

Annuario di storia della metafisica  
Annuaire d'histoire de la métaphysique  
Jahrbuch für die Geschichte der Metaphysik  
Yearbook of the History of Metaphysics

# Quaestio

**Benet Perera (Pererius, 1535-1610).  
A Renaissance Jesuit  
at the Crossroads of Modernity**

**Benet Perera (Pererius, 1535-1610).  
Un gesuita rinascimentale  
al crocevia della modernità**

a cura di  
Marco Lamanna e Marco Forlivesi

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# Quaestio 14/2014

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# Note Cronache Recensioni

ici, les études sur la physique et l'ontologie d'Oresme, ainsi que la mise en perspective de celles-ci prendront bientôt un nouveau relief.

.....  
*Frederic Tremblay*

### On Cicovacki's Introduction to Nicolai Hartmann's Philosophy

📖 Review of P. CICOVACKI, *The Analysis of Wonder: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nicolai Hartmann*, Bloomsbury, New York-London-New Delhi-Sydney 2014, 184 pp.

This book is meant as an introduction to the thought of the twentieth century Balt-German philosopher Nicolai Hartmann. Opening with a useful chronological table, the book is divided into three main themes: "Being", "Values", and "Personality." The part on being briefly presents the core of Hartmann's philosophy, beginning with its method, its theory of being as such, the modes and strata of being, and the categories of being and of knowledge. The part on values presents Hartmann's theory of the nature of values, the different kinds of values, with emphasis on aesthetic values, especially the sublime. The author opposes the realm of real being to the realm of values, but it should be noted that, for Hartmann, the realm of real being is opposed not only to the realm of values, but to the realm of ideal being as a whole, which contains the laws of logic, the laws of mathematics, and values. The third part focuses on Hartmann's theory of personhood, according to which a person is not the undetermined agent that the anthropocentric approach would like it to be, but rather a being ontologically determined on all sides. Despite all these determinations, a person nevertheless enjoys a relative degree of freedom, but it is, so to say, free with its hands tied. Readers will find here an engaging port of entry into Hartmann's thou-

ght, provided that they are forewarned of the following three shortcomings of the book.

*Primo*, the topics emphasized in the book (ontology, ethics, axiology, aesthetics, and the theory of personhood) constitute only a portion of Hartmann's work. Hartmann is also an historian of Ancient Greek philosophy and of German philosophy, a philosopher of the natural sciences, a philosopher of the human sciences, he contributed to phenomenology, and he has been involved in the development of philosophical anthropology. His contribution to some of the omitted topics is historically as significant as his contribution to the topics dealt with in the book under review. To take an example amongst others, his philosophy of nature, which is presented in *Philosophische Grundfragen der Biologie* and *Philosophie der Natur: Abriß der speziellen Kategorienlehre*, occupies a considerable portion of his *opus* and exerted an influence on scientists such as Max Hartmann, Ludwig von Bertalanffy, Konrad Lorenz, and Willi Hennig. Yet the author does not breath a word on this part of Hartmann's philosophy. As a result, this introduction fails to faithfully represent the proportions of Hartmann's philosophy as a whole; it may give the impression that Hartmann is above all concerned with human beings, ethics, and aesthetics, and that his ontology is subservient to these interests, whereas this is not the case. Thus, although the book is advertised as an introduction, the reader should expect a work in which the proportions of the topics do not exactly reflect the proportions of the topics as we find them in Hartmann's work. In this respect, William H. Werkmeister's *Nicolai Hartmann's New Ontology* (Florida State University Press, Tallahassee 1990), remains the undefeated introduction.

*Secundo*, the author employs the word 'function' in a way susceptible to mislead the reader previously unacquainted with Hartmann's philosophy. The author says, for instance, that for Hartmann "being as

being has a grounding function” for its manifestations (p. 21). He also speaks of the “function of the categories” (p. 35). This use of the word ‘function’ may be a source of misunderstanding, because to say that being has a “function” seems to imply that being has a finality, and thus that Hartmann embraces a teleological conception of being in general. But Hartmann is a notorious critique of the teleological tendency of pre-critical dogmatic metaphysics. For Hartmann, teleological systems of thought all make the categorial mistake of confusing ontological and axiological principles: “All teleological thinking is axiologically determined, for the being-a-finality of a content is necessarily rooted in its quality of having a value. So, a teleological conception of the world by implication gives categorial primacy to values rather than to ontological principles, and allows the latter to be determined by the former”.<sup>1</sup> The author recognizes that Hartmann stands against teleological metaphysics (p. 24). Yet, the language he uses is nevertheless misleading. For, although being may be said to *ground* its manifestations, to say that being and its various categories have a grounding *function* implies the underlying fallacy of mistaking the “is” for the “ought”.

*Tertio*, and finally, it is difficult to agree with the author’s interpretation according to which “[f]or Hartmann, philosophy is the *analysis of wonder*” (p. 9). The author repeats throughout the book that for Hartmann “philosophy is the analysis of wonder” (p. 120), that Hartmann “understands philo-

sophy as the analysis of wonder” (p. 141), and that for him “Philosophy is just the analysis of wonder” (p. 157). The author made the same claim in an earlier article.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, neither in the book nor in the article does he provide textual evidence to support this interpretation. Hartmann does say in *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis* that “in the search for categories it becomes clear that philosophical knowledge is ultimately not so much a solution of enigmas as a widening of our bewilderment (*Wundern*)”.<sup>3</sup> He also says in *Ethik* that the new philosophical attitude is the old “Socratic pathos of astonishment (*Staunens*)”.<sup>4</sup> But these claims in no way imply that philosophy is definable as “the analysis of wonder” (or of astonishment), at least not by any known method of definition.

For Hartmann’s definition of ‘philosophy’, one has to turn to his *Einführung in die Philosophie*, where he provides the following characterizations. Starting with an historical characterization, he says that “[a]t the beginning ‘philosophy’ meant nothing else than what the word actually says: the love of wisdom”.<sup>5</sup> But, he adds, a (non-historical) reply to the question “What is philosophy?” can be that “[p]hi-

<sup>2</sup> “[Nicolai Hartmann] understands philosophy as the analysis of wonder”. P. CICOVACKI, *Personality – Developing Nicolai Hartmann’s View*, in *Philotheos: International Journal for Philosophy and Theology*, 13 (2013), pp. 189-206, esp. p. 200.

<sup>3</sup> “In der Kategorienforschung muß es klar werden, daß der letzte Sinn philosophischer Erkenntnis nicht so sehr ein Lösen von Rätseln, als ein Aufdecken von Wundern ist”. N. HARTMANN, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, fünfte Auflage, W. de Gruyter, Berlin 1965, p. 264.

<sup>4</sup> “Ihre Haltung ist wieder der philosophische Uraffekt, das Sokratische Pathos des Staunens”. N. HARTMANN, *Ethik*, W. de Gruyter, Berlin 1962, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> “„Philosophie“ hat anfänglich nichts anderes bedeutet als das, was das Wort eigentlich besagt: die Liebe zum Wissen”. N. HARTMANN, *Einführung in die Philosophie*, Vorlesungsnachschrift, Göttingen 1949, p. 7.

<sup>1</sup> “Alles teleologische Denken ist axiologisch bedingt, denn das Zwecksein eines Inhaltes wurzelt notwendig in seinem Wertcharakter. Ein teleologisches Weltbild also gibt ohne weiteres den Werten den kategorialen Primat vor den Seinsprinzipien, läßt diese durch jene bedingt sein”. N. HARTMANN, *Wie ist kritische Ontologie überhaupt möglich?*, in E. CASSIRER (Hrsg.), *Festschrift für Paul Natort zum siebzigsten Geburtstage*, W. de Gruyter, Berlin 1924, pp. 124-177, esp. p. 134.

losophy is the treatment of those questions that cannot be conclusively solved and that, for this reason, persist”.<sup>6</sup> This latter characterization is consistent with Hartmann’s aporetic conception of philosophy. He also says that at the beginning all the sciences were part of philosophy and that with time they branched out of it, as did psychology and sociology in the nineteenth century. It follows from this, he says, that in a sense philosophy is also “the queen of the sciences”.<sup>7</sup> It is also the most general discipline, for it deals with the “world as a whole”.<sup>8</sup> The latter characterizations are consistent with Hartmann’s tendency toward systematization. Moreover, in conformity with his phenomenological approach, he says that philosophy seeks to move “from the appearance of the world back to the essence of this appearance”.<sup>9</sup> Among all these characterizations, Hartmann makes no mention of philosophy as an analysis of wonder.

*Sensu stricto* philosophy cannot be said to be the analysis of wonder. Wonder is a psychological act or, at any rate, something that occurs in someone’s mind: we wonder at something or we experience wonder. Wonder is always a subjective emotional state or process directed at an object different from itself. As one of the numerous emotional states or processes, wonder is

<sup>6</sup> “Die Antwort auf die Frage: Was ist Philosophie? kann also lauten: Philosophie ist die Behandlung derjenigen Fragen, die nicht bis zu Ende gelöst werden können und deswegen perennieren”. HARTMANN, *Einführung in die Philosophie* cit., p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> “Jedoch ist andererseits die Philosophie, wie es gleichfalls Kant ausdrückte, in ihrer Weise die Königin der Wissenschaften”. HARTMANN, *Einführung in die Philosophie* cit., p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> “Denn sie ist diejenige, bei der es sich um eine Schau des Weltganzen handelt, wobei die Bedeutung des „Weltganzen“ in einem sehr weiten Sinne genommen werden muß”. HARTMANN, *Einführung in die Philosophie* cit., pp. 7-8.

<sup>9</sup> “Von der Schau der Welt zurück auf das Wesen dieser Schau”. HARTMANN, *Einführung in die Philosophie* cit., p. 8.

rarely itself the object of philosophical analysis. There is an important difference between thinking that philosophical inquiry is triggered by a certain kind of psychological act and thinking that philosophy is the analysis of that same kind of psychological act. And it is one of the essential characteristics of Hartmann’s thought that philosophy ought to move away from being a mere analysis of psychological acts and psychological contents toward an analysis of being itself, away from the *intentio obliqua* back to the *intentio recta*, as the author himself remarks (p. 43). Philosophy would be a very narrow field of inquiry if it were limited to analyzing the act of wonder.

.....  
Annalisa Cappiello

### Il Rinascimento nel cuore del Novecento: i carteggi tra Garin, Gentile e Papini

📖 S. BASSI, *Immagini del Rinascimento. Garin, Gentile, Papini*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma 2013, 148 pp.

Porta il titolo di *Immagini del Rinascimento. Garin, Gentile, Papini* la recente edizione critica, a cura di Simonetta Bassi, di alcuni carteggi primo-novecenteschi, per la gran parte inediti, tra Eugenio Garin, Giovanni Gentile e Giovanni Papini. Si tratta per lo più di brevi missive di ordine pratico, che illuminano il quotidiano “dietro le quinte” delle collaborazioni scientifiche, editoriali e pubblicitarie fra i tre autori. Tre intellettuali al lavoro, dunque. Tre intellettuali italiani, nonché tre importanti interpreti della cultura dei secoli XV e XVI, i quali proprio dell’età rinascimentale, nota Bassi, hanno elaborato *immagini* tanto peculiari per approcci, metodi e prospettive, quanto assimilabili nella differente flessione di un elemento comune: l’attenzione nei confronti della «prassi» umana e della «cornice in cui essa è inserita» (*Introduzione*, p. XIX).