of the Father are led by the Son to share in that love which is the Spirit. It is the proper act of love to unite, and the very power of the return (*reductio*) to the Father is the Spirit. The Spirit is the divine order in its perfection of unity; it reveals the perfection within human heart[775].

Reassuming the Trinitarian modality of creation, it is considered that *primitas* characterizes the richness of the divine essence, but ultimately it is not of an essence, rather, it is of person. In divine order there are three persons and no more. This is not a limitation; rather, it is due to the infinite perfection found in the

---

[771] *I Sent*., d. 10, a. 1, q. 2, resp. (I, 198a): "Si ergo emanatio est per modum liberalitatis in divinis, necesse fuit esse primam et summam; et sic necesse fuit esse per modum amoris". Cf. M. MELONE, "'*Donum in quo omnia alia dona donatur*'", 54-55.

[772] MELONE, "'Donum in quo omnia alia dona donatur'", 63: "[…] lo Spirito Santo è in se stessa gratuità e generosità, ragione di ogni libertà e donazione. Egli è colui nel quale il Padre e il Figlio hanno voluto la creazione e donato a essa ogni cosa, così che la comunicazione *ad extra* del sommo Bene trova nella sua persona il compimento e il suo perfezionamento. Nello Spirito, infatti, il Padre ama quelle creature che ha creato per mezzo del Figlio per diffondere la sua bontà".

[773] Cf. M. MELONE, "'Donum in quo omnia alia dona donatur'", 64.

[774] *Brevil*., pars. I, c. 6, n. 1 (V, 215b).

[775] Cf. HELLMANN, *Divine and Created Order*, 79-81.

number three[776]. Speaking of the perfect order in divine person, as we have noted in the first chapter, Bonaventure said that "where there is perfect order there is relationship to the beginning, the middle, and the end; otherwise disorder would occur in the divine. Thus, as said above: it is proper from the viewpoint of order that there are three persons here"[777]. In recapitulation of this section, we can quote a passage of *Breviloquium* from which appears a series of key words representing the character of each divine person of Trinity in order of creation:

> "[…] *oneness* is appropriated to the Father, *truth* to the Son, and *goodness* to the Holy Spirit. Besides this, there is another series of appropriations given by Hillary, namely 'eternity in the Father, splendor in the Likeness and utility in the Gifts'. From this, in turn, derives a third series of appropriations: in the Father is the *efficient principle*, in the Son the *exemplary principle*, and in the Holy Spirit the *final principle*. And further still from this is a fourth, namely *omnipotence* to the Father, *omniscience* to the Son, and *will or benevolence* to the Holy Spirit" [778].

Father	**Son**	**Holy Spirit**
Unitas	*Veritas*	*Bonitas*
Aeternitas	*Species*	*Usus*
Ratio principiandi	*Ratio exemplandi*	*Ratio finiendi*
Omnipotentia	*Omniscientia*	*Voluntas seu benevolentia*[779].

---

[776] *Myst Trin.*, q. 4, a. 2, ad 10 (V, 87b): "[…] nec pluralitatem personarum ultra numerum trinum capit divinus intellectus, non qui limitatus, sed quia perfectissime infinitus" (English trans., Hayes, 197).

[777] *Hexaëm.*, XI, 7 (V, 381a): […] ubi est perfectus ordo, ibi est ratio principii, medii et ultimi; alioquin inordinatio accideret in divinus, sicut supra dictum est: oportet ergo per rationem ordinis, ut sint ibi tres personae". HELLMANN, *Divine and Created Order*, 83.

[778] *Brevil.*, pars. I, c. 6, n.1 (V, 215b): "[…] tamen Patri dicitur appropriari unitas, Filio veritas, Spiritui sancto bonitas. Et iuxta hanc sumitur secunda appropriatio Hilarii, scilicet, 'aeternitas in Patre, species in Imagine, usus in Munere'. Iuxta hanc sumitur tertia, scilicet in Patre ratio principiandi, in Filio ratio exemplandi, in Spiritu sancto ratio finiendi. Et iuxta hanc sumitur quarta, scilicet omnipotentia Patri, omniscientia Filio, voluntas seu benevolentia Spiritui sancto" [Bonaventure quotes Hilarius *De Trin.*, II. n. 1 (PL, 10, 51 A). English trans., Monti, 45.

[779] See HAYES, introduction to the translation of *Myst. Trin.*, 66; see also MALEÒN-SANZ, "La creación como arte de la Trinidad en san Buenaventura", 505.

3. Triadic Analogy in Creatures

Having seen the Trinitarian modality of creation, we continue now with the theme of analogy[780]. We believe that his perspective may offer a helpful hermeneutic to see that a creature is not merely a thing (*res*) but also a meaning (*signa*)[781]; that is to say the whole world is a mirror (*speculum*) through which we may pass to God[782]. In this approach we have no tendency of constructing demonstrative argument for the existence of God; we speak of "the relation of creatures to God"[783], considering that "this cosmos is through and through *theophanic*: God-revealing"[784].

3.1. On the Knowability of God

"*De cognoscibilitate Dei*"[785]. This is the article of the third distinction of Bonaventure's first *Commentary on the Sentences*, wherein Bonaventure examines a series of questions. We will briefly discuss each question.

The first question: Can God be known by a creature (*utrum Deus sit cognoscibilis a creatura*)?[786] It seems that the answer of the question is "no", because God is infinitive, while the intellect is finite, so there is no congruence

---

[780] For the treatment on the theme of analogy, I am refering to ALFONSO POMPEI, (a cura di), *Scritti di Leone Veuthey, OFMConv* (+1974) *raccolti e selezionati da Ernesto Piacentini. La Filosofia Cristiana di San Bonaventura*, MF, Roma, 1996, p. 247-255; ID., "Cosmologia: Scienza e Fede in Bonaventura da Bagnoregio", 5-42; ENRICO BERTI, "Il concetto di analogia in San Bonaventura", in *DrSer*, 32 (1985), p.11-22. HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 62-68, 74-83, 97-101; ID, "The Cosmos, a symbol of the Divine", 249-258; LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità Creatrice*, 179-245 (chap. VI and VII); SCHAEFER, "St. Bonaventure on Man in Creation", 287-306; ID, "The position and function of man in the created World", 362-373; GROVER A. ZINN, "Book and Word. The Victorian background of Bonaventure's use of symbol", in *S. Bonaventura 1274-1974. II*, p. 143-169; A. PERATONER, "Analogia", in *DizBon.*, p. 178-183; PHILIP L. REYNOLDS, "Threefold Existence and Illumination in Saint Bonaventure", in *FrancStud*, 42 (1982), p. 190-215.
[781] Cf. TODISCO, "Il Carattere Cristiano del pensare Bonaventuriano", 27-28.
[782] *Itin.*, I, 9 (V, 298).
[783] G. F. LANAVE, "Knowing God through and in all things: a proposal for reading Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*", in *FrancStud*, 67 (2009), p. 274.
[784] HAYES, "The Cosmos, a symbol of the Divine", 252.
[785] *I Sent.*, d. 3 p. 1. a. u. (I, 67ss). For English translation on this treatment see HOUSER and NOONE, *Commentary on the Sentences*, 67-86
[786] *I Sent.*, d. 3. p. 1 a. u. q.1 concl. (I, 69).

between knower and known. One extreme says that, it is not possible to describe or understand God as it is "incomprehensible"[787]; and the other says: "The mind is an image of God as being capable of receiving God and able to participate in God"[788]. The first sentence is from Dionysius, and the second is from Augustine. But Bonaventure's answer offers a more balance consideration.

Criticizing the false and superficial interpretation of these authorities, Bonaventure shows his answer as follows: Knowledge is divided into *comprehension* and *apprehension*. Apprehensive knowledge involves manifesting a truth about the thing known; comprehensive knowledge involves knowing the whole truth about the thing known. The first kind of knowledge requires a fitting proportion (*proportio convenientiae*). The soul can have this kind of relation to God, since the soul is in a way of all things, through being assimilated to all things. Naturally it can know all things, and it is especially capable of knowing God through assimilation, since it is the image and likeness of God. Comprehensive knowledge, on the other hand, requires a proportion of equality and equivalence (*proportio aequalitatis et aequiparantiae*). The soul cannot have this kind of relation to God, since the soul is finite, while God is infinite. Therefore, it cannot have this kind of knowledge of God[789].

The second question: Can God be known through creatures (*utrum Deus sit cognoscibilis per creaturas*)?[790] Again the answer appears to be "no". According to those who hold arguments rebutting Bonaventure's view, creature is darkness while God is light. Therefore, God cannot be known through a creature. In replying to the argument to this question, Bonaventure refers to the authority of divine Word written in the book of Wisdom 13:5: "From the greatness of beauty and creation its creator can be seen by the mind". And from Saint Isidore who says: "The limited beauty of a creature makes the beauty of God, which cannot be limited, able to be

---

[787] Cf. *De Divinis Nominibus*, 588C (English trans., Luibheid, 50).
[788] *De Trinitatae*, 14. 8. 11.
[789] *I Sent.*, d. 3. p. 1 a. u q. 1 concl. (I, 69).
[790] *I Sent.*, d. 3. p. 1 a. u q. 2 (I, 71).

understood"[791]. Based on these authorities The Franciscan Doctor explored his argument as follows:

Not only can an effect be known through its cause, but a cause can be known through its effect. Therefore, if God is a cause functioning in accord with his own excellence, and the creature is his effect, then God can be known through the creature. The sensible is a way of coming to know the intelligible; but the creature is sensible, while God is intelligible. Therefore, one can arrive at knowledge of the creator through the creature. Like is known by like; but every creature is like God, either as a vestige of God or as an image of God. Therefore, God can be known through every creature[792].

Speaking analogically, Bonaventure contends that, "the cause shines forth in the effect and the wisdom of the craftsman manifests in his work. Therefore, God, who is the craftsman and cause of a creature, can be known through the creature"[793]. On the contention concerning the lack of something common between God and creature, Bonaventure counters, "Between God and creatures things are not common univocally, but analogically (*quod non est commune per univocationem, tamen est commune per analogiam*)[794]. We consider that for Bonaventure, "analogy is the medium between equivocal and univocal"[795].

The third question: *Whether man in every state cognizes God through creatures* (*Utrum homo in omni statu cognoscat Deum per creaturas*)? For Bonaventure, man in the original state (*primum statum*) can know God through creatures. He argues that "Man in the state of innocence did not use to cognize God

---

[791] *I Sent.*, d. 3 p. 1. a. u q. 2 fund. (I, 71): "Sapientiae decimo tertio: *A magnitudine speciei et creaturae cognoscibiliter poterit Creator horum videri*. Unde Isidorus de summo bono: 'Ex pulcritudine circumscriptae creaturae pulcritudinem suam, quae circumscribi non potest, facit Deus intelligi'" [Bonaventure quotes St. Isidore, *Sententiarum*, 1. 4 (PL. 83: 543)].

[792] *I Sent.*, d. 3 p. 1. a. u q. 2 (I, 71-72).

[793] *I Sent.*, d. 3 p. 1. a. u q. 2 concl. (I, 72).

[794] *I Sent.*, d. 3 p. 1. a. u q. 2 concl. (I, 72).

[795] Cf. *I Sent.*, d. 29, a. 1, q. 2, ad 1 (I, 411) [in J. G. BOUGEROL, *Lexique Saint Bonaventure*, Editions franciscaines, Paris, 1969, p. 18.

206

face to face: therefore if he used to cognize God, he used to cognize (Him) through an effect, therefore through a vestige, therefore through a creature"[796]. Knowledge acquired through a vestige is acquired gradually. As such, it is not a perfect knowledge, but only a partial one. Because cognition through a vestige is cognition through a being-lead-by-hand (*manuductionem*); therefore it is not a perfect cognition, but it is partial (*ex parte*); it does not remain among the Blessed, because among them is emptied out what is partial[797].

The saint emphasizes that to understand this point of view one must realize that knowing God *in* a creature is different from knowing God *through* a creature. Knowing God in creature means to know his presence and influence in the creature. Wayfarers (*viatorum*) know God this way partially, while those who comprehend God know him this way perfectly. When Bonaventure talks of knowing God through a creature it means being lift up from knowing the creature to knowing God, as if there is a ladder connecting the two. This way of knowing God is proper to wayfarers. He does not refer to a perfect knowledge concerning the state of beatitude of God in man when he man is in face to face with God, as Augustine said in his *City of God*[798].

The last question refers to what aspect of God can be known through creatures: Can the Trinity of persons combined with unity of essence be known naturally through creatures (*utrum trinitas personarum cum unitate essentiae naturaliter per creaturas cognosci posit*)? Plurality of persons combined with unity of essence is *proper* to the divine nature alone. Nothing similar to it is found in a creature, neither can it be found in a creature, nor can it be known by reason.

---

[796] *I Sent.*, d. 3 p. 1. a u. q. 3 (I, 74): "Homo in statu innocentiae non cognoscebat Deum facie ad faciem: ergo si cognoscebat Deum, cognoscebat per effectum, ergo per vestigium, ergo per creaturam".

[797] *I Sent.*, d. 3 p. 1 a u. q. 3 (I, 74a-b): "Quia cognitio per vestigium est cognitio per manuductionem: ergo non est cognitio perfecta, ergo est ex parte: ergo non manet in Beatis, quia in ipsis evacuabitur quod est ex parte". Cf. TODISCO, "Il Pensare Filosofico - teologico Francescano ha un Futuro?", 293.

[798] *I Sent.*, d. 3 p. 1. a u q. 3, concl. (I, 74).

Therefore, the Trinity of persons is not in any way knowable through a creature, by using rational argument to move up from creature to God. Even though there is nothing like the Trinity, nevertheless in a way there is something that *belief* finds similar in a creature. For Bonaventure, there is trinity, of appropriated attributes: unity, truth, and goodness. And about this trinity, even the philosophers early did know, because trinity does have something similar to itself in creatures[799].

The above questions can be expanded as follows: If God is the perfect and stabile being, accordingly, it is "incommensurable"[800] with created beings, how can God's external self giving be understood? The other fundamental principle which Bonaventure proposes to answer these questions is found in the notion of *influit*. It says that something flows (*influit*) into another thing according to the power[801]. The background of this principle, as discussed in the second chapter, comes from the writer of *Liber de causis* of Neo-Platonist. It points out that the more something is universal, the more it becomes the influencing principle of many others. The metaphysical start point is about the simplicity of the first cause. According to this principle, as we have seen, the more something is simple, the more it is needed by many, and it becomes the principle of many; God is the most powerful, therefore, in the principle of simplicity he is presented in all things[802].

Influence is a sustained power of a presence, a dynamic characteristic of a principle which produces an external effect. God the Creator is the highest principle which influences the created beings. From this idea we have some words from the radix *fluere*: river, flow, affect, etc. With the same vocabulary, we can understand also that grace is the effect of divine *influentia*. And as we see more, the spiritual

---

[799] *I Sent.*, d. 3 p. 1 a. u q. 4, concl. (I, 76).

[800] O. TODISCO, "Dall'analogia al simbolo e dal simbolo all'analogia in San Bonaventura", in *DrSer*, 27 (1980), p. 6.

[801] *I Sent.*, d. 37 a. 1 q. 1. fund. 2 (I, 638a): "Omne quod influit in aliquid, est illi praesens secundum virtutem" [LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità Creatrice*, 185].

[802] *Liber de Causis*, prop. 20: "Quantum aliquid simplicius, tanto a pluribus indigetur et in pluribus invenitur; sed Deus est simplicissimus in fine simplicitatis, ergo est in omnibus" (see quotation of LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità Creatrice*, 181-182, note 5 and 6).

creature, which is closer to God, receives from him the mayor effect of *influentia* to be able to participate in the divine Goodness[803]. The Franciscan Doctor notes that this *influentia* is not an accident but an essential thing[804]. Based on the concept of *influentia*, one may speak about the analogy of divine attribute in the creation, which is unity, truth, and goodness.

In Bonaventure's world-view, as we have already said, the relation between God and creation is understood only in analogical sense. From him there is no univocity of being between God and creature. In line with Augustine's[805] thought, as expressed in *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure categorizes the triadic attributes of created being (measure-number-and-weight) as the vague modality of divine persons[806]. For him, God, who is the First Principle, "has arranged all things in measure, number, and weight"[807].

3.2. The three Books

We have noted that in Bonaventure's system, the doctrine of creation presupposes the doctrine of the immanent emanations that constitute the mystery of the Trinity. To explain the relation between God and all created beings, Bonaventure uses, for example, a metaphor that is very dear to him and similarly used by Holy Scripture, namely the comparison with a *book*. In this analogy he distinguishes two books[808], in which the glory and perfection of God are expressed. One is written *within*, and this is the Eternal Art and Wisdom in God. The other is

---

[803] Cf. LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità Creatrice*, 186-188.

[804] *Hexaëm.*, IV, 8 (V, 350a): "Dico, quod creatio, quae est passio, accidens non est, quia relatio creaturae ad Creatorem non est accidentalis, sed essentialis"; Cf. LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità Creatrice*, 187.

[805] *Myst. Trin.*, VI, a. 1, resp., 11.12 (V, 101): "Haec igitur omnia quae arte divina facta sunt et unitatem quamdam in se ostendunt et speciem et ordinem […] Oportet igitur ut Creatorem per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspicientes Trinitatem intellegamus, cuius in creatura quomodo dignum est apparet vestigium" (English trans., Hayes, 235).

[806] Cf. LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità Creatrice*, 194-198.

[807] *Brevil.*, pars. II, c. 1, n. 1 (V, 219): "de Trinitate dei […] disposuit tamen omnia in certo pondere, numero et mensura" (English trans., Monti, 59).

[808] An example of treatment on the analogy of book is G. H TAVARD, *Transiency and Permanence. The Nature of Theology According to St. Bonaventure*, The Franciscan Institute St Bonaventure, NY, 1945, p. 29-102. Cf. HAYES, "The Cosmos, a symbol of the Divine", 253-257.

written *without* (*quidam liber scriptus forinsecus*)[809], and this book is the visible world[810]. Bonaventure then shifts to an interpretation of the book of creation according to the book of scripture. We have, therefore, two books to know God: the Nature and the Bible; and "we have to read both of them"[811].

In connection with this study, it is necessary to add more emphasis on the metaphor of book as it has rich metaphoric expression relevant to our approach. The content of the book is first written in the consciousness of God in the form of Divine Word. That Word contains all that the divine has in himelf, and all things that God can call into being outside God. In his *Disputed Questions on the Trinity*, using the same metaphor of book, Bonaventure speaks of a three-fold book, namely the book of creatures, the book of Scripture, and the book of life[812].

First, the book of creation. It provides a testimony that is efficacious, as creatures are either vestiges or images of God. Vestige points to the Trinitarian appropriations and the intellectual soul; while image points to the Trinitarian relations. *Second*, the book of Scripture. It is the testimony of faith. In the Old Testament, the Trinity is presented figuratively while in the New Testament, the Trinity is presented clearly. *Third*, the book of life. It is a testimony that is also efficacious to the highest degree, for it is the revelation of Jesus Christ. It is the light that shines on our minds: In the innate light of nature, thinking of God most highly, we see that he is able to produce an eternal beloved and co-beloved. In the infused light of grace, thinking of God most reverently, we see that he does will to produce

---

[809] *Hexaëm.*, XII, 14 (V, 386): "Totus mundus est umbra, via, vestigium et est liber scriptus forinsecus. In qualibet enim creatura est refulgentia divini exemplaris, sed cum tenebra premixta; unde est sicut quaedam opacitas admixta lumini" [PERATONER, "Analogia", in *DizBon.*, 179].

[810] *Brevil.*, pars. II, c. 11, n. 2 (V, 229a): "Et secundum hoc duplex est liber, unus scilicet scriptus intus, qui est aeterna Dei ars et sapientia; et alius sricptus foris, mundus scilicet sensibilis" (English trans., Monti, 94).

[811] POMPEI, "Cosmologia: Scienza e Fede in Bonaventura da Bagnoregio", 26.

[812] *Myst. Trin.*, 1, a. 2, concl. (V, 54-55): "Hoc autem triplex testimonium attenditur secundum triplicem librum, qui est liber creaturae, liber Scripturae et liber vitae. Primus liber dat testimonium efficax, secundus dat testimonium efficacius, tertius vero efficacissimum" (English trans., Hayes, 128-129).

this eternal beloved and co-beloved[813]. In summary, "all these are related to man's knowledge of Trinity"[814].

The book of creation which is the primordial revelation, according to Bonaventure, has become illegible for humankind because of the blindness caused by sin. After the fall, the book of creation became darkened and so creation does not easily let the soul go back to God. Therefore, it is necessary that the book of scripture illuminate the book of creation: "Hence, scripture repairs the whole world to the knowledge, praise, and love of God"[815]. The book of scripture is given to us not to annul the cosmic revelation, but to help us in reading the book of the cosmos. Finally, the book of life, is the highest point of revelation, it is the mystery of Christ. In him we find the most express statement of the meaning of the two other books. By reading these three books in harmony, we can discern the multi-level manifestation of God in created reality and in history[816].

The metaphor of book, as other metaphors used by Bonaventure, proposes a methodology from which one might see the reality "*per visibilia ad invisibilia*"[817], from sensible things to transcendental dimension. God reveals himself so that we can talk about him. Through a book the author expresses himself to a reader, and through this book the reader comes to know the author. In the same way, the book of nature functions as a *medium* both in the movement of creation *from* God and its return *to* God in as far as man should read this book to know about the glories of his great and loving Creator and, by reading and understanding the book, man should

---

[813] LaNave, "Knowing God through and in all things", 273-274.

[814] Zinn, "Book and Word", 163.

[815] *Hexaëm.*, XIII, 12 (V, 390a): "Liber ergo Scripturae reparativus est totius mundi ad Deum cognoscendum, laudandum, amandum". See J. M Hammond, "Bonaventure's Trinitarian Theology and the fourfold exegesis of Scripture", in *FrancStud*, 79/3-4 (2009), p 499.

[816] Hayes, "The Cosmos, a symbol of the Divine", 254-246.

[817] Zinn, "Book and Word", 143. The symbol of "book" and "word" came from confluence of Augustine and Dionysius, is developed by Hugh of St. Victor, and later in Bonaventure's thought. Zinn notes that in their respective theologies Bonaventure and Hugh present not only a theology which is symbolic, but also a theology of symbols". For both, so to speak, it is impossible to represent invisible things except by means of those which are visible (144-147).

find the way to God, and be brought back to him[818]. To know and to love the Trinity, one must learn from its exemplar par excellence, that is the divine Word incarnated in Jesus Christ. Analysing the metaphor of book (book of creation, book of scripture and book of life) in relation with Trinitarian theology, Hammond reassumes beautifully the relation between the three books as follows:

> "Each book interpenetrates each other within a circular dynamic that spirals their way back to the Trinity, the author of all three books. The book of creation informs the book of scripture, while inversely the book of scripture illumines the darkened creation. Likewise, the book of scripture reveals the inner book of life who is Christ, but it is only through the book of life that the book of creation and scripture can be properly read, because only in Christ is the grand *reductio* of everything to God complete"[819].

3.3. The notion of Contution (*Contuitio*)

The bonaventurian teaching that creation is a book, further elucidates the meaning of *contuitio* because creation can be read as a book only when it is recognized as a book, that is, as an expression of the inner order of the author. Speaking of exegesis, Jay Hammond observes that, "reading the Trinitarian analogies within Scripture enables the exegete to read the analogies within the Book of Creation. In effect, Scripture re-establishes the mind's *contuitio* of God in creation, which is simultaneously the *reductio* of the mind to God". To read Scripture means "to encounter the Trinity in the book written within, which enables one to encounter the Trinity's exemplary in the book of written without"[820].

In its specific sense, *contuitio* implies an indirect knowledge of God in his effects. In the context of exemplary causality, it implies the awareness of simultaneity of form in the created thing and in the original or eternal exemplar. Here the general principle is that created beings are the manifestation of the

---

[818] SCHAEFER, "The position and function of man in the created World", 329.
[819] J. M HAMMOND, "Bonaventure's Trinitarian Theology", 501.
[820] J. M HAMMOND, "Bonaventure's Trinitarian Theology", 499-500.

presence of God, and in perceiving it, human intellect "*consurgit ad divinum contuitum*"[821]. In the context of human knowledge, as we will see in the *de Scientia Christi*, *contuitio* affirms a continuity between knowledge of creation and the final sight of God *in se*, between knowledge *in via* and *in patria*. Our natural knowledge leads to the supernatural vision of contemplation. "In heaven the *contution* will be dissolved into a univocal intuition and God will be seen face to face. But meanwhile, with *contutio* it is possible to begin towards that end"[822].

Bonaventure speaks of *contuitio* in a number of ways. For the aim of this study we need to understand this concept as a good scenario to explore more profoundly our treatment. The most fundamental world-view we are sustaining here is Bonaventure's doctrine of *creatione per artem*: Christ is the exemplar par excellence of God's beautiful design and only exemplarity can unlock the deepest meaning of created reality.

In the *de Scientia Christi*, Bonaventure uses *contuitio* as a technical term to express his position on this disputation, that is a "middle position" which guarantees the proper operation of the intellect as well as the unique relationship between God and the intellect in cognition. In operation which Bonaventure calls *contuitio*, the intellect attains the eternal *ratio* together with the created *ratio* in every act of certain knowledge: "along with the created reason *ratio*, the eternal *ratio* is contuited by us in part as is fitting in this life"[823]. Thus both the eternal and the created *rationes* are concurrent causes of cognition, the eternal *ratio* providing a regulative certitude, and the created *ratio* providing concrete data from the creature

---

[821] *Hexaëm*, V, 33 (V, 359); see O. TODISCO, "Contuitio" in *DizBon*, 272; HELLMANN, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 15-16; DELIO, *Simply Bonaventure*, 199.

[822] *III Sent* d. 1. a. 2, q. 1, resp. (III, 20b): "Ibi enim est perfectionis consummatio, sicut apparet in circulo qui est perfectissima figurarum, qui etiam ad idem punctum terminatur, a quo incepit"; see HELLMANN, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 16.

[823] *Sc. Chr.*, IV, resp. (V, 23b); [English trans., Hayes, 132-133].

being cognized. To know *in the eternal reasons* (*in rationubus aeternis*) means to see in the created order the perfect order of the divine[824].

It seems that Bonaventure envisions here not merely a *contuitio* in which the created and *eternal rationes* are known simultaneously, but one in which the intuition of the divine ratio mediates the intuition of the created ratio, and vice versa, so that each ratio is attained through the other. Such a scenario explains how man is able to accord concurrent causality to both while making it impossible for either one to cause knowledge independently from the other. The created essence directs man upwards to the Divine Idea which is its truth, while Divine Idea illuminates the mind in such a way as to enable it to understand the immutable truth which constitutes the ultimate reality of created essence[825].

The term *contuitio* also plays a significant role in the *Itinerarium*[826]. It refers to a concomitant insight into the relationship of everything to God who is the *primum*. Bonaventure identifies Christ as the 'mediator' in chapter four where he asserts that mind can only truly co-know God's presence through the reordering of Christ: "So our soul could not rise perfectly from the things of sense to a *contiuitum* of itself and the eternal Truth in itself unless Truth, assuming human nature in Christ, has become a ladder, restoring the prior ladder that had been broken in Adam"[827]. Bonaventure suggests this when he provides a concise summary of the entire text at the beginning of chapter seven of *Itinerarium*. He claims that the process of the souls' ascent consists of successive "contuitions" by which the mind comes to contemplate the *primum principium* itself and its mediation to creation through Jesus Christ:

---

[824] SCARPELLI, "Bonaventure's Christocentric Epistemology", 69; HELLMANN, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 15

[825] SCARPELLI, "Bonaventure's Christocentric Epistemology", 70-71.

[826] See LUCA DE ROSA, "La teologia della creazione ", 251.

[827] *Itin.*, IV, 2 (V, 306a): "Non potuit anima nostra perfecte ab his sensibilibus relevari ad *contuitum* sui et aeternae Veritatis in se ipsa, nisi Veritas, assumpta forma humana in Christo, fieret sibi scala reparans priorem scalam, quae fracta fueret in Adam" (English trans., Hayes, 97).

"After our mind has contuited (*contuitia*) God outside itself through vestiges and in vestiges, within itself through the image and in the image, and above itself through the similitude of the divine Light shining above us and in the Light itself, insofar as this is possible in our state as wayfarer and through the exercise of our mind, when finally in the sixth stage our mind reaches that point where it speculates, in the first and supreme Principle and in the *mediator of God and men* (1 Tim 2: 5), Jesus Christ, those things whose likeness in so many ways can be found in creatures and which surpass all penetration by the human intellect"[828].

4. Vestige, Image and Similitude

Having seen the metaphor of book and the notion of *contuitio*, we now explore in a more distinctive vision the divine design in the existence of physical nature, in man as the macrocosm, and in supernatural reality beyond man. In the following paragraphs, we will focus on the idea that every created thing can be described as *vestige* (footprint), *image*, and *similitude* (likeness) of God.

In fact, Bonaventure speaks also about a more basic level of analogy, named "umbra" (shadow). Shadow is a distant and confused representation of God. Gilson suggest more detail on this point, making distinction between shadow and vestige, on his treatment on the universal analogy[829]. [For the purpose of this study we leave out these nuances, limiting ourselves on the three degrees mentioned above]. In this purview, we focus on the doctrine of "universal analogy"[830] in Bonaventure.

---

[828] *Itin.*, VII, 1 (312a): "Postquam mens nostra contuita est Deum *extra se* per vestigia et in vestigiis, *intra se* per immaginem et in imagine, *supra se* per divinae lucis similitudinem super nos relucentem et in ipsa luce, secundum quod possibile est secundum statum viae et exercitium mentis nostrae; cum tandem in sexto gradu ad hoc pervenerit, ut speculetur in principio primo et summo et mediatore *Dei et hominum* (1 Tm 2: 5) Iesu Christo, ea quorum similia in creaturis nullatenus reperiri possunt, et quae omnem persipicacitatem humani intellectus excedunt" (English trans., Hayes, 133); Cf. HELLMANN, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 210).

[829] *I Sent.*, d. 3 p. 1 a. u. q. 2 ad 4 (I, 73b): "Nam creatura ut umbra ducit ad cognitionem *communium*, ut communia; vestigium in cognitionem *communium*, ut appropriata; imago ad cognitionem propriorum ut *propria*"; Cf. GILSON, *The Philosophy of Bonaventure*, 185ss.

[830] GILSON, *The Philosophy of Bonaventure*, chap. 7.

4.1. Vestige

The vestiges of God are the, most basic distinctions that point to the Trinitarian appropriations, but not to the personal properties or the persons themselves. To understand the degree of vestige in creation, one can start by observing a text from *Breviloquium*. In the following text, one notes that Bonaventure offers his clear and complete description of the structure of the cosmos which is called *macrocosmus*:

> "Concerning the existence of corporeal nature, the following points must be held. The entire world machine consists of a celestial and an elemental nature. The celestial nature is divided into the three principal heavens: the empyrean, the crystalline heaven, and the firmament. Beneath the firmament, which is the starry heaven, are the seven spheres of planets: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon. The elemental nature is divided into four spheres: fire, air, water, and earth. Thus, ranging from the highest rim of heaven down to the very centre of the earth, there are altogether then celestial and four elemental spheres. From these the whole material world machine is integrated and constituted in a distinct, perfect, and ordered fashion"[831].

That is the real and concrete description of real elements. Bonaventure shows a list without any doubt (*haec tenenda sunt*) about it. He describes this structurally, using not the symbolic language to point out the real things. He describes the reality of the universe, precisely as the corporal nature. It has in the list – (with a language which is used commonly in medieval time) – four natural elements (fire, water, air, earth), seven planets, and three superior heavens (the empyrean, the crystalline

---

[831] *Brevil.*, pars. II, c. 3, n.1 (V, 220): "De natura corporea quantum ad esse haec tenenda sunt, quod corporalis mundi machina tota consistit in natura caelesti et elementari, ita quod caelestis distincta est in tres caelos principales, scilicet empyreum, crystallinum et firmamentum. – Intra frimamentum autem, quod est caelum stellatum, continentur septem orbes septem planetarum, quae sunt: saturnus, iupiter, mars, sol, mercurius, luna. – Natura vero elementaris in quatuor sphaeras distinguitur, scilicet ignis, aëris, aquae et terrae; et sic procedendo a summo caeli cardine usque ad centrum terrae, decem occurrunt orbes caealestes et quatuor sphaerae elementares; ex quibus integratur et constituitur tota machina mundi sensibilis distincte, perfecte et ordinate" (English trans., Monti, 66-67).

heaven, and the firmament). In summary, he treated not only the reality of matter, but also the structure and order of things[832].

The influence of ancient Greek thought is shown. However, later references to the four elements of cosmic tended to restrict the range of its application to the body, paralleling the four elements of the Greek cosmology with the four seasons, the four winds, and the corners of the earth. The idea that the elements of nature are also those found in man, can be traced back in the history of ideas at least to Heraclitus, who declared that man is made of three things, fire, water, and earth, representing fire as the conscious element indentified as the one possessing wisdom which pervades all things. This form of microcosmic thinking is a highly speculative achievement, as it assumes, that all natures or elements which are found in the cosmos universally turn up also in the many-levelled being which man is[833].

This passage shows that the human person belongs to the cosmos, and the cosmos makes sense only in light of the human person. To separate human from cosmos, therefore, is not only unnatural but creates confusion.

Among the various numeric structure mentioned above, there is a consideration that the three superior heavens recall the triadic symbolic[834]. Obviously, this triadic relation is not yet clearly known in terms of the three divine persons, but it may be seen as a first intimation of what will eventually become known as a Tri-Personal mystery of divine love. Number seven (three superior heavens and four natural element, seven planets) is not only a rich biblical symbol, but also a very significant one for Bonaventure: the number seven, throughout Bonaventure's writings denotes rest and completion; it is "the symbolic number of

---

[832] Cf. POMPEI, "Cosmologia: Scienza e Fede in Bonaventura da Bagnoregio", 8-9.
[833] Cf. JAMES MC EVOY, "Microcosm and Macrocosm in the writings of St. Bonaventure", in *St. Bonaventure 1217-1274. II*, p. 315-316.
[834] Cf. POMPEI, "Cosmologia: Scienza e Fede in Bonaventura da Bagnoregio", 11.

consummation"[835]. Then too, and significant, is that the sum of seven planets and three superior heavens results to number ten which symbolizes a perfect number[836]. Number designates beauty, "because beauty is nothing else but numerical quality, or a certain arrangement of parts together with pleasing colour"[837]. And beauty has significance which signifies the divine wisdom:

> "Therefore, since all things are beautiful and in some way delightful; and since there in no beauty or delight without proportion; and since proportion resides first of all in numbers; it is necessary that all things involve number. From this we conclude that number is the principal exemplar in the mind of Creator, and in creatures it is the principal vestige leading to wisdom"[838].

Very close to the symbol of numbers is the category of order (we have seen enough of this category in the first chapter). Under the influence of the Pythagorean understanding of number and of Augustine's *De musica*[839], Bonaventure sees that the order of the universe presupposes a certain number, and number in turn, presupposes a certain measure; for things are not being ordered in the required manner unless they are numbered, and in order to be numbered, they must also be distinct and limited. It is for this reason that God had to create all things in number, weight, and measure[840]. For both Bonaventure, and Augustine, matter is not pure

---

[835] He utilizes a division into seven units in the disputed questions on the *Knowledge of Christ* and later *Itinerarium*. Notably, the division into seven units coincides with the meaning those texts communicate in their seventh moment. Bonaventure utilizes also the pattern in the *Brev.* so that the structural completion of the text's seven movements coincides with the content of the seventh movement, which considers the end of all things in final judgment. See J. BENSON, "The Christology of the *Breviloquium*", (J. M. Hammond et al., eds.), p. 252; J. BENSON, "Structure and Meaning in St. Bonaventure's *Quaestiones Disputatae de Scientia Christi*" (hereafter "Bonaventure's De Scientia Christi"), in *FrancStud*, 62 (2004), p. 67-90.

[836] Cf. POMPEI, "Cosmologia: Scienza e Fede in Bonaventura da Bagnoregio", 10.

[837] *Itin.*, II, 5 (V, 300-301) [Bonaventure quoted AUGUSTINE, *de Musica* VI, 13, 38].

[838] *Itin.*, II, 10 (V, 302b): "Cum igitur omnia sint *pulcra* et quodam modo *delectabilia*; et *pulcritudo* et *delectatio* non sint absque *proportione*; et proportio primo sit in numeris: necesse est, omina esse numerosa; ac per hoc '*numerus est praecipuum in animo Conditoris exemplar*' et in rebus praecipuum vestigium ducens in Sapientiam" [Bonaventure quoted BOETHIUS, *De arithmetica*, I, c. 2]. (English trans., Hayes, 77)

[839] *De Musica*, VI. C. 13, n. 38: "Pulcritudo nihil aliud est quam aequalitas numerosa". Cf. SPARGO, *The Category of the Aesthetic in the Philosophy of Saint Bonaventure*, 55.

[840] *Brevil.*, pars. II, c.1, n. 2 (V, 219a); English trans., Monti, 61.

privation of potency; it must possess some being, and bears something of good and something of beauty; it approximates its original archetype. Matter has *modum*, *speciem*, and *ordinem*, although imperfectly.[841]

In a larger context, the theme of vestige recalls the four transcendental attributes of being (unity, truth, goodness, and beauty) which we have seen in the second chapter. In the consideration that either the category of triadic analogy or the four transcendental attributes, in the final analysis, show the immensity of God's wisdom, it is worthy to reassume it again following the words of Spargo: "They all presuppose the intelligibility of being in which they share, and in terms of sharing, they also presuppose one another. Beauty presupposes the good, and the good presupposes the true; the true, in turn, presupposes the one"[842].

Bonaventure sees in every created being a vestige, or footprint of God its Creator. When one looks upon the things of the world as created things, which consequently bear the mark of their Creator, they are considered as vestiges, having *modus*, *species*, and *ordo*[843]. In Hayes's language, the category of which we are talking indicates a "vague triadic structure". It implies a "very distant echo of the Trinitarian source of creation"[844]. In terms of trinity, as we have seen, Bonaventure affirms that the supreme beauty is to be found in the Son because the Son is equal with the Father; therefore the Son is the *Ars Patris*. Hence, the second person of Trinity is the basis for all other beauty.

The other point of interest in the above description is the question of movement and harmony of the universe. Bonaventure's view is clear: "*Duplex enim est ordo rerum*: *unus in universo*, *alter in finem*"[845]. As we have argued in the first chapter, this straight explanation of the movement and the harmony of the universe

---

[841] SPARGO, *The Category of the Aesthetic in the Philosophy of Saint Bonaventure*, 52.
[842] SPARGO, *The Category of the Aesthetic in the Philosophy of Saint Bonaventure*, 35.
[843] SPARGO, *The Category of the Aesthetic in the Philosophy of Saint Bonaventure*, 51.
[844] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 75.
[845] *I Sent*. d. 47, a. u. q. 3, concl. (I, 844a-b).

brings as consequence that is the denial to the argument of an eternal world. According to Bonaventure's *ratio creationis*, it is difficult to think about the stability and sustainability of the elements of the universe, without accepting a divine wisdom within it. Creation is a manifestation of God's omnipotence, wisdom and benevolence. It is considered that every creature vestiges God's power, truth and the goodness. This triadic vestige, in turn, represents the three-fold cause. In *Breviloqium*, he points out this Trinitarian vestige in created reality, saying:

> "The creature is an effect of the creating Trinity by virtue of the three-fold causality: *efficient*, through which there is in the creature unity, mode, and measure; *exemplary*, from which the creature derives truth, form, and number; and *final*, from which the creature is endowed with goodness, order, and weight. These, as vestiges of the Creator, are found in all creatures, whether corporeal, spiritual, or composites of both"[846].

It is evident that for Bonaventure, the First Principle must have, in respect to any creature, the role of a three-fold cause: efficient cause, exemplary, and final. As a consequence, every creature must bear within itself this threefold relationship to its first Cause. For this reason, one might say that every creature is one, true, and good; limited, beautiful, and well ordered[847]. For these various triadic modality in creation, the saint gives a more explicit reason (*ratio autem ad intelligentiam praedictorum haec est*) as follows:

> "Because all things flow from the first and most Principle, who is omnipotent, all wise, and all-beneficent, it is most fitting that they should come into being in such a way that their very production might reflect these same three attributes or perfections. Therefore, the divine operation that fashions the world machine is

---

[846] *Brevil.*, pars. II, c.1, n. 2 (V, 219): "[…] creatura est effectus Trinitatis sub triplici genere causalitatis: efficientis, a quo est in creature unitas, modus et mensura; exemplaris, a quo est in creatura veritas, specie et numerus; finalis, a quo est in creatura bonitas, ordo et pondus. Quae quidem reperiuntur in omnibus creaturis tamquam vestigium Creatoris, sive corporalibus, sive spriritualibus, sive ex utrisque compositis" (English trans., Monti, 60-61).
[847] *Brevil.*, pars. II, c.1, n. 4 (V, 219).

three-fold: *creation*, particularly reflecting omnipotence; *distinction*, reflecting wisdom; and *embellishment* reflecting unbounded goodness"[848].

In *Itinerarium* Bonaventure writes: "For the created beings of this sensible world signify the invisible things of God partly because God is the origin, exemplar, and goal of all creation, and every effect is a sign of its cause; every copy is a sign of its exemplar; and the road is a sign of the goal to which it leads"[849]. This level is not yet a reflection of the Trinity in the Christian sense, but it is a reflection of the three-fold causal activity of the one God. Such a reflection is a shadowy anticipation of that will becomes explicitly Trinitarian in the Christian context; it may be called vestige[850]. In the same category, in *Hexaëmeron*, Bonaventure's last work, the Trinitarian aspect is stressed and expressed more clearly:

"In substance, there is vestige of the highest order which represents the essence of the divine Trinity: in fact, every created substance consists in the *unity* of matter, in the *form*, and in their *synthesis*. This is to say that the created substance expresses the original *principle*, namely the *foundation*; the *formal determination*, and in their *unity* in the unity of being. This three-fold (order) signifies the mystery of Trinity: the Father as principle and origin; the Son as the forma image of the Father and the Holy Spirit as unity form of love"[851].

The last point we need to underscore in this level is about the place of man in the universe. As indicated above, the most perfect form of creation is not a world in which God should produce all things equally perfect. But it is the present order with

---

[848] *Brevil.*, pars. II, c. 2, n. 3 (V, 220): "Ratio autem ad intelligentiam praedictorum haec est. Quia enim res manant a primo principio et perfectissimo; tale autem est omnipotentissimum, sapientissimum et benevolentissimum: ideo oportuit, quod sic producerentur in esse, ut in earum productione reluceret triplex nobilitas praedicta et excellentia. Et ideo triformis fuit operatio divina ad mundanam machinam producendem, scilicet creatio, quae appropriate respondet omnipotentiae; distinctio, quae respondet sapientiae, et ornatus, qui respondet bonitati largissimae" (English trans., Monti, 63-64).

[849] *Itin.*, II, 12 (V, 118).

[850] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 76.

[851] *Hexaëm.*, II, 23 (V, 340a): "In substantia autem est altius vestigium quod repraesentat divinam essentiam. Habet enim omnibus creata substantia matariam, formam, compositionem: originale principium seu fundamentum, formale complementum et glutinum […]. Et in his repraesentatur mysterium Trinitatis: Pater, origo; Filius, imago; Spiritus Sanctus compago".

its harmonious gradation, because it is in this condition that the best manifestation of the divine power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator happens.[852] In this level, it has been described in *Breviloquium*,[853] the central position of man as the connecting-link in creation entails consequences: Man–the "minor mundus",[854] "the last of all created nature: in him all levels of created reality converge"[855] – is radically a part of the universe, the highest but also the most vulnerable of its products, whose generation and continued life presupposes the functioning of every part of the *machina mundi* in harmony and good order.

The level of vestige shows that in the *machina mundi*, there has to be a multiplicity of forms, qualities of combination and correspondence between things. It shows also a harmony between man and his earthly habitation: Without the light and heat of the celestial bodies, man could not live; without the motion which man receives from the ministering intelligences, the chemistry of his body could not operate. The heavenly bodies serve him also by regulating his works, days, and seasons, while the lower elements offer their characteristic products to sustain his life: fowl and fish, fruit and flesh. Nature, as it now serves his bodily needs and nourishes his soul also is revealing a vestige of God's nature.[856]

4.2. Image

The preceding discussion expresses that vestige is a global gradation of analogy of Trinity, the foregoing paragraphs present the other two levels (image and similitude), and the manner in which the supernatural image perfects the natural image in man[857]. Through the body, humanity is integrated in the material world, and through the soul, humanity is integrated in the world of created spirits which Bonaventure calls microcosm.

---

[852] Cf. SCHAEFER, "St. Bonaventure on Man in Creation", 293.
[853] Cf. *Brevil.*, pars. II, c. 4, n. 1-3 (V, 221); *Hexaëm.*, XIII, 12 (V, 389b-390a).
[854] *Itin.*, II, 2 (V, 300).
[855] EVOY, "Microcosm and Macrocosm in the writings of St. Bonaventure", 328.
[856] *Brevil.*, pars. II, c. 4, n. 1-3 (V, 221); Cf. SCHAEFER, "The position and function of man in the created World", 324-328.
[857] Cf. SCHAEFER, "The position and function of man in the created World", 362.

"It is in turn, the human body is disposed to receive the noblest form, the rational soul, toward which is ordained and in which is brought to fulfilment the yearning of every sensible and corporeal nature. Thus, through the soul – which is a form having existence, life, feeling, and intelligence – every nature may be led back, as if in an intelligible circle, to its beginning, in which it is perfected and beatified. [...] It is therefore undoubtedly true that we are the goal of everything that exists, and that all corporeal being are made to serve humankind, so that through these things humanity might ascend to loving and praising the Creator of the universe whose providence disposes all"[858].

While *vestige* indicates that the universe thus conceived has a profoundly sacramental character – for even at its material level it has the power to lead the spirit of humanity to God – in level *vestige*, there are some creatures that reflect God not only as their cause but as their object as well. This includes the world of created spiritual beings whose spiritual powers are directed to God as the truth to be known, the goodness to be embraced in love, and the eternal beauty to be reveled in with joy. The level image is found, therefore, in the angels as pure created spirits and in humanity, as "intermediate member"[859], in accordance of the faculties of *memory*, *intellect*, and *will*[860].

This level of creation is understood to represent God more closely and distinctly than a mere vestige. Like in vestige, this level presents the divine trace, but the second is most closed. Under the influence of Augustine, Bonaventure placed the three faculties of human soul, *memory* (mind), *intellect* (knowledge), and *will* (love), as analogy of Trinity in human being. These faculties have God not only

---

[858] *Brevil.*, pars. II, c. 4, n. 3, 5 (V, 221-222): "[...] in corpora humana, quae disposita sunt ad nobilissimam formam, quae est anima rationalis; ad quam ordinatur et terminatur appetitus omnis naturae sensibilis et corporalis, ut per eam quae est forma, ens, rivens, sentiens et intelligens, quasi ad modum circuli intelligibilis reducatur ad suum principium, in quo perficiatur et beatificetur [...]. Et propterea indubitanter verum est, quod sumus finis omnium eorum quae sunt; et omnia corporalia facta sunt ad humanum obsequium, ut ex illis omnibus accendatur homo ad amandum et laudandum Factorem universorum, cuius providentia cuncta disponuntur (English trans., Monti, 70-71).
[859] SCHAEFER, "St. Bonaventure on Man in Creation", 298.
[860] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 76-77.

as their cause but also as the object which moves and regulates them. Mind, as the principle of knowledge, represents the Father; knowledge which is derived from mind, is the representation of the Son which is generated from the Father; and love represents the Sprit as mutual love of the Father and the Son[861].

In man, therefore, is present the nature image with the faculty of *mens*, *notitia*, *amor*, the three-fold which represents the image of Trinity. But more than that, in man, who is the intelligence nature, there is soul which has the rational power. How can the human soul reaching out the infinite love of God and become similar to him? Bonaventure displays a subtle distinction within the human soul: On one part there is *cognitive* faculty consisting of memory and intelligence. On the other part there is *affective* faculty which is the free will. Without going into a detailed distinction[862], it is sufficient to underline that the level of similitude, as we will see in the next section, is consist the affected part, because it has more of the convenience of quality from which the soul is to be similar to God. That is the quality of love which emanates from God. As the image of God, a human being, is then elevated and perfected by sanctifying grace which, Bonaventure calls *similitude*[863].

4.3. Similitude

There is yet a further level in Bonaventure's vision of exemplar which moves from the level of created nature to the level of grace. It is at this level that Bonaventure speaks of the *similitude*[864]. Here the focus is on the speculation of God through the image reformed by the gift of grace. The crucial point, therefore, is about the role of grace. However, the grace is best thought of not only in terms of

---

[861] *Myst. Trin.*, q. 1, a. 2, concl. (V, 54-55): "Habet enim creatura intellectualis memoriam, intelligentiam et voluntatem; seu mentem, notitiam et amorem: mentem ad modum parentis, notitiam ad modum prolis, amorem ad modum nexus ab utroque procedentis et utrumque connectentis" (English trans., Hayes, 128-129).

[862] Cf. SCHAEFER, "The position and function of man in the created World", 363-369; HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 97-101.

[863] Cf. LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità Creatrice*, 230-231.

[864] *II Sent.*, d. 26, a. u., q. 4, ad 2 (II, 639).

how the soul grasps its object but in terms of how God grasps the soul in the mystery of incomprehensible love. The joy of human spirit is to be found not only in the fact that the soul touches on the infinite though in a limited way, but rather in the fact that the soul is grasped and absorbed totally by the infinite.[865]

Bonaventure has really considered that no person is in any way worthy to attain the supreme good, unless elevated above self through the condescending action of God. The soul is lifted by virtue of *habitus* that renders it conformed to God[866]. In this case the word *habitus* designates a permanent state or disposition within God. In the level of similitude, Schaefer notes, "the notion of image implies a conformity in regard to *quantity*; this means, in the case spiritual beings, a similarity in their inner structure. The image of God in the human soul is formed in such a configuration in as far as certain powers of the soul are in their relations to one another similar to the three Divine Persons"[867]. This is to say that, "though the soul has a finite capacity, it is imperative, nonetheless, that there be an infinite good in which it finds its completion"[868].

Under the influence of Augustine, Bonaventure sustained that, as it is said in *De Trinitate*, the soul is the image of God as it is created with divine capacity (*capax Dei*), that is to be participated in the first Being[869]. The Franciscan writes: "The soul is created to participate in divine beatitude, therefore it is constituted with a divine capacity, and so to be image and similitude of God"[870]. The key word of this degree is sanctifying grace (*gratia sanctificans*), and the central point belongs to the third phase of creation, thus man's return to God (*reductio / consumatio*). The

---

[865] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 97.

[866] *Brevil.*, p. V, c. 1, n. 3 (V,).

[867] SCHAEFER, "The position and function of man in the created World", 364.

[868] *I Sent.* d. 1, a. 3, q. 2, ad 2 (I, 41): "Patet igitur, quod ad hoc quod anima compleatur, quamvis capacitatem habeat finitam, tamen necesse est adesse bonum infinitum".

[869] *II Sent.*, d. 16, a. 1, q. 1, concl. (II, 395a): "Et hoc es quod dicit Augustinus, *de Trinitate*, decimo quarto, quod eo est anima imago Dei quo capax eius et particeps esse potest".

[870] *II Sent.*, d. 19, a. 1, q. 1, concl. (II, 460a): "Quia enim facta est ad participandam beatitudinem, quae consistit in solo Summo Bono, facta est capax Dei, et ita ad ipsius imaginem et similitudinem".

grace of God enables the human soul to arrive at the answer to the most profound question of life, drawing it to become similitude with the soul of God. This level of God-conformed existence is found in every sanctified creature, and hence the good angels and in human beings who receive and respond to God's gift of grace. The Franciscan Saint further writes: "*similitudo vero principalis consistit in unione animae ad Deum, quae quidem est per gratiam*"[871].

Through the metaphor of *book*, we have seen that it is the task of the human person to learn how to be sensitive to the symptoms of divine presence, but he has failed to read the divine presence in the book of creation. Why do human beings find it so difficult to do this? For Bonaventure, the answer to this lies in the mystery of our fallen nature which has distorted our vision and deformed our intellectual capacities. Once these have been reformed through the grace and light of Christ, we will again be able to read the glorious book of creation in which we will come to know God precisely as creator, and will see the relation of creation to salvation, which is the primary concern of the biblical revelation[872].

It is in the triadic structure (*mens*, *notitia*, *amor*) of the human spirit that creation comes closest to God through its awareness of and to God's personal, gracious presence mediated through creation. Therefore, as noted by Veuthey[873], the status of the human soul is a natural similitude of God, but by the force of grace it becomes a supernatural similitude. The grace, which is incarnated in Christ, enables a re-creation for human soul to be able to participate in the community of Trinity. This divine capacity within human being, in Bonaventure-Pauline language, is a participation in the sonship of the Son, and being so, it has the ability of

---

[871] *II Sent.*, d. 16, a. 2, q. 3, concl. (II, 405b).
[872] See Z. HAYES'S introduction to *Red. art.*, (English trans.), 11.
[873] Cf. VEUTHEY, *La Filosofia Cristiana di San Bonaventura* (a cura di Pompei), 252.

participation in Trinity. "By sanctifying grace, the soul becomes the bride of Christ and, in him, the son of the eternal Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit"[874].

Reassuming the treatment on Bonaventure's general analogy let me quote *Breviloquium* and show some general key words of this theme:

"[...] we may gather that the created world is like a book in which the Maker, the Trinity, shines forth, is represented, and can be read at three levels of expression, namely as *vestige*, as an *image*, and as a *similitude*. The reality of the vestige is found in all creatures; that of image is found only in intellectual beings or rational spirits; and that of similitude is found only in those creatures which have become conformed to God"[875].

This passage includes the conviction that the world reflects not only the oneness of God but also in its Trinitarian dimensions, as well. Generally one might find a series of key words in this three-fold structure as follows:

Vestigium ←Deus: principium et causa   = actiones naturales

Imago   ←Deus: obiectum et ratio motiva = actiones intellectuales

Similitudo ←Deus: donum infusum   = actiones meritoriae[876].

5. A Threefold structure on some works

Having seen the three level of participation of creatures in God, we now apply it into some of Bonaventure's writings. The point we want to make clear in this section is that there is a peculiar structure in the *De Scientia Christi*, *Breviloquium* and *Itinerarium*, which offer a good guide to find the principle meaning of each writing: Seven parts or chapters of each work, a fourth point as

---

[874] *Brevil.*, pars. V, c.1, n. 2 (V, 252): "Ipsa nihilo minus est donum per quod anima perficitur et efficitur sponsa Christi, filia Patris aeterni, et templum Spiritus Sancti".

[875] *Brevil.*, pars. II, c.12, n. 1 (V, 230): "[…] quod creatura mundi est quasi quidam liber, in quo relucet, repraesentatur et legitur Trinitas fabricatrix secundum triplicem gradum expressionis, scilicet per modum vestigii, imaginis et similitudinis; ita quod ratio vestigi reperitur in omnibus creaturis, ratio imaginis in solis intellectualibus seu spiritibus rationalibus, ratio similitudinis in solis deiformibus; ex quibus quasi per quosdam scalares gradus intellectus humanus natus est gradatim ascendere in summum principium, quod est Deus" (English trans., Monti, 96).

[876] *Chr. unus* IV, n. 16-17 (V, 571); L. SILEO, "Relazione tempo e storia. Ipotesi di accostamento tra Bonaventura e la *Dei Verbum*", in *DrSer*, 36 (1989), p. 105.

medium within each text, and a seventh part or chapter as culmination of each text, is a very significant order for Bonaventure's system. Its presence in each work should not be overlooked. The structure throughout the writings reveals the three distinct parts of his metaphysics: emanation, exemplarity, and consummation.

5.1. De Scientia Christi: scientia-cognitio-sapientia

In the first chapter we have seen that in this disputation, Bonaventure shows the centrality of the divine Word in human knowledge. What we need to see now is that the textual structure and content of this disputation reveals three distinct, yet intimately interrelated meanings: 1) Christ's wisdom, 2) human knowledge, and 3) metaphysics[877]. First, Bonaventure treats *three* questions on the divine knowledge, followed by *one* on human certitude and a final *three* on the wisdom of Christ's soul. The seven questions of the disputation are found to move from *scientia*, through *cognitio*, and into *sapientia*.

The *De Scientia Christi* fits into triadic framework: it has three distinct and explicitly ordered components: divine knowledge (qq. 1-3), certitude in human knowledge (q. 4) and the wisdom of Christ's Soul (qq. 5-7). The 3-1-3 structure of these *quaestiones* reveals that the text has a clear center mid-point: *question four*. As the fourth question of the seven, it mathematically falls in the center text. However, it is even more explicitly designated as the middle of the disputation, since it is framed by three questions on God's knowledge and three questions on the wisdom of Christ's soul[878]. The disputation is in some way structured along the lines of the hypostatic union: moving from God, through humanity and only then into Christ. Thus, a simple sequential reading of these *quaestiones* plainly reveals that Christ's wisdom is a principal meaning of the text. As we will discover later, at the heart of this disputation is an understanding that the real knowledge, therefore,

---

[877] J. BENSON, "Bonaventure's *De Scientia Christi*", 67-90; T. SCARPELLI, "Bonaventure's Christocentric Epistemology: Christ's Human Knowledge as the Epitome of Illumination in *De scientia Christi*", in *FrancStud*, 65 (2007), p. 63-86.
[878] BENSON, "Bonaventure's *De Scientia Christi*", 70-71.

the real wisdom, the real truth, the real meaning of things, lies in the fact that they come from God's desire to communicate himself, from his goodness[879].

Christ's Wisdom (1-3)	Human Knowledge in Relationship to Christ's Wisdom (4)	Christ's Wisdom (5-7)
q.1: Whether the knowledge of Christ, in as far as he is the Word, actually extends itself to an infinite number of things. **q.2**: Whether God knows things by means of their likeness or by means of their proper essence. **q.3**: Whether God knows creatures by means of likeness that are really distinct.	**q.4**: Whether that which is known by us with certitude is known in the eternal reason themselves? "*For certain knowledge, the eternal reason is necessarily involved as the regulative and motivating principle, but certainly not as the sole principle nor in its full clarity. But along with the created reason, it is contuited by us in part as is fitting in this life*" (resp.). "*But the truth which is absolutely immutable can be seen only by those who are able to enter into that innermost silence of the soul, and to this no sinner is able to come, but only to one who is supremely a lover of eternity*" (resp.).	**q.5**: Whether the soul of Christ possessed only uncreated wisdom, or whether it possessed also a created wisdom together with uncreated wisdom. **q. 6**: Whether the soul of Christ comprehends the uncreated wisdom itself. **q. 7**: Whether the soul of Christ comprehends all those things which the uncreated wisdom comprehends.
Vestigio → **Emanatione**	**Imago →** **Exemplarite**	**Similitudo** **Consumatione**

Bonaventure clarifies two sorts of knowledge with regard to two likenesses: knowledge caused by things and knowledge that causes things. Knowledge caused by things pertains to us, and this knowledge requires the likeness of imitation. Christ's wisdom is the fundamental meaning of this text. For the saint, Christ is the exemplar of human knowing: in its intimate union with the Word, Christ's human soul exemplifies human knowledge at the height of its perfection[880]. Referring to Bonaventure's method of *reduction*, one might say that the question of human knowledge is a philosophical question, but the ultimate answer to this philosophical question does not become available to humans until the eternal archetype becomes

---

[879] Cf. LaNave, "God, Creation, Philosophical Wisdom", 824.
[880] Scarpelli, "Bonaventure's Christocentric Epistemology", 63.

incarnated in the history of Jesus. It follows, therefore, that the final answer of the question of the exemplarity is found at the level of faith and theology[881].

Thus, creation's fulfilment is not only its own desire but Gods desire, as well. As we move on to the other question specifically the seventh, we will see that it has brought the *De Scientia Christi* to rest. The soul of Christ has comprehensive knowledge of all things that happen in the universe: In this rest one can comprehend both the repose of the mind and the return of all reality to its source. As emerged in the study of Benson, essentially, the likeness of imitation can be viewed from three perspectives: vestige, image and similitude. Likewise, by discussing Christ's knowledge, the text also subtly alludes to the metaphysical categories of emanation, exemplarity and consummation[882].

> "For a creature is related to God as a *vestige*, as an *image*, and as a *similitude*. In as far as it is vestige, it is related to God as to its principle, and in as far as it is a image, it is related to God as to its object. But in as far as it is similitude, it is related to God as an infused gift. And, therefore, every creature that proceeds from God is a vestige. Every creature that knows God is an image. And every creature in whom God dwells, and only in such a creature, is a similitude. There are three levels of divine cooperation corresponding to these three degrees of relationship"[883].

5.2. Breviloquium: Ortus-progressus-status

As in the case of *De Scientia Christi*, the study of Benson[884] on *Breviloqium* proposes a similar prospective, that is the significance of structure and a particular

---

[881] Cf. HAYES, introduction to *On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology*, 7.
[882] Cf. BENSON, "Bonaventure's *De Scientia Christi*", 88-90; SCARPELLI, "Bonaventure's Christocentric Epistemology", 75.
[883] *Sc. Chr.*, IV, resp. (V, 24a): "Creatura enim comparatur ad Deum in ratione vestigii, imaginis et similitudinis. In quantum vestigium, comparatur ad Deum ut ad principium; in quantum imago comparatur ad Deum ut ad obiectum; sed in quantum similitudo, compratur ad Deum ut ad donum infusum. Et ideo omnis creatura est vestigium, quae est a Deo; omnis est imago, quae cognoscit Deum; omnis et sola est similitudo, in qua habitat Deus. Et secundum istum triplicem gradum comparationis triplex est gradus divinae cooperationis" (English trans., Hayes, 135-136).
[884] BENSON, "The Christology of the *Breviloquium*", 254-259.

concern on the theme of *Christus Medium*. His study was focused on the fourth part of *Breviloquium* ("The incarnation of the Word"). It is notable that the fourth part is the middle side of the whole text of the text, which treats the medium of all reality. Benson reads the text through a triadic lens: *ortus –progressus/modus – status/fructus*[885].

Through this lens he points out the role of Christ as *the one Medium*, the *fructus* of creation and at the same time the new or the *ortus* of re-creation (part. IV). The ultimate *ortus* of all things must be the Triune God (I), expressed in creation (II), but is disgraced by *modus* of sin (III). As the one Medium and Mediator, Christ offers healing to humanity, expressed structurally as the *ortus* of re-creation through the new modus of grace (V) and sacraments (VI). The final judgment (VII) will be a new *status* of all things[886]. The seven parts then can be charted as follows:

Part 1:			Part 4:			Part 7:
The Trinity: **_Ortus_** **of all things**	**Part 2**: Creation *Ortus* of movement from God	**Part 3:** Sin *Modus* of fallen creation	**Christ** **The One Medium** *Fructus* *Ortus* of of Creation Re-creation	**Part 5**: Grace *Modus* of re-creation	**Part 6**: Sacrament *Fructus* of re-creation	**Final Judgment** **_Status_** **of all things**
		The	**_Progressus_ of**	**All Things**		

The above scheme shows the whole program of *Breviloquium*, with a particular concern on Christological dimension. Not only does all emanate from the Father through the Word, but the return of all things to the Father can take place only through the same Word who stands at the very center of reality. Through the whole of the divine economy, a common principle is operative which reflects the mediatorial significance of the Word in its universal scope: "It is the law of the

---

[885] BENSON, "The Christology of the *Breviloquium*", 253, 261.
[886] BENSON, "The Christology of the *Breviloquium*", 257.

divinity that lower beings are led to the highest beings by means of beings that lie in the middle between the extremes"[887]. The historical mediatorship of Christ is grounded in the inner-trinitarian of the second person. "Only he who is *medium* can be mediator"[888].

5.3. Itinerarium: extra nos-intra nos-supra nos

Through that triadic level, we therefore, first, speak with the language of *Itinerarium* and move through the *vestiges* which are outside us (*extra nos*); next, we enter into our mind which is the *image* of God within us (*intra nos*); and finally, we must pass beyond and above us (*supra nos*) by rising our eyes to the *First Principle*. In the first chapter of *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure begins by establishing the basic ternary division of the work in accordance with the modes of exemplarity and the orientations of the soul (outside, within and above self). With regard to these divisions, he writes:

"In order to arrive at the First Principle which is most spiritual and eternal, and above us, it is necessary that we move through the vestiges which are bodily and temporal and outside us. And this is to be led in the way of God. Next, we must enter into our mind which is the image of God, in image which is everlasting, spiritual, and within us. And this is to enter into the truth of God. Finally, we must pass beyond that which is eternal, most spiritual, and above us by raising our eyes to the First Principle. And this will bring us to rejoice in the knowledge of God and to stand in awe before God's majesty"[889].

---

[887] *Brevil.*, pars. II, c. 9, n. 2 (V, 226): "quia lex divinitatis haec est, ut infima per media reducantur ad summa" (English trans., Monti, 85).

[888] *III Sent.* d. 19, a. 2, q. 2 ad 1 (III, 411); HAYES, *The Hidden Center*, 87.

[889] *Itin.*, I, 2 (V, 297): "Ad hoc, quod perveniamus ad primum principium considerandum, quod est *spiritualissimum* et *aeternum* et *supra nos*, oportet, nos *transire* per *vestigium*, quod est *corporale* et *temporale* et *extra nos*, et hoc est *deduci in via Dei*; oportet, nos *intrare* ad mentem nostram, quae est *imago Dei aeviterna*, *spiritualis* et *intra nos*, et hoc est *ingredi in veritate Dei*; oportet, nos *transcendere* ad *aeternum*, *spiritualissimum*, et *supra nos* aspiciendo ad primum principium, et hoc est *laetari in Dei notitia et reverentia Maiestatis*" (English trans., Hayes, 47); Cf. LANAVE, "Bonaventure's *De Deo Uno*", 66.

Extra nos	Intra nos	Christus Ostium	Supara nos	In Deum
Chap. 1: the consideration of God through his vestiges in the universe **Chap. 2**: the consideration of God in his vestiges in his visible world	**Chap. 3**: the consideration of God through his image imprinted in our natural powers	**Chap. 4**: **the consideration of God in his image reformed through the gifts of grace**	**Chap. 5**: the consideration of the divine unity through its primary name which is Being **Chap. 6**: the consideration of the most blessed Trinity in its name which is Good	**Chap. 7**: the mystical transport of mind totally to God
Vestigium →	*Imago →*	*Donis gratuitis*	*Reforomata →*	*Similitudo*

6. Metaphysics of Christus Medium

We continue now to show that what occurs at the structure level in three of Bonaventure's works we are illustrating now, also occurs at the level of meaning. In particular way, this perspective recalls the dimension of consummation of the universe in Christ: the story of man is a journey to go back in unity with the Creator, when his natural knowledge becomes knowledge in the love of God. In this condition, "man becomes new creation, as grace accomplishes nature and makes perfect the soul"[890].

6.1. *De Scientia Christi*: Christ the Goal of Human Knowledge

The central point of this disputation is the fourth question: "Whether what which is known by us with certitude is known in the eternal reasons themselves"[891]. As we have noted, human knowing stands in stark contrast to divine knowing. It is not marked with simplicity and perfection, but with mutability and uncertainty. These limitations can only be remedied when human mind attains to the eternal reasons. The divine Word is the prior condition by reason of which anything in the

---

[890] *II Sent.*, d. 7, p. 1, a. 2, q. 1. concl. (II, 184a): "Gratia naturam perficit et confirmat".
[891] J. BENSON, "Bonaventure's De *Scientia Christi*", 69.

world is knowable and who is known to some degree in any authentic act of knowledge[892]. Bonaventure returns to the vocabulary of *contuitio* to emphasize the irreducible participation of the human intellect in the cognitive act of wisdom: "wisdom is united with the soul of Christ only through the mediation of the gift of created wisdom, which is like an informing light for the soul, making it conformed to God and capable of *contuiting* the light of uncreated wisdom"[893]. He writes:

"For certain knowledge, the eternal reason is necessarily involved as the regulative and motivating principal, but certainly neither as the sole principal nor in its full clarity. But along with the created reason, it is contuited (*contuita*) by us in parts as is fitting in this life"[894].

In Bonaventure's lengthy response to the last four objections in question four, the connection between question four and the remaining three becomes apparent. The fourth question is obviously the centre of the work and determines the decisive moment of the text: the "supreme lover of eternity". In the last line of his reply, Bonaventure concludes in a flourish: "But the truth which is absolutely immutable can be seen only by those who are able to enter into that innermost silence of the soul, and to this no sinner is able to come, but only one who is supremely a lover of eternity"[895].

The presupposition underlying Bonaventure's treatment here is that of Christ's utter sinlessness, which enables his intellect to reach the fullness of human knowledge unhindered. The knowledge which he attributes to Christ in qq. 5-7 of *De scientia Christi*, thus hinges on the illuminationist principles from the fourth

---

[892] Cf. HAYES, *The Hidden Center*, 206.

[893] *Sc Chr.*, V, 8 (V, 28a); see SCARPELLI, *Bonaventure's Christocentric Epistemology*, 78.

[894] *Sc Chr.*, IV, resp. (V, 23b): "ad certitudinalem cognitionem necessario requiritur ratio aeterna ut regulans et ratio motiva, non quidem ut sola et in sua omnimoda claritate, sed cum ratione creata, et ut ex parte a nobis contuita secundum statum viae" (English trans., Hayes, 134); see BENSON, "Bonaventure's *De Scientia Christi*", 75.

[895] *Sc Chr.*, IV, resp. (V, 27b): "Nam illa veritas simpliciter incommutabilis perspicue videri non potest, nisi ab illis qui intrare possunt ad intimum silentium mentis, ad quod nullus peccator pervenit, sed ille solus, qui est summus amator aeternitatis" (English trans., Hayes, 143-144); see BENSON, "Bonaventure's *De Scientia Christi*", 76.

question[896]. Hence, the "immutable truth" is evidently God himself, the concern of questions one through three. Christ, the concern of questions five through seven is *the* "supreme lover of the eternity". The entirety of the phrase is thus an encouragement for the human person (the concern of question four) to imitate the "supreme lover of eternity", by entering into the innermost silence of the mind"[897].

By describing the "supreme lover of eternity" the fourth is the fullness of meaning for the whole work. Yet, in terms solely of human knowledge, the fourth question is but a point on the way to completion, drawn towards Christ for its fulfilment. Any self-communication of the Father must take place through the Word. Thus, the central point of questions 5-7 of disputation, as observed by Benson, is that "Christ's wisdom is the horizon of human knowing". Accordingly, "a human person can never attain to the eternal font in the way that Christ's perfect human soul can, because God is totally familiar (*faimiliaritas*) to him, completely intimate with him"[898]. Bonaventure's illumination is specifically Christological: the mystery of Christ reveals the *telos* of his epistemology[899].

Turning to question six, on Christ's wisdom, Bonaventure underscores a basic principal of his mystical theology. The created, and therefore finite, soul cannot comprehend what is infinite, but the infinite object – namely, the infinite truth and goodness that is God – draws the infinite soul out of itself and thereby establishes the soul in a relationship to itself in which the soul can find rest. Such knowledge is, of course, dependent on grace; nevertheless, it is appropriate to the nature of a rational soul, for "nothing is sufficient for the soul unless it exceeds the soul's capacity" (*nihil sufficit animae, nisi eius capacitetem excedet*)[900].

---

896 SCARPELLI, *Bonaventure's Christocentric Epistemology*, 75-76.
897 BENSON, "Bonaventure's *De Scientia Christi*", 89.
898 *Sc. Chr.*, IV, resp. (V, 40a); BENSON, "Bonaventure's *De Scientia Christi*", 83.
899 SCARPELLI, *Bonaventure's Christocentric Epistemology*, 85.
900 *Sc. Chr.*, VI, resp. (V, 35a).

In this perspective, we are drawn to God, the infinite good and truth, precisely because God is infinite. The soul's fulfilment lies not in what the soul can limit to itself through comprehension, but precisely in what draws the soul outside of and beyond itself, beyond its expectations and ability to comprehend. The true knowledge is nothing more or less than the knowledge of God's Word as the exemplary cause of things. In sum, by imitating Christ, refusing to be satisfied with the comprehension that is only limitation, human knowledge is led beyond itself and into the divine[901].

In question seven, the text ends in the culmination and rest of knowledge: love and silence. This is not accidental. Number seven for Bonaventure, as noted above, denotes rest and completion. The disputation culminates in silence and love. Finally, Bonaventure concludes the whole disputation with the following statement:

> "In trying to explain this, negations are more appropriate than affirmation, and superlatives more appropriate than positive predications. And if it is to be experienced, interior silence is more helpful than external speech. Therefore, let us stop speaking, and let us pray to the Lord that we may be granted the experience of that about which we have spoken"[902].

As we have seen, following the study of Benson, the 3-1-3 structure of the disputation indicates three yet interrelated components: God, humanity, and Christ. There are likewise three clear components of the disputation: divine knowledge (qq. 1-3), human knowledge (q. 4) and Christ's wisdom (qq. 5-7). According to Benson, "within these three discussions of knowledge, Bonaventure's three metaphysical

---

[901] Cf. BENSON, "Bonaventure's *De Scientia Christi*", 84; see also LANAVE, "God, Creation, Philosophical Wisdom", 821.

[902] *Sc. Chr.*, VII, resp. ad 19-20-21 (V, 43b): "Ad cuius circumlocutionem magis sunt idoneae negations quam affirmationes, et superpositiones, quam positivae praedicationes; ad cuius experientiam plus valet internum silentium quam exterius verbum. Et ideo hic finis verbi habendus est, et orandus Dominus, ut experiri donet quod locuimur" (English trans., Hayes, 196).

categories emerge in precisely the some order"[903], namely *emanation*, *exemplarity*, and *consummation*.

Note that these *quaestiones* begin at the Beginning in the proper sense, that is the knowledge of God, for the first question on the divine knowledge speaks about the source of all *emanation*, the divine mind, fully fecund, totally infinite, containing a knowledge of all things possible and actual, of what is and of what will never be. This is the Father of lights, the *Primitas*, from whom every good and perfect gift descends: "Every worthwhile gift, every genuine benefit comes from above, descending from the Father of the heavenly luminaries" (Jas. 1: 17)[904]. Thus, the text is seen to emanate from a discussion of the very source of emanation.

Question four, on human knowledge, also addresses metaphysics inasmuch as it speaks about *exemplarity*, the second element of Bonaventure's threefold metaphysics scheme. Specifically, as quoted above, question four describes the three categories by which created things imitate the eternal reason, the true exemplar: vestige, image, and similitude. As vestige, every creature proclaims God's existence and has God as its creative principle. As image, the rational creature has God as its object and moved by God in its knowing processes. As similitude, the creature in which God dwells has God as its infused gift and in all its meritorious actions, God cooperates as the infused gift that elevates it. The carefully crafted structure of the disputation reveals this metaphysical meaning as a part of what it means to discuss Christ, the metaphysical door. This meaning is likewise an integral movement of the text as whole[905].

Finally, the last series of questions on Christ's wisdom speaks about the last element of Bonaventure's scheme: *consummation*. In the seventh question, the fine distinctions of the first question on divine knowledge allow Bonaventure to make a

---

[903] BENSON, "Bonaventure's De *Scientia Christi*", 86.
[904] *Red. art.*, 1 (V, 319); BENSON, "Bonaventure's *De Scientia Christi*", 87.
[905] *Sc. Chr.*, IV, concl., (V, 24a); BENSON, "Bonaventure's *De Scientia Christi*", 87.

key distinction in the last question with regard to the wisdom of Christ's soul. The seventh question is in some way a return to the first, speaking of the consummation of mind in love and quietude. Likewise, the person, in excessive knowing is both vestige, image, and similitude and thus it can be seen that the entirety of creation is being led back to its infinite source as the soul is ceaselessly drawn after the eternal reason. This entire movement is accomplished by the prompting of the infinite source to which all things desire to turn[906]. For Bonaventure,

> "The soul of Christ has comprehensive knowledge of all things that happen in the universe and ecstatic knowledge of all things contained in the divine art [...]. Consequently, as nothing further can be added to his grace, so nothing can be added to his wisdom because he has been given as much as can be granted to any creature"[907].

6.2. *Breviloquium*: Christ the New Status of All Things

Bonaventure places Part 4 within the *Breviloquium* so that its structure and structural function in the text reflect what he understands to be true of the incarnate of the reality. It can be said that chapter one of the part functions like a prologue to the entire part. Here, Bonaventure wants to make clear that creation and redemption both occur through the incarnated Word. He then further describes the identity of God's actions in creation and redemption. The following passage sums up beautifully the triadic dimension of divine revelation, and shows how the Incarnation was understood by Bonaventure as a mystery of divine bounding down to man, taking the form of slave to repair the human dignity:

> "Since God made all things *powerfully*, *wisely* and best or *benevolently*, it was fitting that he would repair them in such a way that could show forth his power, wisdom and benevolence. Now what is more powerful than to join extreme supremely distant in one person? What is more wise and fitting than that for the

---

[906] BENSON, "Bonaventure's De *Scientia Christi*", 87-88.
[907] *Sc. Chr.*, VII, resp. ad 19-20-21 (V, 38-39); English trans., Hayes, 194; Cf. SCARPELLI, "Bonaventure's Christocentric Epistemology", 75.

perfection of the whole universe the joining of the first and last should occur, that is, of the Word of God that is the principium of all things and of human nature which was the last (*ultima*) of all creatures? What is more benevolent than the Lord taking the form of a slave (Phil. 2: 7) for the salvation of a slave?"[908].

Bonaventure determined that the appropriations of power, wisdom and benevolence are especially important: "Now what is more powerful", "what is more wise and fitting", and finally, "what is more benevolent than the Lord taking the form of slave for the salvation of a slave"? The order of these rhetorical questions is important: They begin with admiration of the *power* of God demonstrated in the union itself. The next two rhetorical questions then provide the two primary meanings of the incarnation: the incarnation manifests God's *wisdom* because it completes creation, and the incarnation manifests God's *benevolence* because it heals humanity[909].

In addition, the *Breviloquium* expresses this Christological truth through the structural complexity of part 4 itself. For when we apply the same category of *ortus –progressus/modus – status/fructus* to the treatment of the incarnate Word in part 4, we can see that the structure of this part comes into focus as a perfectly unified composition that mirrors the unity of the incarnate Word. In this part, Bonaventure divides this series of chapters into three distinct groups of three chapters each.

The first three chapters (4.2-4.4) concern the union of natures. Where shall a material-spiritual being find a fulfilment most in harmony with its nature but in an object uniting both matter and spirit within it? The union of natures forms the

---

[908] *Brevil.*, pars. IV, c. 1, n. 2 (V, 241): "Quoniam ergo Deus omnia fecit potenter, sapienter et optime seu benevolenter, decuit, ut sic repararet, quod suam potentiam, sapientiam et benevolentiam ostenderet. Quit autem potentius quam coniungere extrema summe distantia in unam personam? Quid sapientius et congruentius, quam quod ad perfectionem totius universi fieret coniunctio primi et ultimi, Verbi scilicet Dei, quod est omnium principium, et humanae naturae, quae fuit ultima omniam creaturarum? Quid benevolentius, quam quod Dominus propter servi salutem accipiat *formam servi*?" (English trans., Monti, 132-133); Cf. BENSON, "The Christology of the *Breviloquium*", 262.
[909] BENSON, "The Christology of the *Breviloquium*", 262-263.

bedrock and guiding principle for all other Christological assertions; it is that from which Bonaventure's understanding of Christ flows; it is therefore the *ortus* of Bonaventure's treatment of the incarnate Word[910].

In that perspective the eternal, invisible Word becomes visible and audible in the incarnation, a perfect object of contemplation comes into being in which humanity will find the fulfilment of the desires that spring from its material-spiritual nature. God has chosen a most appropriate solution to the problem of sin, creating in Christ an object which is both proportionate and similar to man. "Through Christ, the order of justice is healed and the possibility of friendship with God is again opened to humanity together with the restoration of true human dignity"[911].

The second series of three chapters (4.5-4.7) studies the gifts that mark the incarnate Word's presence among us: his grace, wisdom, and merit. These gifts from the *modus* of Bonaventure's inquiry into the incarnate Word's person as gifts through which the union of natures is manifested.The gifts also speak of what Christ does for humanity: he makes humanity one through his grace; his grace and wisdom "are the sources of upright and holy living"[912]; his merit restores our relationship to God and opens the path to eternal life with God. The sanctifying function of grace is understood as follows: "The grace is given in order that its effects in created reality, which comes from God, is now returned to him, as in a perfect circle, the rational spirits reach out their perfection"[913]. This perfect circle is realized in the incarnated Word. In Christ, man reaches its final fulfilment[914].

---

[910] BENSON, "The Christology of the *Breviloquium*", 257-258.

[911] Cf. *Brevil.*, pars. IV, c. 3 (V, 243); HAYES, *The hidden Center*, 94.

[912] *Brevil.*, pars. IV, c. 7, n. 2 (V, 427).

[913] *Brevil.*, p. V, c. 1, n. 6 (V, 253a): "Cum ad hoc sit [gratia] ut, per ipsam, opus manans a Deo revertatur in Deum in quo, ad modum circuli intelligibilis, consistit omnium Spirituum rationalium complementum" (English trans., Monti, 172-173).

[914] *III Sent.*, d. 1, a. 2, q. 2. concl. (III, 23b): "In incarnatione, homo, qui est ultimus, coniungitur cum suo Principio unione qua sub Deo nulla est maior".

The third series of chapters (4.8-4.10) examines the full scope of Christ's passion. The passion completes Bonaventure's inquiry in many ways, to clarify that the passion, more than any other action of Christ, demonstrates his unity with humanity (4.8) and provides humanity with a perfect example of love to follow in love (4.9). The examination comes to completion with the passion, since the passion, in relationship to the resurrection, ascension and sending the Spirit, fully and perfectly restores all things (4.10)[915].

In the incarnated Word, the divine potence in man becomes a real *actus* in divine indwelling place, the reign of God[916]. The life of grace involves an intensification of the similitude that the human person bears to God already by virtue of creation. Created as an image of God, the human being becomes a similitude of God through the appropriate, personal response to God's loving presence. The characteristic language which Bonaventure uses to speak of grace is the language of *dei-formity* (deiformis)[917].

Grace means that the copy becomes ever more like the original; it becomes God-like in ever greater depth and intensity[918]. Let me display this with Bonaventure's own words in *Breviloquium*:

> "Now no one possesses God without being possessed by God in a special way. And no one possesses and is possessed by God without loving God and being loved by God in a particular and incomparable manner, as in the case a bride and groom where each loves and is loved by the other. And no one is loved in this way without being adopted as a child entitled to an eternal inheritance. Therefore, the 'grace which makes pleasing' makes the soul the temple of God, the bride of Christ, and the daughter of the eternal Father. And since this cannot occur except through a supremely gracious condescension of the part of God, it could not be caused by

---

[915] BENSON, "The Christology of the *Breviloquium*", 258.
[916] Cf. POMPEI, (a cura di), *La Filosofia Cristiana di San Bonaventura*, 254-255.
[917] *Brevil.*, pars. V, c. 1, n. 3 (V, 252).
[918] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 99.

some naturally implanted habit, but by a free gift divinely infused. This is most evident if we consider what it truly means to be God's temple and God's child and to be joined to God as in wedlock by the bond of love and grace"[919].

The central point of this text is the power of grace. Here, in *Breviloquium* and also in Bonaventure's two other writings, we are talking about, he convinces that the authentic spiritual development of human beings can take place only through human response to divine influence which emanates from God as a ray emanates from the sun[920]. The order of grace is conceived in parallel with the order of creation. Both emanate from God as their primary source. The order of grace is that level of existence in which the true potentiality of human life, implanted in it at creation but stunted by sin, is brought closer to realization. Rather, that which we call human nature is a potentiality which finds its only meaningful realization in grace and ultimately in glory. Grace here is conceived as an influence emanating from God, affecting a God-likeness deeper than that of the image of the first creation, and leading the soul back to God in union with love[921].

6.3. *Itinerarium*: Christ is the Door of Salvation

The itinerary of human soul to God is to be completed only through the person of Christ. Our soul would not be able to be lifted up perfectly from sensible realities to see itself and the eternal truth within itself unless the truth, assuming a

---

[919] *Brevil.*, pars. V, c. 1, n. 5 (V, 252-253): "Et quoniam nullus deum habet, qui ab ipso specialius habeatur; nullus habet et habetur a Deo, quin ipsum praecipue et incomparabiliter diligat ed diligatur ab ipso sicut sponsa a sponso; nullus sic diligatur, quin ad aeternam hereditatem adoptetur pro filio: hinc est, quod gratia gratum faciens facit animam templum Dei, sponsam Christi et filiam Patris aeterni. Et quia hoc non potest esse nisi ex summa dignatione et condescensione Dei; ideo illud non potest esse per habitum aliquem naturaliter insertum, sed solum per donum divinitus gratis infusum; quod expresse apparet, si quis ponderet, quantum est esse Deo templum, Dei filium, Deo nihilominus indissolubiliter et quasi matrimonialiter per amoris et gratiae vinculum copulatum" (English trans., Monti, 172).
[920] HAYES, *The Hidden Center*, 42.
[921] HAYES, *The Hidden Center*, 43.

human form in Christ, becomes a ladder to repair the first ladder that had been broken in Adam[922].

> "[…] all creatures in this world of sensible realities lead the spirit of the contemplative and wise person to the eternal God. For creatures are shadows, echoes, and pictures of that first, most powerful, most wise, and most perfect Principle, of the eternal source, light, and fullness; of that efficient, exemplary, and ordering Art. They are vestiges, images, and spectacles proposed to us for the *contuitio* of God. They are divinely given signs"[923].

Christ, the mediator, restores the mind's contemplative ascent because Christ is the eternal Word, the perfect self-expression of the Father. Bonaventure's understanding of *contuitio* presupposes the metaphysics of exemplarism. The mind participates in this exemplarism by its contuitive intuition of the circular path that comes from and leads back to God[924]. Ultimately, *contuitio* is a co-knowing with God whereby the human mind glimpses the divine mind gazing upon itself. The itinerary of the soul is a transformative life into which man can enter only throughout Christ, the door[925] to salvation:

> "So it is that, no matter how enlightened one might be with the light of natural and acquired knowledge, one cannot enter into oneself to *delight in the Lord* (Ps 36: 4) except by means of the meditation of Christ who says: *I am the door. Those who enter through me shall be saved*; *they shall go in and out and find the pasture* (John 10: 9). But we do not draw near to this door unless we believe in Christ, hope in Christ, and love in Christ. If we wish, therefore, to re-enter into the enjoyment of

---

[922] *Itin.*, IV, 2 (V, 306): "Non potuit anima nostra perfecta ab his sensibilibus relevari ad contuitum sui et aeternae Veritatis in se ipsa, nisi Veritas, assumpta forma humana in Christo, fieret sibi scala reparans priorem scalam, quae fracta fuerat in Adam" (English trans., Hayes, 97).

[923] *Itin.*, II, 11 (V, 302b): "[…] quod omnes creaturae istius sensibilis mundi animum contemplantis et sapientis ducunt in Deum aeternum, pro eo quod illius primi principii potentissimi, sapientissimi et optimi, illius aeternae originis, lucis et plenitudinis, illius, inquam, artis efficientis, exemplantis et ordinantis sunt *umbrae*, *resonantiae*, et *picturae*, sunt *vestigia*, *simulacra* et *spectacula* nobis ad contuendum Deum proposita et *signa* divinitus data" (English trans., Hayes, 77).

[924] HELLMANN, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 211.

[925] L. CHIARINELLI, "Prolusione: Cristo, la Porta", in *DrSer*, 91 (2013), p. 7-12.

truth as into a paradise, we must do so through faith in, hope in, and love for *the mediator between God and humanity*, *Jesus Christ*, who is like the three of life in the middle of paradise (1 Tim 2: 5; Gen 2: 9)"[926].

The last chapter of *Itinerarium* evokes the central role of Christ as the way and door to salvation. In the chapter seven of *Itinerarium*, reassuming the whole program of the work (the mind's contemplation of God *outside* itself, *within* itself, and *above* itself[927]), Bonaventure evokes the image that the abandonment of the soul to God is signified by the death of Christ on the cross. The highest wisdom is kenosis because it bears a crucified form. This passage speaks of the state of the soul at its highest ascent, the soul in process of the *transitus* to Christ. The soul finally takes the form of such *transitus* because it has disposed himself to be impressed with the form of the Crucified[928].

The way of the cross is a hidden way, a very secret way, "which no one knows except one who receives it; and no one receives it except one who desires it; and no one desires it but one who is penetrated to the very marrow with the fire of the Holy Spirit whom Christ has sent into the world"[929]. It is only at the end of the journey that Bonaventure discloses his secret:

"But if you wish to know how these things come about, ask grace not instruction, desire not understanding, the groaning of prayer not diligent reading, the Spouse, not the master; God not man, darkness not clarity, not light but the fire that totally inflames and carries us into God by ecstatic unctions and burning affections. This

---

[926] *Itin.*, IV, 2 (V, 306a): "Ideo quantumcumque sit illuminatus quis lumine naturae et scientiae acquisitae, non potest intrare in se, ut in se ipso delectetur in Domino, nisi mediante Christo, qui dicit: *Ego sum ostium. Per me si quis introierit, salvabitur et ingredietur et agredietur et pascua inveniet*. Ad hoc autem *ostium* non appropinquamus, nisi ipsum *credamus*, *speremus* et *amemus*. Necesse est igitur, si reintrare volumus ad fruitionem Veritatis tanquam ad paradisum, quod ingrediamur per *fidem*, *spem* et *caritatem* mediatoris Dei et hominum Iesu Christi, qui est tanquam lignum vitae in medio paradisi" (English trans., Hayes, 99).

[927] *Itin.*, VII, 1 (V, 312a); see its parallel on *Itin.*, I, 2 (V, 297a).

[928] Cf. LANAVE, *Through Holiness to Wisdom*, 184-185.

[929] *Itin.*, VII, 4 (V, 312b): "Hoc autem est mysticum et secretissimum, quod nemo novit, nisi qui accipit, nec accipit nisi qui desiderat, nec desiderat nisi quem ignis Spiritus sancti medullitus inflammat, quem Christus misit in terram" (English trans., Hayes, 137).

fire is God, and his *furnace is in Jerusalem* (Isa 31: 9); and Christ enkindles it in the heat of his burning passion"[930].

Conclusion

Along this chapter we have narrated the general analogy reemphasising the three-fold pillar in Bonaventure's metaphysical-theology system: All creatures come from God as *efficient cause* (*emanatio*); all brings the footprint of the Creator, *the exemplar cause* of the universe (*exemplar*); and finally all go back to God as the *final cause* (*reductio*). Between the point of origin and the point of end stands the mystery of exemplarity. Thus, the last chapter was also mainly discussed the theme of *Christus Medium*. The eternal Son who is the center of the Trinity, and who mediates all the divine works of creation and illumination, is becoming incarnate assumes his place as the center of the created universe and history.

This chapter recalls what we have emphasized in the first chapter. According to Bonaventure's world-view, the universal role of the Word, the eternal archetype in whom God eternally expresses all things, is expressed in the triple formula: *Verbum creatum*, *Verbum incarnatum*, and *Verbum inspiratum*[931]. Hayes aptly observes that, "this is one of the powerful synthetic formulae of Bonaventure which expresses his conviction that all things in the order of creation, knowledge, and salvation are to be referred to Christ"[932]. This is but another way of saying that God, the Creator is Triune. In *Hexaëmeron*, his last work, Bonaventure confirms evidently the triadic modality of creation of the world:

"It is necessary, in fact, that being which it is from itself, is both according to itself and for itself. Being from itself is in the ratio of *originality*, being in itself is in the

---

[930] *Itin.*, VII, 6 (V, 313): "Si autem quaeras, quomodo haec fiant, interroga gratiam, non doctrinam; desiderium, non intellectum; gemitum orationis, non studium lectionis; sponsum, non magistrum; Deum, non hominem, caliginem, non claritatem; non lucem, sed ignem totaliter inflammentem et in Deum excessivis unctionibus et ardentissimis affectionibus transferentem. Qui quidem *ignis* Deus est, et huius *caminus est in Ierusalem*, et Christus hunc accendit in fervore, suae ardentissimae passionis, quam solus ille vere percipit" (English trans., Hayes, 139).
[931] *Hexaëm.*, III, 2 (V, 343).
[932] HAYES, *The Hidden Center*, 205; Cf. HAYES, *The window to the divine*, 73.

ratio of *exemplar*, and being for itself is the ratio of *finality* or ending, thus is ratio of the principle, the middle, and end or term. *The Father is in the ratio of the principle origin*, *the Son is in the ratio of medium exemplar*, *and the Holy Spirit as term point*. These three Persons are equal and have the equally nobility, as it is of equal nobility for the Holy Spirit to be the term point of the divine Persons, as it is to rise to the Father, the same as the Son who represents all things"[933].

Saying this we consider the importance of distinction between emanation and analogy. The emanation, in strict sense, exists only in God; it is in the perfect unity of three divine person: The Father emanates the Son, and together with the Son, emanate the Spirit. The three divine persons are united in one divine substance. The finite beings, therefore, is created to be able to "participate in divine community"[934]; they are "the external emanation"[935] of the Triune God. The creatures are almost nothing in the sense that they participate in a finite way in being, and they are radically contingent, for they come to be and cease to be. There is a "triadic incompleteness in created beings: of truth, stability and simplicity". The quality of creature is a participation in the perfection of the Creator[936].

The participation of the finite beings in the Absolute Being, in Bonaventure's language, is an analogy of participation: On the one side, the Creator is not identical with created beings, as God is infinitive Creator, while created being is contingent. But on the other side, it does not mean that there is a total separation between them. Analogy indicates, therefore, simultaneously difference and similarity; there is a qualitative gap between the two beings, but the finite being reflects the divine

---

[933] *Hexaëm.*, I, 12 (V, 331): "Necesse etiam est, ut *esse*, quod est ex se, sit secundum se et propter se. *Esse* ex se est in ratione originantis; *esse* secundum se in ratione exemplantis, et *esse* propter se in ratione finentis vel terminantis; id est in ratione principii, medii et finis seu termini. Pater in ratione originantis principii; Filius in ratione exemplantis medii; Spiritus Sanctus in ratione terminantis complementi. Hae tres personae sunt aequales et aeque nobilis, quia aequae nobilitatis est Spiritui sancto divinas personas terminare, sicut Patris originare, vel Figlio omnia repraesentare"; see SCHAEFER, "St. Bonaventure on Man in Creation", 265-266.

[934] A. POMPEI, (a cura di), *La Filosofia Cristiana di San Bonaventura*, 247.

[935] HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 62.

[936] LUC MATHIEU, *La Trinità Creatrice*, 180-181.

presence[937]. For Bonaventure, analogy has an epistemological consequence: Epistemology is not merely an account of the inner mechanical workings of the soul, but a question of fundamental theological import. By concluding his investigation of divine and human knowledge in *De scientia Christi* with an inquiry into Christ's human knowledge, he brings man's knowledge back to its final resting place, closing the circle which began with the Word as the exemplar which makes every creature a sign of God. Indeed, from the first moment of creation[938].

The term *contuitio* is a very helpful instrument to understand that for Bonaventure, within this triadic dynamic, the divine Incarnated Word places a central position; he is the conveyance of the whole universe, so-called *Christus Medium*. That Word is contains all that the divine mystery is within itself as a mystery of self-communicative-love. In Christ the most profound desire of man reaches its final and perfect answer, and the divine potence within human soul reaches its most perfect act[939]; the question of the proper sense of happiness is answered. In Christ's life, one might consider that the true nature of creative power is enacted as God's "humble love":

The *Summum Bonum* becomes one among us. Hayes writes: "As the Son of God kneels to wash the feet of his disciples, he carries out an act of supreme humility and expresses the most touching quality of God's love for humankind. If divine love is the motive of incarnation, that love is here seen more specifically as humble love. The very act of incarnation is an act of divine humility"[940]. As the proper *medium* of all reality, Christ is the centre of humility (*medio humilitatis*), the humility which culminates in the cross (*humilitate crucis*)[941]. According to

---

[937] Cf. GIUSEPPE BESCHIN, "La Creatura simbolo del Creatore in San Bonaventura", 45; A. POMPEI, (a cura di)., *La Filosofia Cristiana di San Bonaventura*, 247-248.

[938] Cf. SCARPELLI, "Bonaventure's Christocentric Epistemology", 85.

[939] *III Sent.*, d. 1, a. 2, q. 2 concl. (III, 24a): "Completus etiam est totius humanae naturae *appetitus*, dum per opus incarnationis nobilissima idoneitas quae erat in humana natura secundum quam unibilis erat divinae, ad actum perfectum reducitur". Cf. HAYES, *The Hidden Center*, 189.

[940] HAYES, *The Hidden Center*, 36; ID, "The Cosmos, a symbol of the Divine", 265.

[941] *Hexaëm.*, I, 23 (V, 333).

Bonaventure's Christological way, one might say that "there is no real imitation of Christ without humility"[942]. Taking this into account, we say that for a Christian, creation is a divine epiphany through which the world and humanity is brought to completion. From Bonaventure's theological system we have seen that the creative ground is fruitful love, as the mystery of the Trinitarian God is the community of love. It is beyond words to declare that "faith in the Trinity is the foundation and root of divine cult and of the entire Christian religion"[943].

---

[942] HAYES, *The Hidden Center*, 39.

[943] *Myst. Trin*., q. 1, a. 2, resp. (V, 56a): "fides Trinitatis et fundamentum et radix est divini *cultus* et totius *christianae religionis*" (English trans., Hayes, 131).

CHAPTER IV
BONAVENTURE'S THEOLOGY OF CREATION:
A WINDOW OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN THEOLOGY AND SCIENCE

Introduction

The main thrust we pursue in this study is that creation flows out of the heart of an infinitely loving Creator, the highest Good. This is to say that God cannot communicate being to the finite if he is not supremely communicative himself. Our doorway to this world-view is the doctrine of analogy, as it opens a hermeneutic setting that enables us to read the cosmological issue with Bonaventure's system. In this context we seek to find answers to the following questions: What can cosmology tell us about God? How can the cosmos, viewed in the light of the best empirical knowledge available to us through science, be used to manifest the mystery of God to those who believe in God, and who believe that the physical universe which is described by science is the universe which God is creating?

In the first section of this chapter, we present a general reception of Bonaventure's thought in contemporary time. This general overview helps us to detect the inclination of any scholar who attempts to bring forward Bonaventure's voice in the project of interdisciplinary dialogue. We have noted that Bonaventure's theological system has a 'wisdom method' character; but we know as well the differences between Medieval and Modern methods. We need, therefore, to adopt an alternative way which might become a bridge between them. In the second section, therefore, we treat the methodological question by looking closely at the coherent paradigm of human knowledge identified as the *convergence* model of contact between theology, philosophy and science.

We are aware of the fact that as we do this we are led to ask why we should try to relate science and religion by using such a model of dialogue. The answer lies in the area of our vision of human destiny and the future of humanity in this cosmos. There are insights that cry out for reflection and understanding. From a scientific perspective, we see the cosmos as a unified, unfolding, unfinished chemical process that eventually brings forth life, consciousness, and freedom at least on planet Earth. And here on planet Earth, in the form of human intelligence, this cosmic process comes to ask about itself, about its ultimate source, and its ultimate goal or purpose, and how that purpose is to be attained[944].

Proceeding from the above emerging reality and utilizing the method of *convergence*, in the third section, we move on to see the plausibility of Bonaventure's method of *reductio* in the context of dialogue between theology and science. In the fourth section, using his theme of *ratio seminalis*, we expound on the evolution theory in modern time. The doctrine of *ratio seminalis* and the theory of evolution provoke a consideration on the fact that the material reality existed as a system of systems; methodologically it proposes convergence between theology and science. In modern times, "perhaps the prominent exemplar of convergence is the renowned paleontologist and Jesuit priest, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955)"[945]. Therefore, in the fifth section, we treat briefly Teilhard's main theses.

The final point highlights particular characteristics of Bonaventure's style that may well be seen as a paradigm for today's context. While Christian theology understands the world as the creation of the Triune God, the very plausibility and integrity of a Christian theology of creation surely demand that it attends to – and indeed must engage in dialogue with – the physical and biological sciences and their explanations of the origin of the cosmos and its on-going natural and cosmic processes. The truth that abides in the Christian understanding of God as Trinity must surely accommodate and sit coherently with other approximations to the truth,

---

[944] Cf. HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 22-24.
[945] J. HAUGHT, *Science and Faith. A New Introduction*, Paulist Press, NY., 2012, p. 17.

as approached from other areas of human endeavour, including science. In this study, our purpose is to show that the strategy of the interconnection is not simply an intra-theology strategy, confined only to the realm of theology, but necessarily includes and embraces all areas of human search for meaning and truth[946].

1. The interest on Bonaventure in our time: an overview

Before looking directly on the issue we are interested in, it is necessary that we recall briefly some of the significant reception on Bonaventure's thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is a fact that, the tentative objective to bring Bonaventure's theology in dialog with modern thought is not really new. There are available views of studies or references on this issue. In this section, we briefly review or mention some of them.

1.1. Some theological issues

One notable study is that of Von Balthasar's on spiritual senses and the theology of beauty using Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* explicitly. The study of Paolo Martinelli[947], for example, outlines three areas on this issue: the relationship between theology and spiritual senses, the role of spiritual sense in knowing God, and the theme of beauty (*pulchritudo*). It also shows how these themes play a decisive role within Balthasar's entire theology and with which he himself enters into dialogue with some questions on contemporary theology.

Von Balthasar views the work of Bonaventure as a pre-eminent example of the aesthetic in theology, and hence presents him in terms of the spiritual and conceptual beauty of his theology. The kind of beauty in Bonaventure's terms, according to Von Balthasar, takes a specifically Franciscan form in the mystery of the God who humbles himself in the incarnation and above all in the cross[948]. In its deepest sense, beauty resides in the mystery of that ecstatic love that lies at the heart

---

[946] Cf. A. HUNT, *Trinity*, Orbis Books, NY., 2005, p. 94-95.
[947] P. MARTINELLI, "*L'Itinerarium mentis in Deum* di San Bonaventura da Bagnoregio nel Pensiero di Hans Urs Von Balthasar", in *StudFranc*, 107. 3-4 (2010), p. 395-421.
[948] HAYES, "Bonaventure of Bagnoregio", 44.

of the divine mystery and that manifests itself in the many forms of creation and salvation. Von Balthasar writes:

> "It is love in its incomprehensible passing over from itself into what is other than itself. It is love as the eternal generation of the Son from the Father, and as God's act of creation directed into the nothingness – a passing over that reveals at once and at the same time is the absolute power and infinite fruitfulness of God and the divine disposition of poverty, that wishes to have and hold on to nothing for itself. This disposition becomes visible in the creation, and more fully in redemption, as a descent into nothingness and fruitlessness"[949].

Still another notable contemporary scholar of Bonaventure's theology, considered in this study, is the Italian-German philosopher Romano Guardini. He dedicated himself to the study of Bonaventure, as developed in his *Doktorarbeit* of 1915, and his *Habilitationsschrift* of 1922[950]. He made two essays on Bonaventure, as well as making many references to Bonaventure's thought throughout all his other works. Guardini's studies, as we have noted in his volume, *Bonaventura*, deal with some themes in Bonaventure's system like: Christology, Incarnation, the doctrine of Supreme Being, the doctrine of the name of God, anthropological and cosmological questions; his elaborations on these themes provide worthy and significant suggestions in the context of interdisciplinary dialogue.

In addition there are other comparisons of Bonaventure's theology based on various themes, and some of them are: Bonaventure and Karl Rahner on the primacy of Christ[951]; and between Bonaventure, Karl Rahner and Von Balthasar on the theme of spiritual senses[952]. Although Rahner has been influenced in many ways by Thomism, his Trinitarian theology is self-consciously, as Bonaventure, derived

---

[949] VON BALTHASAR, *The glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, II, 359.

[950] SILVANO ZUCAL, "Bonaventura nella Formazione del Pensiero di Romano Guardini con Riferimento All'*Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, in *StudFranc*, 107. 3-4 (2010), p. 423-472.

[951] DELIO, "Theology, Metaphysics and Centrality of Christ", in *TheolStud*, 68 (2007), p. 254-273; KEVIN HUGHES, *Bonaventure contra mundum?*, 372-398.

[952] STEPHEN FIELDS, "Balthasar and Rahner on the Spiritual Senses", in *TheolStud*, 57 (1996), p. 224-241; see also COUSINS, *Coincidence of Opposites*, 262.

from the Greek Fathers. On other various themes like theology of history, Trinity, cosmology and the evolution theory, Bonaventure's world view is reconsidered also in the thought of modern and contemporary authors like Ratzinger, Jurgen Moltmann[953], Leonardo Boff and Greshake[954], Paul Tillich[955], Denis Edwards, John Faught, etc. More recently there emerged a study of comparison between Bonaventure and Jacques Dupuis regarding the issue of interreligious dialog, proceeding from the concept of triple *Verbum* utilized by the two authors[956].

1.2. Tendency of Dialogue between Theology and Science

This tendency, then and now has been almost elaborated on from the scholars of the English language. Father Zachary Hayes, O.F.M., one of the most renowned American scholars of the theology of St. Bonaventure in the twentieth century, was an important figure on this issue. We have utilized many of his contributions in this study. His studies on Bonaventure do not only cover a consistent reading on the texts; but he has also tried to stimulate the reader to place Bonaventure's metaphysical system as a paradigm.

This model of approach emerged early in the various writings of Evert Cousins. His book, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, with an introduction by Hayes, expresses his main approach and methodology on reading Bonaventure's theology and its influence on Twentieth Century thought. A recent and more progressive resource on this issue is being done by Sister Ilia Delio OSF. The studies of the Franciscan sister are indebted to Hayes's translation and studies, but she has shown more interest on science. She proposes various innovative issues,

---

[953] DONS SCHWEITZER, "Aspect of God relationship to the World on the theology of Jurgen Moltmann, Bonaventure and Jonathan Edward, in *RST*, 26.1 (2007), p. 5-24.

[954] L. BOFF, *Holy Trinity*, *Perfect Community* (English translation by Phillip Berryman), Orbis Books, NY., 2000; BRYAN M. DOYLE, "Social Doctrine of the Trinity and Communion Ecclesiology in Leonardo Boff and Gisber Greshake, in *Horizon*, 33. 2 (2006), p. 239-255.

[955] JOHN DOURLEY OMI, "God, Life and the Trinity in the Theologies of Paul Tillich and St. Bonaventure", in *S. Bonaventure 1274-1974 IV*, p. 271-282; COUSINS, *Coincidence of Opposites*, 262-263.

[956] AMAURY BEGASSE DE DHAEM, "Cristologia trinitaria e teologia delle religioni. Il 'triplice' *Verbum* in Bonaventura e J. Dupuis", in *Greg*, 96 (2015), p. 791-817.

and we consider them in this chapter; but we emphasize that the reader of her studies needs to differentiate well the two areas of her study.

Still in this concern of approach and language, we have another source: Those who follow the annual volumes of the Commission on the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition supported by OFM English Speaking Conference (ESC-OFM), through the years, may have noted various interesting issues promoted by the Commission like: Dialogue between Franciscan intellectual and post modern culture[957], responsibility on creation (ecological issue)[958], Franciscan theology in dialogue with science as a pursuit of wisdom,[959] Trinitarian perspectives on Franciscan Theological Tradition, etc[960]. Naturally, as a result one finds various suggestions on Bonaventure's thought produced by the Commission.

Still another important source is a notable contemporary Bonaventurean scholar in Italy, Father Orlando Todisco OFM Conv.[961] whose contributions are helpful and essential to our study. As we follow his studies, we say that Todisco's method is a proposal to bring forward the Franciscan intellectual tradition, particularly Bonaventure and Scotus, as a distinctive contribution in our contemporary context. Consequently, there is also a tendency for a dialogue between Franciscan theology with philosophy, science and other disciplines. Here are some important issues emerged from Todisco's study: reinterpretation of the concept of being emphasizing its relational dimension, creation of the world and the existential question of human life, the limit of human intellect, human freedom, the

---

[957] K. A. WARREN, OSF (ed.), *Franciscan Identity and Postmodern Culture*, *CFIT 2*, Franciscan Institute Publications, Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2002.

[958] E. SAGGAU (ed.), *Franciscans and Creation: What is Our Responsibility? Washington Theological Union Symposium 2003*, *CFIT 3*, Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2003; ID., *The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition: Washington Theological Union Symposium 2001*, *CFIT 1*, Franciscan Institute Publications, Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2002.

[959] K. D. WARNER, *Knowledge for Love: Franciscan Science as the Pursuit Wisdom*, *FHS 8*, Franciscan Institute Publications, Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2012.

[960] M. CALISI, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, *FHS 5*, Franciscan Institute Publications, Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2008.

[961] See for example, O. TODISCO, "Il Pensare Filosofico - teologico Francescano ha un Futuro?" (Pietro Maranesi ed.), p. 209-301.

contingency of creature, etc. As we have seen, a new paradigm, identified as "creative liberty" (*libertà creative*) is articulated consistently in Todisco's studies.

1.3. The Sense of Dialogue

The various receptions on Bonaventure's thought shown above, assert that dialogue is an intrinsic character of his theology. Indeed Bonaventure's system *per se* is a paradigm of dialogue, as he indicated that God – which is infinite – could not communicate himself in a finite way if he were not infinitely communicative in himself. His fundamental point of departure is divine *Logos*, the incarnated Word, the *medium* of God's initiative dialogue to the human being. "The cognitive structure of his (Bonaventure) theology is suitable for dialectical, but not demonstrative, knowledge"[962]. It is a way that enhances our humanity through a continuously deepening knowledge of the world of God's creation and of ourselves in this world. Bonaventure envisions a dialogue between the human spirit with its orientation toward union with the mystery of God's love and the human being; he offers us a way of coming to understand faith and to translate faith into life[963].

Like other great Christian thinkers of his time, Bonaventure, considered the question on the relation between reason and faith, between natural knowledge and knowledge avowedly based on divine revelation[964]. As we have seen in previous chapters, he describes the physical world with the natural philosophical language of his time; he debates about the possible eternity of the world, and he sustains the sense of the radical contingence of the world. What is impressive is not so much about the correctness or incorrectness of his answer, but the range of questions generated by the attempt to engage what seemed to him to be some of the best

---

[962] LaNave, *Through Holiness to Wisdom*, 27.
[963] Hayes, "Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, a Paradigm for Franciscan Theologians?", in *Franciscan and Creation: What is Our Responsibility? CIFT 3* (E. Saggau, OSF, ed.), Franciscan Institute Publications Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2002, p. 54.
[964] Cf. Hayes, *The Gift of Being*, 9-10.

insights of human reason. In *De reductione*, as we will see more, Bougerol notes that Bonaventure's style is "dialectic"[965].

In Bonaventure's thought, the universal transcendentals (*unum*, *pulchrum, bonum*), symbolic of *light* and *book*, and the concept of *contuitio*, represent a metaphorical language. The metaphors give us a deeply religious reason for taking care of the world. The metaphor is a creative way to tell about God; it is *the leading* of our intellect *by the hand* (*manuductio intelletus nostri*), so we come through creatures to perceive the Creator[966]. Without identifying nature with God like what the pantheists do, the analogical approach sees that the natural world is at heart a symbolic disclosure of God. Bonaventure drew an integral relation between the Trinity of self-diffusive goodness and the goodness of creation. For him, the whole creation emerging out of the fecundity of divine goodness reflects an intimate relationship to the Creator and is oriented to God as its source and goal[967].

In sum, the universal logic of Bonaventure's system can be formulated as follows: God is the highest Good and, is the most diffusive and communicative; there is something constitutively relational in God's own being *ad intra* that enables us to understand the created world in which we live *ad extra*. This divine communication of the good, is eternally present in the Trinity, is temporally manifested in the creation of the universe. Creation stands foremost as a witness to the goodness of God, who moves by love, desires from all eternity to share the abundance of divine goodness with rational creatures[968].

---

[965] BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, 75.

[966] *I Sent.* d. 34, a. u. q. 4. concl (I, 594): "Alia ratio vel finish translationis est *manuductio* intellectus nostri". TODISCO, "Il Pensare Filosofico-teologico Francescano ha un Futuro?", 293.

[967] Cf. TIMOTHY J. JOHNSON, *The Soul in Ascent*: *Bonaventure on Poverty, Prayer, and Union with God*, Franciscan Institute Publications, The Franciscan Institute Saint Bonaventure University, Saint Bonaventure, NY., 2012, p. 90-91.

[968] Cf. *Itin.*, VI, 1-3 (V, 310b-311a); Cf. KENAN OSBORNE, *A Theology of the Church for the Third Millennium*, *A Franciscan Approach*, Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2009, p. 321-322.

2. Modern Question on Methodology

Through the above section, we just want to show the relevance of Bonaventure's doctrine in various present-day issues. Naturally Bonaventure's language maybe different from ours, but with him we find a well-knit interrelation of faith, metaphysics, and physics. Before going through this issue, we have to resolve this difficult question: Which kind of approach in contemporary view can we place Bonaventure's theological system, particularly his world-view on creation? We present a sample model on the question of methodology as the scenario to bring Bonaventure's contribution in our time.

2.1. Convergence Model (Haught)

In his book, *Science and Faith*, John Haught[969], whose books and articles are very helpful in dealing with questions about the relation between science and theology, designs a series of twelve questions from which would emerge the interaction of science and faith: Is faith opposed to science? Does science rule out a personal God? Is faith compatible with evolution? Do miracles really happen? Was the universe created? Can chemistry alone explain life? Can science explain intelligence? Can we be good without God? Are we special? Is there life after death? Does the universe have purpose? What if extraterrestrials exist?[970] Making use of his orientation from recent studies on possible interfaces between science and the disciplines, he singles out three models for that issue: *conflict*, *contrast*, and *convergence*/*contact* models.

A few comments on each of these models will be helpful for this chapter, but let us choose to deal with the two most relevant questions for our theme, namely:

---

[969] JOHN HAUGHT, *Science and Faith. A New Introduction* (quoted above); see also HAUGHT, *Christianity and Science. Toward a Theology of Nature*, Orbis Books, NY., 2007. Haught did his doctoral studies at Catholic University in Washington, D. C. He is presently Senior Fellow, Science and Religion at Woodstock Theological Center, Georgetown University. His area of specialization is systematic theology with a particular interest in issues pertaining to science, cosmology, ecology, and religion. Some of his works are *Deeper than Darwin*: *The prospect of Religion in the Age of Evolution* (2003) and *God after Darwin*: *A theology of Evolution* (2000).

[970] See the contents of his book, *Science and Faith. A new Introduction*.

"Was the universe created"?[971] "Can chemistry alone explain life"?[972] First, the *conflict* model. It is one which makes it necessary to choose either science or religion with the exclusion of the other to answer the questions. It operates from a basic sense of opposition that isolates the realm of religion from the work or realm of science. According to this model, the universe was not created; there is no evidence that any deity brought it into existence. Even if the Big Bang universe did have a definite beginning in time, it may be only one of the many universes spawned by any eternal 'mother universe'.

Second, the *contrast* model. It operates on the assumption that science and religion are two fundamentally different and unrelated realms of discourse. Science is informative and makes claims about objective reality. Religion deals with the inner experience of the believer or the conduct of the worshiping community. Hence, there can really be no contradictions between them as long as one is clearly aware of the concerns and limits of each. Harmony between religion and science can be achieved, but only at the price of depriving religion of the claim of saying anything about the empirical world of ordinary experience. This way of describing the two approaches is helpful in the context of the creation-science debates. It may be applicable not only to the contrast model; it may be helpful in the convergent or contact model, as well. But certainly, it would lead to different conclusions.

Third, the *convergence/contact* model. This model takes advantage of Big Bang cosmology in its reflections on the biblical accounts of creation. This moves from the conviction that there are ways in which religion, as understood in the Christian tradition, while not proving any specific scientific claims or theories, may in fact offer positive support for the scientific projects as a whole. This model claims that the large bodies of modern and recent scientific discoveries always have

---

[971] Cf. HAUGHT, *Science and Faith*, 64-77.
[972] Cf. HAUGHT, *Science and Faith*, 77-92.

theological implications. Science is forever changing, but some scientific ideas are likely to stand the test of time indefinitely[973].

Hence, Haught concludes that there is something at least in the biblical tradition that encourages and supports the project of the scientific investigation. It is almost likely that Big Bang cosmology will be overturned, even though scientists will continually refine and improve it in the future. Convergence does not base theology directly on contemporary cosmology, but it bets that current scientific understanding of the universe can help enliven theology in important new ways. Consequently, convergence takes advantage of Big Bang cosmology in its reflections on the biblical accounts of creation[974].

To answer the second question, "Was the universe created?", the *convergence* position believes that Big Bang cosmology is significant theologically for at least four reasons: 1) Above all, it has been Big Bang science that allowed us to think of the universe as a story; 2) Big Bang cosmology is theologically important for the simple reason that it presents us with a universe that is still in the making; 3) Big Bang cosmology opens up a place for human creativity more explicitly than traditional theology has ever been able to do; 4) The scientific quest for beginnings that led to Big Bang cosmology is of interest to convergence because it coincides with the nearly human universal search for origins[975].

In this perspective, it is interesting to consider that if the universe exists eternally and necessarily, it has no choice as to what kind of universe it must be. If it exists necessarily, the universe could never have been other than what it is. Haught claims: "If that were the case, however, the empirical imperative that gives rise to modern science – namely, that we need to look at the universe before trying to understand it – would be irrelevant. For if the universe were necessary, we would

---

[973] Cf. HAUGHT, *Science and Faith*, 72.
[974] Cf. HAUGHT, *Science and Faith*, 72.
[975] Cf. HAUGHT, *Science and Faith*, 72-75; ID., *Christianity and Science*, 65.

simply sit at our desks and logically deduce its every feature, at least in principle. Empirical observation and fieldwork would be unnecessary"[976]. Haught sustains, therefore, the convergence-model, in the sense that we are not in *materialist-reductionism*, considering the emergence of life is not only a chemical affair but also an important episode in a momentous cosmic drama. We refuse, therefore, the thesis of those who believe that cosmos presents nothing about God.

The dynamic nature of the universe speaks to us, from the Christian perspective, of the home in which a loving creator has placed us. This gives nature a 'sacral' quality that should divert our manipulative tendencies. An integral ecology world-view argues that apologetics, with its emphasis on classic text, is not enough to ground an ethically motivating ecological theology. "If we want a theology that is capable of responding to the full dimensions of the ecological crisis we must learn once more to respect the natural world itself for showing forth to us the sacred reality that underlies it". Evidently, "we cannot do this without the help of contemporary science and cosmology"[977]. In this regard, we have two books of creation, the Nature and the Bible, and "we have to read both"[978].

Accepting the *convergence* model, therefore, means to accept a reciprocal dialogue between science and religion. Modern science gives us a new understanding of space and time that demands a new understanding of ourselves in relation to God. Reading Bonaventure's theology and finding out his contribution for today's world, Hayes sustains the importance of dialogue between science and religion. He writes: "We are looking for science not to prove the truth of religion, but to play a creative role together with religion and the arts in the constructions of relatively coherent vision of reality"[979].

---

[976] HAUGHT, *Science and Faith*, 76.
[977] HAUGHT, "Theology and Ecology in an Unfinished Universe", 8.
[978] POMPEI, "Cosmologia: Scienza e Fede in Bonaventura da Bagnoregio", 26.
[979] HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 23.

2.2. Bonaventure's "Wisdom Style" (Hayes)

According to Hayes, "the doctrinal treatment of creation has long been the area in which Christians have most emphatically posed the question of the relation between science and theology"[980]. As emerged in the question of the eternity of the world was discussed, Bonaventure has an extensive knowledge about the quality of the philosophical work of Plato and Aristotle. In several instances he would refer to Aristotle, as "the prince and leader of the Peripatetics"[981]. But he did not hesitate to point out where certain philosophical position of Aristotle stood in contradiction to truths of Christian faith. It must be stressed that the style leads Bonaventure to sound Christian criticism, which is "a wisdom style"[982].

Taking Haught's map of approach as point of departure, as we have just presented, Hayes proposes his stand to explain why the relation between science and religion becomes crucial. At this juncture the most fundamental point, we believe, is that scientific theories may serve as supporting data for theology as long as they are explained theologically. Science describes *what* the cosmos is and *how* the cosmos works. Theology attempts to discuss above all the question *why* it is at all? In the other words, "While theology depends on science for information on the concrete flow of evolutionary history, science as such can provide no framework for interpreting the ultimate levels of meaning"[983].

The unavoidable fact is that our scientific knowledge of the world is incomplete and tentative. Hence any theological construct must share in that tentative character. What we are concerned is to see the possibility of coherence and

---

[980] HAYES, *A Window to the Divine*, 1.
[981] *II Sent.*, d. 1, p.1, a.1, resp. (II, 17).
[982] HAYES, "Bonaventure of Bagnoregio", 48-50. Cf. HAYES, "Beyond the Prime Mover", 13, 15. For a more profound treatment on Bonaventure's methodology, and its effect for his whole theology, see HAYES, *Bonaventure. Mystical Writings*, Tau Publishing, LLC, 1999, chap.1: "Bonaventure's Program", p. 33-45. On the theme of the nature of Bonaventure's theology see LANAVE, *Through Holiness to Wisdom: The Nature of Theology according to St. Bonaventure*, Istituto Storici dei Cappuccini, Rome, 2005.
[983] HAYES, *A Window to the Divine*, 72; ID., "A New Reading of the Sources", 19.

concordance involved in two visions; precisely, the cognitive harmony between them. We are looking for science not to prove the truth of faith (theology), but to play a creative role together with religion and the arts in the construction of a relatively coherent vision of reality. In Bonaventure's language, it is said that "Knowledge is never an end in itself. It must always become a step toward an ever deeper, richer, richer love and transforming union with the God of love"[984].

Methodologically, Bonaventure's major concern is not simply to develop abstract philosophical concepts, distinctions, and proofs about matter but rather to deal more concretely with the questions related to the meaning of human life and history of the world. Our theology of creation begins with the conviction that our very being is a pure gift from a loving, creative God. As we experience our existence within history, it is the gift laden with potential to develop into ever deeper, richer realizations[985]. With this in mind, one might say that Bonaventure's style represents a paradigm of Franciscan theology and suggests a way for contemporary theologians[986].

In Bonaventure's language, the metaphors of the circle, river, book, etc., elicit a sense of immense diversity, fertility and fluidity of creation. No one form of created being can be an adequate expression of the immensely fertile source that resides in the divine, creative love. The diversity of beings which in fact exists in creation constitutes an appropriate form of divine self-expression[987]. Bonaventure recommended that whoever does not see is blind, whoever does not hear is deaf, whoever does not praise God in all these effects is mute, and the entire universe will rise up against such a person"[988].

---

[984] *De donis*., IV, 24 (V, 478). For detail issue, see HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 22-24.
[985] Cf. HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 123.
[986] Cf. HAYES, "Bonaventure of Bagnoregio", 45.
[987] Cf. HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 66-67.
[988] *Itin*., I, 15 (V, 299).

The approach we are claiming here is a "sacramental approach"[989]. We believe that nature in all of its beauty and diversity reveals the divine mystery. A sacrament is anything through which we are gifted with a sense of the sacred; and it is especially nature's beauty and vitality that have communicated to humans an impression of the divine[990]. In this world view, one who reads Bonaventure must consider that "the issue is not simply to repeat his theological position, but to do in our time what he did in such a powerful way for his"[991].

2.3. The World as the Altar of God (Todisco)

Still in the perspective of *sapiential argumentation*[992], in the case of knowing the presence of God in creation, Todisco expresses the relation between God and creation as follows: "creation is the altar of God", "the temporal face of the eternal God", "the communication *ad extra* of divine Goodness". His fundamental point of departure is that, when we speak of *being*, we need to consider that it is not a neutral concept, neither a pure abstract concept. In Bonaventure's way we consider that God is the highest Good who diffuses himself in creation. The highest Good is communicative in itself. Consequently, for human beings, to be a creature means to render that our existential identity comes not from our own capacity. Our being is an *ex-sistere*, thus, we exist from other being outside of us that is from God who created us as he wants us[993].

God did not want what already existed, in contrary, he makes what he wants; and he wants it gratuitously. The created beings, therefore, exist from the will of God; they come to be because God wants. In Bonaventure's view, the created being, human being in particular, is not "res cogitans" in Cartesian sense, but "res

---

[989] HAUGHT, "Theology and Ecology in an Unfinished Universe", 7.
[990] HAUGHT, "Theology and Ecology in an Unfinished Universe", 7-8.
[991] HAYES, "Bonaventure of Bagnoregio", 56.
[992] LANAVE, *Through Holiness to Wisdom*, 24.
[993] TODISCO, "Il Pensare Filosofico - teologico Francescano ha un Futuro?", 212-213; for a large issue on confrontation between *rationalistic* paradigm in Greek and modern philosophy and the primacy of *creative liberty* in the perspective of the Franciscan school, see TODISCO, "L'uomo il futuro di Dio? Introduzione all'antropologia francescana", in *MF*, 115 (2015), p. 331-367.

cogitata". The created beings are "ens volitum". In this logic, our attitude toward creature must be departed from the principle that God willed every creature before we want it; the way we see the creature must be in accordance of God's own project, which is the logic of gratuitous gift. There is a moral consequence to be considered: Our relation to someone or something must be motivated by the spirit of relationship, solidarity, and communion, not by the logic of domination[994].

Todisco writes: "Is the world the altar of God? Yes, and scientists, philosophers, and theologians are his priests"[995]. The created beings are the face of God which assumes his desire to reveal himself to man as the love to be loved. We don't have to go beyond the sensible world to think of God, as God is manifested himself in it. Hence, the sensible worlds are not superficial things, but a "sacrament"[996] of God's hand, exactly as Bonaventure said, the vestige of God. It is not difficult, therefore, to see that the metaphoric language is important for Bonaventure. Through a sign we can see what is symbolized, so through the *book of creation*, we can read and reflect the project of its Author. If one learns to read the *book* of cosmos correctly, one will discover something of God's wisdom, beauty, power, and love. To see the cosmos as a *theophany* means to see the various forms and rhythms of nature as at least distant reflections of divine qualities.

2.4. Philosophy does not discord from the Faith

We can say that for Bonaventure, theology is a science which leads us to wisdom. Bonaventure is not a "rationalist" in the later meaning of the term. For him, the 'science' of theology must begin with religious faith in God and end with a 'wisdom' that exhibits the intimate co-operation of faith and reason[997].

Bonaventure's theology, therefore, must be something other than a purely deductive science. We have seen that in confrontation of the question "whether

---

[994] TODISCO, "Il Pensare Filosofico - teologico Francescano ha un Futuro?", 222-223.
[995] TODISCO, "Il Pensare Filosofico - teologico Francescano ha un Futuro?", 294.
[996] TODISCO, "Il Pensare Filosofico - teologico Francescano ha un Futuro?", 295-296.
[997] Cf. HOUSER and NOONE, *Commentary on the Sentences*, Ixx.

things have a causal principle", he convinced that Philosopher could have never given the correct answer without revelation. The saint then emphasizes that when the philosophical virtue is weak, it must be helped by the virtue of faith as written in the holy Scripture: "Where the expertise of philosophers fails, there comes to our aid the Holy Scripture, which says, that all have been created and produced in 'being' according to everything which they are. And reason too does not discord from the Faith"[998]. This passage represents Bonaventure's basic idea of relation between faith and reason or theology and philosophy; one does not drive out or remove the other. For him there is harmony between them when both are looking for the same truth. Therefore, the same things can have both faith and knowledge. This underlines Bonaventure willingness to embrace both faith and philosophical argument about the existence of God. He writes:

"A philosopher who knows through cogent reasons that God is one, the creator of all, is able to come to the faith in such a way that he does not lose sight of those reasons. But one who knows those reasons has scientific knowledge. Therefore, it seems that about the same thing at the same time he is able to have faith and scientific knowledge"[999].

As we have noted in the second chapter, speaking of language style, we consider the role of philosophical language as a bridge between theology and science. Bonaventure presents a theology of a Trinitarian God who is identified in philosophical and theological terms as both being and diffusive love. Such identification is in relation to the core, since diffusive love in itself can only be relational, and the highest being (*esse ipsum*) can only be understood as the highest relationality (*amor ipse diffusivum*)[1000].

---

[998] *II. Sent.*, d. 1, p.1, a.1, q.1 (II, 17).

[999] *III Sent.*, d. 24, a. 2, q. 3 (III, 521a): "Philosophus aliquis sciens rationibus cogentibus, Deum esse unum, creatorem omnium, potest venire ad fidem, ita quod non obliviscatur illarum rationem; sed sciens illas rationes habet scientiam: ergo videtur quod possit de eodem simul habere fidem et scientiam" (English trans., HOUSER and NOONE, *Commentary on the Sentences*, 33, 41 footnote n. 4).

[1000] Cf. OSBORNE, *A Theology of the Church for the Third Millennium*, 322.

We have noted also that in Bonaventure's *De donis* and *Hexaëmeron*, the strong focus on the issue of philosophy is obvious. Bonaventure sees the human intellect as an outstanding gift of God, and all knowledge gained through the use of that faculty is truly a gift from God. But he convinces also that a philosophy which ignores the world of faith and theology will most likely be incomplete. This is not to be taken as a form of anti-intellectualism, but a recommendation to avoid "idle curiosity"[1001]. The Franciscan writes:

"Against the harmonies praise of God there is a spirit of presumption and curiosity. We take this to mean that the presumptuous person does not glorify God but gives praise to himself, and the curious person does not have a sense of devotion. There are many people of this kind who lack both praise and devotion while they are filled with the splendors of the science. They build wasps' nests without honeycombs, while the bees make honey"[1002].

The point is that no form of secular knowledge, including that of philosophy, will be sufficient in itself. Bonaventure's metaphysical system is intellectual criticism. We have noted it also in *de Scientia Christi*. To be clearer on this approach, we have underlined in addition what Bonaventure thoughts on this perspective, so to speak, as a scientific methodology in front of the question of the eternal world. The dispute provides a guideline of the doctrine of illumination[1003]. Now we just want to underline briefly this issue to see its methodological relevance on the theme we are expounding in this present chapter.

[1001] Cf. *De donis*., IV, 23 (V, 478b).

[1002] *Haëxam* I, 8 (V, 330): "Item, contra consonantiam divinae laudis spiritus praesumptionis et curiositatis, ita quod praesumptuosus Deum non magnificat, sed sese laudat; curiosus autem devotionem non habet. Unde multi sunt tales, qui vacui sunt laude et devotione, etsi habeant splendorem scientiarum. Faciunt enim casas vesparum, quae non habent favum mellis, sicut apes, quae mellificant"; see Hayes, "Bonaventure of Bagnoregio", 50-51.

[1003] T. CROWLEY, "Illumination and Certitude", in *S. Bonaventure 1274-1974.IV*, 431-448.

Under the influence of Augustine, and particularly of Robert Grosseteste[1004], for Bonaventure, the symbol of light has a particular significance. In Bonaventure's language it is a central symbol; it opens our intuition to the Divine Truth. The saint writes: "When we say that God knows creatures in a manner internal to the divinity as in a likeness, we are saying nothing other than the fact that God knows creatures in a manner internal to the divine nature in their Truth, or in that supreme light which *expresses* other things"[1005].

As we have discussed earlier, based on the authority of Augustine, Bonaventure claims that above all human mind's activities, there is an absolute truth. Following the authoritative arguments of Augustine it is manifestly clear that for Bonaventure, everything is known in the eternal reasons[1006]. This claim guides us to the concept of illumination in Bonaventure, that is, that God illumines our mind through the divine being itself. For the Franciscan Doctor, […] "there is nothing above our mind other than God and the eternal truth. Therefore, the divine truth and the eternal reason is that by which knowledge comes to be"[1007]. Nothing enters the intellect except by means of the supreme truth. Everything known with certitude is known in the light of the eternal reasons[1008].

For Bonaventure it is necessary, therefore, to turn to the Lord as the light which illuminates the human knowledge, as the light of the creature is not completely infallible by virtue of its own power, since such light is created moving from non-being to being. The nobility of knowledge and the dignity of the knower necessarily require that, in the case of certain knowledge, our mind must in some

---

[1004] For Grosseteste, "Forte omnis entitas lux est". Departing from God the highest Light, all creatures share in various degrees and according to their possibilities in the joy and energy of this quality. Being light is for both spiritual and corporeal creatures the essential quality of their existence. See SERVUS GIEBEN, "Grosseteste and Universal Science", in MAURA O'CARROL, ed., *Robert Grosseteste and the Beginnings of a British Theological Tradition*, 226-232.

[1005] *Sc. Chr.*, III, concl. (V, 13): "Dicere ergo, quod Deus cognoscit res se ipso ut similitudine, non est aliud quam dicere, quod Deus cognoscat res se ipso ut veritate sive ut summa luce res ceteras exprimente" (English trans., Hayes, 105).

[1006] *Sc. Chr.*, IV, 8 (V, 17a).

[1007] *Sc. Chr.*, IV, 17 (V, 19a).

[1008] *Sc.Chr.*, IV, 24-6 (V, 19-20).

way follow and respect those rules and unchangeable reasons. The main point of Augustinian-Bonaventurean epistemology is the fact that certain knowledge can be accounted for only if the eternal truth is in some way involved in the cognitive processes. The eternal truth, or light, must be present and must exercise some sort of influence on the human object. The theory of illumination, therefore, is an attempt to articulate the mode of divine presence as the light and norm by means of which the human mind can know with certitude. The intellect does not see eternal reason directly, but *contuits* them as it looks directly at the created object[1009].

Early on we said that Bonaventure's methodology is *wisdom style*. It offers a way of doing theology that opens the possibility of a fuller, richer expression of humanity. Its importance as a paradigm lies in the way he opens a vision of life-long, ongoing process of growth and self-refinement[1010]. Bonaventure never doubted that man has a *cognitio certitudinalis*, but the form in which he asks question is familiar to the transcendental philosopher: what are the conditions under which metaphysical knowledge is possible? There must be a *ratio aeterna* in human knowledge[1011]. This is a method of *perscrutatio*, that is the action of uncovering, penetrating; the most appropriate theological method for allowing the depth of the mystery to unveil itself without destroying it[1012]. A theologian is a *perscrutator*, the searcher of divine depths; and he/she must be on the journey to God[1013].

[1009] Cf. HAYES, introduction to *Sc.*, *Chr.* (English trans.), 57-58.

[1010] HAYES, "Bonaventure of Bagnoregio", 54. Hayes points out that wisdom (*sapientia*) is understood to be something more than the mere possession of knowledge (*scientia*). By word *wisdom* what is emphasized is the ability to make sound and helpful judgments concerning the relation of one's knowledge to the conduct of one's life. The wisdom style as seen by Bonaventure is concerned with the process of integrating many levels of reality into a unified vision of the world and multiple levels of human experience into a unified sense of the spiritual journey of humanity. But the goal of the journey is not to be simply a knower. It is, above all, to become a lover. Knowledge without love is not perfect. Cf. HAYES, *Bonaventure. Mystical Writings*, 34-35.

[1011] BERNARD A. NACHBAHR, "Pure reason and practical reason. Some themes in Transcendental Philosophy and in Saint Bonaventure", in *Bonaventure 1274-1974. III*, p. 454.

[1012] E. FALQUE, "The Phenomenological Act of *Perscrutatio* in *Proemium* of St. Bonaventure's Commentary on the Sentences" (English translation by ELISA MANGINA), in *Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, 10 (2001), p. 1-2, 9; see also DELIO, "Theology, Spirituality and Christ the Center", 361-402 (367-370).

[1013] Cf. DELIO, *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being*, 140.

3. Bonaventure on Reduction of the Arts to Theology

Having seen the general view on the reception of Bonaventure's thought of some modern and contemporary scholars, adopting a methodological sample to facilitate the place of Bonaventure's system in modern language, now we turn to Bonaventure's own words in *De reductione*[1014], "a perfect concise instance of Bonaventure's synthetic vision"[1015], from which the assumption that all the forms of knowledge are to be related finally to divine revelation which is the highest form of wisdom, is presented with remarkable consistency.

3.1. Why back to the Logic of *Reductio*?

Bougerol notes that we shall use *De reductione atrium ad theologiam* as "a guide to Bonaventure's basic ideas and a proof of their actuality and relevance to our world, in which all science is in danger of becoming mere technique, and an authentic scientists anxiously assessing the usefulness of his discoveries; in which man has lost the sense of his destiny because he seeks all costs to empty his life of mystery and the supernatural"[1016].

The idea of *reductio* in Bonaventure's world of thought has both metaphysical and cognitive significance. As a metaphysical term, the word has to do with the circle of creation as it emanates from God eventually to return to its point of origin. The idea of the return is expressed in the word *reductio* which means literally *leading back*. In its final *consummation*, creation is led back to its point of origin in God. As a cognitive term, the word refers to the way in which the human subject comes to know and understand the realities of the created order in the light of this metaphysical conviction[1017].

[1014] Our treatment is indebted on Hayes's English translation and Commentary, *On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology*, Franciscan Institute St. Bonaventure University, NY., 1996.

[1015] K. HUGES, "Reduction's Future: Theology, Technology, and the Order of Knowledge" (hereafter: "Reduction's Future"), in *FrancStud*, 67 (2009), p. 228.

[1016] BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, 163.

[1017] HAYES, Introduction to *Red. art.* (English trans), 1; for a comprehensive explanation of the term *reductio*, see BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, 75-76, 164.

Now, to understand better the logic of *reductio* in the context of Bonaventure's whole system of theology, let us deal first with a relevant passage from the first question in the prologue of the first *Commentary of Sentences*. The question is: "What is the matter or the subject of this book, or of theology?"[1018] Bonaventure's answer is as follows:

"The subject to which everything is reduced as to a principle is *God* himself. The subject to which all the conclusions in this book are reduced as to an integral whole is *Christ*, understood as including both divine nature and human nature or the created and uncreated. […] I take integral whole in a wide sense, one that includes many things, not only as components, but also through unification and through order. That subject to which everything is reduced as to a universal whole […] is *things* and *signs*, and here a sign is called a sacrament. Or we can describe it using one term. In this way the subject as the *object of belief* passes over into indelibility by the addition of reasoning"[1019].

Bonaventure introduces this division on the basis of the three divisions of subjects one may find in any science: The *principium radicale* of theology is the Triune God as the first principle beyond which nothing in theology can be reduced; the *totum integrale* of Bonaventure's theology – the object that includes all of the elements of the theology – is Christ as the exemplar; and the *totum universale* of

---

[1018] *I Sent.*, proem., q.1 (I, 6a): "Quae sit materia quodve subiectum huius libri vel theologiae".

[1019] *I Sent.*, prooem., q. 1 resp. (I, 7b): "Nam subiectum, ad quod omnia reducuntur ut ad *principium*, est ipse *Deus*. Subiectum quoque, ad quod omnia reducuntur quae determinantur in hoc libro, ut ad *totum integrum*, est *Christus*, prout comprehendit naturam divinam et humanam sive creatum et increatum. […] Et accipio large *totum integrum* quod multa complectitur non solum per compositionem, sed per unionem et per ordinem. Subiectum quoque, ad quod omnia reducuntur sicut ad *totum universale* […] est res vel signum; et vocatur hic *signum* Sacramentum. Possumus et unico vocabulo nominare; et sic est *credibile*, prout tamen credibile transit in rationem *intelligibilis*" (English trans., HOUSER and NOONE, *Commentary on the Sentences*, 3-4); Cf. LANAVE, *Through Holiness to Wisdom*, 35.

theology is whole created beings[1020]. In sum, "there is one science about all *things* and *signs,* in so far as they are reduced to one thing: the Alpha and Omega"[1021].

To reduce to a judgment is to follow the series of its conditions down to the eternal principles on which they are based. Method of *reductio* refers to the entire range of human disciplines. All of them may be seen to be important sources of insight and truth, but none of them individually can be seen as adequate. All must be seen, finally, in relation to the basic insight of the biblical revelation. It is Bonaventure's conviction that knowledge should move to love and to union with God. "Bonaventure's method of *reductio* aims to trace things back to their roots in God the Creator"[1022]. Only when that is the case does the soul truly 'come home'[1023]. Seen in this perspective, Bougerol writes:

> "The reduction is not merely a technique, it is the soul of the return to God; and since all knowledge depends upon principles, and principles are born within us under the regulating and motivating action of divine ideas, the certitudes which seem most capable of being self-sufficient are necessarily linked, by means of the first principle, with the eternal reasons and their divine foundation"[1024].

What we have treated in the earlier chapters is that the world moves out from the inner-divine movement of creative love into its own existence. The point of departure of Bonaventure's speculation is the idea of creation. As the world pours out from God, it is shaped in the likeness of divine exemplar; and the movement out from God is internally oriented to the return of creation to its divine source. We can say that in Bonaventure's methodology there are two key concepts: *exitus* and *reditus*. What was originally the Neo-Platonic circle of emanation and return has

---

[1020] Cf. LaNave, *Through Holiness to Wisdom*, 35, 187.
[1021] *I Sent.*, proem., q. 1 resp. (I, 8b); Cf. Houser and Noone, *Commentary on the Sentences*, 5.
[1022] Huges, "Reduction's Future", 237.
[1023] Hayes, introduction to *Red. art.* (English translation), 12.
[1024] Bougerol, *Introduction to the works of Bonaventure*, 75.

now become the overarching framework of the Christian theology of creation (*exitus*) and salvation (*reditus*)[1025].

3.2. Four Lights From and lead back to divine Word

Bonaventure fashions the *De reductione* upon the metaphor of light, taken from the first chapter of James. Hs point of departure is clear: the illumination by divine Word, thus *fides quaerens intellectum*: "Every worthwhile gift, every genuine benefit comes from above, descending from the Father of the heavenly luminaries" (Jas 1: 17). From this principle he divides four lights: *Exterior light*, *inferior light* or light of sense perception, *interior light* or the light of philosophical knowledge, *superior light* or the light of grace and of the Sacred Scripture[1026].

In doing so, Bonaventure incorporates all the familiar and new forms of knowledge (secular disciplines) in the arts and sciences into an all-embracing, theological framework and integrates them into the journey of the human spirit into God. All must be situated in the context of the going-forth from and the return of creation to God, which is Wisdom[1027]. In sum, "the *Reductio* aims to clarify the logical relations of all form of knowing to theology, Scripture, and beyond and through them, to the 'Father of Lights' who gives every perfect gift"[1028].

The exterior light sheds its light on the forms of *artifacts*, the things which are external to the human person and intended to supply the needs of his body. Bonaventure calls it the light of mechanical art. Man receives nature from God as a garden untended; his task is to master it and make it serve the fundamental needs of life. We need mechanical art for our daily life: food, clothing, medicine, agriculture, trade, and many practical needs for a normal life[1029]. Bonaventure, therefore, takes the word *ars* in a broad sense; he means not only the seven liberal arts constituting

---

[1025] Cf. HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 79.
[1026] *Red. art.*, 1 (V, 319).
[1027] HAYES, introduction to, *Red. art.* (English trans.), 11.
[1028] HUGES, "Reduction's Future", 239.
[1029] *Red. art.*, 2 (V, 319).

the *trivium* and the *quadrivium* which were taught in the faculty of arts, but also every rational creative activity[1030].

The second light, which provides light for the apprehension of natural forms, is that of sense perception which we obtain through the diversification of corporeal life according to the five organs of the senses. The human person has five senses that correspond to sight, hearing, vapor, fluid, and touch, so that the person might be able to perceive all bodily forms. Human being needs not only the exterior things but also to comprehend the circumstance. For Bonaventure, "no apprehension would be possible without a certain similarity and correspondence between the sense-organ and the object"[1031].

The third light, the interior light, which enlightens the human person, is the investigation of intelligible truths; it is the light of philosophical knowledge. It may be subdivided into three different branches: rational philosophy, which seeks the truth of concept and words; natural philosophy, which studies the truth of things; and moral philosophy, which studies the truth of human behavior.

In summary, rational philosophy considers the truth of *speech*; natural philosophy preoccupies the truth of *things*; and moral philosophy studies the truth of *conduct*. Bonaventure then enlarges this category to express the threefold divine dimension: God the most high as efficient, formal or exemplary, and final causality. We may find these in the illumination of philosophy, which enlightens the mind to discern the *cause of being*, in which case it is *physics*; or to know the *principles of understanding*, in which case it is *logic*; or to learn the *order of living*, in which case it is *moral* or practical philosophy[1032].

[1030] Cf. BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, 164.
[1031] *Red. art.*, 3 (V, 320).
[1032] *Red. art.*, 4 (V, 320-321); BOUGEROL, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, 165.

Bonaventure's way devises drawing into more profound vision in the case of *reductio* that is to place natural philosophy back to theology. Human intellect activity can be viewed from three perspectives: in relation to matter, they are called *formal*; in relation to the *mind*, they are called *intellectual*; and in relation to divine wisdom, they are called *ideal*. Having divided natural philosophy into *physics*, *mathematics*, and *metaphysics*, he illuminates the reader to trace back to the first principle:

> "So it is that *physics* treats of the generation and corruption of things according to natural powers and seminal principles; *mathematics* considers abstract forms in terms of their intelligible causes; *metaphysics* is concerned with the knowledge of all beings according to their ideal causes, tracing them back to the one first Principle from which they proceeded, that is to God, in as far as God is the *Beginning*, the *End*, and the *Exemplar*"[1033].

The above quotation, therefore, brings us to the fourth light, the superior light, which provides illumination with respect to *saving truth*, which is the light of the *sacred Scripture*. The saint writes: "This light is called *superior* because it leads to higher things by revealing truths which transcend reason, and also because it is not acquired by human research, but comes down from the *God of Lights* by inspiration"[1034].

Bonaventure's category of knowledge is peculiar or distinctive. From what has been said up to now he then concludes that, the fourfold category is a primary division; nonetheless there are six differentiations of this light, namely: the light of the sacred Scripture, the light of sense perception, the light of the mechanical arts,

---

[1033] *Red. art.*, 4 (V, 321): "Ita quod *physica* consideratio est circa rerum generationem et corruptionem secundum virtutes naturales et rationes seminales; *mathematica* est circa considerationem formarum abstrahibilium secundum rationes intelligibiles; *metaphysica*, circa cognitionem omnium entium, quae reducit ad unum primum principium, a quo exierunt secundum *rationes ideales*, sive ad Deum in quantum *principium finis*, et *exemplar*" (Eng. trans., Hayes, 43).
[1034] *Red. art.*, 5 (V, 32): "[…] lumen *sacrae Scripturae*, quod ideo dicitur *superius*, quia ad superior ducit manifestando quae sunt supra rationem, et etiam quia non per inventionem, sed per inspirationem a *Patre luminum* descendit" (English trans., Hayes, 43).

the light of rational philosophy, the light of natural philosophy, and the light of moral philosophy. Bonaventure associates these six lights to the six days of creation; in this way all these branches of knowledge are ordered to the knowledge of the sacred Scripture[1035].

All our knowledge comes to rest in the knowledge of the sacred Scripture. Through the divine Word, any illumination is traced back to God from whom it took its origin. And there the circle is completed; the pattern of six is complete, and consequently there is a rest. Bonaventure concludes: "in the present life there are six illuminations; and they have their evening, for all knowledge will be destroyed. And therefore they will be followed by a seventh day of rest, a day where there is no evening, namely, the *illumination of glory*"[1036].

3.3. Rational, Natural, and Moral Philosophy lead back to Theology

That last passage recalls the central place of the divine Word as *ratio aeterna* and *medium* of human knowledge. "If we consider the *medium* of knowledge, we shall see there the Word begotten from all eternity and incarnate time"[1037].

Bonaventure sees the illumination of human life not only on the spiritual level. His doctrine of illumination departs from the real life; he convinces that divine wisdom may be found in the illumination of the mechanical arts[1038]. Every work of art is the external projection of a model or exemplar which exists in the mind of an artist. If we think of the Creator God in an analogous way, then we would say that all creatures exist in the mind of God before they exist in their own right as realities external to God in the created world. Bonaventure writes: "Considering the illumination of mechanical arts as regard the production of the

---

[1035] *Red. art.*, 6-7 (V, 321-322).
[1036] *Red. art.*, 6 (V, 321): "Et ideo sex illuminationes sunt in vita ista et habent vesperam, quia omnis *scientia destruetur*; et ideo succedit eis septima dies requietionis, quae vesperam non habet, scilicet illuminatio gloriae" (English trans., Hayes, 45).
[1037] *Red. art.*, 8 (V, 322).
[1038] *Red. art.*, 11 (V, 322).

work, we shall see there the Word begotten and incarnate, that is, the divinity and the humanity and the integrity of all faith"[1039].

In a similar way, divine wisdom is to be found in the illumination of *rational philosophy* whose principal concern is *speech*. Here, three elements are to be considered which correspond to three aspects of speech itself: these are, the person speaking, the delivery of the speech, and the hearer or the goal. It is something like this that we see in the Eternal Word. The speaker is an image of the eternal Word who comes down to the level of us creatures while remaining in God, thus making himself the Mediator of the return of humanity to the father. God conceived the Word by an eternal act of generation, so that the Word might be known by human beings who are endowed with senses. *Word was made flesh and dwelt among us*, *while remaining in the bosom of God*[1040].

By the same line of reasoning the wisdom of God is to be found in the illumination of *natural philosophy*[1041]. Natural philosophy is concerned with the formal causes of things. Departing from the concept of *ratio aeterna*, Bonaventure sees that these formal causes exist at three levels: in material beings themselves, in the human mind, and in the divine mind. These may be called also as the *seminal forms*, the *intellectual* or abstract forms, and *the ideal forms*.

"If we consider the formal principles in terms of their *relation of proportion*, we shall see there the *Word Eternal* and *Word Incarnate*. The intellectual and abstract principles are, as it were, midway between the *seminal* and the *ideal* principles. But seminal principles cannot exist in *matter* without generation and the production of a form; neither can *intellectual* principles exist in the *soul* without the generation of the word in the mind. Therefore, *ideal* principles cannot exist *in God* without the generation of the Word from the Father in due proportion. Truly, this is a mark of

---

[1039] *Red. art.*, 12 (V, 322-323).
[1040] *Red. art.*, 15-16 (V, 323).
[1041] *Red. art.*, 19 (V, 324).

dignity; and if it is true of the creature, how much more must it be true of Creator"[1042].

Moral philosophy, which deals principally with rectitude or justice, can also be seen in relation to theology. The entire discussion involves a certain play on the Latin noun *rectitudo* (right) and the related adjective *rectus*. In one sense of the word, something is said to be 'right' (straight) if its middle is not out of line with its extreme points. In another sense, that is called *right* which is conformed to that by which it is ruled[1043]. In the third sense, something is called *right* when its summit is raised upward, as in the case of a human being with its upright posture. "In this sense, in the consideration of certitude there is manifested the union of the soul with God, for since God is above, it necessarily follows that the apex of the mind itself must be raised aloft"[1044].

Viewed from this perspective, the *De reductio*, as observes Hayes, "is the most compact statement of Bonaventure's vision to be found in the entire body of his writings. It is pre-eminently a wisdom-theology". This way of doing theology "unfolds a way not only of knowing but above all a way of living out of fullness of the human, spiritual journey into God. All knowledge and speculation is put into the service of the final goal of human life; namely, a transforming, mystical union with the mystery of divine love"[1045]. In summary,

"The sciences as we know them today are very different from anything that would have been seen as science in the middle Ages. But the task of engaging theology in

---

[1042] *Red. art.*, 20 (V, 324): "Si consideremus eas secundum habitudinem proportionis, videbimus in eis *Verbum aeternum* et *Verbum incarnatum*. Rationes *intellectuales* et abstractae quasi mediae sunt inter *seminales* et *ideales*. Sed rationes *seminales* non possunt esse in *materia*, quin sit in ea generatio et productio formae; similiter nec in *anima* rationes *intellectuales*, quin sit generatio verbi in mente; ergo nec *idealis in Deo*, quin sit productio Verbi a Patre secundum rectam proportionem; hoc enim est dignitatis, et si convenit creaturae, multo fortius inferri potest de Creatore" (English trans., Hayes, 55, 57).

[1043] *Red. art.*, 23-24 (V, 325).

[1044] *Red. art.*, 25 (V, 325): "Et secundum hoc in consideratione rectitudinis manifestatur *Dei et animae unio*, Cum enim Deus sit sursum, necesse est, quod apex ipsius mentis sursum erigatur" (English trans., Hayes, 59, 61).

[1045] HAYES, Introduction to *Red. art.* (English trans.), 34.

a critical and creative conversation with them may turn out to be crucial for the future of the human race. The wisdom-style of Bonaventure suggests the possibility of a more holistic form of humanism. Bonaventure himself was able to bring together faith and reason, mysticism and rationality, as well as experience and tradition not as opposites but as mutually enriching dimensions of the theological project. The challenge of doing something comparable for our world today is crucial. His project challenges us to engage all the arts and sciences of our time with the religious, theological concerns of the believer"[1046].

4. Bonaventure on *Ratio seminalis*

In the preceding section we have seen the question of the originality of idea in philosophy. At this juncture, let us apply the same method specifically to the notion of *rationes seminalis*. Generally, the term is used to point the intrinsic and immanent causes of natural phenomenon, which determine its origin and mostly the operative modality which enables the progress within the phenomenon. It is an active potency which enables nature to produce its effect[1047].

In our treatment we understand the term in the context of *De reductio*, accordingly all natural philosophy presupposes the Word of God as begotten and incarnate, which is begotten in beginning before all time, and incarnate in the fullness of time. This suggests that Bonaventure thought of matter not as inert but as having an inner dynamism toward change, and eventually toward union with spiritual reality, thus its noblest perfection. This dynamic orientation he spoke of as an "appetite" (*apetitus*)[1048].

[1046] HAYES, "Bonaventure of Bagnoregio", 49-50.
[1047] See DARIO SCHIOPPETTO, "Ratio Seminalis" in *DizBon*, p. 660-661. For the study on this doctrine see JOSÉ DE VINCK, "Two Aspects of the Theory of the 'Rationes Seminales' in the Writings of Bonaventure", in *S. Bonaventure 1274-1974 III*, p. 307-316; GANOCZY, *Il Creatore Trinitario*, 111-113.
[1048] *Red. art.*, 20 (V, 324); Cf. "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 71.

4.1. Influence of Augustine

Augustine used the term *rationes seminales* to explain that all the seeds of creation (the potential powers of everything that could be) that were given in the first instance of creation provide a productive sense. The Augustinian theory is explained by means of the Aristotelian principle that forms are produced from the potency of matter[1049]. In Augustine's view, the many material beings of nature are the result of the development of the seminal principles. These seminal principles as they were, and as they are, are active forms in matter or in the principles of growth and development. And wherever these forms are present and operative in reality, they prepare matter to receive other forms. Thus, matter first receives the form of the elements. In this way it becomes capable of receiving the form of an organic compound. Thus, by a series of progressive changes, nature attains its perfect form, the higher form in matter developing when the lower form has brought matter to the degree of organization which would permit its further development[1050].

Under the influence of his Franciscan masters and the Genesis account of creation, which appeal to the "light" that changed the "formless void" into a form body – the earth – Bonaventure says that light (*lumen*) is the very first "substantial form" that turns prime matter into a body, to some degree luminous and actually extended in space, but as yet without an actually determinate essence. Such corporeal matter, however, when considered in itself, does have the *capacity* to become any number of kinds of things[1051].

To explain why this same original matter has the potential for becoming every creature, Bonaventure incorporates into bodies Augustine's "seminal reasons" that help to explain the successive emergence of the different kinds of bodies capable of higher and higher life forms. In summary, physical bodies are composed

---

[1049] On Augustine's doctrine of *rationes seminales* see MICHAEL J. MCKEOUGH, *The Meaning of Rationes Seminales in St. Augustine*, Catholic University Press, Washington DC, 1926.

[1050] Cf. *II Sent.*, d. 7, p. 2, a. 2, q. 1 (II, 197); HAYES, introduction to *Red. art.* (English trans), 29; ID., "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 71-72.

[1051] HOUSER and NOONE, *Commentary on the Sentences*, xxxiv.

of prime matter, light and "seminal reasons". Bonaventure holds that "seminal reasons" have been present in all matter since the first day of creation; so each body has seminal reasons that contain the proximate potency for all forms of life, whether as a petunia or platypus. In generation, the efficient cause actualizes some of these potencies, but not others. So the "souls" of plants and animals must contain a plurality of substantial forms, corresponding to the difference between the essences of living things[1052]. The case of humans is even more complicated, as it is composite of corporeal and incorporeal natures. The human soul is a substance existing on its own, even though it functions as the animating principle of the human body.

> "So that divine power might be manifest in human nature, God fashioned it from the two natures that were the maximum distance from one another, united in a single person or nature. These are the body and the soul, the former being a corporeal substance, the later a spiritual and immaterial substance"[1053].

The natural philosopher sees in created substances composition of matter and form, sees in physical bodies prime matter, "light" and "seminal reasons", sees in all living things a soul containing a plurality of substantial forms, and sees in humans a soul consisting of such forms that give the soul its essence and a spiritual matter that gives the soul its existence. All these kinds of composition will allow Bonaventure to use creatures as points of departure for understanding God[1054]. Indeed looking at this, Bonaventure claims that if such productivity characterizes the creature, with greater reason should we except to find it in the Creator in whom exist the ideal principles of all things[1055].

[1052] HOUSER and NOONE, *Commentary on the Sentences*, xxxv.

[1053] *Brevil.*, pars. II. c.10, n. 3 (V, 228a): "Ut igitur in homine manifestaretur Dei potentia, ideo facit eum ex naturis maxime distantibus, coniunctis in unam personam et naturam; cuiusmodi sunt corpus et anima, quorum unum est substantia corporea, alterum vero, scilicet anima, est substantia spiritualis et incorporea; quae in genere substantiae maxime distant" (English trans., Monti, 90).

[1054] HOUSER and NOONE, *Commentary on the Sentences*, xxxv-xxxvi.

[1055] HAYES, Introduction to *Red. art.*, 29.

4.2. Inner dynamic in created being

Bonaventure notes that "Augustine, speaks ambiguously of these seminal reasons in the fifth and sixth (book) *On a Literal Exposition of Genesis*: "egregius doctor Augustinus in quinto et sexto super Genesim ad literam ambigue loquatur"[1056]. Cross notes that "Augustine uses the notion of *ratio seminales* to account for the universe's evolution from lesser to greater development, and Bonaventure expends on this evolutionary view to suggest that the initial state of the universe consisted of extended matter along with matter's active inclination for different kinds of elemental and animate forms"[1057].

> "A created, particular agent can educe substantial forms, at least corporal ones, which are in the potency of nature, not only (in the matter) in which (it is) and (in the matter) from which (it is) in some manner, but even (in the matter) out of which (it is), to the extent that they are in the matter according to seminal reasons"[1058].

What the above quote indicates is that the seed-principles are an intrinsic part, the essential aspect, of the very nature of created being. Created being, therefore, is characterized by the fact of being naturally quickened by means of dynamic and logical pattern of future development. Things have nothing in their proper natures that had not been made in the first days through a cause act[1059]. Bonaventure then claims that not only is there generation and productivity in matter, but also the intellectual generation. Looking at both of these, the seminal forms and the intellectual forms, Bonaventure emphasizes that if such productivity characterizes the creature, with greater reason should we expect to find it in the Creator, in whom exists the ideal principles of all things[1060].

[1056] *II Sent.*, d. 18, q. 2. resp. (II, 436).

[1057] CROSS, *The Medieval Christian Philosophers*, 91.

[1058] *II Sent.*, d. 7, p. 2, a. 2, q. 1 concl. (II, 197); "Agens creatum particulare potest educere formas substantiales, saltem corporales, quae sunt in potentia materiae, non solum in qua et a qua aliquo modo, sed etiam ex qua, quatenus in materia sunt secundum rationes seminales"; Cf. HAYES, "Bonaventure. Mystery of the Triune God", 72.

[1059] J. DE VINCK, "Two Aspects of the Theory of the Rationes Seminales", 307-308.

[1060] Cf. *Red. art.*, 20 (V, 324-325); see HAYES's commentary (English trans.), 28-30.

Bonaventure emphasizes two characters of seminal reasons in the created beings: "those according to seminal reasons, which come to be according to the *exigency* and *virtue* of the powers endowed to creatures themselves"[1061]. Thus, material reality is not inert and passive but is full of active powers virtually present from beginning and educed into an actual diversity of beings in the course of history through the agency of specific creatures. This same seed is the very principle of the dynamic action and evolution as an individual and as an element in the chain of natural progression. The Franciscan writes: "But if an effect is produced thus, that it is in the power of a nature, not only in one *obeying*, but even in one *potent* to carry (it) through to act [ad actum perducere]; thus it is said to be done according to "*seminal reasons*"[1062].

Under the influence of Augustine, Bonaventure elevates the concept of seminal reasons to the level of a "universal" form, not in the proper sense but in broader sense (*largiore ita vocari potest*)[1063]. Thereby, as note Houser and Noone, "Bonaventure is not atomist". The Franciscan notes that "we speak of matter in two senses: either insofar as it exists in nature; or as it is considered by the soul". With respect to the second sense, "matter according to its essence is unformed, thanks to its being of pure potentiality"[1064]. In *Itinerarium*, quoting Augustine[1065], Bonaventure utilizes the term, to point out the plurality form in the context of triadic analogy: *power*, *wisdom*, and *goodness* of God. Considering the plurality of natural things, for example, light, shape, colour, he affirms: "the fact that matter is full of forms because of the *seminal reasons*[1066]; and form is full of power in terms of active potency; and power is of effects by reason of its efficiency, shows that the

---

[1061] *II Sent.*, d. 18, q. 2. contra. (II, 435)

[1062] *II Sent.*, d. 18, q. 2. resp. (II, 436): "Si autem sic producitur effectus quod est in potentia naturae non solum obediente, sed etiam potente ad actum producere, sic dicitur fieri secundum rationes seminales" (English trans., J. De Vinck, 308).

[1063] *II Sent.*, d. 18, a. 1, q. 3 concl. (II, 440): "Ratio seminalis non est forma universalis in proprio sensu; in sensu autem largiore ita vocari potest".

[1064] HOUSER and NOONE, *Commentary on the Sentences*, xxxiv.

[1065] AUGUSTINE, *de Civ. Dei*, VIII, 4.

[1066] In English, J. De Vinck used to translate the term as *seed principles*, but I prefer to use *Seminal reasons* as suggested in *Dizionario Bonaventuriano*.

fullness of things clearly proclaims the same three attributes (power, wisdom, goodness)"[1067]. In sum, every aspect, potential or actual, of every creature is an outcome of what it had received as possibility in the original act of creation brought about by God's causal will[1068].

One of the early Greek Fathers, Justin Martyr, speaks of the seed of the Logos (*λόγοι σπερματικοὶ, lógoi spermatikói*). Being confronted with the philosophers of his time, he was led to organize what may well be called the first Christian synthesis of the universe, in which he stresses the cosmological function of the Logos. Logos designates the Son precisely in his cosmological function, namely in the relation to the cosmos[1069]. Taking this into account, by using the term *rationes seminales*, we mean *ratio* of the Word, the "incarnated logos" which enable a "creative synergy"[1070] in the creature. As we have seen, Bonaventure would say that the incarnated Word is the fulfilment of God's auto-communication to creature. Having this perspective in mind, the term "(intelligent) design" in our treatment is understood from the logic of God's gratuitous project of creation, not in a deterministic sense[1071]. God's main *ratio*[1072] in creature is identical with his liberty communication of *aternal ratio* articulated in the mystery of Incarnation.

[1067] *Itin.*, I, 14 (V, 299ab): "Plenitudo autem rerum, secundum quod materia est plena formis secundum rationes seminales; forma est plena virtute secundum efficientiam, id ipsum manifeste declarat" (English trans., Hayes, 59).

[1068] J. DE VINCK, "Two Aspects of the Theory of the *Rationes Seminales*", 308.

[1069] See the study of M. A. KOPIEC, *Il Logos della Fede: Tra Ragione, Rivelazione e Linguaggio*, Antonianum, Roma, 2014, (143-162); ID., "Il logos della fede nel contesto contemporaneo. Prospettiva teologico-fondamentale", in *Francescanesimo e mondo attuale* (a cura di Agustín H. Vidales), Antonianum, Roma, 2016 p. 342-363.

[1070] Cf. GANOCZY, *Il Creatore Trinitario*, 110-111.

[1071] NORMAN WIRZBA, "Christian *Theoria Physike*: Learning to see Creation", in *Modern Theology*, 32. 2 (2016), p. 229: "When our focus and attention rests on the material body alone we forget both the *logos* that is interior to that thing directing it to its fulfillment, and we forgot the divine *Logos* in which it participates and that is leading it to its eternal well-being in God, because what has become most important is how that thing can be made to serve our end. A passionate embrace of the world, we could say, is invariably a superficial and a destructive looking at others because it does not see God's love of creatures everywhere at work. Things are degraded and destroyed because their movement, rather than contributing to the flowering of God's whole creation, has been channeled to suit the narrow aim of human ambition".

[1072] Cf. LEXICON BONAVENTURIANUM, 158.

4.3. An anticipation of the theory of evolution?

Based on this world view, one might say that no being is the maker of its own seed. No created object brings forth the rules of its own future growth or change or decay. Every created being receives its seed together with existence, as an intrinsic part of itself. This same seed is the very principle of the dynamic action and evolution as an individual and as an element in the chain of natural progression. Bonaventure teaches clearly that everything a being ever *becomes* existed originally in the form of *eternal ratio* placed in nature by an act of the creator's will. Nature, then, is not the slave of some Darwinian law of 'survival of the fittest', or of some blind 'struggle for life'[1073].

The seminal urge proposed by Bonaventure is part of an over-all plan, of the intelligent placing within the core of the most primitive forms of matter, the dynamic tendencies and possibilities, which, when the proper time and physical circumstances come about, will allow the immense variety of created beings to unfold. Many new forms are to unfold in the future ages; many others will remain as mere 'possible' and all can eventually develop in other worlds than ours. But everything that ever comes to be does so on the basis of its seed[1074]. We can say that this doctrine is "an anticipation of the theory of evolution"[1075].

> "The theory of the *rationes seminales* taken in this sense is very close to two philosophic views much more recent than those of Bonaventure: Bergson's *élan vital* and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's 'Omega Point'. Bergson perceives an inner force, even in blind matter, leading to life, consciousness and eventually love. Teilhard de Chardin proposes a magnificent synthesis of the rise of nature from the hydrogen atom to the fulfilment in Christ at the end – the Omega Point. This is to occur through different phases: complexification, cerebralization, and the development of the noosphere – the area of spiritual thought"[1076].

[1073] J. DE VINCK, "Two Aspects of the Theory of the *Rationes Seminales*", 309.
[1074] J. DE VINCK, "Two Aspects of the Theory of the *Rationes Seminales*", 308-309.
[1075] J. DE VINCK, "Two Aspects of the Theory of the *Rationes Seminales*", 307.
[1076] J. DE VINCK, "Two Aspects of the Theory of the *Rationes Seminales*", 309-310.

Speaking analogically, the doctrine, hence, provides the idea of creative synergy in creation, the idea that emerges also in modern cosmology[1077]. Although the notion of evolution is completely foreign in Bonaventure's medieval mind, his theory of *rationes seminales* does open the road to his later development by providing its philosophical and theological basis[1078]. So De Vinck writes: "The genius of Bonaventure consists essentially in his integrated vision of reality, not as divided between the natural and the supernatural, but as one continuum in which the supernatural shines through the natural and leads it back to its source, the creative Word, the Omega Point of the Teilhard de Chardin"[1079].

5. The case of Teilhard

We just have noted that Bonaventure's doctrine of *ratio seminalis*, nonetheless its large and rich theological sense, and its strong characteristic of medieval language, it anticipates the modern theory of evolution. We need to treat this interpretation. We believe that Teilhard's system is a good model of contact between theology and science. That is the main reason, I think, why each of the scholars Hayes, Cousins and Delio etc., from whose studies our study is indebted, by way of their method and purpose on reading Bonaventure, have been trying also to insert some resemblance between the two authors.

We take note that Teilhard began writing on Christ and evolution in the 1920s and continued up to his death in 1955[1080]. He came to know about the Franciscan theology late in his life, through the Sicilian Franciscan Father Allegra (1907-1976), now blessed[1081]. It is on record that when Teilhard heard of the Franciscan doctrine of primacy of Christ he exclaimed "Voila! La théologie de

---

[1077] Cf. GANOCZY, *Il Creatore Trinitario*, 111.
[1078] J. DE VINCK, "Two Aspects of the Theory of the *Rationes Seminales*", 310.
[1079] J. DE VINCK, "Two Aspects of the Theory of the *Rationes Seminales*", 316.
[1080] SIR JULIAN HUXLEY, Introduction to *The Phenomenon of Man*, 21ii. For recent study on Teilhard's thought see ILIA DELIO (ed), *From Teilhard to Omega*, Orbis Books, NY., 2013.
[1081] Cf. GABRIELA M. ALLEGRA, *Il primato di Cristo in san Paolo e Duns Scoto. Le mie conversazioni con Teilhard de Chardin*, Porziuncola, Assisi, 2011. As it is noted in this testimony, the friendship conversation was happened between 1942-1945 in Pekin.

l'avenir" (There it is! The theology of the future). But that was only a friendly conversation between two missionaries in China. We have no testimony that Teilhard made any systematic study on Bonaventure. We will take note of Teilhard's two books: *The Phenomenon of Man*[1082] and *The Future of Man*[1083].

5.1. Primordial Energy

In connection with the theme of this study, we will focus on three main aspects: the question of the origin, the place of man in the world, and Christological-anthropology. We choose to start with Teilhard's three key concepts which are found in the following phrase: "Plurality, unity, energy"[1084]. *First*, plurality (*pluralité*): For Teilhard, "the stuff of tangible thing reveals itself with increasing insistence as radically particulate yet essentially related (*radicalement particulaire, essentiellement liée pourtant*), and lastly, prodigiously active"[1085]. *Second*, unity (*fondamentale unité*): There is perfect identity in every smaller unity (molecules, atoms, electrons)[1086]. *Third*, energy (*l'énergie*): For him "energy is the measure of that which passes from one atom to another in the course of transformations"[1087]. As a modern man, Teilhard recognized well that energy represents for science the most primitive form of universal stuff. As the unifying power in the course of exchange of matter, energy equilibrates and makes stability in the universe. In physical science, energy is an instrument to measure the complexity of the system of the universe[1088].

[1082] PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *Le Phénomène Humain*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1955. English version: *The Phenomenon of Man* (English trans., Bernard Wall, with introduction by Julian Huxley), Harper perennial, NY., 1955. Our treatment is based on the English version, but in central passages it needs to show also in the French text; the page will be indicated in bracket (...) after the note of the French version. It is noted that *The Human Phenomenon* is the most detailed articulation of Teilhard's vision of the wholeness of evolution.

[1083] PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *L'avenir de L'home*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1959. English version: *The Future of Man* (translated by Norman Denny), Image Books, NY., 1959.

[1084] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 40.

[1085] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 40.

[1086] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 41.

[1087] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 42.

[1088] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 42-43.

Departing from this basic concept of dynamic energy, he convinces that in every region of space and time, "co-extensive with their *withoutness*, there is a *withinness* of things" (*coextensif à leur dehors, il y a un dedans des choses*)"[1089]. The *without* of things is their material reality; the *within* of things is their psychic energy. There is a single energy in the cosmic that enables the interconnections of all the stuff of the universe, the energy which intervens the interdependence and complexity of the universe[1090]. That is the "spiritual energy"[1091] that enables the growing of life: The basis of the material world is nonmaterial: "Something is going to burst out upon the early earth, and this thing is life"[1092].

Theilhard observed that the first stage of creation is the elaboration of the lower organisms. He writes: "However minute the bud may be, however small the seed, it is precisely here that the power of renewal and rebounding of the living world are concentrated"[1093]. The most vital character of the primordial energy is "self arrangement" (*s'arranger*): "Matter on earth is involved in a process which causes it to *arrange itself*, starting with relatively simple elements, in ever larger and more complex unity"[1094].

But how are we to account for the origin and growth of this process of arrangement? In Teilhard's view, the idea of self-arrangement of matter is *not identical* with automatic selection or chance arrangement of matter as Darwin thought. For Teilhard, the evolution is a "grand cosmic phenomenon of the vitalization of matter". There is an *inner force* in matter that makes the evolution process as free choice and inner direction. The final purpose of the self arrangement

---

[1089] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 56-64 (53).
[1090] Cf. TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The phenomenon of Man*, 64-65.
[1091] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 63, 72.
[1092] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 74.
[1093] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Future of Man*, 197.
[1094] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Future of Man*, 195. "Très certainement la Matière, sur Terre, se trouve engrangée dans un processus qui la fait s'arranger, à partir d'éléments relativement simples, en particules toujours plus compliquées et toujours plus vastes" (256).

is *consciousness*[1095]; finally the complexity of the universe is becoming individualized in the form of autonomous spiritual principle in man[1096]. Man's evolution is interiorized and made purposeful[1097]; it consists of three phases:

> "Whence, for the Christian in particular, there follows a radical incorporation of terrestrial values in the most fundamental concepts of his faith, those of Divine Omnipotence, detachment and charity. First, *Divine Omnipotence*: God creates and shapes us through the process of evolution […] Then, *detachment*: God awaits us when the evolutionary process is complete: to rise above the World, therefore, does not mean to despise or reject it, but to pass through it and sublime it. Finally, *charity*: the love of God expresses and crowns the basic affinity which, from the beginning of Time and Space, has drawn together and concentrated the spiritualizable (*spiritualisables*) elements of the universe"[1098].

5.2. Man and the Consciousness

For the Jesuit, "man is not an incident or event in the biological world, but is a higher form of life"[1099]. The progress of man is the growth of consciousness. Having consciousness means to be free in act and to know the choice. He writes: "Evolution, by the very mechanism of its syntheses, changes itself with an ever-growing of freedom"[1100]. With the capacity of consciousness man not only knows; "he knows that he knows; he reflects"[1101]; "admittedly the animal knows; but it cannot know that it knows"[1102]. The consciousness of man shows that evolution is

---

[1095] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Future of Man*, 196-197.
[1096] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Future of Man*, 206.
[1097] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Future of Man*, 209.
[1098] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Future of Man*, 71. "D'ou, pour le Chrétien en particulier, une incorporation radicale des valeurs terrestres dans les nations, les plus fondamentales pour sa foi, d'omnipotence divine, de détachement, et de charité. *D'omnipotence* divine, d'abord : Dieu nous crée, il agit sur nous, à travers l'Evolution; […] De *détachement*, ensuite : Dieu nous attend au terme de l'Evolution ; surmonter le Monde ne signifie donc pas le mépriser ni le rejeter, mais le traverser et le sublimer. De *charité*, enfin : l'amour de Dieu exprime et couronne l'affinité foncière qui, depuis les origines du Temps et de l'Espace, rassemble et concentre les éléments *spiritualisables* de l'Univers" (103-104).
[1099] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Future of Man*, 211.
[1100] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Future of Man*, 63.
[1101] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Future of Man*, 126.
[1102] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Human Phenomenon*, 165.

not merely a theory but a dimension of life. There are three characteristics which enable man to be a truly unique object in the universe:

> "a) an extreme psychochemical *complexity* (particularly apparent in the brain) which permits us to consider man as most highly synthesized form of matter known to us in the universe; b) arising out of this, an extreme degree of *organization* which makes man the most perfectly and deeply centered of all cosmic particles within the field of our experience; c) and correlative with the above, the high degree of psychic *development* (man's capacity of reflection, thought) which places him head and shoulders above all other conscious beings known to us"[1103].

5.3. Christ the Omega Point

On Teilhard's *The Phenomenon of Man*, he sustains that love is a "synthesis of centers, center of center" [1104] (*une synthèse des centres, c'est de centre a centre*). Love is "*within* of things"[1105] (*dedans des choses*), it is an energy which enables the convergence of the universe. "Driven by the force of love, the fragments of the world seek each other so that the world may come to being. […]. Love alone is capable of uniting living beings in such a way as to complete and fulfill them, for it alone takes them and joins them by what is deepest in them-selves. This is the fact of daily experience"?[1106]

For Teilhard, love is a passionate force at the heart of the evolution of the universe, the *fire* that breathes life into matter and unifies elements center to center. Love is deeply embedded in the cosmos, a cosmological force. At the same time love is a finality of human consummation. He considers that pure science is not

---

[1103] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Future of Man*, 79. "a) D'abord, une extrême complexité physico-chimique – surtout marquée dans le cerveau – qui permet de le considérer comme la forme la plus hautement synthétique de Matière que nous connaissions dans l'Univers; b) ensuite, et par le fait même, un extrême degré d'organisation, qui fait de lui, dans le champ de notre expérience, la plus parfaitement et la plus profondément centrée des particules cosmiques; c) enfin, et corrélativement, un extrême développement psychique, réflexion, pensée, qui le place, haut la main, au premier rang des êtres conscients que nous connaissons" (115).
[1104] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 263 (293).
[1105] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 264 (294).
[1106] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 264-265 (294-294).

sufficient to offer a new horizon of the future of the evolution. The existence of Omega is a matter of faith – yet faith is not at all alien to science. Therefore, "we should extend our science to its farthest limits"[1107]. The above passages point out the fundamental vision of Teilhard's system. This vision underlines his account of evolution. For the Jesuit paleontologist, evolution is not solely a feature of biological organisms; evolution is much more than a theory or hypothesis: "it is a general condition to which all theories, all hypotheses, all systems must bow and which they must satisfy henceforward if they are to be thinkable and true. Evolution is a light illuminating all facts, a curve that all lines must follow"[1108].

The whole evolutionary process is an optimism of unification, and its final scope is to make all things back upon *someone*. Viewed in this way, Teilhard defines the evolution as a "personalizing universe"[1109]. How can one understand the direction of evolution as a real life? Teilhard answers: "I'm thinking here of Christian love"[1110]. The integrity convergent of all created beings will be the uncompromising affirmation of a personal God: "God as providence, directing the universe with loving, watchful care; and God the revealer, communicating himself to man on the level of and through the way of intelligence"[1111]. Manifested in this way Christianity itself cannot become a sort of alien, but becomes more familiar, it gives the roots for human desire[1112]. The finality of the evolution, therefore, is the unity in love[1113], the moment of consummation.

"For a Christian, provided his Christology, accepts the fact that the collective consummation of earthly mankind is not a meaningless and still less a hostile event but a precondition of the final, 'parousiac' establishment of the Reign of God – for such a Christian the eventual biological success of man on earth is not merely a

---

[1107] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 267-268.
[1108] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 241.
[1109] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 283-284.
[1110] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 295.
[1111] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 293.
[1112] Cf. TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Future of Man*, 223.
[1113] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Future of Man*, 233.

probability but a certainty: since Christ (and in Him virtually the world) is already risen"[1114].

5.4. The Motive of Contact between Faith and Science

When Teilhard says that the world is run in an order, that it organizes itself, around life, it is considered that the whole process of life has direction as to where it is heading for. In the process of life there is progress, it becomes more concentrated in convergent point[1115]. He places the maturity point of revolutionary process in the ambit of Christianity. Departing from the primacy of Christ of Saint John and Paul, Teilhard explains that in the culmination of evolution Christ occupies the centre of all creation[1116]. The phase of *consummation* is the final and perfect convergence with the Omega Point; the moment of unity in God, the *center of centers*. This is not only a speculative idea or philosophy, but a reality of life[1117].

It can be said that in Teilhard's system, the motive of contact between science and faith is evident, and, as observed by Hayes, "though it raises many problems that are not fully resolved by Teilhard, can appeal to clear precedents in the cosmic Christology of Paul and the Word Christology of John, as well as in the Logos speculation of the Apologists, the great patristic writers such as Athanasius and Maximus the Confessor, and the medieval Franciscan tradition as presented by Bonaventure and Scotus"[1118]. Taking this into account, Hayes really considers that, at the level of the physical world-view, the medieval theologians differ from

---

[1114] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Future of Man*, 235. "Pour un Chrétien (à condition cependant sa Christologie reconnaisse dans la consumation collective d'une Humanité terrestre non point un événement indifférent, ou même hostile,– mai une condition préalable (nécessaire mais non suffisante) à l'établissement final 'parousiaque', du Règne de Dieu – pour un tel chrétien, dis-je, le succès biologique final de l'Homme sur Terre est, non seulement une probabilité, mais une certitude: puisque le Christ (et en Lui, virtuellement, le Mode) es déjà ressuscité" (305).
[1115] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Future of Man*, 214.
[1116] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 297.
[1117] Cf. TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 295.
[1118] HAYES, *A Window to the Divine*, 72.

Teilhard, but on the other side, he convinces that "there is a striking parallel between the Franciscan tradition and the vision of Teilhard"[1119].

The thendency today is to say that creation was not complete at the origins of the universe but continues as the universe develops in complexity. As a relational reality, the universe is a process to be one in an integral point, all in Christ the Omega Point. Divine love is the primordial cosmic energy, and being so, it is the ontological foundation for the various analogies of the universe. From Bonaventure's perspective, the logic of this is quite simple and direct: God is the creator of the entire universe. But God is the mystery of the Trinity. Therefore, the Trinitarian God is the Creator. Bonaventure names God the *creative Trinity*. If the Trinitarian Creator is the exemplar, then all that spring forth in the universe reflect that Trinitarian exemplar[1120].

One might see that "the thought of Bonaventure and Teilhard are complementary. Their common foundation is the dynamics of reality. Bonaventure reaches this dynamics in the level of the Trinity and creation, whereas Teilhard finds it throughout its manifestation in the cosmos, history, and in the human being"[1121]. In the anthropological-Christological area, Rivi[1122] asserts that both the authors, although separated by time, methodology of thought and language, acknowledged the dignity of the human person. For both the dignity of human person must be open to transcendence. Anthropology must be linked to Christology. Not every transcendental being can be a fundamental principle of human dignity; only in Christianity can the most profound of human *desiderium* may be answered.

[1119] HAYES, *A Window to the Divine*, 108.
[1120] HAYES, *Bonaventure. Mystical Writings*, 41-42.
[1121] COUSINS, "Teilhard de Chardin et Saint Bonaventure", in *ÈtFranc*, 19 (1969), p. 184.
[1122] PROSPERO RIVI, "L'uomo signore e custode del creato in Bonaventura e in Teilhard de Chardin", in *DrSer*, 62 (2014), p. 45.

6. Window of Dialogue (Hayes)

Having seen the reception of Bonaventure's thought in our time and the contribution of his methodological view, considering his hermeneutic model in the *De reductione*, we now focus on the specific issue regarding the question of origins and the way modern science sees the reality of cosmos. A major part of this section is indebted to the study of Hayes; but we substantiate it with some relevant passages from selected contemporary theologians.

6.1. On the Scientific Theories of Origins

It seems to be basically the conviction that scientific cosmology, precisely as science and by virtue of scientific methodology, can neither prove nor disprove the existence of God; it knows nothing about God. This appears that it will be the case. But does it lead us to say that the scientific vision of cosmic reality tells us nothing about God? It is important to nuance this more carefully[1123]. For those who are on the side of pure science, the answer to the question asked above is "no", and the ideas suggested in the works of Bonaventure will sound hopelessly archaic. But for those who resonate with the language in the *convergence-model*, the views of Bonaventure are of considerable interest[1124].

Cosmologists have attempted to project look back to the beginning of the universe and this leads to the idea of Big Bang. We take note that this process necessitates a clear methodological consideration as the issue is about creation from nothing. Hayes cautions that it must be considered that the issue is a kind of question beyond the ambit of science. Early on, we have said that the medieval idea of nothing, for example in Bonaventure, is simply and totally the denial of existence in any form whatsoever. The tendency of physicists to move in this direction, therefore, raises the question about the nature of science and the limit experiences to

---

[1123] HAYES, "Is creation a window to the divine? A Bonaventurian Response", in *Franciscans and Creation*: *What Is Our Responsibility*? (Elise Saggau, ed.), Franciscan Institute Publications St Bonaventure University, Saint Bonaventure, NY., 2003, p. 91.
[1124] HAYES, "Is creation a window to the divine? A Bonaventurian Response", 92.

which science itself gives rise. What does one say when one is pushed against such outer limits? Faced with this question, Hayes believes that scientists themselves are divided between those who are primarily observers (or empirically oriented) and those who are theoreticians (or speculatively oriented)[1125].

In reading the issue of creation of nothing, it is important to keep in mind exactly and specifically what is involved in the so-called Big Bang model of cosmology. Note that in the 1920s, A Friedman had advanced the idea of a constantly expanding universe. What the Big Bang theory says is that everything in the 'observable universe' are the remnants of a huge explosion called Big Bang that took place about 17.3 billion years ago. The question of what, if anything, may have happened before the Big Bang and what may exist beyond the bounds of the observable universe is the subject of much speculation[1126].

The generally agreed upon 'overall picture' of what has happened within the observable universe since Big Bang is sometimes called the 'standard' model of cosmology. The argument roughly looks like this: If the universe is expanding, what did it look like before? Can we trace it backward in time to its original situation? Physicists offer many details of the stages to answer the question. Basically, it is said that the process of expansion has continued for some fifteen billion years until it has brought forth cosmos as we now observe it. But it is not clear whether this expansion will continue indefinitely; or whether at some point things will begin to contract and eventually return to its origin[1127].

The Big Bang model seems most convincing to a large number of present-day cosmologists. But the thought of cosmologists does not stop here. To the degree that physics is an empirical science, the methodology physicists use is by nature

---

[1125] Cf. HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 53-54.

[1126] For a model of study and discussion on theory of Big Bang, see ROBERT. J. SPITZER, *New Proofs for the Existence of God. Contribution of contemporary Physics and Philosophy*, Grand Rapids/ Cambridge, U.K., 2010, p. 14-21.

[1127] Cf. HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 55.

inductive. That means, until all the evidence have been discovered and accounted for, a theory has not been definitively proven. In this manner the degree of acceptance of any large cosmological vision depends on the data of physics, or is confirmed by the data provided by physics. Without it, such a vision is always temporary and open-ended until such time that all the data are in[1128]. In the other words, the Big Bang model does not describe facts, yet it helps us to understand some significant data. There might be conflicting data which might eventually lead to the rejection of the model. Hayes writes: "For the time being, it might be helpful to think of the Big Bang as a suggestive and helpful image or metaphor rather than as a literal description of cosmic facts"[1129].

Viewed in this way, Hayes emphasizes the following consideration: When physicists represent the Big Bang cosmology and begin to speak of creation from nothing, either they have moved beyond the limits of their discipline, or they have in mind with these words something quite different from what these words have meant in classical Christian theology. For the classical question of creation from nothing, according to the Christian theology, the answer is not some weakened, watered down type of something, but simply the creative love of God who calls a thing into being from non-being. He emphasizes:

"For Scholastic thought, this is not physical change. As we have suggested above, we might be tempted to call it a metaphysical change, provided we recognize that there is no common subject on both sides of the change. There is not something that passes from non-being to being. There is simply a fact of being from non-being. This is a matter not of temporal priority but of ontological priority. It is not a continuation of the chain of secondary causality to one more, and presumably the final, link in the chain. It is a move to a fundamentally different level of causality. God is not a cause among causes at the beginning of the temporal chain of created

---

[1128] Cf. HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 55-56.
[1129] HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 56.

causes. Rather, God is the ground for the fact that there is created causality at all at a very moment of time"[1130].

6.2. Life as System of Systems

As the above citation indicates, this study considers Bonaventure's position as an approach to what remains of interest: For one who believes in God, the cosmos can open such a person to a deeper sense of a mystery. If the scientific viewpoint is an accurate account of the world, there should not be a conflict with the vision of the faith. When we look at medieval theological construct, for example the notion transcendental, we find a well-knit interrelation of faith, metaphysics, and physics. We consider that theology has recovered a sense of the principle that stood behind the medieval synthesis: The God who creates and is thus revealed in the cosmos is the God who is revealed in biblical history. The believer should be able to look out at the same world described by science and see precisely that world as the world of God's creation[1131].

In his early study of Christological-Cosmology, Hayes, under the influence of the process philosophy of Whitehead, was interested on the theme of *convenientia* of Christ in Bonaventure. The center of the Christian historical experience is the person of Jesus Christ; Christ is the center of reality, and it is from that center that man should begin his inquiry concerning the nature of reality. "Beginning at the center, the inquirer can come to know how all things come forth into being and how they are to be brought to consummation"[1132]. Although the science of evolution, marked by change toward greater complexity, would have been foreign to Bonaventure's view, the dynamic change within evolution complements his emphasis on God as love and hence the dynamic relation between God and creation. In light of Bonaventure's Christological concept, Hayes identifies Christ as the goal of creation.

[1130] HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 56.
[1131] HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 10.
[1132] HAYES, "*Convenientia* in Bonaventure's Metaphysics", 75.

Therefore, looking back to Bonaventure we see one who consciously operated against the background of philosophical exemplarity. This has to do with the relation between cause and effect, or between an artist and the work of art. When we turn to the work of Bonaventure with this in mind, it is interesting to see how he develops the analogy of a book, written *within* and *without*. According to Hayes' interpretation, "the content of the book of the cosmos is the divine Ideas or archetypes. The task of human beings is to learn how to read the divine Creator-Artisan as they learn to understand the world more deeply"[1133]. In this interpretation, Hayes sees the relevance of Bonaventure's cosmology:

"The Big Bang model of science suggests that, huge as it is, the whole of the cosmos came originally from one point. Hence, all things as we know in this cosmos go back to a common source. Development and change (evolution) is the stuff of our history, but finally they all come from one foundation. It is not difficult to relate this to Bonaventure's description of God as the inexhaustible source of all that is. Also, it signals an awareness of the unity and fecundity of God in Bonaventure's thought. And there is the emergence of order out of what seemed to be chaos, and the beauty of the drama of life emerging from very simple elements reaching out into the immensity of time and space. This is reminiscent of what in Bonaventure's language is called the simplicity of God and of the *plenitude fontalis*"[1134].

For Hayes, the various forms and rhythms of nature show a distant reflection of divine qualities. He observes six points of it[1135]: 1) Science sees the cosmos in its incalculable immensity both in space and in time. After we have given a complete description of what the cosmos is and how it works, we are still left with the question as to *why* it is, and *why* human being exist in it. But the tendency to give a full and adequate account on this fact is beyond a scientific methodology. 2) This cosmos reveals a baffling number of diverse forms of created things. There is one

---

[1133] HAYES, *The Gift of Being*, 7.
[1134] HAYES, "Is creation a window to the divine? A Bonaventurian Response", 94.
[1135] HAYES, "The Cosmos, a Symbol of the Divine", in Down M. Nothwehr (ed.), *Franciscan Theology of the Environment*, Franciscan Press, Quinci, 2002, p. 260-264.

discernible trend in evolution, and that is the emergence of an ever greater variety of organism. 3) Scientists today are inclined to see a universe of things intimately intertwined at all levels. For example, in the search of the ultimate particle, it was discovered that quarks can be discerned only in groups. The so-called building blocks are not isolated monadic blocks, but relational complexes.

In addition, 4) science operates on the assumption that the cosmos is intelligible, while the chaos-theory raises the awareness of the limits to predictability and intelligibility. One would not be surprised if things are not totally predictable, because of the divine freedom. 5) Science sees humanity to be deeply imbedded in the cosmic material process out of which life emerges, and eventually conscious life with intelligence and freedom. That is, the human being contains within its own development from conception onward the mineral, the vegetative, the animal, and finally the rational dimensions of the cosmos. 6) The ambiguity of nature. The world of nature is not just a realm of unmitigated beauty. It is profoundly marked by the struggle of life. All around us, and even in ourselves and in our relation to each other, we find that life comes from life. There is a pervasive movement to more and fuller life which moves through pain, struggle, and death.

This perspective suggests the need for a sense of wholeness, a sense of inter-relatedness of the element that make up the cosmos, and the hope that there is, in the context of the wild diversity of creatures, some form of unity and order. Every whole is part of a larger whole, and the whole process of evolution seems to yearn for ultimate wholeness. Life flows from a relational, nondeterministic world. In the process of life, what endures is dynamic, adaptive, and creative. Nature bears a capacity to self-organize, and at every stage, transcends itself toward more integral wholeness[1136]. It is not difficult to relate this to what contemporary cosmology sees as systems within systems, all the way down and all the way out into space[1137].

[1136] Cf. I. DELIO, *Making all things New. Catholicity*, *Cosmology*, *Consciousness*, Orbis Books, NY., 2015, p. 175-176.
[1137] HAYES, "Is creation a window to the divine? A Bonaventurian Response", 94.

Bonaventure explains this in a similar way. Bonaventure's model of Trinitarian theology, as we have seen, is an attempt to give expression to the relation between the mystery of the Trinity and the reality of creation. The creative ground is fruitful love; the mystery of the divine is the love community in itself.

In other words, "the Trinity is seen as supreme creative love and goodness, the fount from which all created reality pours forth. The divine Word in the mind of God is the perfect expression of all that God is within the Godhead and all that God can call into being in creation"[1138]. The divine Trinity can be seen as the fountain-fullness from which the river of reality flows, both within the mystery of God in the Triune life of love, and outside the divinity in the form of creation. Bonaventure's dynamic, relational Trinity provides a fruitful ground for dynamic, relational universe. Based on this perspective Hayes writes:

> "With that [the various forms and rhythms of nature] in mind, we can recall that the core insight of the traditional Trinitarian concept of God; namely, that the divine reality is intrinsically relational in character. It may well be, […] as did Bonaventura in his own time and place, as grounded in and as reflecting the relational character of the trinity. Similarly, if the trinity is thought of, as it is in the tradition, as unity of many, it may be thought of as reflected in the cosmic system of systems; a union of many and not simply a universe of individual things only extrinsically related to each other"[1139].

With the background of Franciscan theology, Hayes sees the centrality of Bonaventure's view on Christ as the exemplar par excellence of the story of the universe. God creates toward an end. That end as embodied in Christ points to a Christified world. What appears from one viewpoint as a process of biological evolution and cultural history may be seen from another viewpoint as a history of the creative self-communication of God in an ongoing interaction with the world and humanity. The world is not a plurality of unrelated things but a true unity, a

---

[1138] HAYES, "Is creation a window to the divine? A Bonaventurian Response", 94.
[1139] HAYES, "The Cosmos, a Symbol of the Divine", 263.

cosmos, centered in Christ. In sum, "God creates toward an end. That end as embodied in Christ points to a Christified world"[1140].

> "It is through this history of revelation that Christians come to perceive that the ground of source of the creative process is a limitless mystery of productive love. The creative ground is fruitful love; the mystery of the divine is the love community in itself. This is but another way of saying that God is Triune. This being the case, it should not be surprising to see that the entire process of history reflects the history of the fruitful love in a variety of analogous ways. Science sees a process whereby, as in basic chemical element, individual elements unite with each other to form something new, as hydrogen and oxygen unite to become water. One would hesitate to call this love, but it is possible to see a certain distant analogy with the experience of human love. Isolated, independent existence must be given up to enter into its border and potentially deeper levels of existence"[1141].

6.3. Reinterpreting the concept of Being

A recent and more progressive resource on this issue was done by Ilia Delio OSF[1142]. Many of her studies on Bonaventure are sourced from the studies and translations of Hayes. But she explores and develops it for the purpose of coming up with mutual conversations with contemporary theology, spirituality, philosophy, science, and culture. Her recent book, *Making all things new*, is a proposal to reconsider the *catholicity* in a sense of wholeness. "To be catholic is to be aware of belonging to a whole and to act according to the whole, including the galaxies and stars, earth, animals, plants, and human life"[1143].

[1140] HAYES, *A Window to the Divine*, 90.
[1141] HAYES, *A Window to the Divine*, 73.
[1142] Delio's studies from which she compares the cosmological view between Bonaventure and Teilhard: DELIO, *Making all things New*; DELIO, (ed.), *From Teilhard to Omega*, Orbis Books, NY., 2014; ID., *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being. God Evolution and the Power of Love*, Orbis Books, NY., 2013; ID., *The Emergent Christ. Exploring the Meaning of Catholic in an Evolutionary Universe*, Orbis Books, NY., 2011; ID., *Christ in Evolution*, Orbis Book, NY., 2008.
[1143] DELIO, *Making all things New*, xii.

It is noted that what was lost in the embroiled history of the Church's formation was the integral connection between catholicity and cosmology. The science, including Big Bang cosmology and evolution, evokes a new understanding of catholicity. Taking this in account she sustains that "Catholicity requires an integrated consciousness of the whole, a deep relationality, as well as a deepening of inner and outer wholeness. It calls to recognize that connectedness is a basic reality of our existence. We are wholes within wholes"[1144].

Drawing from this direction she concerns herself on the metaphysical question on the first being. She claims that "being is energy and hence relational"[1145], that is, the Triune God. From this world-view, she goes on to the theme of an integral universe. With this view, it is sustained that personal life finds its depth not in isolated monads but in the emergence of a human community of love. This vision is "not a naïve optimism but a call to awaken us from our medieval slumber and to see the core of religion (love, truth, goodness, and beauty) woven into the very fabric of the cosmos"[1146].

Delio sees that one of the central world-view suggested by the perspective of the three-fold analogy is "cosmological force"[1147]. With Teilhardian language it is sustained that the cosmological force is called as Omega, the spiritual energy, the ultimate depth of love; and what we mean by love is the Triune God. Love energy marks the history of the universe, because it "is the most universal, the most tremendous and the most mysterious of the cosmic forces. […] The physical structure of the universe is love"[1148].

[1144] DELIO, *Making all things New*, 199.
[1145] DELIO, "Evolution and the Rise of the Secular God", in *From Teilhard to Omega* (Delio, ed.), 42.
[1146] DELIO (ed.), *From Teilhard to Omega*, 3.
[1147] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *Human Energy* (English trans., J. M. Cohen., NY), Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1969, p. 72 (quoted in DELIO, *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being*, 43).
[1148] TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *Human Energy*, 72.

Evolution, therefore, is not merely an explanation of physical life but a whole new world-view that affects every aspect of created life. With the background of Bonaventure's theology, she convinces that if the Trinity is eternally self-expressive dynamic overflowing love – love unto love – then the whole evolutionary process is marked by the horizon of love. In this way we can speak of evolutionary creation as progress toward love in relationship to a God of ever-deepening love. Love-energy is intrinsically relational in the universe.

> "If being is intrinsically relational, then nothing exists independently or autonomously. Rather, 'to be' is 'to be with'. Reality is 'being with another' in a way open to more union and more being. Since being is existence towards another, being is relational and exists for the sake of giving. 'I do not exist in order that I may possess; rather I exist in order that I may give of myself, for it is in giving that I am myself.' Cosmic life is intrinsically communal. Being is first we before in can become I"[1149].

Love is energy that empowers union; union generates new creation, and each new creation is more whole and united in love. The Trinity shows the essential condition of God's capacity to be the personal summit of a universe that is in process of personalization; love generated as evolutionary Word expressed in Spirit-energy reaches its summation in Jesus Christ, in whom we see the direction of evolution. Where God is operating, it is always possible for us to see only the work of nature because God is the formal cause, the intrinsic principle of being, although God is not identical with being itself[1150]. "God is dynamically interior to creation, gradually bringing all things to their full being as Trinity-in-unity by a single creative act spanning all time. God does act outside creation, but also from within, at the core of each element, by animating the sphere of being from within"[1151].

[1149] DELIO, *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being*, 45.
[1150] Cf. DELIO, *Unbearable Wholeness of Being*, 123-125.
[1151] DELIO, *Unbearable Wholeness of Being*, 124-125.

Inspirited by the view of John Paul the Second[1152] on relation between *fides et ratio*, and most of all by the reformative figure of Pope Francis, – indeed she writes: "there is no greater visible model of catholicity at present than the Argentinean Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis"[1153] – Delio proposes the idea of a "revisiting catholicity"[1154]. She claims that "Catholicity invites us to wake up, open our eyes, and reach the stars to create a new world together by becoming a new community of life"[1155]. Through the new spirit proposed by the Holy Father, the Franciscan sister sees that "there is an urgency today to reconnect cosmology and catholicity, not as abstract concepts, but as reconciliation of modern science and religion"[1156]. What is urgent for our time is an "option for whole".

6.4. Back to Analogy of Three-fold Causality

Now, to answer the questions posed in the introduction, we turn to the principle of the "duplice fontalità trinitaria"[1157]: First is that Father as the *plenitude fontalis* who generates the Son and Holy Spirit; and the second is that the Father, in the Son and with the Spirit produce all the creatures (*est principium omnium creaturarum*). The paternity, in the freedom of love, is the original source of all the potency which can be read in the *book* of creation. Our discourse on the multidimensionality of creation, on the theory of evolution for instance, is nonsense, without a comprehensive reflection on the Triune God.

[1152] On September 21-26, 1987, the pope sponsored a study week on science and religion at Castel Gandolfo. On June 1, 1988, reflecting on the results of this conference, he sent a very positive and encouraging letter to the director of the Vatican Observatory steering a middle course between a separation and a fusion of the disciplines. The pope writes: "Science can purify religion from error and superstition, while religion purifies science from idolatry and false absolutes. Each can draw the other into a wider world, a world in which both can flourish". See POPE JOHN PAUL II, "Letter to Rev. George V. Coyne S.J., Director of the Vatican Observatory", in *Science and Theology: The New Consonance* (Ted Peters, ed.), Boulder CO, Westview Press, 1999, 57; see also also D. WARNER, *Knowledge for Love: Franciscan Science as the Pursuit of Wisdom*, p. xi.

[1153] DELIO, *Making All Things New*, 184.

[1154] DELIO, *Making All Things New*, 175.

[1155] DELIO, *Making All Things New*, xxi.

[1156] DELIO, *Making All Things New*, xix.

[1157] TODISCO, "La carne Abitata", 18.

In the second chapter of this study we have applied the *communio* to express the interrelation of the Divine Person. It is referred to again as a clue to comprehend the analogy of creation (*extern relation*). After his analytic study on theological and philosophical concept of *communio*, Greshake argues on a principle of hermeneutic for analogy of creation in the context of evolution. Creation is comprehended as a process toward a fulfillment point. The evolutionary event reveals the path of Trinity and its gradual process proceeds to a participation in the Triune God[1158]. Based on the Trinitarian theology of medieval and modern theologians, Greshake directs our attention to a beautiful hermeneutic on triple terms: *auto-organization*, *differentiation*, and *complexity*. The point we want to stress is that in a certain sense, speaking analogically, the terms revisit the theological idea of Trinitarian intelligence in Bonaventure's system. We proceed to explain these terms.

First, the term *auto-organization* or *auto-production of creature*; it is associated to the Father. This fact has a good theological grounding, as it surfaces the questions of causality. How can we explain the emergence of the primordial living being?[1159] Father places the universe from love, he is the origin of creation, the absolute Being and Goodness; he is the final consummation of the whole story. Herein, is applied Bonaventure's point of departure: "*quanto aliquid prius tanto fecundius est et aliorum principium*"[1160].

Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology, as this study has shown, proceeded from the *primitas* of the Father. This property of the Father indicates the *auctoritas* in the order of origin, the supreme Goodness. As the first person, Father is *fons vitae*, the only person without origin, and being so receives nothing from the other two persons. Analyzing the *innascibilitas* as Father's personal property, the Franciscan saint claims that it has both negative and positive sense. Negatively it indicates a lack of source; but positively it indicates fecundity. As the absolutely primary of

---

[1158] GRESHAKE, *Il Dio Unitrino*, 303-314.
[1159] GRESHAKE, *Il Dio Unitrino*, 309.
[1160] *I Sent*. d. 2, a. u., q. 2 (I, 53).

love, the Father is absolutely fecund. Bonaventure refers to this absolute fecundity of the Father as *fontalis plenitudo* or fountain-fullness. The foundation of the reflection, as we have seen in the second chapter, is the notion of self-diffusive, self-transcending, and self-communicating love that Bonaventure inherited from the thoughts of Dionysius and Richard of St. Victor.

Second, the term *differentiation*; it is associated to the Son. As we have explained earlier, in the evolution of the universe, there is a process of differentiation: The simplest form of life increases into a more distinctive form, and as such, it becomes more permanent. It is like a new being which evolves into a perfect or a better element than the first one which was simple. But this auto-perfection is not a separation, since its 'improved' being results from the auto-production of the first living being. In the process of life, each part is characterized by points of connection within and between them. There is, so to speak, fecundity within each entity which enables it to produce a new and a better entity.

In Bonaventure's Christology, one of the most important points is the doctrine of *exemplarity*. In this respect, Bonaventure speaks of the Word as the eternal Art, the perfect expression of God's self-communicative love. Being the exemplar par excellence of creation, the Son is the ontological model of other beings. In the second person of Trinity, the divine idea is permanent in the sense that it becomes the *convenience* of the entire universe; he is the *medium* of human knowledge. In *Itinerarium* we have seen that the boundless fecundity of the Father expresses itself in the generation of the Son. It is in the Son that the fecundity of the Father finds it's perfect Image; and it is from the Son, that all creation emerges, and it is through him, as exemplar, that all creatures back to their Creator. In *De reductio*, Bonaventure claims that all human disciplines lead back to God as their origin; and this *reductio* is a journey through a *medium*, that is the divine Word.

Third, the term *complexity* is associated to the Holy Spirit. How can the process of evolution involving the development production entities possible? This

phase designs a new element. It is a phase of complexity, a capacity that goes beyond the permanent being to become more complex, creating a new element, more distinct, but remains in harmony with the previous fragment. This complexity is a harmony. There is discontinuity and continuity, a connected inter system. In sum, there is reciprocal relation of one and many. Delio defines, "Evolution is a process marked by novelty, creativity, and futurity; new entities rise up out of the old as elements become more complex and convergent"[1161].

As shown in the second chapter, one of the crucial terms Bonaventure uses for the Holy Spirit is *nexus* (bond). The Holy Spirit is bond to the Father and Son. The Father and Son communicate, therefore, through the Holy Spirit. Beyond his oneness of person is the fact that the Spirit is the expression of love. In the Holy Spirit the plurality is nothing but unity, an integrated expression of complexity. The Holy Spirit is properly a distinct bond of the Father and Son in the sense that he is their mutual love[1162].

In this manner of interpretation, it is significant to note that the most vital characteristic of the third divine Person is *donum*. The Spirit opens the new possibility, a new gift. For the Franciscan Doctor, to be a gift is constitutive property of Holy Spirit. It is to say that creation is an open-ended process. We take note that the above statements present new surprises or mystery in creation beyond the logic of science. The freedom in creature is expressed, because creation is not a deterministic pole between God and humanity, but the expression of abundant love of God. "The spirit is the absolute freedom of God to love and to create anew in love. God, therefore, is freely in love with everything that comes to be and, as such, is the paradoxical mystery of love: emptiness and fullness"[1163].

[1161] DELIO, *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being*, 18-19.
[1162] COUSINS, "The Two Poles of St. Bonaventure's Theology", 257.
[1163] DELIO, *Making all things New*, 177.

The theological insight which surfaces here is that the Triune God is love, and love is no other but freedom. "Evolution means that nature does not operate according to fixed laws but by the dynamic interplay of law, chance, and deep time; meaning one cannot understand natural process apart from developmental categories. The interaction of forces creates a dynamic process of unfolding life, pointing to the fact that nature is incomplete; there are no fixed essences. Instead, nature is consistently oriented toward new and complex life"[1164]. In scientific language, for example in the theory of quantum wholeness, the process of life operates not only by a single particle-wave in isolation, but rather the way the system operates as a whole; the parts cannot be separated from the whole. "The quantum world is a continuous dance of energy in which relationships form reality"[1165]. And one migh say that human organs are 'irreducibly complex'.

The above passages point out that the creation is a "becoming", it is in the process of fulfillment; and within this process God is all in all. It is plausible to say that, as God in itself is perfect *communion* and *communication*, we can also speak (even though human language is contingent) about the analogy of relation in the universe[1166]. The evolution is simply a process of becoming, in which a simple result becomes a more complex one, there emerges a more perfect being as synthesis but is still in communion with the primordial one. In other words, there is a process of interconnection in the process of evolution, thus there is present communion and communication between living beings[1167].

Seen in this perspective, Greshake then claims that God is the perfect communion. The threefold distinctive movements of the same moment – auto-organization, differentiation, and complexity – in a certain sense, is a vague analogy of the Triune God. As a reality enabled and sustained by the Triune God, the creature must be produced from itself what should be emerged as the early form of

---

[1164] DELIO, "Evolution and the rise of the Secular God", 40.
[1165] DELIO, *Making all things New*, 60-61.
[1166] Cf. GRESHAKE, *Il Dio Unitrino*, 304.
[1167] Cf. GRESHAKE, *Il Dio Unitrino*, 306-307.

life. In this context, it opens a new possibility of unity, as to create means to make in unity, in harmony, and in order to arrive in finality; in summary, to be in communion in the Omega Point[1168].

In this line of interpretation, Guardini speaks of *being* as an organic concept applying the definition of life in the human being. The concept of life in Bonaventure's view is derived from his expression "*vitae fluunt*" (life is flowing). Life is flowing continually from the eternal being; and it communicates throughout *sensus* and *motus*. From life is derived *sensus* and *motus* (*vitae influentiam quantum ad sensum et motum*)[1169]. To receive life (*recipere vitam*) means to receive movement and sense (*recipere motum et sensum*). The term *sensus* refers to the totality of taste, while *motus* refers to the totality of impulse and the processes of movement. In this dynamics there is a harmony of the whole system[1170]. In summary, there is "language of God"[1171] in the whole process of life.

A good example of this principle is the relation between human body and soul. The soul is the center and principle of human *complexio*. The soul is the principle for the unity of life. In the complexity of the human body, the soul places itself as the core of *organisatio*; the soul is the principle of *motum et sensum*. Guardini notes that in medical or natural philosophy language, we know that the heart is the *minor mundus* of our whole body. "*Medium maioris mundi est sol,*

[1168] Cf. GRESHAKE, *Il Dio Unitrino*, 312.

[1169] *I Sent.*, d. 8., p. 2, a. u, q. 3 (I, 171a) [in GUARDINI, *Bonaventura*, 542] .

[1170] Cf. GUARDINI, *Bonaventura*, 542-543.

[1171] FRANCIS COLLINS, *The Language of God. A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*, Free Press, NY/London/Toronto/Sydney, 2006. Francis Sellers Collins is an American physician-geneticist noted for his discoveries of disease genes and his leadership of the Human Genome Project. His professional knowledge in these fields convinced him that the beauty and symmetry of human genes and genomes strongly testifies in favor of a wise and loving Creator. But God, he believes, does not need to intervene in the process of bodily evolution. He holds for a theory of theistic evolutinonism which he designates as the 'Bio-Logos' position. He writes: "Toady we are learning the language in which God created life. We are gaining ever more awe for the complexity, the beauty, and the wonder of God's most divine and sacred life" (p. 2). For more treatment on Collins's *Language of God*, see EVERY DULLES, *Church and Society. The Laurence J. McGinley Lectures, 1988-2007*, Fordham University Press, NY., 2008, p. 513-514.

medium minoris est cor"[1172]. From the heart is derived the diffusion of life. In sum, in the whole system there is an *unitas nexus* between every single part[1173].

Bonaventure situates the terms *complexio* and *organizatio* of beings almost in the context of the universe (*universitas rerum*). In the universe, there exists the so-called *mundus maior* (*major order*) and *mundus minor* (*minor order*). There is reciprocal *influentia* between things and together they move into a unity. In the physical world, there is a reciprocal influence within primitive material: the major material has particular influence upon the inferior. Hence, a single thing has autonomy but at the same time it holds the plurality characteristic of a system. These various phenomena figuring harmonic relation between systems; designate that life is an organized complexity. In other words, there is order in the universe, and this order is oriented into finality[1174]. Guardini reassumes:

> "The totality of being and its singularity circumstance establish together a unity; a singularity, therefore, is not merely a case or a part [of the structure], it is rather an insider which from the beginning has been participating within the totality of the whole structure; as a single being attributes to the totality, so the totality, from the beginning is oriented to the multiple of every single element which is relatively autonomous. It deals, therefore, with a balance relation between differentiation and integration, between association and separation"[1175].

The examples presented in this chapter recall the fundamental ideal of the Triune God. The Triune God is the ultimate Being, but Being is Love; God is substance but substance is relational; God is One but the highest unity is the unity of plurality in love. Expounding from this fundamental metaphysics, Bonaventure's system suggests the need for a sense of wholeness, a sense of inter-relatedness of all elements that make up the melody of the cosmos. This idea evidently emerged from the principle that the Trinity is seen as a supreme creative love and goodness, the

---

[1172] *Hexaëm.*, I, 19 (quoted in GUARDINI, *Bonaventura*, 544).
[1173] Cf. GUARDINI, *Bonaventura*, 543.
[1174] Cf. GUARDINI, *Bonaventura*, 552-555.
[1175] GUARDINI, *Bonaventura*, 659.

fount from which all created reality pours forth. The mystery of the Trinity tells us that God is through and through relational[1176].

God's ultimate reality cannot be located in substance (what is in itself) but only in personhood: what God is toward another. God exists as the mystery of persons in communion. God exists in freedom and ecstasies. Only in communion can God be what God is, and only in communion can God be at all. The revelation of God as love (Jn. 4: 13) designates that God is the most dynamic, relational, and the most personal love, the love of all love. This dynamic personal relatedness of infinite love means that creation is not a mere external act of God; rather, it emerges out of the innermost depths of Trinitarian life. The drama of creation is the drama of Trinitarian life. Trinity is not merely the condition of evolution; indeed evolution is Trinity unfolding space-time in the entire universe[1177].

As it has been argued, Bonaventure sustains that metaphysics is concerned with the knowledge of all beings according to their ideal causes, tracing them back to the first principle from which they proceeded, that is, to God, in as far as God is the *beginning*, the *end*, and the *exemplar*"[1178]. This terms indicate clearly the key insight of Bonaventure's theological-metaphysical system: "This is the whole of our metaphysics: it is about *emanation*, *exemplarity*, and *consummatio* (*return*); that is, to be illumined by spiritual rays and to be led back to the Supreme Being"[1179].

It has been averred also that Bonaventure's metaphysics of love is based on the three closely related Trinitarian terms: *primacy*, *fecundity*, and *communicability*. This is to say that, for the Franciscan, the Father is primal and self-diffusive; the Son is that person eternally generated by the Father's self-diffusive goodness, thus

---

[1176] Cf. HAYES, "Is Creation Window to Divine?", 94-95.

[1177] Cf. DELIO, *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being*, 69-71.

[1178] *Red. art.*, 4 (V, 321a): "Metaphysica circa cognitione omnium entium quae reducit ad unum primum principium, a quo exierunt secundum rationes ideales; sive ad Deum in quantum principium, finis et exemplar" (English trans., Hayes, 43).

[1179] *Hexaëm.*, II, 17 (V, 332).

the total personal expression of the Father; and the Holy Spirit which proceeds from the Father and Son in an act of full freedom[1180].

The deeper source and basis for such a threefold causality is manifested also in God's *power*, *wisdom*, and *goodness*[1181]. These three divine attributes are then further related to the three Divine Persons[1182]. The connection which is thus established between the three phases of creation and the three Persons in God shows the created world as the implementation of the economy of the Blessed Trinity. The first phase corresponds to the Father, who is the originating principle for the other two Divine Persons. The second phase has its parallel in the Son, who is the perfect image of the Father. God has Idea in mind and projects that Idea externally to bring forth the created universe. The universe therefore can be seen as a work of art that expresses the divine Idea, which is the Word of God. The third phase is comparable to the Holy Spirit, who, as the bond of divine love, completes and terminates the inner life of God, so that the ring of divine procession is closed and perfect[1183].

In the same line of hermeneutics, Haught speaks of three *infinites* in theological general world view. One is *immense* and the other the *infinitesimal*. But there is also a third infinite, that is the infinite of *complexity*, or we may call this the intricate patterning of the infinite of *relationality*. In a cell or organism, as we have noted earlier, every component is so interior to, and constitutive of, the identity of every other that we cannot understand an organism by taking it apart. If we dissect it, we murder it. An organism is a bundle of connections that interlace, overlap, and feed back into one another in an endless dynamic interplay. To isolate any part of this network is to miss its meaning altogether[1184].

[1180] McGinn, "The Dynamism of the Trinity in Bonaventure and Meister Eckhart", 142; Cf. Hayes, Introduction in *Disputed Question on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 51.
[1181] *Hexaëm.*, XVI, 9 (V, 404b); Cf. Hayes, *Bonaventure. Mystical Writings*, 58.
[1182] *Brevil.*, par I, c. 6 (V, 215b).
[1183] Cf. Schaefer, "St. Bonaventure on Man in Creation", 265-266.
[1184] Haught, *Christianity and Science*, xiii.

What then are the roles of faith and theology to make a world embedded in the three infinites, the immense, the infinitesimal, and the complex? Haught sees that there are three possibilities in answering the question. Having denied the two extreme approaches of those who see no relation between faith and science – such that each one deals on things completely unrelated – he finally proposes the *convergence* option (the model we have briefly explained above). Haught writes: "one can embrace the three infinites, or better, embraced them, in such a way as to read them as invitations to an unprecedented magnification of the sense of God creation, Christ, and redemption"[1185]. Is not he talking about triadic analogy?

We can say that such an analogy is not strange. It designates that, for Bonaventure, "there is something constitutively relational in God's own being ad intra that enables us to understand the created world in which we live ad extra"[1186]. Viewing the mystery of the Trinity in terms of the doctrine of exemplarity, Bonaventure unfolds consistently the Trinitarian vision of the universe. Christ is the metaphysical center, the ground of all created reality. For him, the Trinitarian fullness of divine goodness explodes into creatures which are not God, but God's self expression. Speaking of analogy, one might say that every creature, therefore, is understood as an aspect of God's self expression in the world[1187].

Conclusion

From Bonaventure's view, what is evolution's relation with the faith in the Triune God? What is the urgency of dialogue between theology, philosophy and science? The main point we have proposed in this chapter, therefore, is the pursuit of wisdom: Science cannot provide the wholeness we seek, hence it must partner with religion and spirituality; and vice versa theology can no more close in itself as a document archive. "To be sure, scientist and philosophers have given us a great number of gifts in the forms of engineering, medicine and education, but it would

---

[1185] HAUGHT, *Christianity and Science*, xiv-xv.
[1186] OSBORNE, *A Theology of the Church for the Third Millennium*, 322.
[1187] Cf. HAYES, *Bonaventure Mystical Writings*, 40-42.

be naïve to ignore that today's research institutions and machinery are leading us to the extinction of human life"[1188].

Hence, philosophy in the proper sense of word, *philo-sophia*, is but a stage in the acquisition of true knowledge, which is wisdom, must also be a cognitive instrument to facilitate this dialogue. Indeed, Bonaventure claims that philosophy is the way to other knowledge, not the goal; "whoever comes to stay there, falls into darkness"[1189]. His rejection of Aristotle is directed only against a philosophy separated from theology, "not anti-philosophical in an absolute sense", but "a battle against a self-sufficient philosophy standing over against the faith"[1190].

For Bonaventure, the formal structure of knowing is, in the end, *apophatic*, which is to say that all knowledge open up into its relationship to creation's creator, in its depth. Knowledge is not ordered to God horizontally, but vertically[1191]. All human knowledge must be in pursuit of truth; and in Bonaventure's Christian way, there is no tendency of "double truth", as only God the *Summum Bonum* is the final Truth. The intention of this chapter was not to demonstrate the existence of God neither to enter in a profound conversation with any particular case in the world of science. Our main scope was to propose a new pattern of thinking which might open a posibility of dialogue between theology and science, whereby in the *book* of creation we can readily read the "Trinitas fabricatrix" trace.

We claim that the Trinity is the "intelligent design" of creation. From this fundamental principle we speak of the analogy of triadic dimension. If God is the highest Good, and the nature of the highest Good is to be found in the highest form of love, then the mystery of the Trinity becomes the mystery of the primordial, self-communicative-love which is productive within the Godhead before it moves

---

[1188] WIRZBA, "Christian Theoria Physike", 216.
[1189] *De donis.*, IV, 12 (V, 476a): "Philosophica scientia via est ad alias scientias, sed qui ibi vult stare cadit in tenebras"; see SPEER, "Illumination and Certitude", 140.
[1190] RATZINGER, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, 160.
[1191] HUGES, "Reduction's Future", 241.

outside to create the universe. Therefore, out of these varied resources, Bonaventure crafts for us a vision of the divine as purest, loving, and self-communicative. God is the Creator of the entire universe, thus the Trinitarian God is Creator[1192].

In the case of dialogue between theology and science we have tried to show that Bonaventure's view on creative God has a relevant contribution for our contemporary world. Even though he was not aware of contemporary technology and science, nonetheless he has the intuition of "creative synergy" in the cosmos. This intuition is an invitation to awaken to a dynamic cosmos in which we are deeply related, and to seek the divine Word expressing itself in the rich fecundity of cosmic life. Kenan Osborne writes: "Bonaventure did not live in globalized world similar to ours. […]. Because of these limited horizons, Bonaventure did not see the implications that his creational approach would have for the world of the third millennium. It is our task to extrapolate beyond the limits of Bonaventure's horizon and situate a creational theology in the space-time of today"[1193].

[1192] Cf. HAYES, *Bonaventure. Mystical Writings*, 104-105.
[1193] OSBORNE, *A Theology of the Church for the Third Millennium*, 330.

CONCLUSION

In each chapter of this study we have underlined its conclusive point. Now we just need to give a highlight of it and to deal with some reflective insights which are in conformity with the purpose of the present study. From all we have said, we should put in evidence that, Bonaventure takes up Saint Francis's vision of creation and enriches it by relating it to some of the great philosophical insights that have helped humans to define their place in the world. Seen in this way, speaking of the recent recipient on this Franciscan world-view, Pope Francis's Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si*' is a good example which illumines brightly the implication of Saint Francis's intuition which revealed in his "Canticle of the Creation".

1. A Brief Highlight

In the *first chapter*, treating out the issue of the eternity of the world, we sustained that there is no great metaphysical system which is not faced with the problem of the first origin of things. In Bonaventure's Christian perspective, the answer of this metaphysical question is God the Creator of the world. Therefore, the need to answer the question of the origin of the world and to make sense of it as a whole, is not only an ultimate curiosity on the physical world, but an option to see the whole universe as an *order* of divine creative love in the story. Refuting the fatalistic consequence of an eternal world, we have presented the new paradigm in Bonaventure's theology of creation, that *exemplarism*: The Word of God is *ratio aeterna* of creation. The Word shares eternally all aspects of Father's nature; and the communicative love between them, in turn, produces the Holy Spirit.

Based on this Trinitarian-Christological principle, in the *second chapter*, we sustained that, in Bonaventure's view, God could not communicate himself in a finite way if he were not infinitely communicative in himself. The communicative nature of God is rooted in the self-diffusive which renders God Triune. To be good

315

means to communicate oneself; the divinity cannot remain a subsistent monad. Trinity is the perfect *communio* (*perichŏrēsis*): the mystery of being a person lies in the fact that the otherness and communion are not in contradiction but coincide. The mystery of the divine is love community itself. Based on this dogmatic principle, Bonaventure treated out the activity *ad extra* of the Triune God in creation. Going further than mere validation of Trinitarian dogma, he establishes the Trinitarian system as necessary metaphysical truth, thus as a paradigm to see the reality.

The concept of *communio* then illumines our treatment on three-fold analogy. As we have seen in the *third chapter*, the logic of *communio* is quite simple and direct. God is the creator of the entire universe. Therefore the Trinitarian God is the Creator. If the Trinitarian Creator is the exemplar, then all that comes forth in the universe is some way reflects that Trinitarian exemplar. In summary, the world lives in the embrace of the Trinity. Our treatment on the three-fold analogy is a paradigm to be able to see the centrality of Christ in our story. This Christological vision concerns with the principle that God unites all of creation to himself through the Incarnation, bringing it his lap in love. As one who is *capax Dei* ("capable of God"), the human being represents the noblest potency of the created order, since she/he is capable of receiving the personal communication of God.

The notion of the cosmos as the artwork of its Trinitarian Creator has a profound implications for the understanding of our relationship and responsibility regarding the cosmos. In the *last chapter* we have purposed to bring forward Bonaventure's theology of creation in dialogue with contemporary cosmological issue; this is an open-ended perspective, as is indicated by word *window* in the title of the fourth chapter. Although the science of evolution, marked by change toward greater complexity, would have been foreign for Bonaventure's Ptolemaic universe, the dynamic of change within evolution complements Bonaventure's emphasis on God as love and hence the dynamic relation between God and creation.

2. "Laudato Si'" and Option for the Whole

Having reflected on the theological reflections of Bonaventure's theology of creation, our final goal is how this can be practiced more, thus to reconsider some of its real consequences. We believe that Pope Francis's "Laudato Si" is an ecclesiastic voice of this option; therefore we will deal with some of its basic points. The need of dialogue between theology and science, as we have said, serves not only for a methodological change, but to reform our treatment on nature. The Holy Father names this option as an integral "ecological-conversion"[1194]. This conversion is an option for a new "ecological culture", which needs not only a technical remedy to each environmental problem, but a "distinctive way of looking at things, a way of thinking, policies, an educational program, a lifestyle and a spirituality"[1195].

Inspirited by Saint Francis's spirituality, the Holy Father address our universe as a "common home", which is "like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us"[1196]. Saint Francis "is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically"[1197].

Saint Francis's way of see the universe, said Pope Francis, "was so much more than intellectual appreciation or economic calculus, for to him each and every creature was a sister united to him by bonds of affection"[1198]. In Saint Francis attitude to the creature, his disciple Bonaventure, described that "from a reflection on the primary source of all things, filled with even more abundant piety, he would call creatures, no matter how small, by the name of 'brother' or 'sister'"[1199]. Such a

---

[1194] POPE FRANCIS, *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si'. On care of our Common Home*, 216-221. An example of study on the Ancyclic is DOMENICO PAOLETTI, "Il 'Cantico Delle Creature' Fonte Ispiratrice della Laudato Si' di Papa Francesco", in *MF*, 115 (2015), p. 408-424.
[1195] POPE FRANCIS, *Laudato Si'*, 111.
[1196] POPE FRANCIS, *Laudato Si'*, 1
[1197] POPE FRANCIS, *Laudato Si'*, 10.
[1198] POPE FRANCIS, *Laudato Si'*, 11.
[1199] *LegM*, VIII, 6: *FF* 1145 (POPE FRANCIS, *Laudato Si'*, 11).

way of life is a model for us to think and live authentically in the universe as an "universal fraternity"[1200].

The spiritual vision of Saint Francis challenges us to reflect that, "rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise"[1201]. The Holy Father invites us to see our universe "not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it"[1202]. In this world-view the Pope criticizes the business orientation of technology: "Technology, which, linked to business interests, is presented as the only way of solving these problems, in fact proves incapable of seeing the mysterious network of relations between things and so sometimes solves one problem only to create others"[1203].

The theological basic of that option is the communion of the Triune God. In the "Canticle of the Creatures", the *poverello*, Saint Francis contemplated creation and sings of it as internal to the communal trace of the Triune God. The Holy Father dedicated this theme on an entire topic namely: "The Trinity and relationship between Creatures"[1204]. Quoting the *Disputed Question on the Trinity* of Bonaventure, he writes: "The Franciscan saint teaches us that *each creature bears in itself a specifically Trinitarian structure* […]. In this way, he points out to us the challenge of trying to read reality in a Trinitarian key"[1205].

This point has an important consequence: As the image of God, "the human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures". In the cosmological context, it is

[1200] POPE FRANCIS, *Laudato Si'*, 228.
[1201] POPE FRANCIS, *Laudato Si'*, 11.
[1202] POPE FRANCIS, *Laudato Si'*, 19.
[1203] POPE FRANCIS, *Laudato Si'*, 20.
[1204] POPE FRANCIS, *Laudato Si'*, 238-242.
[1205] *Myst. Trin*, q. 1, a. 2 concl. (POPE FRANCIS, *Laudato Si'*, 239).

considered that in the universe "everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity"[1206].

3. *Rectus* versus *Incurvatus*: Back to man's original status

Reflecting the original state of man as the image of the Triune God, as we have seen from the Pope's words, at the end of this study let us deal briefly with Bonaventure's reflection on human statues as emerged in his reading on the passage of Ecclesiastes 7: 29: "Only this have I found out: God made humankind straight, and human beings have entangled[1207] themselves in endless questioning". The key point of this passage is that God had made human kind *straight*[1208].

The text contains two elements, namely that human kind's right formation and uprightness is form God, and this is alluded to when it is said that God made humankind straight. The other element is the fact that humankind's miserable deviation come from itself, and this is alluded to when it is said that humankind is entangled in endless questioning. Humanity's creation is touched upon when it is said that God made humankind straight. The above Ecclesiastes' text shows that not only did God make rectitude possible for humankind by endowing it with God's own image, but God also actually made humankind upright by turning (*converses*) humanity toward God. Thus it is that humankind is upright when intelligence is consonant with the highest truth in knowing, when the will is in conformity with the highest goodness in loving, and the powers conjoined with the supreme power in acting. This happens when a human person turns totally toward God[1209].

[1206] POPE FRANCIS, *Laudato Si'*, 240.

[1207] The Vulgate reads *miscuerit* (mixt up) while Bonaventure has *immiscuit* (entangled).

[1208] Prologue of Commentary on Book II of the *Sentences*; see *The Works of St. Bonaventure. Writing on the Spiritual Life*, Introduced and Notes by F. Edward Coughlin, OFM, Franciscan Institute Publication, Saint Bonaventure University, Saint Bonaventure NY., 2006, p. 8-12, 347-349; see also *Red. art.*, 23-25 (V, 325) [English trans., Hayes, 59, 61].

[1209] E. COUGHLIN, *The Works of St. Bonaventure. Writing on the Spiritual Life*, 348-349.

Treating this theme, the point we want to reflect here is Bonaventure's consideration on the consequence of the human failure to use freedom rightly, the first human turns away from higher goods and turned toward the self through disordered desire (*concupiscentia*) and the desire for temporal goods (*cupiditas*), that is sin. Therefore, as Bonaventure imaged it, the human person became bent over (*incurvatus*) as opposed to being right and upright (*rectus*) as created originally[1210]. Someone bent cannot see the world around; there is no light!

We would say that human tendency of to be *incurvatus* has a horizontal consequence: domination of cosmos. The cosmos is treated more with scientific-technical logic neglecting the designation of divine gratuitous love in it; the logic of domination dims out the message of eternal goodness in the cosmos; the cosmos becomes object of power and not of a global solidarity. Hence, the right order of the original state of creation becomes disorder. Human inner orientation to infinite goodness was disoriented by the desire for temporal good which serves for human benefits. Pope Francis describes it in most concrete words: "business interests".

Humankind needs therefore, to reconsider his original state: *upright* as created. To be *upright* means to be able to contemplate the cosmos as a sacrament of divine's *power*, *wisdom* and *goodness*. A model of this is the "Canticle of the Creatures" in light of which Saint Francis's gaze is fixed on God, the highest good. Bonaventure's paradigm of the Trinity creative, which is rooted in Saint Francis's deep faith, prerequisites for a possible rethinking of the role of scientific-technical knowledge in the era of globalization. Both the cosmological and anthropological issues are a matter of theology that calls for a conversion of a person to Trinitarian agape – and we would say that this is the deepest meaning of *reductio* in Bonaventure's method. This calling is needed "not for any esthetic motivation, but for a spiritual motivation"[1211], the faith in the Triune God, the most high, the

---

[1210] E. COUGHLIN, *The Works of St. Bonaventure. Writing on the Spiritual Life*, 10-11.
[1211] PAOLETTI, "Il 'Cantico Delle Creature' Fonte Ispiratrice della Laudato Si' di Papa Francesco", 411.

omnipotence, the most good, the creator of the universe. This conversion is a testimony of the Christian optimism for a future which is "beyond the sun",[1212] because "we are journeying towards our common home in heaven"[1213].

[1212] POPE FRANCIS, *Laudato Si'*, 243-246.
[1213] POPE FRANCIS, *Laudato Si'*, 243.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Sources

1.1. Holy Bible

THE NEW AMERICAN BIBLE. Translated from the Original Languages with Critical Use of All the Ancient Sources by Members of the Catholic Biblical Association. Sponsored by Bishop's Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Catholic Bible Publisher, Kansas, ed.1981-1982.

LA SACRA BIBBIA. Testo Bilingue Latino-Italiano (a cura di Fortunato Frezza), Libreria Editrice Vaticano, Città del Vaticano, 2015.

1.2. Patristic

AGOSTINO DI IPPONA, *La Trinità*, (edizione Latino-Italiano a cura di G. Catapano e B. Cillerai), Bompiani, Milano, 2012.

AGOSTINO DI IPPONA, *La Vera Religione*, (edizione Latino-Italiano, introduzione, traduzioni, note e indici di Antonio Pieretti), CN., 1995.

AGOSTINO DI IPPONA, *Le Confessioni* (testo Latino dell'edizione di M. Skutella riveduto da Michele Pellegrino, introduzione, traduzione, note e indici, a cura di Carlo Carena, CN., Rome, 1965.

AUGUSTINE S, *The Trinity*, (Introduction, translation and notes by Edmun Hill OP), New City Press/ Hyde Park, NY., 2012.

AUGUSTINE S, *City of God*, (English translation by Gerald G. Walsh et al, edited and abridged by Vernon J. Bourke, forward by E. Gilson), Image, NY., 2014.

DIONYSII AEROPAGITAE, *Operan Omnia Quae Extant*, et comentarii quibus illistrantur, studio et opera Balthasaris Corderii, Apud Garnier Fratres, Editore set J. P. Migne Successores, Parisiis, 1889.

GIOVANNI DAMASCENO, *De fide Orthodoxa*, (Italian translation and critical text by B. Kotter; introduction, philosophic commentary, bibliography, and note by M. Andolfo), Edizione San Clemente e Studio Domenicano, Bologna, 2013.

JOHN DAMASCENE, *De Fide Orthodoxa* (versions of Burgundio and Cerbanus, edited by E. M. Buytaert OFM), St. Bonaventure University, NY., 1955.

PSEUDO DIONYSIUS, *The complete Works*, (English translation by Colm Luibheid), Paulist Press, NY., 1987.

1.3.   Bonaventure

1.3.1. Critical Edition of Quaracchi

SANCTI BONAVENTURAE, *Opera Omnia*, vol. I-X, studio e cura PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi), 1882-1902.

1.3.2. Italian Translation

OPERE DI SAN BONAVENTURA. SERMONI TEOLOGICI/1 (Edizione latino-italiano a cura di J. G. Bougerol, C. D. Zotto, L. Sileo) CN., Roma, 1993.

    -*Riconduzione Delle Arti Alla Teologia* (traduzione di Silvana Martignoni);

    -*La Conoscenza di Cristo* (traduzione di Lettario Mauro);

    -*Il Mistero della Trinità* (traduzione di Gianfranco Zaggia);

    -*Itinerario Della Mente in Dio* (traduzione di Orlando Todisco).

OPERE DI SAN BONAVENTURA. SERMONI TEOLOGICI/1.*Collazioni Sull'Exaëmeron* (Edizione latino-italiano a cura di J. G. Bougerol, C. D. Zotto, L. Sileo, traduzione di Pietro Maranesi, introduzione, revisione e note a cura di Bernardino de Armellada, indici di J. G. Bougerol) CN., Roma, 1994.

OPERE DI SAN BONAVENTURA. SERMONI TEOLOGICI/2 (Edizione latino-italiano a cura di J. G. Bougerol, C. D. Zotto, L. Sileo), CN., Roma, 1995.

    -*Collazioni Sui Dieci Precetti* (traduzione di Pietro Maranesi);

    -*Collazioni Sui Sette Doni Dello Spirito Santo* (traduzione di Attilio Stendardi);

    -*Il Regno di Dio* (traduzione di Pietro Maranesi);

    -*Cristo Unico Maestro di Tutti* (traduzione di Renato Russo).

OPERE DI SAN BONAVENTURA. OPUSCOLI TEOLOGICI/2 *Breviloquio* (Edizione latino-italiano, traduzione di Mariano Aprea, revisione di Letterio Mauoro e Attilio Stendardi, introduzione e note di Letterio Mauro, Indici di J. G. Bougerol, a cura di J. G. Bougerol, C. D. Zotto, L. Sileo), CN., Roma, 1996.

1.3.3. English Translation

The Works OF ST BONAVENTURE, *Mystical Opuscola* (English translation by José de Vinck, Saint Anthony Guild Press, 1960.

Works of ST BONAVENTURE, *Six Days of Creation* (English translation by José De Vinck), Paterson N.J, Saint Anthony Guild Press, 1970.

Works of ST BONAVENTURE (I), *On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology* (translation, introduction and commentary by Zachary Hayes OFM), Franciscan Institute Publications Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 1996.

Works of ST BONAVENTURE (II revised and expanded), *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* (edited by Philotheus Boehner, OFM and Zachary Hayes, OFM), Franciscan Institute Publications Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2002.

Works of ST BONAVENTURE (III), *Disputed questions on the Mystery of the Trinity* (introduction and translation by Zachary Hayes, OFM), Franciscan Institute Publications Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2000.

Works of ST BONAVENTURE (IV), *Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ*, (introduction, translation and note by Zachary Hayes), Franciscan Institute Publications Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2005.

Works of ST BONAVENTURE, *Collations on the Ten Commandments* (VI) (introduction and translation by Paul J. Spaeth, edited by F. E. Coughlin), Franciscan Institute Publication Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 1995.

Works of ST BONAVENTURE (VII), *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* (translation and notes by Campion Murray, OFM and Robert J. Karris, OFM), Franciscan Institute Publication Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2005.

Works of ST BONAVENTURE (IX), *Breviloquium* (introduction, translation, notes by Dominic V. Monti, OFM), Franciscan Institute Publications Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2005.

Works of ST BONAVENTURE (X), *Writings on the Spiritual Life* (Introduction and Notes by F. Edward Coughlim, OFM), Franciscan Institute Publications Saint Bonaventure University, Saint Bonaventure, NY., 2006.

Works of ST BONAVENTURE (XIII), *Disputed Questions on Evangelical Perfection* (translation by Thomas Reist OFM Conv., and Robert Karris, OFM), Franciscan Institute Publications Saint Bonaventure University, Saint Bonaventure, NY., 2008.

Works of ST BONAVENTURE (XIV), *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (introduction and translation by Zachary Hayes, OFM., notes by

Robert J. Karris, OFM), Franciscan Institute Publications Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2000.

Works of ST BONAVENTURE (XVI), *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God* (translation and notes by R. E Houser and Timothy B. Noone), Franciscan Institute Publications Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2013.

1.4. Other Medieval Authors

ALEXANDER HALENSIS, *Summa Theologica*, vol. II, ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi), ex typographya Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1982.

ANSELMO D'AOSTA, *Monologio e Proslogio. Gaunilone Difesa dell'insipiente Risposta di Anselmo a Gaunilone* (introduzione, traduzione, note e apparati, a cura di Italo Sciuto), Bompiani, Milano, 2002.

ANSELM OF CANTERBURY, *The Major Work*, (English translation edited by Brian Davies & G. R. Evans), Oxford, NY, 1998.

BOEZIO DI DACIA, *Sull'eternità del Mondo*, (Italian translation by Luca Bianchi), Edizioni Unicopli, Milano, 2003.

FILIPPO IL CANCELLIERE, *Summa de bono* (edited by N. Wicki), Bern, 1985.

GUILLELMI ALTISSIODORENSIS, *Summa Aurea*, (J. Ribaillier, cura et studio), Paris-Grottaferrata, 1986.

JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *A Treatise on God as first principle* (Latin text and English translation by Allan B. Wolter), Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 1966.

PETRUS LOMBARDUS, *Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae*, editio tertia, ad fidem codicum antiquiorum restituta, vol. I-II, Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, Grottaferrata (Romae), 1971-1981.

PETER LOMABARD, *The Sentences*, (English translation by Giulio Silano), Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, 2010, 4 series.

RICHARD DE SAINT-VICTOR, *De Trinitate*, (Texte critique avec introduction, notes et tables, Publié par JEAN RIBAILLIER), Paris, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, Sorbone, 1958.

RICCARDO DI S. VITTORE, *La Trinità* (traduzione, introduzione, note e indici, a cura di Mario Spinelli), CN., Roma, 1990.

RICHARD OF SAINT VICTOR, *On the Trinity*, (English translation and introduction by Ruben Angelici), Cascade Books, Eugene/Oregon, 2011.

ROBERT GROSSETESTE, *Hexaëmeron*, Richard C. Dales, Servus Gieben (eds.), Oxford, NY., 1982.

SANCTI THOMAE DE AQUINO, *Opera Omnia*, *De aeternitate mundi*, Editori di San Tommaso, Santa Sabina, Roma, 1976.

S. TOMMASO D'AQUINO, *Commento alle Sentenze di Pietro Lombardo – e testo integrale di Pietro Lombardo*, trad. Carmelo Pandolfi e P. Roberto Coggi, Studio Domenicano, Bologna, 2000.

S. TOMMASO D'AQUINO, *La Somma Teologica – La Creazione*. Traduzione e commento a cura dei Domenicani italiani testo latino dell'edizione leonina, Casa editrice Adriano Salani, Firenze, 1972.

S. TOMMASO D'AQUINO, *La potenza divina*, a cura di Battista Mondin, Studio Domenicano, Bologna, 2003.

S. THOMAS AQUINAS *on Creation. Quastiones Disputatae de Potentia Dei Q. 3*, (translated and note by S. C. Selner-Wright), The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, 2011.

1.5. Philosophical Literature

ARISTOTELE, *Metafisica* (introduzione, traduzione, note e apparati di Giovanni Reale), Bompiani, Milano, 2000.

BARNES J., *Complete Works* of ARISTOTLE, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N. J., 1991.

PLATO, *Timaeus*, (English translation by Donald J. Zeyl), Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis / Cambridge, 2000.

PROCLUS, *The Elements of Theology* (A revised text English translation, introduction and commentary by E. R. Dodds, second ed.), The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1963.

The Basic Works of ARISTOTLE (edited and with an introduction by Richard McKeon, Random Hause, NY, 1941.

1.6. Ecclesial Document and Papal Letters

DENZINGER H., *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (Italian-Latin edition, P. HÜNERMANN, ed.), EDB, 2003, Bologna.

JOHN PAUL II (POPE), *Letter to Rev. George V. Coyne S.J. Director of the Vatican Observatory*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1988.

FRANCIS (POPE), *Laudato Si'. On Care for our Common Home*, L'osservatore Romano, Città del Vaticano, 2015.

1.7. Other Document

GEORG CANTOR'S Letters of to IGNATIUS JEILER OFM., available in *Archivio Storico Generale OFM*, collocation SM 1347, SQ 5, 3 (www.ofm.org).

2. Studies

2.1. Philosophy

BETTETINI M., BIANCHI, L., MARMO, C., PORRO P., *Filosofia Medievale*, Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milano, 2004.

GILSON E., *Being and Some Philosophers*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, 1949.

– *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy* (Eng. trans., by A. H. C. Downes), University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1991 (rep. 2007), p. 51-52.

GRANT E., *A History of Natural Philosophy. From the Ancient World to the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge University, NY., 2008.

HOUSER R. E., *Philip the Chancellor*, in *A companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Jorge J. E. Gracia and T. B. Noone eds.), Blackwell, 2006, p. 534-535.

VAN STEENBERGHEN F., *The Philosophical Movement in the Thirteenth Century. Lecture given under the auspices of the Department of Scholastic Philosophy the Queen's University, Befast*, Nelson, Toronto, 1955.

2.2. Patristic

DUNHAM S., *The Trinity and Creation in Augustine. An Ecological Analysis*, State University of New York Press, NY., 2008.

MORGAN J., *A Radiant Theology: The concept of Light in Pseudo-Dionysius*, in *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 55.1-4 (2010), p. 127-147.

PETERSEN A., *A Good Being would Envy none life. Athanasius on the Goodness of God*, in *Theology Today*, 55.1 (1998), p. 59-68.

ROGERS K. A. *St. Augustine on Time and Eternity*, in *ACPQ*, 70. 2 (1996), p. 207-223.

ROREM P., *Pseudo Dionysius. A commentary on the texts and an introduction to their influence*, Oxford University Press, Oxford/NY., 1993.

WOLFSON H. A., *Patristic Arguments against the Eternity of the World*, in *HTR*, 59 (1966), p. 351-367.

2.3. Bonaventure

ANDERSON C., *A Call to Piety. Saint Bonaventure's Collations on the Six Days*, Franciscan Press Quincy University, Quincy, 2002.

BALDER S., *St. Bonaventure and the Demonstrability of a Temporal Beginning*: *A Reply to Richard Davis*, in *ACPQ*, 71 (1997), p. 225-236.

BEGASSE DE DHAEM A., *Cristologia trinitaria e teologia delle religioni. Il 'triplice' Verbum in Bonaventura e J. Dupuis*", in *Greg*, 96 (2015), p. 791-817.

BENSON J., *The Christology of the Breviloquium* in *A Companion to Bonaventure* (J. M. Hammond et al., eds.), Brill, 2014, p. 247-287.

–   *Structure and Meaning in St. Bonaventure's Quaestiones Disputate De Scinentia Christi*", in *FracStud*, 62 (2004), p. 67-90.

–   *Bonaventure's De reductione artium ad theologiam and its Early Receptions as an Inaugural Sermon*, in *ACPQ*, 85.1 (2011), p. 7-24.

BERTI E., *Aristotelismo e antiaristotelismo in Bonaventura*, *Itinerarium 5*, in *DerSer*, 40-41 (1993-1994), p.7-15.

BESCHIN, G., *La creatura simbolo del Creatore in San Bonaventura alla luce della ragione e della fede*, in *DerSer*, 47 (2000), p. 43-64.

BIGI C., *La Dottrina della luce in S. Bonaventura*, in *DivThom*, 64 (1961), p. 396-442.

–   *La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo in Bonaventura*, in *Ant*, 39 (1964), p. 437-488.

–   *La dottrina della temporalità e del tempo in San Bonaventure*, in *Ant*, 40 (1965), p. 96-151.

BONANSEA, B. M., *The question of Eternal World in the teaching of St. Bonaventure*, in *FrancStud*, 34 (1974), p. 7-33.

BOUGEROL J., *Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite*, in *Actes du Colloque Saint Bonaventure* 9-12 Septembre (1968), p. 33-123.

–   *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure* (English translation by José de Vink), St. Anthoni Guild Press, NY., 1964.

–   *Saint Bonaventure et saint Anselme*, in *Ant*, 47 (1972), p. 333-361.

–   *Concordia e dissenso nel cammino verso la verità secondo Bonaventura*, in *DrSer*, 35 (1988), p. 23-33.

BRADI I., *St. Bonaventure's Doctrine of Illumination*: *Reactions Medieval and Modern*, in *The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*, 5. 2 (1974), p. 27-35.

BROWN B., *Bonaventure on the Impossibility of Beginning-less World: Why the Traversal Argument works*, in *ACPQ*, 79 (2005), p. 365-409.

COCCIA A., *Antologia del Pensiero Filosofico di S. Bonaventura* (*1274-1974*), Edizione Lazio Francescano, Roma, 1975.

COLT A., *A Call to Piety*: *Saint Bonaventure's Collations on the Six Days*, Franciscan Press Quincy University, Quincy, 2002.

COUSINS E., *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 1978.

–   *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites. A respond to Critics*, in *TheolStud*, 42 (1981), p. 277-290.

–   *The Two Poles of St. Bonaventure's Theology*, in *S. Bonaventura 1274-1974. Vol. II*, p. 153-176.

–   *Teilhard de Chardin et saint Bonaventure*, in *ÈtFranc*,19 (1969) p.175-186.

CULLEN C., *Bonaventure*, Oxford, NY., 2006.

–   *Bonaventure's Philosophical Method*, in *A Companion to Bonaventure* (J. M. Hammond et al., eds.), Brill, 2014, p. 121-163.

DE ROSA L., *Dalla Teologia della Creazione All'antropologia della Bellezza. Il Linguaggio simbolico chiave interpretativa del pensiero di San Bonaventura da Bagnoregio*, Cittadella, Assisi, 2011.

DAVIS R., *Bonaventure and the Arguments for the Impossibility of an Infinite Temporal Regression*, in *ACPQ*, 70 (1996), p. 361-380.

DE VINCK J., *Two Aspects of the Theory of the 'Rationes Seminales' in the Writings of Bonaventure*, in *S. Bonaventure 1274-1974. Vol. III*, p. 307-316.

DEL ZOTTO C., *Sapienza come amore nel Dottore Serafico*, in *DrSer*, 33 (1986), p. 29-58.

DELIO, I., *Bonaventure's Metaphysics of the Good*, in *TheolStud*, 60 (1999), p. 228-246.

–   *Is Creation Eternal?*, in *TheolStud*, 66 (2005), p.279-303.

–   *Theology, Metaphysics, and the Centrality of Christ*, in *TheolStud*, 68 (2007), p. 254-273.

–   *Is Creation Really Good? Bonaventure's Position*, in *ACPQ*, 83 (2009), p. 3-22.

–   *From Metaphysics to Kataphysics*: *Bonaventure's 'Good' Creation*, in *SJT*, 64. 2 (2011), p. 161-179.

–   *Crucified Love. Bonaventure's Mysticism of the Crucified Christ*, Franciscan Press, Chicago, 1998.

–   *Simply Bonaventure. An Introduction to His Life, Thought, and Writings*, New City Press, NY., 2001.

–   *Theology, Spirituality and Christ the Center: Bonaventure's Synthesis*, in *A Companion to Bonaventure* (J. M. Hammond et al., eds.), Brill, 2014, p. 361-402.

DI MAIO A., *Piccolo glossario bonaventuriano. Prima introduzione al pensiero e al lessico di Bonaventura da Bagnoregio*, Aracne, Roma, 2008.

DOURLEY J., *God, Life and the Trinity in the Theologies of Paul Tillich and St. Bonaventure*, in *S. Bonaventure 1274-1974. Vol. IV*, p. 271-282.

ENNIS H. J., *The place of love in Bonaventure*, in *S. Bonaventure 1274-1974. Vol. IV*, p. 129-145.

EVOY MC J., *Microcosm and Macrocosm in the writings of St. Bonaventure*, in *S. Bonaventure 1217-1274. Vol. II*, p. 315-316.

GENACCHI G., *L'argomento intuitivo di S. Anselmo*, in *San Bonaventura Maestro di vita francescana e di sapienza. Atti del Congresso internazionale per il VII centenario di san Bonaventura da Bagnoregio Roma 19-26 settembre 1974* (a cura di A. Pompei), Pontificia facoltà teologica 'San Bonaventura', Roma, 1976, p. 110-125.

GHISALBERTI A., "*Ego sum qui sum*": *La tradizione platonica - agostiniana in San Bonaventura*, in *DrSer*, 40-41 (1993-1994), p.17-33.

GILSON E., *The philosophy of St. Bonaventure* (English trans. Dom Illtyd Trethowan and Frank J. Sheed), St. Anthony Guild, NY., 1965.

GOFF I., *Caritas in Primo. A study of Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of Trinity*, Academy of the Immaculate, New Bedford, 2015.

GUARDINI R., *Opera Omnia XVIII Bonaventura* (Italian translation, Edited by Ilario Tolomio), Morcelliana, Brescia, 2013.

HAMMOND J. *Bonaventure's Trinitarian Theology and the Fourfold Exegesis of Scripture*, in *CollFranc*, 79.3-4 (2009), p. 487-503.

HAYES Z., *Incarnation and Creation in the Theology of St. Bonaventure*, in *Studies Honoring Ignatius Charles Brady Friar Minor* (Romano Stephen and Conrad L. Harkins, eds.), The Franciscan Institute, NY., 1976, p. 309-329.

– *The meaning of Convenientia in the Metaphysics of St. Bonaventure*, in *FrancStud*, 34 (1974), p. 74-100.

– *Christology and Metaphysics in the Thought of Bonaventure*, in *Journal of Religion*, 58 (Supplement, 1978), p.82-95.

– *The Hidden Center Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St. Bonaventure*, The Franciscan Institute St Bonaventure University, NY., 1992.

– *Bonaventure.Mystery of the Triune God*, in *The History of Franciscan Theology* (K. Osborne, ed.),The Franciscan Institute St Bonaventure University, NY., 1994, p. 39-125.

– *Bonaventure Mystical Writings*, Crossroad, NY., 1999.

– *The Cosmos, a Symbol of the Divine*, in *Franciscan Theology of the Environment. An Introductory Reader* (Dawn M. Nothwehr, ed.), Franciscan Press Quincy University, Quincy, 2002, p. 249-267.

– *A New Reading of the Sources*, in *Franciscan Theology of the Environment. An Introductory Reader* (Dawn M. Nothwehr, ed.), Franciscan Press Quincy University, Quincy, 2002, p. 9-22.

– *Is Creation a window to the divine? A Bonaventurean Response*, in *CFIT 3: Franciscans and Creation: What is our Responsibility? WTUSP 2003* (E. Sagau OSF, ed.), St Bonaventure University, NY., 2003, p. 91-99.

– *Bonaventura. Mystery of the Triune God*, in *Franciscan Theology of the Environment. An Introductory Reader* (Dawn M. Nothwehr, ed.), Franciscan Press Quincy University, Quincy, 2002, p. 201-248.

– *Beyond the prime mover of Aristotle: faith and reason in the Medieval Franciscan tradition*, in *FrancStud*, 60 (2002), p. 7-15.

– *Bonaventure of Bagnoregio: A Paradigm for Franciscan Theologians?*, in *CFIT 1: The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition. WTUSP 2001.* (E. Saggau,

OSF, ed.), The Franciscan Institue of St. Bonaventure University, NY., 2002, p. 43-56.

– *The Metaphysics of Exemplarity*, in *Cord*, 59. 4 (2009), p. 409-424.

HELLMANN W., *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, (English Translation with an appendix by J.M. Hammond), The Franciscan Institute Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2001.

HUGHES K., *Bonaventure contra Mundum? The Catholic Theological tradition revisited*, in *TheolStud*, 74 (2013), p. 372-398.

– *Reduction's Future: Theology, Technology, and the Order of Knowledge*, in *FrancStud*, 67 (2009), p. 227-242.

– *Saint Bonaventure's Collationes in Haexameron: Fractured Sermons and Protreptic Discourse*, in *FrancStud*, 63 (2005), p. 107-129.

– *Remember Bonaventure?* (*Onto*) *theology and Ecstasy*, in *Modern Theology*, 19. 4 (2003), p. 530-545.

IAMMARONE L., *Il valore dell'argomento ontologico nella metafisica Bonaventuriana*, in *San Bonaventura Maestro di Vita Francescana e di Sapienza Cristiana. Atti di Congresso Internazionale per il VII Centenario di San Bonaventura da Bagnoregio, Roma, 19-26 settembre 1974* (a cura di A. Pompei), Pontificia Facolta Teologia 'San Bonaventura', Roma, p. 67-110.

JOHNSON T., *Structure and Meaning in St. Bonaventure's Questiones Disputate de Scientia Christi*, in *FrancStud*, 62 (2004), p. 67-100.

– *The Soul in Ascent. Bonaventure on Poverty, Prayer, and Union with God*, The Franciscan Institute St Bonaventure University, NY., 2012.

LANAVE G., *Through Holiness to Wisdom: The Nature of Theology according to St. Bonaventure*, Instituto Storico Dei Cappucini, Rome, 2005.

– *Knowing God through and in all things: A proposal for reading Bonaventure's Itinerarium*, in *FrancStud*, 60 (2002), p. 267-299.

– *God, Creation, and the possibility of Philosophical Wisdom: The perspectives of Bonaventure and Aquinas*, in *TheolStud*, 69 (2008), p. 812-833.

– *Bonaventure's Theological Method*, in *A Companion to Bonaventure* (J. M. Hammond, W. Hellmann and J. Goff, eds.), Brill, 2014, p. 81-120.

MALEòN-SANZ I., "La creación como arte de la Trinidad en San Buenaventura", in *Scripta Theologica*, 47. 3 (2015), p. 579-605.

MARANESI P., *Verbum Inspiratum. Chiave ermeneutica dell'Hexaëmeron di San Bonaventure*, Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, Roma, 1996.

MARIANI E., *L'evidenza di Dio in San Bonaventura*, in *DrSer*, 24 (1977), p. 7-28.

MARIA S., *The Category of the Aesthetic in the Philosophy of Saint Bonaventure* (Allan Wolter, ed.), Franciscan Institute, NY., 1953 (reprinted 2012).

MARTINELLI P., *L'itinerarium Mentis in Deum di San Bonaventura nel Pensiero di Hans Urs Von Balthasar*, in *StudFranc*, 3-4 (2010), p. 395-421.

MASSANI M., *Lo slancio creaturale verso Dio in sant'Agostino, San Francesco e san Bonaventura: la fede nell'adhaerere Deo e nell'ascensus in Deum*, in *DrSer*, 61 (2013), p. 83-106.

MATHIEU L., *La Trinità creatrice secondo san Bonaventura*, Biblioteca Francescana, Milano, 1994.

– *Trinitas*, in *DizBon* (E. Caroli, a cura di), Editrice Francescane, Padova, 2008, p. 819-826.

MATHIAS T., *Bonaventurian Ways to God through Reason*, in *FrancStud*, 16. 38 (1978), p. 153-206.

McGINN B., *The Dynamism of Trinity in Bonaventure and Eckhart*, in *FrancStud*, 65 (2007), p.137-155.

McMULLIN E., *Cretio ex Nihilo: a brief history*, in *Creation and the God of Abraham*, (David. B et al., ed.), Cambridge University, Cambridge, 2011, p. 11-23.

MC EVOY J., *Microcosm and Macrocosm in the Writings of St. Bonaventure*, in *S. Bonaventure 1217-1274 II*, p. 309-343.

MELONE M., *Donum in quo omnia alia dona donatur. Aspetti di teologia dello Spirito Santo in Bonaventura da Bagnoregio*, in *RT*, 17.1 (2006), p. 51-75.

– *Circumincessio*, in *DizBon*, E. Caroli (a cura di), Editrice Francescane, Padova, 2008, p. 230-231.

– *Lo Spirito, dono di carità e guida, in san Bonaventura*, in *DrSer*, 58 (2010), p.57-73.

– *La vita in Dio, summa bonitas et caritas, nel mistero della Trinità: il fondamento della comunione e della creazione*, in *DrSer*, 62 (2014), p.7-25.

METSELAAR S., *The Structural Similarity between the Itinerarium mentis in Deum and the Collationes in Hexaëmeron as First Known*, in *ACPQ*, 85.1 (2011), p. 43-75.

Mirri E., *La verità, l'uomo e la storia nel pensiero di san Bonaventura*, in *DrSer*, 59 (2011), p. 7-27.

Motta G., "Padre Vincenzo Cherubino Bigi Interprete di San Bonaventura", in *DrSer*, 61 (2013), p. 107-116.

Nachbahr B A., *Pure reason and practical reason. Some Themes in Transcendental Philosophy and in Bonaventure*, in *S. Bonaventure 1274-1974. Vol. III*, p. 449-461.

Nguyen Van Si A., *Seguire e imitare Cristo secondo san Bonaventura*, Edizione Biblioteca Francescana, Milano, 1995.

Ninci M., *Il Bene e il Non-essere. Alle radici pseudo- dionisiane dell'esemplarismo in San Bonaventura*, in *DrSer*, 33 (1986), p. 71-96.

Oppes, S., *L'esistenza umana a stabilitate fidei per serenitatem rationis. La Porta fidei bonaventuriana*, in *Francescanesimo e mondo attuale: stile di vita francescana. Miscellanea in onore di José Antonio Merino Abad*, *ofm* (a cura di Agustíne H. Vidales, ofm), Antonianum, Roma, 2016, p. 77-100.

Pino A., *Continuity in Patristic and Scholastic Thought: Bonaventure and Maximos the Confessor on the Necessary Multiplicity of God*, in *FrancStud*, 72 (2014), p. 107-128.

Pompei, A., (a cura di), *Scritti di Leone Veuthey, OFMCOnv (+1974) raccolti e selezionati da Ernesto Piacentini. La Filosofia Cristiana di San Bonaventura*, *MF*, Roma, 1996.

– *Cosmologia: Scienza e fede in Bonaventura da Bagnoregio*, in *DrSer*, 47 (2000), p. 5-42.

Prenga E., *Il Crocifisso via alla Trinità l'esperienza di Francesco d'Assisi nella teologia di Bonaventura*, CN., Roma, 2010.

Quinn F., *The Role of the Holy Spirit in St. Bonaventure's Theology*, in *FrancStud*, 33 (1973), p. 273-284.

– *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure's Philosophy*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Tronto, 1973.

– *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 1989.

Rivi P., *L'uomo signore e custode del creato in Bonaventura e Teilhard de Chardin*, in *DrSer*, 62 (2014), p. 25-43.

Reynolds P., *Threefold Existence and Illumination in Saint Bonaventure*, in *FrancStud*, 42 (1982), p. 190-215.

ROBERT-LONGSHORE, *The Word and Mental Words: Bonaventure on Trinitarian Relation and Human Cognition*, in *ACPQ*, 85.1 (2011), p. 100-125.

ROGERS K., *St. Augustine on Time and Eternity*, in *ACPQ*, 70.2 (1996), p. 207-223.

SANTINELLO G., *L'itinerarium Mentis come itinerarium Dei*, in *DrSer*, 25 (1979), p.15-80.

–   *S. Bonaventura e la nozione dell'essere*, in *DrSer*, 30 (1983), p. 69-80.

SCHAEFER A., *The position and function of man in the created world according to Saint Bonaventure*, in *FrancStud*, 20 (1960), p. 261-317.

–   *The position and function of man in the created world according to Saint Bonaventure*, in *FrancStud*, 21 (1961), p. 233-382.

SCARPELLI T., *Bonaventure's Christocentric Epistemology*: *Christ's Human Knowledge as the Epitome of Illumination in De Scientia Christi*, in *FrancStud*, 65 (2007), p.63-86.

SCHWEITZER D., *Aspects of God's Relationship to the World in Theologies of Jürgen Moltmann, Bonaventure and Jonathan Edwards*, in *Religious and Theology*, 26.1 (2007), p. 5-24.

SEIFERT J., *Si Deus est Deus, Deus est. Reflection on St. Bonaventure's Interpretation of St. Anselm's Ontological Argument*, in *FrancStud*, 52 (1992), p. 215-231.

SILEO L., *L'esordio della teologia universitaria: i maestri secolari della prima metà del Duecento*, in *Storia della Teologia nel Medioevo II* (G. D'Onofrio dir.), Casale Monferrato, 1996, p. 603-635.

–   *I primi maestri francescani di Parigi e di Oxford*, in *Storia della Teologia nel Medioevo II*, (G. D'Onofrio dir.), Casale Monferrato, 1996, p. 645-684.

–   *La 'via' teologica di San Bonaventura di Bagnoregio* in *Storia della Teologia nel Medioevo II* (G. D'Onofrio dir.), Casale Monferrato, 1996, p. 699-757.

–   *Relazione tempo e storia. Ipotesi di accostamento tra Bonaventura e la Dei Verbum"*, in *DrSer*, 36 (1989), p. 65-110.

SOLIGNAC L., *Bonaventure: de l'étude des noms divins à la fabrication de miroirs Trinitaires*, in *EtFranc*, 4 (2011), p. 49-66.

SPEER A., *Illumination and Certitude*: *The Foundation of Knowledge in Bonaventure* in *ACPQ*, 85.1 (2011), p. 128-141.

Szabò T., *Trinità e Creazione. Riflessione sull'attualità del pensiero di Bonaventura*, in *San Bonaventura Maestro di Vita Francescana e di Sapienza Cristiani: atti del Congresso internazionale per il VII centenario di S. Bonaventura da Bagnoregio Roma 19-26 settembre 1974* (A. Pompei, ed.), Pontificia Facoltà Teologia 'S Bonaventura', Roma, 1976, p. 223-231.

Tavard G. H., *On a Misreading of St. Bonaventure's Doctrine on Creation*, in *The Downside Review*, 217 (1951), p. 276-288.

–   *Transiency and Permanence. The Nature of Theology According to St. Bonaventure*, The Franciscan Institute St Bonaventure, NY, 1954.

Tedoldi M., *La dottrina dei cinque sensi spirituali in San Bonaventura*, Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, Roma, 1999.

–   *Verbum vivens in verbo hominis. L'influsso del Verbo sulle parole dell'uomo nei Sermoni domenicali di San Bonaventura*, in *DrSer*, 62 (2014), p. 91-125.

Todisco O., *Verbum divinum omnis creatura. La filosofia del linguaggio di San Bonaventura*, in *MF*, Fasc. I-II (1993), p. 149-198.

–   *Il volto Francescano di Dio oggi. Bonaventura in funzione di Scoto*, in *MF*, 110 (2010), p. 55-84.

–   *Il carattere cristiano del pensare Bonaventuriano*, in *DrSer*, 61 (2013), p. 13-41.

–   *Sacrificium Intellectus? Bonaventura contro la Tirannia della Ragione*, in *StudFranc*, 1-2 (2014), p. 47-87.

–   *La Libertà Creativa Fonte Francescana della Verità e della Carità*, in *Città di Vita*, Gennaio – Febbraio (2014), p. 3-22.

–   *Nella Gratuità la Felicità. Spunti bonaventuriani*, in *ItalFranc*, 90 (2015), p. 357-359.

–   *La Carne Abitata Alla fonte della grandezza delle creature con Bonaventura e Duns Scoto*, in *MF*, 115 (2015), p. 9-46.

Travis A., *The Word in which all things are spoken*: *Augustine, Anselm, and Bonaventure on Christology and the Metaphysics of Exemplarity*, in *TheolStud*, 76. 2 (2015), p. 280-297.

Van Steenberghen. F, *Saint Bonaventure contre l'éternité du monde*, in *S. Bonaventura 1274-1974. Vol. III*, p. 259-278.

WOLTER A., "Bonaventure, St", in *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy vol. 1 & 2* (Paul Edward, ed.), Macmillan Publishing, NY/ Collier Macmillan Publisher/ London, 1972, p. 339-344.

WOZNIAK J., *Primitas et Plenitudo. Dios Padre en la teologia trinitaria de San Buenaventura*, Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona, 2006.

YATES P., *A Sermon on the Trinity Inspired by St. Bonaventure*, in *Cord*, 47.6 (1997), p. 281-288.

ZINN G., *Book and Word. The Victorine background of Bonaventure's use of symbol*, in *S. Bonaventura 1274-1974. Vol. II*, p. 143-169.

2.4.   Franciscan Theology

CALISI M., *CFIT 5*: *Trinitarian Perspective in the Franciscan Theological Tradition.* The Franciscan Institute St. Bonaventure University, NY., 2008.

DELIO I.,. *The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition: Contemporary Concers*, in *CFIT 1: The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition. WTUSP 2001.* (E. Saggau, ed.), The Franciscan Institute St Bonaventure University, NY., 2002, p.1-19.

–   *A Franciscan View of Creation*: *Learning to Live in a Sacramental World. FHS 2*, Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2003.

–   *The Humility of God. A Franciscan Perspective*, St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati, 2005.

–   *Revisiting the Franciscan Doctrine of Christ*, in *TheolStud*, 64 (2003), p. 3-23.

FONG F., *A Franciscan View of Creation. A Response to Keith Warner*, *OFM*, in *CFIT 3*: *Franciscans and Creation: What is our Responsibility? WTU 2003* (E. Sagau OSF, ed.), St Bonaventure University, NY., 2003, p. 83-89.

FREYER J. B., *Homo Viator L'uomo alla luce della salvezza Un'antropologia in prospettiva francescana*, EDB, Bologna, 2008.

MERINO J. A., *Storia della Filosofia francescana*, Edizione Biblioteca Francescana, Milano, 1993.

OSBORNE, K., *A Theology of the Church for the Third Millennium*, *A Franciscan Approach*, Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2009.

–   *The Infinite God and a Finite World. A Franciscan Approach*, Franciscan Institute Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2015.

TODISCO O., *Il Pensare Filosofico - teologico Francescano ha un Futuro?*, in *Teologia Francescana? Indagine storica e prospettive odierne su di una questione aperta* (P. Maranesi ed.), Cittadella, Assisi, 2010, p. 211-300.

– *Lo Sguardo Francescano Alla riscoperta del creato oltre la volontà di potenza*, in *MF*, 114 (2014), p. 303-328.

– *L'uomo il futuro di Dio? Introduzione all'antropologia francescana*, in *MF*, 115 (2015), p. 331-367.

– *Oltre il pensare oggettivante. Primato francescano della libertà creativa*, in *Francescanesimo e mondo attuale: stile di vita francescana. Miscellanea in onore di José Antonio Merino Abad*, *ofm* (a cura di Agustíne H. Vidales, ofm), Antonianum, Roma, 2016, p. 149-179.

WARNER D. K., *FHS 8: Knowledge for Love*: *Franciscan Science as the Pursuit of Wisdom*, The Franciscan Institute St Bonaventure University, NY., 2012.

– *Taking Nature Seriously*: *Nature Mysticism, Enviromental Advocacy and the Franciscan Tradition*, in *CFIT 3*: *Franciscans and Creation: What is Our Responsibility? WTU 2003* (E. Saggau OSF, ed.), The Franciscan Institute St Bonaventure University, NY., p. 53-82.

WARREN K. A., *CFIT 2: Franciscan Identity and Postmodern Culture*: *WTA 2002*, The Franciscan Institute Saint Bonaventure University, NY., 2003.

WOLTER A., *The Transcendental and their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus*, St. Bonaventure, NY., 1964.

2.5. Other Medieval Authors

ABLES T. E., *The Word in Which All Things are Spoken: Augustine, Anselm, and Bonaventure on Christology and the Metaphysics of Exemplarity*, in *TheolStud*, 76. 2 (2015), p. 280-297.

AERTSEN J. A., *The Medieval Doctrine of the transcendentals. The current state of research*, in *SIEPM*, 33 (1991), p. 130-147.

– *Good as Transcendental and the Transcendental of the Good*, in *Being and Goodness. The concept of the Good in Metaphysics and Philosophical Theology* (Scott MacDonald ed.), Cornell University Press, NY., 1991, p. 56-73.

BALDNER S., *Albertus Magnus on Creation: Why Philosophically is Inadequate*, in *ACPQ*, 1 (2014), p. 63-79.

BLANKENHORN B., *The good as self-diffusive in Thomas Aquinas*, in *Ang*, 79 (2002), 803-837.

BERTOLA E., *Tommaso d'Aquino e il problema dell'eternità del mondo*, in *RFNS*, 46 (1974), p. 312-355.

BUKOWSKI T. P., *An Early Dating for Aquinas 'De aeternitate mundi'*, in *Greg*, 51. 2 (1979), p. 277-303.

CROMBIE A. C., *Robert Grosseteste and the Origins of Experimental Science*, At The Clarendom Press, Oxford, 1961.

CROSS R., *The Medieval Christian Philosophers. An Introduction*, I. B. Tauris, London/NY., 2014.

DALES R, *Medieval Discussion of the eternity of the world*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1990.

DE RIJK L. M., *The Aristotelian Background of Medieval transcendentia: A Semantic approach*, in *MiscMed 30. Die Logik des Transzendentalen. Festschrift für Jan A. Aertsen*, Berlin-NY., 2003, p. 4-22.

FOX R., *Time and Eternity in Mid-Thirteenth-Century Thought*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006.

FRIEDMAN R. L., *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010.

GHISALBERTI A., *La Nozione di Tempo in San Tommaso d'Aquino*, in *RFNS*, 59 (1967), p.343-347.

–   *La creazione nella filosofia di S. Tommaso d'Aquino*, in *RFNS*, 61 (1969), p. 202-220.

KONDOLEON T., *A Contradiction in Saint Thomas's Teaching on Creation*, in *Thomist*, 57.1 (1993), p. 51-61.

MACDONALD S., *The Metaphysics of Goodness and the Doctrine of the Good*, in *Being and Goodness. The concept of the Good in Metaphysics and Philosophical Theology* (Scott MacDonald ed.), Cornell University Press, NY., 1991, p. 31-55.

MCGINNIS J., *The Eternity of the World: Proofs and Problems in Aristotle, Avicenna, and Aquinas*, in *ACPQ,* 88. 2 (2014), p. 271-288.

MAGEE J., *Boethius*, in *A companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Jorge J. E. Gracia and T. B. Noone eds.), Blackwell, 2006, p. 217-226.

MAURER A., *Medieval Philosophy. An introduction* 2nd (E. Gilson, ed.), Pontifical Institute PIMS, Toronto /Ontario, 1982.

MELONE M., *Lo Spirito Santo nel De Trinitate di Riccardo di S. Vittore*, Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, Roma, 2001.

O'CARROLL M. (ed.), *Robert Grosseteste and the Beginnings of a British Theological Tradition. Papers delivered at the Grosseteste Colloquium held at Greyfriars, Oxford on 3rd July 2002*, Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, Rome, 2003.

PINI G., *The Transcendentals of Logic: Thirteenth-Century Discussion on the Subject Matter of Aristotle's 'Categories'*, in *MiscMed 30. Die Logik des Transzendentalen. Festschrift für Jan A. Aertsen*, Berlin-NY., 2003, p.140-159.

PRINCIPE W., *William of Auxerre's Theology of the Hypostatic Union*, Pontificial Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, 1963.

STUMP E., *Aquinas on Being, Goodness, and Divine Simplicity*, in *MiscMed 30. Die Logik des Transzendentalen. Festschrift für Jan A. Aertsen*, Berlin-NY., 2003, p. 212-225.

STUMP E. and KRETZMANN N., *Being and Goodness*, in *Being and Goodness. The concept of the Good in Metaphysics and Philosophical Theology* (Scott MacDonald ed.), Cornell University Press, NY., 1991, p. 98-128.

VOLLERT C et. all (translation and introduction), *St. Thomas Aquinas, Siger of Barbant, St. Bonaventure, On the Eternity of the Word* (*De Aeternitate Mundi*), Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wis, 1964.

WIPPEL J., *Aquinas on Creation and Preambles of Faith*, in *Thomist*, 78 (2014), p. 1-36.

ZUPKO J., *William of Auxerre*, in *A companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Jorge J. E. Gracia and T. B. Noone eds.), Blackwell, 2006, p. 688-689.

3. Other Relevant Studies

3.1. Theology in General

ALLEGRA M., *Il primato di Cristo in san Paolo e Duns Scoto. Le mie conversazioni con Teilhard de Chardin*, Porziuncola, Assisi, 2011.

BOFF L., *Holy Trinity Perfect Community* (English translation by P. Berryman), Orbis Books, NY., 2000.

BURRELL D. B., *Creatio ex nihilo Recovered*, in *Modern Theology*, 29. 2 (April 2013), p. 5-21.

CROSS, R., *The eternity of the world and the distinction between creation and conservation*, in *RS*, 42 (2006), p. 403-416.

DOYLE B., *Social Doctrine of the Trinity and Communion Ecclesiology in Leonardo Boff and Gisbert Greshake*, in *Horizon*, 33. 2 (2006), p. 239-255.

DURAND E., *Perichoresis*: *A Key Concept of Balancing Trinitarian Theology*, in *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology. Disputed questions and Contemporary Issues in Trinitarian Theology* (Woźniak and Maspero, eds.), t&t Clark, London, 2012, p.177-192.

FIELDS S., *Balthasar and Rahner on the Spiritual Senses*, in *TheolStud*, 57 (1996), p. 224-241.

GANOCZY A., *Il Creatore Trinitario Teologia della Trinità e sinergia* (Italian translation by Carlo Danna), Queriniana, Brescia, 2003.

GRESHAKE G., *Il Dio Unitrino Teologia Trinitaria*, (Italian translation by Paolo Renner), Queriniana, Brescia, 2008[3].

–   *Trinity as Communio*, in *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology. Disputed questions and Contemporary Issues in Trinitarian Theology* (Woźniak and Maspero, eds.), t&t Clark, London, 2012, p. 331-349.

HUNT A., *Trinity*, Orbis Books, NY., 2005.

–   *The Trinity through Paschal Eyes*, in *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology. Disputed questions and Contemporary Issues in Trinitarian Theology* (Woźniak and Maspero, eds.), t&t Clark, London, 2012, p. 472-489.

JOSEPH T., *Divine Simplicity and the Holy Trinity*, in *IJST*, 18.1 (2016), p. 66-93.

KNEALE W., *Time and Eternity in Theology*, in *Aristotelian Society*, 61 (1960-1961), p. 88-108.

KOPIEC M. A, *Il Logos Della Fede: Tra Ragione, Rivelazione e Linguaggio*, Antonianum, Rome, 2014.

–   *Il Logos della Fede nel contesto Contemporaneo. Prospettiva teologico–fondamentale*, in *Francescanesimo e mondo attuale: stile di vita francescana. Miscellanea in onore di José Antonio Merino Abad*, *ofm* (a cura di Agustíne H. Vidales, ofm)., Antonianum, Roma, 2016, p 341-363.

KRETZMANN N., *A general problem of creation. Why would God create anything at all?*, in *Being and Goodness. The concept of the Good in Metaphysics and*

Philosophical Theology (Scott MacDonald ed.), Cornell University Press, NY., 1991, p. 208-228.

– *A Particular Problem of Creation: Why would God create this World*, in *Being and Goodness. The concept of the Good in Metaphysics and Philosophical Theology* (Scott MacDonald ed.), Cornell University Press, NY., 1991, p. 229-249.

LADARIA F., *Tam Pater nemo: Reflections on the Paternity of God*, in *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology. Disputed questions and Contemporary Issues in Trinitarian Theology* (Woźniak and Maspero, eds.), t&t Clark, London, 2012, p. 446-471.

MATEO-SECO L. F., *The Paternity of the Father and the procession of the Holy Spirit: Some Historical Remarks on the Ecumenical Problem*, in *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology. Disputed questions and Contemporary Issues in Trinitarian Theology* (Woźniak and Maspero, eds.), t&t Clark, London, 2012, p. 69-102.

ORTLUND G., *Divine Simplicity in Historical Perspective: Resourcing a Contemporary Discussion*, in *IJST*, 16. 4 (2014), p.436-453.

ROREM P., *Pseudo Dionysius. A commentary on the texts and an introduction to their influence*, Oxford University Press, Oxford/NY., 1993.

PAOLETTI D., *"Il Cantico Delle Creature" Fonte Ispiratrice Della 'Laudato Si' di Papa Francesco*, in *MF*, 115 (2015), p. 408-424.

ROSSETTI C., *La pericoresi: una chiave della teologia cattolica a proposito della recente riflessione trinitaria*, in *Lateranum*, 72.3 (2006), p. 553-575.

VON BALTHASAR H. U., *The glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, *II*: *Studies in Theological style: clerical style*, (English translation, edited by John Riches), Ignatius Press, San Francesco, 1984.

YONGHUA GE, *The one and the many: a revisiting of an old philosophical question in the light of theologies of creation and participation*, in *THJ*, 57. 1 (2016), p. 109-121.

WIRZBA N., *Christian Theoria Physike*: *On Learning to See Creation*, in *Modern Theology*, 32. 2 (2016), p. 211-230.

3.2. Theology and Science

BARBOUR I., *Religion and Science. Historical and Contemporary Issues*, SCM Press Ltd., NY., 1998.

BEHE M., *Darwin's Black Box*, Free Press, NY/London, 2006.

BRACKEN, J., *The World in the Trinity. Open - Ended Systems in Science and Religion*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2014.

BROOKE J. H., *Science and Religion Some Historical Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991.

COLLINS F., *The Language of God. A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*, Free Press, NY/London/Tronto/Sydey, 2006.

CRAIG W., *The Kālam Cosmological Argument*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene/Orgeon, 2000.

DULLES A., *Church and Society. The Laurence J. McGinley Lectures, 1988-2007*, Forham University Press, NY., 2008.

DELIO I., *Christ in Evolution*, Orbis Book, NY., 2008.

– *The Emergent Christ Exploring the meaning of Catholic in un Evolutionary Universe*, Orbis Book, NY., 2011.

– *The unbearable Wholeness of Being*, Orbis Book, NY., 2013.

– (ed)., *From Teilhard to Omega. Co creating an Unfinished Universe*, Orbis Books, NY., 2014.

– *Making All Thing New. Catholicity*, *Cosmology*, *Consciousness*, Orbis Books, NY., 2015.

EDWARDS D., *The God of Evolution*, Paulist, NY., 1999, p. 30-31.

HASKER W., *Metaphysics & the Tri-Personal God*, Oxford University, Oxford, 2013.

HAUGHT J. F., *Theology and Ecology in an Unfinished Universe*, in *CFIT 3. Franciscans and Creation: What is our Responsibility? WTUSP 2003*, (E. Sagau, OSF, ed.), St Bonaventure University, NY., 2003, p.1-19.

– *Christianity and Science. Toward a Theology of Nature*, Orbis Books, NY., 2007.

– *Science and Faith. A New Introduction*, Paulist Press, NY., 2012.

– *Teilhard de Chardin: Theology for an Unfinished Universe*, in *From Teilhard to Omega. Co creating an Unfinished Universe* (I. Delio, ed.), Orbis Books, NY., 2014, p. 7-23.

HAYES Z., *The Gift of Being A Theology of Creation*, A Michael Glazier Book, Minnesota, 2001.

–   *A window to the divine. Creation theology*, Anselm academic, Winona, 2009.

JANTZEN B., *An Introduction to Design Arguments*, Cambridge University, NY., 2014.

KING U., *Spirit of Fire. The Life and Vision of Teilhard de Chardin*, Orbis Books, NY., 1996.

LENNOX C J., *God's Undertaker. Has Science Buried God?*, Lion, Oxford, 2007.

SIMMONS E., *The Entangled Trinity*, Fortress, Minneapolis, 2014.

SPITZER R., *New Proofs for the Existence of God*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, Cambridge, 2010.

STOEGER W., *The Big Bang*, *quantum cosmology and creation ex nihilo*, in *Creation and the God of Abraham* (David. B. Burrell et al., eds.), Cambridge University, Cambridge, 2011, p. 152-175.

SWEETMAN B., *Religion and Science*: *An Introduction*, Continuum, NY., 2010.

TEILHARD DE CHARDIN P., *The Phenomenon of Man* (English trans. by Bernard Wall), Harperperennial, NY/London/Toronto/ New Delhi, 2008.

–   *The Future of Man* (English trans. by Norman Denny), Image Books, NY., 2004.

VAN NIEUWHENHOVE R., *Catholic Theology in the Thirteenth Century and the Origins of Secularism*, in *ITQ*, 75 (2010), p. 339-354.

4. Dictionary and Lexicon

DIZIONARIO BONAVENTURIANO. *Filosofia Teologia Spiritualità* (a cura di Ernesto Caroli), Editrice Francescana, Padova, 2008.

DIZIONARIO CRITICO DI TEOLOGIA, sotto la direzione di J.Y. Lacoste, ed. italiana a cura di P. Coda, Borla-CN., Roma, 2005.

LEXIQUE SAINT BONAVENTURE, Publié sous la direction de Jacques Bougerol OFM., Editons Franciscaines, Paris, 1969.

LEXICON BONAVENTURIANUM Philosophico-Theologicum, Opera et Studio PP. Antonii Mariae A Vicetia et Joannis A Rubino, Ex Typographia Aemiliana, 1880.

CONTENTS