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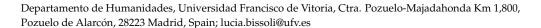
An Organic System Open to an Intelligible Reality: The Concept of Method in Antonio Rosmini

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Abstract: Oftentimes, reality seems to us a chaos that we try to control with our theories. This article starts from the antithetic standpoint, inspired by Antonio Rosmini's works: reality is intelligible, and originates our thinking. From this perspective, any research that tries to reach the truth is determined by the real, not the contrary. Moreover, interdisciplinarity, far from being a solipsistic enterprise, aims at achieving truth and guaranteeing scientific advancement. Here, we analyze the distinctive character of Rosminian encyclopedism and his principles for preventing human errors. We then clarify why it is impossible to achieve perfection, and why such an impossibility is not problematic for the interdisciplinary dialogue.

Keywords: intelligibility of reality; interdisciplinarity; encyclopedism; method; mystery; anti-perfectionism; Rosmini; Hegel

1. Introduction

The intelligibility of reality is a debated question, inside as well as outside academia. Indeed, we naturally tend to conceive the universe as a material reality separated from our minds. Therefore, we suppose an antagonism between what is inside us, our mental life, which we can control, and what is outside us, which oftentimes seems to be a chaotic sum of diverse forces. This widespread opinion is also present in academia, and especially in recent epistemology. An alternative can be conceived, though it requires a kind of new "Copernican revolution". In order to do so, we first need to stop asking ourselves how to define reality from a preestablished method. We must rather look at how reality is, and how we participate in it. Moreover, this different approach entails a change in perspective on the scientific method. Could we find a method that does not overlay and distort being, but expresses it? Is interdisciplinary knowledge achievable, in order to understand being in its unity?[1]

We believe that this method to achieve interdisciplinary knowledge is feasible, and we will analyze the above-mentioned issues from a philosophical standpoint. Philosophy, and in particular gnoseology understood as the theory of knowledge, is the necessary framework for articulating the science–theology dialogue. Indeed, philosophy is both a form of science, as a methodic and rational human investigation, and an expression of the highest human questions about reality. Our reflections are inspired by Antonio Rosmini's philosophy (Rovereto 1797–Stresa 1855). Rosmini was an Italian thinker and one of the most important European intellectuals of his time. We refer to him because he contributed considerably to the investigation of the interconnection between mystery, the intelligibility of reality, and scientific research. For him, reality is intelligible, and originates our thinking. From his perspective, any research that tries to reach the truth is determined by the real, not the contrary. Indeed, he developed a complex metaphysics, driven by the desire to overcome the dualism between object and subject[2]. Moreover, he conceived a distinguishing "organic" view of human knowledge. Over the course of his life, he created a new "encyclopedia" of the sciences, to emphasize the wide variety of the forms of being

and to argue God's vicinity to humankind. Rosmini wrote more than ninety works on metaphysics, theology, art, biology, medicine, politics, pedagogy, and law[3].

In this article, we first analyze the distinctive character of Rosminian encyclopedism, comparing it with the previous ones. We then investigate his systematic method and his principles for preventing human errors. Finally, we clarify why for Rosmini it is impossible to achieve perfection, in contrast to Hegel, and why such an impossibility is not problematic for the interdisciplinary dialogue.

2. The Distinctive Character of Rosmini's Encyclopedism

The reader could object that, in human history, many attempts at creating an encyclopedic system of knowledge have been made, especially from the Renaissance to the XIX century[4]. Hence, why shall we distinguish Rosmini's encyclopedia from that of Diderot and D'Alembert? Because they have an antithetical vision of human knowledge. Indeed, the *Encyclopédie* adopted the "principle of quantity" of facts: it collected a huge amount of notions, organized by mere alphabetic order. The *Encyclopédie* juxtaposed different sciences but did not articulate a metaphysical vision as their fundament; in other words, there is no unitary standpoint in support of this horizontal information. In this way, the *Encyclopédie* confirms the separation and the overspecialization of disciplines; therefore, it cannot be the right strategy for an integrated, interdisciplinary approach to knowledge.

Conversely, Rosmini's method is inspired by a theoretical perspective: the truth of being. For him, human knowledge is determined by being—i.e., that which exists, not the contrary[5]. Hence, humans know any entity "in the intrinsic order of being" ([Rosmini 1988](), n. 840, 180–81): when intellectuals and scientists study an object, firstly, they recognize it as existing. Then, they can affirm something correct about it because they accept it; they do not state anything incompatible with this object. Moreover, scholars realize that the object of their study is caught in a complex web of relations, involving reality in its entirety. Hence, the latter is not reduced to a mere sum of entities, but is rather seen as a complex whole, the "universal being" (*esse*). For Rosmini, universal being is the "horizon" beyond the individual *ens* as well as the origin of all relationships between entities, ideal as well as real[6]. However, in Rosmini's opinion, humans can only partially comprehend universal being since they are also implicated in it. We will clarify this idea at the end of the article. We must now specify what the intrinsic order of being is for Rosmini.

According to Alberto Peratoner, Rosmini, thanks to his constant recognition of the universal being, could investigate not only the totality of reality—in a horizontal sense—but also its principle of unity, recognizing reality's "essential vertical order"[7]. This order is not God and is not imposed through social influences or human pedagogical traditions. It is the very universal being, as it appears to all humankind, regardless of individual education or cultural background[8]. For Rosmini, without this recognition of being, philosophy would become a mere list of empirical entities[9]. To avoid this philosophical collapse, he highlights the transcendental complexity of being, which for him is characterized by three forms: real being, ideal being, and moral being. These forms are not different regions of being, nor distinct categorical principles. Real being, or the subjective form, is the horizon of all entities, both existing (this lamp next to me) and abstract (a triangle), but concrete insofar as we can think of them as potentially existing, i.e., as not contradictory[10]. In other words, real being collects all possible objects of our present and future ordinary experience. The second form, ideal being or objective form, is similar to the Aristotelian concept of the agent intellect, or Augustine's theory of illumination: it "illuminates" both finite entities and the human mind, thereby allowing the latter to abstract and recognize the former for what they are[11]. Hence, ideal being is not the result of human thought. Conversely, it is the same universal being, which, insofar as it manifests itself, is intelligible, and renders humankind capable of grasping everything in a transcendental way ([Rosmini 1988](), nn. 1316–21, 28–31). Moreover, through the ideal form, we understand the essence of our ordinary objects. In other words, we comprehend which are the necessary elements for defining a specific object as that very object, and for understanding how it should be to be what it is. Finally,

moral being—or moral form—represents for Rosmini two different kinds of unity of the aforementioned categories. At first, it indicates the fusion between the real and the ideal forms, which is realized when individual entities perform an act corresponding to their specific essences. Therefore, for Rosmini, animals do something good when they reach their true animal essence, i.e., their vitality and instincts, and humans achieve their excellence by living rationally. Secondly, moral being denotes the continuous implication of the three forms, to the point that Rosmini speaks of a "circuminsession" of the three forms (Rosmini 1998–2002, vol. 13, n. 1141, 466–67). Hence, through the moral form, it is possible to achieve the universal unity of being we are searching for. For these reasons, Rosmini cannot be assimilated to the Enlightenment movement, as Alberto Peratoner and Pier Paolo Ottonello explained (Ottonello 1992, pp. 138–42; Peratoner 2008, pp. 31–32; see also Bonafede 2022). For the present purposes, we will compare and contrast Rosmini and Hegel, since both pursued a universal vision of truth and developed a systematic method.

3. Systematic Method in Rosmini and Hegel

In his works, Rosmini often uses the term "system". He employs this word to indicate his philosophy in its totality, or any other thinker's theoretical constructions[12]. The word "system" could suggest the impression of a method that is set up a priori, but Rosmini means the opposite. Following Paolo Pagani (2016, p. 124), we can say that for him "system" is synonymous with "organism" and indicates a unity between our concepts and the totality of being. This method reflects the complex relation between the three forms of being. In other words, for Rosmini, there is no separation between metaphysics, science, and logic: to know something, we must walk the same path where being manifests itself (See Rosmini 1998–2002, vol. 12, n. 320, 295). On this, a correspondence between Rosmini and Hegel is evident. Indeed, also for the German philosopher, dialectics is equivalent to the development of being (See Hegel 1991, pp. 824–25). Sharing this principle, Rosmini and Hegel objected to Xavier Bichat's vitalism and John Brown's theory of excitability (See Hegel 2015, n. 359; Rosmini 1981, nota n. 12 and nn. 68–69). Brown (1735–1788) developed a materialistic view of the body. Indeed, he reduced the diagnostic analysis of a whole body to observing the enervation of an organ or the lack of stimulation in a particular organ. In addition, he tried to explain life as a mechanical sum of inanimate particles. Similarly, Bichat (1771–1802) declared that a functioning body—and life in general—can be explained through an external observation of excitability. However, Rosmini noticed that, following these principles, it became impossible to distinguish between a living body and a corpse in which nails or hair keep growing (See Rosmini 1981, n. 91, 72–73). Rosmini and Hegel disapproved of these argumentative strategies, not because they had an "ethereal" understanding of organic life[13], but for strictly methodological reasons. Indeed, Hegel disputed that these theories were a mere "comfortable formalism" because Brown and Bichat presupposed a definition of organic life before studying it. Therefore, the result of these enterprises is an uncertain and unscientific definition of life, unable to distinguish living beings from inanimate ones.

Another aspect of Rosmini's and Hegel's methodological correspondence is the lack of presuppositions about universal being (*esse*). For them, this concept can be defined only at the end of a dialectical process (See Fenu 2016, pp. 120–25). For Rosmini, this is a complex epistemological issue. Indeed, he emphasizes the role of intuition at the beginning of human knowledge. Human beings passively receive through intuition the concept of the "indeterminate being", the abstract perception of reality[14]. For this reason, many interpreters argued that Rosmini was an innatist, and read the intuition of being as synonymous with a first a priori concept of reality[15]. In Rosmini, this intuition is not the effect of human abstraction, nor a pure idea of being. Rather, it is an illumination, that humankind receives from being itself. It is not a voluntary act operated by our brain. Furthermore, for him, a man does not know any determinate notion through intuition. This illumination opens our intellect to an infinite horizon. However, a man does not know anything after this intuition: individuals need empirical experience to develop

their knowledge. In brief, our notions are produced by our empirical experience of our environment[16].

Let us return to the comparison between Hegel and Rosmini. There is a similarity between them, even though Rosmini is not an exponent of German classical philosophy or transcendental idealism. Both philosophers state that human knowledge is not a mere sum of empirical experiences. For them, the sensitive world (the real form in Rosminian terms) would be insignificant without its essence, the ideal form. Maria Adelaide Raschini notices this commonality between the two thinkers. However, she immediately declares that, after that point of contact, their philosophies do not converge. On the contrary, they diverge strongly (See Raschini 1996, pp. 40–41). We shall thus mention the manifest differences between the former and the latter. For reasons of space, we cannot muse on all their discrepancies; hence, we ponder on the way in which they conceive a systematic method[17]. Rosmini distinguishes between human ontological perception and the *esse*, the universal being. For Hegel, on the contrary, the subject's thought is equivalent to the dialectical process, and both are identical with the universal being—understood as history. In other words, from his perspective, there is no distinction between our knowledge of reality and being-in-itself. In the process of dialectics, they coincide. Consequently, Hegel postulated that his *Science of Logic* was the ultimate encyclopedia of the sciences (Hegel 1991, p. 824). On the contrary, Rosmini believed that any "system" should be perfectible at any time, hence under perennial revision, as our knowledge of being is. Indeed, for Rosmini, a systematic method is a reliable approach to truth, but is not perfect. Philosophers and scientists can still be misled in their investigations.

4. Humility as Prevention of Human Error

Why can humans still make mistakes, even if they adopted the correct methodological principles, and try to recognize being as it is? For Rosmini, this happens because of our minds. In order to understand this point, we must consider which gnoseological faculties act for Rosmini when we know something new. In *Psicologia* (*Psychology*), he distinguishes between two faculties of reason: perception and reflection (Rosmini 1988, vol. 9A, nn. 1027–35, 254–56). The first one includes all the dimensions connected with the physical perception of an entity in its individuality: the five senses, and the "physical feeling" (*sentimento corporeo*). The latter is the perception of ourselves while we are experiencing an entity. In addition, still connected with our physical perception is the "sensorial or animal imagination" (*immaginazione sensitiva o animale*): it is the ability to re-evoke one or more sensations. Imagination is, for Rosmini, intimately connected to fantasy. Indeed, this faculty brings back, through dreams, disordered images that are based on remembrances or past experiences. For Rosmini, error comes neither from the senses nor from physical feeling. Indeed, if our senses are efficient, they will only register and not re-work their perception[18]: a sighted person cannot avoid seeing the objects around her. Hence, if our senses are misled, reality would turn out to be unreliable, and the search for truth would result in universal skepticism. However, this conclusion contradicts the method of recognition of being. Indeed, this endless extremized doubt prioritizes our individual perception over the universal being[19]. It is, once again, an unjustified presupposition.

Even fantasy and imagination are not the cause of error if they are recognized as not concrete, but only as a personal memory of some real facts. Hence, they are not denigrated by Rosmini[20]. Therefore, for Rosmini, only the faculty of reflection is marked by fallibility. Why? Because of its very essence. Indeed, reflection is the phase of the "perception of perception" (Rosmini 1988, 255, n. 1032). In other words, it is a personal re-working or re-interpretation of data received through the five senses and the feeling. Here, human reason does not work mechanically. On the contrary, it acts methodically, but also in an inventive way. Hence, reason can fail as well as obtain an improvement in wisdom. An error is not equivalent to ignorance: ignorance is the total lack of knowledge, an error is a rational, failed attempt to approach knowledge and truth (Rosmini 2003–2005, vol. 5: 240, n. 1362).

Therefore, for Rosmini, our fallibility is not only a result of an irrational development or an ideological approach. It can also result from a poorly constructed synthesis of subject and object. So, how do we formulate our syllogisms? For Rosmini, asking this question is equivalent to asking how many different kinds of reflections a human being can make.

In his *Psicologia*, Rosmini declared that there are two kinds of reflection: the partial one, which considers comparisons between objects, and the total one, which contemplates a single object in light of the universal being. We analyze only the first typology, as for Rosmini, it is the one adopted by the empirical sciences. He divides this class into four categories: analysis, synthesis, rational faith, and rational creation. The first two compare present objects, whereas the last two compare a subsistent and an absent object. Hence, the mind tries to find clues to the possible existence of a non-evident object (Rosmini 1988, 257, nn. 1038–39). In this section, we examine analysis and synthesis. For Rosmini, when we focus onto a new object, we immediately analyze it through general categories. Firstly, we tend to divide it into parts, considering the "quantity" criteria. So, for example, we take a molecule apart, scrutinizing its chemical structure. Then, we analyze this object considering the "quality" criteria. So, for example, we distinguish many different species belonging to a single genre. In the meantime, our mind reasons on these classifications and produces a synthesis of them. Hence, we affirm judgments on this new object and express what the object is through syllogisms. At this level, we make mistakes when we give a rushed assent to the first interpretation of an object, without a careful study of its actual existence in the order of being[21]. However, humans can still make mistakes, even after careful research. This happens especially when we compare an already-known object with an unknown one. Obviously, in this last case, we try to discover something new, and not only to make a comparison. Inevitably, we push ourselves to our epistemological limits[22]. Indeed, we do not examine an actual dimension, but a possible one that is mysterious.

5. Faith Means Being Open to New Discoveries

Rosmini states that humans rationally assimilate a mysterious object through "reasoning by integration" (*ragionamento per integrazione*), thus obtaining a "rational faith" (*fede razionale*). He defines this faith as the logical persuasion that such an object necessarily exists, even though its existence was never perceived by the senses (Rosmini 1988, vol. 9A, n. 1046, 258–59). In order to corroborate his statement, he cites some historical discoveries obtained with innate reasoning. Among these, Urbain Le Verrier's mathematic study is emblematic. In 1846, Le Verrier (1811–1877) forecasted Neptune's position in Uranus' orbit through calculation only. Indeed, he noticed a constant discrepancy between Uranus' theoretical and observed longitude[23]. From these data, he deduced Uranus' longitude angle, supposing that another planet was influencing Uranus' orbit, and he proposed a position for this possible planet on 31 August 1846. A few days later, Johann Gottfried Galle (1812–1910) confirmed the presence of this planet through empirical observation, using a range variable from Le Verrier's estimated point[24]. Rosmini refers to this historical case to highlight the capacity of human thought to align with being. Indeed, when we orient all our intellectual capacities to reality, we can "move from possible dimension of the being to the necessary one" (Rosmini 1988, vol. 9A, n. 1046, 259). In other words, insofar as we become aware of the order of being, we can grasp not only how reality is in the present, but also its future potential. However, this potential is based on how reality is, not on our subjective ideas or expectations (Rosmini 1988, vol. 9A, n. 1048, 260). This viewpoint—which Rosmini called the "virtuality of the being"—marks the intellectual aptitude, but also the artistic and educational ones. Indeed, when a sculptor hammers an imponent marble cube, he does not simply manipulate it. He tries to express all the inner potentiality of that matter. Similarly, an educator does the same with a student, respecting the student's identity and, for this reason, imposing some rules or proposing activities. Moreover, this capacity to glimpse the possible beyond the given, or the creativity of reason, is more than mere imagination. This rational creativity does not correspond to imagining an image or constructing fantasies. It is the capacity to distance ourselves from the contingent reality

that surrounds us, and to intuit a dimension connected with the transcendent without being able to define it. Therefore, when we recognize this veiled dimension of being and act to express it, we reach the truth; in other words, we obtain necessary knowledge. Indeed, any attempt to contradict this truth will be denied by reality itself, and the negator will recognize her error[25]. However, Rosmini observes that our reflection is so powerful that it can even invent what it does not see. That is the case of rational creation. This latter situation is similar to rational faith. However, it reaches an antithetical conclusion. Indeed, rational creation works out a hypothesis to grasp mystery, not by thinking on the order of being but only by adapting previous knowledge to new situations (Rosmini 1988, vol. 9A, n. 1051, 261). In other words, human reflection imposes itself over universal being, falling once more in error. Hence, we can detect a sort of inner contradiction inside the human mind: it starts with a rational inspiration and ends against rationality (Rosmini 1988, vol. 9A, n. 1053, 262). A common sign of this aversion to rationality is an ardent conviction about the truth of our conclusions. Consequently, we refrain from changing our hypothesis, even if other colleagues show us that we are wrong. In this last case, our will or, better, our pride obfuscates our minds. However, for Rosmini, this risk is not the expression of a defect of human nature, but on the contrary of its potency. It confirms that our mind is open to an infinite perspective and is capable of creative acts as it grasps the virtual dimension of being and not only the actual dimension (Rosmini 1988, vol. 9A, n. 1054, 262).

6. Conclusions

At the end of our analysis, it is evident that Rosmini emphasizes human fallibility and, at the same time, praises human reflection. There is no incoherence in this. Indeed, Rosmini does not condemn humankind for its limits. On the contrary, as a modern interpreter of classic exemplarism, he proposes to reconsider our essential limitations, and see them not as negative, but as our complexion, the foundation of our existence[26]. Rosmini only rejects any abstract perfectionism for humans[27]. Such perfectionism denies human contingency, deceives people—illuding them of being completely independent – and frustrates any perfectible attempt as not perfect yet. The outcome of perfectionism is individual self-destruction[28].

Rosmini is not a supporter of cosmological or epistemological dualism between the finite and the infinite, or between subject and object. So far, we have resumed the gnoseological reasons why he cannot be a dualist, and we now conclude by alluding to the metaphysical ones. Rosmini conceives universal being as absolute manifestation. Universal being, inasmuch as it is, manifests itself, and it cannot do otherwise (Rosmini 1998–2002, vol. 15, nn. 1509–10, 21–22). It lies beyond the entities' limits, it is not the transcendent God but rather the *ens communissimus*, the transcendental that involves any entity, finite or infinite[29]. Also, for Rosmini, there is no dualism between God and finite creatures, even though the ontological distinction holds true. Indeed, finite beings arise and receive the necessary "energy" to exist from the infinite Absolute Ens—God for Rosmini— (Rosmini 1998–2002, vol. 14, nn. 1371–79, 257–65). Moreover, the finite humankind is in a complex analogical relationship with the infinite being and the infinite God. Therefore, the first participates in the latter two, even though in a way that remains mysterious for the limited mind. That is inevitable, since humans are only a part of an overabundant horizon of being and cannot give themselves their own lives. Consequently, science cannot achieve perfection and perennial precision, since it is the product of a finite, human perspective. For all these reasons, Rosmini is convinced that the most significant goal of the sciences is not solving all mysteries—something that lies beyond our human capabilities—but rather converting the subjective to the objective. In other words, their goal is recognizing the priority of the universal being, and in so doing, opening us to the infinite perspective of being. Indeed, with our rationality and acts, we can tend towards being as it manifests itself and go towards it (Rosmini 1998–2002, vol. 14, n. 1379, 265–66). We do not achieve perfection, but we become perfectible. In other words, we start a path of constant personal growth, whereby being keeps manifesting itself to us, and we keep being amazed by it.

Notes

1. An analysis of the causes of the fragmentation of knowledge, and the necessity of interdisciplinarity to make sciences progress is offered in (Peratoner 2008, pp. 13–23).

2. A problem that Kant had bequeathed to all successive philosophers.

3. Moreover, he was involved in the political affairs of his times, and became a friend of Alessandro Manzoni. That friendship was so significant for both that Rosmini suggested to Manzoni *The Betrothed*'s end, and they both influenced each other with their political and philosophical ideas. See (Zama 2013; Muscherà 2019; Pagani 2019).

4. For encyclopedism, we refer to the intent to reunify human knowledge in a great unitary work, sometimes for didactic aims, but primarily to put in order the various disciplines, arriving at a whole complex vision of any science, beyond the fragmentation of specialized areas of studies. Generally, the Renaissance is associated with the culture of encyclopedism". However, the history of encyclopedism is another vast theme that deserves more attention. Indeed, just the origin of the term itself involved a very complex multidisciplinary study, see (Blair 2013). We can only refer to researchers who noticed an encyclopedism ante litteram even in ancient Greek and Latin literature, from the Hellenistic period to the Medieval Period. See (Díaz y Díaz 1999; Fossati 2011). These literary and philosophical investigations pushed other scholars to investigate Hellenistic eclecticism and Medieval encyclopedism in different cultures, such as Judaism. See (Hartog 2019). For a synthetic and complex analysis of embryonic elements of modern encyclopedism—through Nicolò Cusano, Pico della Mirandola, and Ficino—and the Enlightenment, see (Peratoner 2008, pp. 23–31).

5. (Rosmini 2003–2005, n. 2, 92), quoted in (Peratoner 2008, p. 35).

6. At this point, we should reconstruct the long debate between the Aristotelian, Scholastic, and Late Scholastic schools on the concept of relation and the connection between a relation and its extremes. We briefly mention the distinction between real and ideal relations. A real relation is established between two real (extramental) entities and distinct from each other, based on their accidents (called foundations and terms of the relation). For example, an entity A (the subject of the relation) is in connection with another entity B through their white color, if and only if A has this accident, i.e., whiteness (foundation for that relation), corresponding to the whiteness present in B (term of the relation). According to many authors, real relations are based on an extramental foundation that makes them valid, even if they are not recognized by any intellect (nullo intellectu cogitante). On the contrary, a relation of reason or "ideal relation" is established between extremes that are not real (as it happens for entia rationis, for example, "the square circle"), or not distinct, or between extremes that do not have a real accident as their foundation. Hence, on a very general level of discussion, all correspondences due to acts of the intellect, such as the relation between knowing subject and known thing, fall under the relations of reason. The issue of the distinction between ideal and real relations is complicated when different authors reflect on the relation between God and creatures, since this is a nexus of total asymmetry: on the one side, the Creator of the universe; on the other, all finite, dependent, and contingent entities. For this reason, Thomas Aquinas theorized that God must have—ex parte Dei—an exclusively ideal relation with the world, to preserve divine independence and His freedom in creating. For further discussion of this point, see (Ignotus Auctor, Summa totius Logicae Aristotelis, Tractatus 5, chapter 1; Henninger 1989, 31–39; Roncaglia 2009, pp. 212–23).

7. (Rosmini 2003–2005, n. 7, 97–98), quoted in (Peratoner 2008, p. 36).

8. Rosmini gradually expressed in words this first intuition. We have the first affirmation of his system in *Sistema filosofico*, dated 1844, and now published in (Rosmini 1979). Another general scheme, ordering the relations between sciences is found in *Prefazione alle opere metafisiche* included in (Rosmini 1988). For a comparison between these categorizations, see (Peratoner 2008, pp. 39–42).

9. For our author, a reflection like that is mere vulgar thinking, a list of empirical observations without a theoretic order. See (Rosmini 2003–2005, nn. 29–34, 114–19).

10. Among these subsisting entities, there is also God, as an example of a real Entity in the absolute sense, therefore absolutely subsisting, since in him, essence and existence coincide (Rosmini 1998–2002, vol. 15, nn 1526–29, 41–45).

11. For an overview of this issue, see (Soliani 2020, pp. 58–81).

12. See *Degli studi dell'Autore* in (Rosmini 1979, n. 46, 103)

13. On the contrary, many scholars noticed that Rosmini and Hegel shared a strong interest in plants' organization and animal biological life. On this specific theme, see (Chiereghin 1990; Illetterati and Andrea 2020; Achella 2012; Achella 2017; De Cieri 2002).

14. On this passivity, see (Soliani 2018).

15. Many interpretations of this type have been formulated during the XX century. We cite the most influential ones: (Spaventa 2009; Jaja 1999; Gentile 1958; Olgiati 1955; Mancini 1955; Severino 1994).

[16] On the hierarchical precedence between experiences and intuition in Rosmini, Thomas Aquinas, and Ludwig Babenstuber (1660–1726), see (Soliani 2022). In brief, finite material entities are the first kind of being that humans experience. However, the initial and virtual being, the source of intuition, is the first object that develops our intellect.

[17] We thank Paolo Pagani for sharing with us his ideas on this issue. The other discrepancies between Rosmini and Hegel are the following: for the German philosopher, the real subjective being collapses into the ideal. Therefore, for him, there is no distinction between the subsisting object and the essence of the same object. On the contrary, Rosmini theorizes the necessary distinction between knowledge of the essences (the ideal being) and concrete existences (the real being): the first one is the incontrovertible being in the logical sense, but ineffectual because it is not evident. The latter, the concrete entity, is evident, but it is subdued to the development of time, and it can be denied. Therefore, for Rosmini, our subjective knowledge (belonging to the real being) is not equivalent to the universal thinking or the universal being itself. Moreover, according to Hegel, the abstract being, the result of illumination, is the absolute God. In this sense, he is effectively an ontologist. Conversely, Rosmini separated God, as Creator of the Universe, by transcendental being, which includes creatures and God (as the ultimate perfect Entity, where existence and essence are equivalent because there is nothing potential in Him). Thirdly, being for Hegel always becomes its opposite. Therefore, dialectics is the same development of being. For Rosmini, being cannot convert itself into not-being.

[18] Here, the reference to (Thomas 1970, q. 1, a. 9), respondeo.

[19] Rosmini did not deny the role of doubt as an initial moment of human reasoning towards the truth, as Descartes said in his *Discourse of the Method*. He is arguing against the extremization of this doubt, which falls into skepticism.

[20] On the contrary, Rosmini sees it as a necessary stage of child development, see (Rosmini 1981, pp. 218–19; Rosmini 2019, n. 406–9).

[21] That is exactly what happened in the classic example of the "far tower", described by Rosmini in his *Nuovo Saggio*, see (Rosmini 2003–2005, vol. 5, nn. 1248–52, 167–69).

[22] For a synthetic vision of the human limits according to Rosmini, see (Rosmini 1998–2002, vol. 12, nn. 683–86, 655–58).

[23] As John C. Adams already noticed in 184.

[24] For a comparison between Adams' and Le Verrier's calculus of Neptune's position, see (Eriksson and Kevin 2018): http://kth.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:1218549&dswid=7338 (accessed on 23 February 2024).

[25] In this work, Rosmini does not mention the principle of not contradiction, nor the *élenchos*—the process against the negator of the truth. Moreover, he does not ponder on these themes in other works, like the *Theosophy* and *Aristotle exposed and examined*. However, we can affirm that Rosmini applies the *élenchos* even though he does not consider explicitly. Indeed, without it, any reference to necessary being will be left without foundations, and his entire metaphysics would fail.

[26] For a study about the distinction between human privation (evil) and limitation, see (Raschini 1996, pp. 155–65).

[27] As it is well known, Rosmini refused any ideologic totalitarianism pretending to achieve paradise on Earth. See (Rosmini 1997).

[28] Sciacca wrote about this kind of illusion, and the self-destruction of any attempt at perfectionism in (Sciacca 1972, pp. 73–86). See also (Pagani 2011).

[29] This is the virtual being (*essere virtuale*), the being in unity with the entities. We briefly remember that Rosmini also presents the initial being (*essere iniziale*), which is the being abstracted by finite objects. Both are the principles of Rosminian metaphysics. Indeed, they are distinct from the human mind's perspective, but both are the same bedrock seen from different standpoints. Moreover, the initial being is not in contradiction with the finite object since any reasoning concerns the universal being and infers it. Hence, the *essere iniziale* is the ultimate object for any thinking. See (Rosmini 1998–2002, vol. 12, n. 217, 218; Pagani 2020).

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