

## First Part - ON THE ORIGINAL STRUCTURE

# Structural Principles in Emanuele Severino's Thought

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The essay focuses especially on the three structural principles that sustain the entire proceeding of Severino's thought and that refer to and imply one another. The first one is the principle of non-contradiction, in Parmenides' interpretation and not in the Aristotelian interpretation. The second one is given by the statement, of Hegelian and Gentilian origin, according to which every meaning – that is, every being as a signifier – necessarily implies the totality in its concrete and exhaustive content, and vice versa. The third one requires that every being in the earth, which arrives at the horizon of the appearing, is something that must always be overstepped by another being, and so on endlessly.

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## Introduction

Before addressing the topic indicated in the title of my speech, I would like to recall briefly, in this auditorium and in this Brescian headquarter of the Cattolica University, some facts from Emanuele Severino's biography, in particular those concerning his teaching activities (this article is the final report of the speech of the author at the conference "At the dawn of eternity", held in Brescia in March 2018).

After his degree in Philosophy, received in 1950 from the University of Pavia, where he had also been a guest of the Almo Collegio Borromeo, presenting his final dissertation concerning Heidegger with his never forgotten Master Gustavo Bontadini, and after becoming a lecturer in Theoretical Philosophy on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 1952, Emanuele Severino established his lecturing post at the Cattolica University, having received for that purpose the required authorization from the Sacra Congregazione dei Seminari e delle Università (Sacred Congregation of the Seminars and of the Universities) on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1957.

In the year 1956-57, he already taught a free course in History of Contemporary Philosophy; later, starting from 1957-58, he was assigned to teach History of Contemporary Philosophy and History of Ancient Philosophy for a year at the Faculty of Education and subsequently at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, until, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 1962 he was called upon to fill the position of full professor of Philosophy at the Faculty of Education, since he turned out second in a set of three in a contest for the teaching of Moral Philosophy launched by the University of Genova.

After he started his work on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 1963, he also taught a class in Moral Philosophy for the degree course of Philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, while he also taught courses in History of Philosophy, Institutions of Philosophy and Theoretical Philosophy in this Brescian location, when, starting from 1965, the courses of the detached section of the Faculty of Education were initiated. And it is interesting to

remember the judgements that the Council of the Faculty of Education expressed concerning Prof. Severino's activity in two different occasions: with the purpose of accompanying his application for the participation to a competition for a professorship, the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 1961, the Faculty writes a report in which it highlights that "Prof. Severino has surely demonstrated to fully master the subject and to possess remarkable teaching abilities. His contribution to the development of the doctrine that inspires the Faculty itself has converged in a vast series of works [...] and has vigorously resulted not only in his teaching (eliciting the most attentive participation among the students, vibrant debates and fruitful inquiries), but also in the discussions with his colleagues and among the 'Società Italiana per gli Studi Filosofici e religiosi' ('Italian Society for the Study of Philosophy and Religion')".

After the three years probationary period, in view of his confirmatory application as full professor, he receives from the Faculty Council, on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 1966, a statement in which it is attested that "in his extremely broad teaching activity, accompanied by a constant seminar activity that was always conducted with exemplary commitment and with careful attention to the different needs of the different groups of students, Prof. Severino has continued to demonstrate his rare and deep competence in the most diverse fields of the philosophical research. This is confirmed by both the relevant number of final dissertations led by him, which earned excellent marks, and the efficacy and acuity of his relations and correlations during the discussions for the final degree examinations, by both the constant increase in the number of young students around him who have already improved their knowledge in the scientific field, and the relevant interest and fruitful discussions that his teaching and his publications have raised among the students and the professors of the University".

And who was fortunate enough to be able to attend his classes, as the one who is speaking to you right now, for a biennium, between 1966 and 1968, will certainly never forget the rigorous way in which his arguments were presented, the solemn calm of his way of speaking, the clarity that illuminated the depth of his arguments, the supreme and scrupulous command of the logical passages, the attention to take into consideration questions and objections, in order to fully and exhaustively give an account of his own position.

## Logos and dialogue

Emanuele Severino's speculative path for over sixty years develops in an exemplarily coherent and fruitful way: it unravels in a debate with other philosophical perspectives; at the same time, it shows to be able to face and resolve the unresolved matters with innovative turning points, not easily predictable at the beginning, but congruent with the previous path. In particular, the dialogue with the opposite or differing positions becomes unavoidable and inescapable, since only by denying its own negation and by showing that its own negations are resolved in self-denial, the truth can be affirmed in its incontrovertibility and necessity. The presumption to deny it, indeed, would imply a contradiction either because it would be in contrast with other necessarily true propositions, since they belong to the original structure of truth, or because they would be intrinsically contradictory, that is, in contrast with the principle of non-contradiction. Moreover – and this is another point on which Severino methodologically insists – the different negations, as they concretely present themselves in history, or which can anyway be hypothesized, must be identified and refuted: even though the foundation of truth implies that, and is what it is as long as, it manages to resist to any assault and retort any objection, if the single negations weren't refuted and rejected, it would happen that negations that are only illusory could occur and act like actual negations. Severino points out indeed: «but if the truth knows *a priori* that there cannot be a motivation for every possible form of its negation, and that therefore every motivation is illusory, it must indeed show its appearance *concretely*, since otherwise that which counts as illusory motivation acts as an actual motivation» (Severino, 1984, p. 70; see also Severino, 1982, pp. 81-84). It can also be hypothesized (and this concretely happened for a certain period also in Severino's reflection concerning the relationship between the basics of logos and the presumed phenomenological experience of the becoming as the annihilation of the being) that such an assertion, which cannot be denied, contradicts another one, which belongs to the original structure of truth: from this would then result a radical aporia, inside the original structure itself, which cannot certainly be resolved by sacrificing one of the two assertions, but it cannot be accepted either as a synonym of the reality of the absurd. In this case, this is, therefore, about identifying, discovering and removing that element, alien to the original structure of the truth, which, illegitimately assumed as part of it, elicits the lamented aporia, that is, the conflict between two mutually contradictory

propositions, but of which none of them – because of its own nature – could be denied. In particular, such a case occurs actually, and it does not remain in the mere hypothetical level, when the conflict between the law of the logos and the report of the experience concerning the becoming, in its classic interpretation, happened. As long as that extrinsic element will not be refuted, the system of truth, which, as such, in its entirety sets itself as incontrovertible, is only valid in an abstract way and it remains in the aporia and in the problem and therefore, at least to some extent, in the contradiction.

From what has been said it appears that the dialectical dialogue, interpreted like this, is necessary to the truth in order to affirm and defend itself and, therefore, it must be concretely and actually pursued: not for a benevolent personal and subjective sentiment of openness toward the others, but because the truth itself depends on this dialogue, the philosophical position of a single thinker not so much. From this point of view, then, «the logos *is* dialogue, dialogue between the truth and its negation, outside of which the truth does not live» (Severino, 1984, p. 69): the condition of the truth is indeed such that if the incontrovertible foundation guarantees that its negation is defeated as the universality of negation, it is however not defeated in all of its possible individualizations, of which that universality is composed, so that the victory over the negation of the truth at the mere universal level is still an indeterminate victory, in a manner of speaking only potential and abstract.

Since the truth is well-founded, it is known *that* every possible negation is, as such, defeated, but it is not known *how* it is defeated yet; the debate with the different determinations of the negation makes, then, actual that *how* and it finally makes the defence of the truth concrete. It follows that the one who denies the truth or the interlocutor who insists on confuting it, must not be silenced, nor we must rejoice if he/she is weak and little fierce, since «his/her silence is the silence of the truth; since if the truth is not realized as the removal of its negation, it is not realized as the truth either; however, if the negation, the mistake is silent, the removal does not establish itself and the truth does not show its value, that is, it does not reveal itself and *so* it is not realized as the truth» (p. 68). If the adversary is strong and the objection is formulated as solidly and rigorously as possible, its confutation will also achieve a firmer success and the truth will establish itself in a more secure form.

It must be kept in mind that Severino does not interpret the dialectical

dialogue as the expression of single thinkers or of single, individual people: and this for two different kinds of reasons. First of all, during the initial moment of his reflection (before the latest developments), according to Severino, the existence of other individuals besides me is, indeed, only a problem and it is only possible that it can be possible that other people analogous to me exist and that they possess a conscience that is analogous to mine and beliefs perhaps opposite and in contrast with one another. In this sense, *I* find myself in a privileged situation, from the very point of view of the original structure of the truth, since I am aware, besides my behaviour, of my conscience too and my awareness concerning the reality, my feelings, desires and acts of will, whose reliability I am aware of, while concerning the others I am only aware of their external behaviour and it is only possible that to them a conscience analogous to mine is associated. Their beliefs are not immediately present. Hence, the dialogue and the conflict is not between a plurality of individuals, but the objections establish themselves only as propositional contents that presume to deny the original structure: «the philosophies are many [...] but I am the only philosopher, the only philosophizing that is actually real is mine, the only belief is mine» (p.78) and the thesis according to which «“the” philosophy is “my” philosophy» (Severino, 1981, p. 76; see also pp. 119-128) is only apparently paradoxical. Only in the continuation of his reflection, as we shall see, Severino will find not only the possibility, but the necessity that other consciences, apart from the original one are present, when he will demonstrate that, beyond the original circle of the appearing of destiny, an infinite constellation of finite circles of destiny must be considered present, in constant dialogue with one another.

Secondly, then, the affirmation of the truth does not occur because of (and thanks to) the work of a single thinker, that is, of an empirical I, but of the thought as itself, of a transcendental appearing, aware of being self-aware, which includes in itself every empirical appearing as its object. It is to the thought, interpreted like this, that the truth discloses, that is, something manifests itself immediately and the contradiction of the negation of the immediate (logical or phenomenological) manifests itself to it, and not to a specific empirical individual. In this regard, in an article entitled *Hic homo intelligit* (Severino, 1995, pp. 126-136) Severino explicitly criticizes the thesis according to which the subject of the process of knowledge is the man, the concrete human individual, since, when we affirm that “this being thinks”, we cannot mean that the connection between subject and predicate

is analytical and identical: in this case, we would actually say that the thought thinks, that what characterizes and completes this being is only and uniquely the thought, and we would deny, therefore, its individuality as an additional and crucial moment: because of this the aforementioned connection, if it wants to defend the specific subjectivity as linked to the thought must be synthetic; but, if it does not want to only be merely de facto, but needs to be necessary, it could not be given by experience, but it should be demonstrated. Without such a demonstration, saying that necessarily *hic homo intelligit* is just a premise, a hypothesis that lacks immediacy and truth. It must be said that as regards this position Severino has always remained very coherent, with great clarity: what he affirms with truth is not a point of view or a personal position concerning the world and what is real, but in philosophy it has to do with the destiny itself, that is, of what is present in a necessary way and is as such affirmed by a knowledge that is not mere opinion, but it reflects and translates what for the Greeks was called *epistémè*.

### **Non-contradiction and élenchos**

Three are the structural principles that sustain the entire proceeding of his thought and that refer to and imply one another.

The first one is the *principle of non-contradiction*, in Parmenides' interpretation, according to which "the being is and cannot not be" and not in the Aristotelian interpretation, according to which, instead, the being, if and when it is, is opposed to nothingness. This possibility precisely, that the being is not, is banished from Parmenides' formulation, which, therefore, does not entrust the time with the task to settle the contradiction that is intrinsic to the becoming anymore, but it is affirmed that the being can never and under no circumstances identify itself with the nothingness: as a result, it is not possible to say anymore that in the becoming the identification of the being with the nothingness would be avoided because the becoming being is before and is not after, since a being would not be anyway and there would be a moment in which a being would equal to nothing. And Parmenide's formulation impedes exactly this identification, since it simply affirms that the being is and the nothingness is not. Certainly, compared to the original Parmenides' formulation some sort of parricide will however be accomplished by Severino, when he will subsume again the determinations of the being, the platonic *éteiron*, inside the being and he will therefore affirm that those determinations too – since they are

– cannot not be. This way the becoming understood in a nihilistic way – as the affirmation of the coming from nothing or of the ending in nothing by the being (and by the single entities that exist) – is excluded. Equally, even the immediate presence, that can be attested on a phenomenological level, cannot be denied: if the being is immediately present on a phenomenological level, its negation is removed because it would be in contrast with the immediacy of the positive that is present: the immediacy of the presence of the being excludes its negation and it establishes the non-contradictoriness of the being in its patency. When the gnoseological dualism is overcome as an unacceptable premise, the phenomenological level and the logical one coincide in this Archimedean point, in which the immediate is in its concreteness. Here emerges also the link that ties together the non-contradiction principle and the affirmation of the intentional identity between being and thought, with the consequent refusal of a “reality per se”, cloudy for the thought and unknowable.

In defence of this principle there is the *élenchos* – the specific confutative argument that Aristotle develops in the fourth book of his *Metaphysics* – which Severino, precisely in his essay *Ritornare a Parmenide* (*Returning to Parmenides*) (Severino, 1982, pp. 19-61; in particular pp. 40-58), exhaustively and systematically reorganizes in its possible variations and formulations. Apart from the Aristotelian formulations, according to Severino, the principle of non-contradiction affirms the universal opposition of the being and of the nothingness, that is, the opposition of the positive and the negative: the confutation of those who deny such an opposition is developed through two passages with an increasing accuracy and universality of conclusions and results. First of all, it can be observed that the negation of the universal opposition is the affirmation of an individuation of the universal opposition, since that presumed negation – being a certain positive – in order to be that, is opposed to everything that is different from itself, that is, to its not being. At this point it results that the negation of the universal opposition is not refuted as such, but it is refuted in its universality, since at least one specific exemplification of that universal opposition must be admitted. This way it is said that the negation of an individuation is an individuation, and so it cannot achieve its aim. Secondly, it can be observed that not only the negation of the opposition is distinguished from the other-than-self, but even its terms cannot be confused with one another, if the negation of the opposition wants to be such. If indeed I demand to deny the principle, identifying what is different



(positive and negative; being and nothingness; yellow and red; man and trireme), it is necessary that the elements that are different from one another appear and are known as such: otherwise, the opposition would not be denied, instead, a banal identity would be affirmed among elements perceived as not at all different from one another. As a consequence, the identification of the opposites is entirely based on the opposition of the opposites, that is, the opposition of the opposites can be denied only if it is affirmed and therefore its negation is entirely based on its affirmation. The negation of the principle implies exactly the truth of what it wants to deny, that is, of the principle itself, since, in order to deny, it is necessary that the negation is asserted as a negation, and not as an affirmation or something else. This way, we are implicitly compelled to affirm what we explicitly would like to deny, and we are compelled to pose what we would like to eliminate exactly in the act itself and with the intent itself of eliminating it.

These earnings will remain as the analysis and the investigation of the Aristotelian postulate also in the development of the subsequent reflections, even though they will be inserted in a broader context and will undergo a radical reevaluation. The continuation of the reflection will lead to further reiterate that the Aristotelian *élenchos* does not belong to the truth of destiny, but only to the Western *epistème*, considered in its most rigorous role. Since it is isolated from the truth of destiny, the Aristotelian position takes only the form of an alteration of the truth of what is original. Separated from the truth, the language that resounds as similar to the truth, is not the truth, it is instead its alteration and a deviation from it.

The principle of non-contradiction, as it is delineated in that essay, however, even though it affirms the eternity and the immutability of every being, it does not determine yet what the report of the experience concerning the becoming of the single beings is, on a strictly phenomenological and descriptive level. Consequently, it does not imply a specific solution to the problem posed by the becoming yet, when the becoming is intended as in the formulation that traditionally – at least starting from Plato and Aristotle – is given to the matter, that is, the becoming as the passage from nothingness to the being and from the being to nothingness (or from a certain not-being to a certain being and vice versa). At first, a solution like the one glimpsed in an original interpretation of Anassimandro's postulate and proposed in the essay: *La parola di Anassimandro (Anassimandro's word)* (Severino, 1982, pp. 391-411) seemed plausible. In that essay it was affirmed that, even though in the world things are born and die following the order

of time, «the uncontaminated sphere of the divine, where the being is eternally in itself» (p. 408), still remains. As Severino will later note, this «is the extreme attempt to join the testament of the truth of being up with the nihilistic concept of the becoming» (p. 411). Such an hypothesis of a solution is later resumed right at the end of *Ritornare a Parmenide (Returning to Parmenides)*, when, reaffirmed the immutability of the being, in front of the fact of the becoming intended as the annihilation of the being, it is stated that «the being as the being, and therefore the entirety of the being, is; and therefore it is immutable. However, since immutable it hovers over the becoming being, it transcends it» (p. 59). The immutable includes, consequently, all the positive that is in what is in the process of the becoming and transcends it; what is in the process of the becoming, then, is not a nothing, but it does not constitute a novelty for God, in fact it is already rescued besides the eternal. However, this draft of a solution could not hide the underlying grave aporia, determined by the simultaneous presence of two opposite and irreconcilable needs, the thesis of the immutability of the being and the presence of the becoming, and by the awareness that none of them could be sacrificed to the other.

Starting from the *Poscritto (Postscript)* (pp. 63-133), the subsequent reflection – and in this sense the return to Parmenides will be developed in a renewing and actual loyalty – will highlight that the ancient problem of the becoming does not exist and is dissolved not as a consequence of just the application of the first principle, but because of a more adequate reading and interpretation of the phenomenological report, which attests not the annihilation of a being and its rising from nothingness, but only its disappearing and appearing; and together with the being its own appearing is destined to disappear and appear too – not to be annihilated. The experience, correctly read and not interpreted according to the tradition of the Western metaphysics, does not certify the annihilation of the being at all, but only its disappearing; so that the being, which appeared before, does not appear anymore and its appearing too, which appeared before, is not annihilated but is only disappeared. When a being is not present anymore, its being a nothing does not appear at all, but simply that being does not appear anymore. Severino reaffirms later, in numerous and increasingly deep analysis, that in here there is not the risk of an infinite process, since the appearing is not something external and alien to what appears from time to time: if this were the case, since every appearing appears, we would go on infinitely into the series of the new forms of what appears. Instead, the

different moments of what appears coincide, since, when a being appears, the appearing of the being, the appearing of the appearing and the appearing of the appearing of the appearing coincide and, when the being becomes, it disappears and, with it, its appearing and the appearing of the appearing, without the manifestation of any form of annihilation. «The appearing that starts (or ends) has itself as a content, so that the starting to appear structurally excludes the starting to be» (p. 110). This alternation, which is the new face of the becoming that is nihilistic no more, is accomplished inside the total horizon of the appearing, which, since it is transcendental, is not prone to any form of becoming, while it is instead the background that encloses the totality of the beings that appear.

Hence, since, from the correctly read experience, no annihilation of the beings emerges, the problem of a contradiction inherent to the becoming – that is, in the presumed appearing of the annihilation of the being – which would need to be remedied in order to be able to break even with the regulation given by the principle of non-contradiction, is not present anymore. On this substantial point the discussion with Gustavo Bontadini, which, despite not overcoming the radical opposition between the two interlocutors, has allowed both of them to clarify their positions, sharpening the respective arguments and highlighting the essential points of the dissent, will develop for many years. And right thanks to a reading of the experience and of its report, Severino refutes the traditional conception of the becoming, considered nihilistic since it considers indeed proven the evidence of the annihilation of the being. Since the experience does not comment on the destiny of the being that does not appear anymore, the principle of non-contradiction takes over at this point to impose the only possible interpretation, which becomes necessary since it implies the inconsistency of all the other alternatives. As can be seen, the ancient distinction between appearing and being returns here, which in history has had different and opposite declinations, starting from the ancient thinking. Since the gnoseological dualism between the being and the appearing has been overcome, it will not be possible to say anymore that the being is destined not to appear or that it is alien to the appearing (almost as if the being per se would be something that, as such, cannot appear), and vice versa, the appearing will not be an heterogenous or misleading manifestation compared to the being; but instead the appearing will be the splendor of the being, i. e. that to which the being, in its fullness and adequacy, is destined. If the being is immutable and eternal, then, when it does not appear

anymore, it continues to be, so the sequence present in the becoming proves the historicity of the ways in which the immutable manifests itself and, at the same time, the finiteness of the appearing, that is, the proceeding under which the totality appears, without being ever concretely, and fully, given. Hence, if a being appears, it certainly is; while, if it does not appear, not only *it is not possible to say* that it is no more, but *it is necessary to say* that it continues to be, eternal and immutable.

### **Abstract and concrete**

The second structural principle is given by the statement – of Hegelian and Gentilian origin – inspired to the dialectic in its fundamental speculative function, according to which every meaning – that is, every being as a signifier – necessarily implies the totality in its concrete and exhaustive content, just like, inversely, the totality necessarily implies all the single meanings, since it is constituted only in reference to them. On this fundamental point Severino lingers at great length in his *La Struttura Originaria (The Original Structure)* and in his subsequent writings for different reasons: if a specific predicate befits *necessarily* a certain meaning, if the meaning would be considered outside of that relation, it would not be itself anymore and its position would be the position of something different from itself (of a not-self). With this we do not simply want to propose the (rather banal) observation that A, in relation to B, is not A outside that relation, but it is asserted that, if the relation between A and B is necessary, it becomes constitutive of the meaning of A, so that, outside this relation, A is not itself, but something else. In this regard Severino enunciates a series of theorems that outline an organic conception of the reality and a view of the totality as a complex system (Severino, 1984, pp. 186-193). If a being, as immediately significant, is such because it denies everything that is not itself (since, this way, the identity with itself is immediately linked to the distinction-opposition toward what is other from itself), that is, it denies the *totality* of its opposition, then this, the totality, belongs necessarily to the meaning of that being. And this being will not be itself, but it will be denied, if with it it will not be also *concretely* given the totality of the other from itself. And such a thesis will soon pose a grave problem to which we will come back later. *Thus, every being necessarily implies the totality of the beings.* Moreover, a second thesis must be posed: speaking of the totality, if we observe that it necessarily includes a certain being – since otherwise it would not be the totality – this being (just like all the other beings included in the totality)

determines the meaning of the totality, which, therefore, will not be itself anymore if it will not refer concretely to all the beings that belong to it. *The totality implies necessarily every being.* It must be then concluded that every being and every meaning necessarily imply every other being and meaning. *Every being necessarily implies every other being.*

This series of thesis highlights that the main mistake to repel must be found in the affirmation of the independence or of the insularity of a meaning or of a being with regard to all the others. This way Severino resumes the fundamental basis of the Hegelian position and his organicism: he rejects the primacy of the unrelated individual, in its independence from everything else, and he does not accept that the relationship is only secondary and subsequent with regard to the different things that are in relation to one another and that these, therefore, must be assumed. On the contrary: it is only inside the relation that the different signifiers beings are constituted, since each of them is both identical to itself and different from all the others, so that the reference to all the others is intrinsically necessary for every being. Only inside the totality of the system a being is adequately and fully significant. Thus, referring to the part always implies referring to the whole, and vice versa.

The entire context in which a being is inserted contributes therefore to the determination of the being itself and, if that context changes, that being and its meaning change too and are the same no more. And, however, among the different contexts in which that being is placed (and in which it assumes different meanings) there is always an identical moment, which changes in the different contexts and which however allows to say that in each of them it is always present. It must not be thought however that the identical moment subsists separated from the contexts: rather the identity is realized in different ways, depending on the contextual relations in which it is inserted.

Therefore, if a being is posed without posing the totality of the references that constitute it essentially, that being that we would like to pose is not posed and the intention to pose it remains frustrated. We are here in the presence of that contradiction C that in all of Severino's reflection, starting from *La Struttura Originaria (The Original Structure)*, plays a fundamental role that remains unchanged. If it is not taken under consideration and is not understood in its essence and in its function most of the outcomes of Severino's conception are missed. With such contradiction C – here is its peculiarity – a certain content is not posed and in the same time not posed

(as happens in the contradictions as normally intended) and that other fundamental contradiction, because of which the immutability of every being is denied and we give in to the nihilistic conception of the becoming and of the experience (as happens in the Western philosophy), is not posed either, but an inequality is realized between what we intend to pose and what is instead actually posed, between the concrete position we intend to realize and the only formal position that we manage to achieve. With it we demand to affirm a being without posing with it the concrete and infinite totality of the references that constitute it and that give to it its full and adequate meaning. Thus, we come to affirm the finiteness of the I, even when it is in the truth, since it cannot manifest the concrete totality of the being in its absolute fullness: from which results that the finite I of destiny, despite being in the truth, can never align itself with the infinite I of destiny, and it cannot do so because otherwise the finite would be annihilated in the infinite and that being, made of the finite I, would be annihilated. And this is impossible. It follows that the immutable manifests itself only in a processual way, that is, in a finite way: otherwise, the being that is the transcendental appearing would cease to be, that is, the immutable horizon in which the moments of the immutable enter and exit the appearing.

In this context is located the difference between the concrete position of a being and its abstract position, between the concrete position of the totality and its abstract position, since the totality and the original structure are not denied in their truth and essentiality, but they are not shown in their concreteness. The abstract concept of the abstract is the position of something that is not only distinguished from the totality that is essential to it, but of something that is also separated from it. Almost all the aporias are actually born from the fact of considering an element as separated and, at the same time, not separated from a certain constitutive relation. The vice of the abstract intellect, demands indeed that the element, separated, exists per se and that (only) in its separated existing per se it is fully itself; but, at the same time, it considers that element still as a part and not as the totality, because this way only, if it is a part, it can be separated and the work of separation can be accomplished: however, right because of this, that element is not considered as something separate. Such a need for concreteness encourages a logic of identity, according to which, when an equation between things that are different is posed (saying, for example, that A is B), we manage not to say the impossible and not to contradict ourselves, only if A is not intended as a generic A, but precisely as that A that is together with B and, vice versa, B

will not be a generic B, but precisely that B that is destined to be together with A, so that the relation between the two becomes essential and necessary. Those who know Severino's different works, in their progressive speculative development and in their complete and meticulous work and constant refinement, also know with what persistence and with how much difficulty he tries to bring out the fact that, in the case of an identification of things that are different, each element is not the other, while it is destined to enter in a synthesis with the other, precisely because it is what it is. The affirmation of the identification is always accompanied by the position of distinction and of the diversity and it is rather tiring (if not difficult) to make the difference coexist with the identity of what differs, which would not in turn break in additional elements that are different from one another that need to be identified and linked to one another. And here the risk of an endless regression, always glimpsed, might hide.

And, as it has been said just above, this contradiction highlights the finiteness of the finite appearing, in which the concrete totality of the beings does not appear in its absolute fullness; a structural finiteness, since it could never coincide with the infinite, concrete and totally unfolded appearing. Precisely this contradiction and the inequation between finite appearing and infinite appearing of the destiny is the ultimate foundation of the possibility of the nihilistic isolation from destiny. If the finite appearing were the concrete appearing of everything and not only a formal appearing of the totality, the earth could not be isolated and that event that is nihilism could not happen either. At this point, however, the question of why the presence of a finite and only formal appearing of destiny is necessary arises, why we can only approach Joy and not already be in it.

## Crossing

The third principle emerges mostly starting from the volume *La Gloria* (*The Glory*), and is later reaffirmed in *Oltrepassare* (*Crossing*): it requires that every being in the earth, which arrives at the horizon of the appearing, is necessarily not impossible to overstep, but is something that must always be overstepped by another being, and so on endlessly: «something that oversteps that is impossible to overstep is impossible» (Severino, 2007, p. 185). Thanks to this principle not only the possibility (which had always been allowed and justified), but also the necessity that a plurality of finite ways of appearing of the destiny exists will be founded; that is, that there is an

infinite constellation of finite circles of destiny, according to the linguistic formulation assumed in the most recent works. And this is a conclusion that arises from a series of very important reflections. On the one hand, we can ask ourselves why the being, which is the immutable, must appear in a processual way; which means always in a partial and finite form, as we could already observe. On the other hand, the question of in what sense and why this principle will allow us to get out of that form of solipsism, to which Severino appeared necessarily condemned, when – as we saw – it was affirmed that, while the immediate presence attested my conscience, besides my behaviour, this was not the case for the others, so that it had to be concluded that philosophy came to coincide with “my” philosophy.

As regards the first issue, it should be noted that Severino starts, so to speak, from the bottom, that is, from the original circle of the actual appearing; he does not deduce from certain abstract and a priori conditions, which prescind from the actual presence, but he moves from the original point in which that presence is located. And the empirical appearing arrives inside the horizon of the transcendental appearing, which is immobile not only because, since it is a being, it is eternal, but also because it constitutes the ultimate background of the rising and of the setting of every being, the remaining upon which the becoming beings follow one another and which is the condition that allows their following one another, but it is not one of the becoming beings itself. Without the transcendental appearing there would not be the sight of the arrival of the different beings, whose empirical appearing rises and sets. The appearing in a processual way, and therefore the finiteness, is then required both because the arrival demands that something disappears, and the fact that something arrives is attested by the empirical appearing, and because otherwise those beings that are the empirical appearing and the transcendental one, as well as the starting to appear of a certain empirical appearing on the background of the transcendental appearing, would be cancelled in their difference. And since we know that even the empirical appearing, albeit finite, since it is a being it is eternal, it, when it disappears, will continue to appear (and in this case, to be) inside the infinite appearing, in which everything appears in its total concreteness.

We could however ask ourselves if and why elements (every one of them or some of them) that appear in the horizon of the transcendental appearing, although they rise, cannot remain permanent in it and must be crossed, according to the principle that was now recalled: I believe the



reasons are different. If all the positive that arrives were impossible to cross and permanent, the content of the transcendental appearing would move toward the limit of equalling what is totally and fully accomplished in the harmony of everything; but this could never arrive as the result of a process of accomplishment, in which the contradictions of which every moment that arrives in the earth consists are entirely overcome, right because it is partial (Severino, 2001, pp. 91-92). The infinite appearing of everything is originally infinite and total, and it cannot become so, otherwise it would not be that full concrete totality it is. Hence, what arrives must in turn be crossed and it cannot demand to be the ultimate elimination of every contradiction. Moreover, according to Severino, if a content of the empirical appearing were unsurpassable, it would be assimilated to the background, to the immutable field inside which the becoming happens, but which – we know – cannot become, and it therefore cannot undergo increases or additions. The variants, which are in the becoming, would become permanent constants, from a content of the transcendental appearing they would become a moment of it. Certainly, what disappears at the arriving of something else, continues to appear somehow, but indeed as something that is disappeared.

It follows that, then, – and this is the second issue – that even that finite appearing, actual and original, aware of itself as I, cannot be the only form of finite appearing, but it becomes necessary (and not only possible) to admit that «the being that crosses starts to appear inside another I of the destiny, that is, inside a circle of the appearing and on a background different from the original circle and background» (Severino, 2001, p. 185). It becomes necessary then to pose also an infinite constellation of finite circles of the appearing, which is beyond and different from the actual and original appearing, albeit analogous to it: otherwise, the latter, right in its actuality, would be impossible to cross and it would start to belong to the immutable background, which is impossible. At the actual appearing these finite circles appear, but only as abstract, and they do not possess that concreteness the original appearing has for itself.

This way, Severino's reflection gains the foundation of a plurality of finite ways of appearing, analogous to the original one, and manages to conjugate the affirmation that the totality manifests itself in its own absolute and full concreteness and, at the same time, the affirmation of the infinite plurality of the essentially finite prospects, which more and more completely, but never fully, match that infinite appearing.

## References

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