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existence. Elles font donc durer l'humanisme et la religion. Pour garantir sa durée, celle-ci jouit, en outre, de l'aide de Dieu, puisque la nature d'une relation dépend des personnes qui y concourent.

Les relations basées sur les propriétés que l'être possède en raison de son existence sont des rapports instaurateurs de présence. La présence prend la forme de ces relations. La présence n'est donc pas l'existence. Elle est, grâce à l'existence, la rencontre de personnes dans des relations d'amour, de foi et d'espérance, qui ont grandi sur la réalité de l'être, sur sa vérité, et sur sa bonté.

Les relations basées sur les propriétés que l'être possède en raison de son essence sont des rapports productifs. Le produit ou l'effet de la connaissance, c'est le savoir; le produit ou l'effet de la décision, c'est l'efficacité. Pareil effet n'est pas la présence. Grâce à la *metanoia*, le savoir et l'efficacité sont seulement en mesure d'aider à faire durer les relations instauratrices de présence, l'humanisme et la religion, les liens d'amour, de foi et d'espérance.

Grâce aux relations fondamentales d'amour, de foi et d'espérance, en séjournant parmi les personnes, l'homme peut commencer d'exister, naître, vivre, tirer profit de l'univers, de l'humanisme et de la religion. Les personnes ainsi que les relations d'amour, de foi et d'espérance, tel est le monde fondamental de l'homme, son monde propre, son véritable monde. Quant à l'univers, ce n'est qu'à titre secondaire et dérivé qu'il est le monde de l'homme.

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DERMOT MORAN

«OFFICINA OMNIUM» OR «NOTIO QUÆDAM
INTELLECTUALIS IN MENTE DIVINA AETERNALITER
FACTA»:

THE PROBLEM OF THE DEFINITION OF MAN IN THE
PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN SCOTTUS ERIUGENA

1. Man as «Officina Omnium»

In this paper I offer an interpretation of John Scottus Eriugena's account of human self-knowledge and self-definition. Since the «re-discovery»⁽¹⁾ of Eriugena by the German Idealists of the 19th century, it is his striking theory of human nature (in particular the claim that man is the *officina omnium*, «containing» all things, II, 530 d, IV, 755 b) which has attracted most critical attention⁽²⁾. I propose to deal with just one aspect of this «hydra-headed» problem⁽³⁾, namely, whether human nature somehow contains itself, since it contains all things. Containment involves, for Eriugena, comprehending and defining whatever is contained⁽⁴⁾. If the human mind can contain itself, then it has complete comprehension of itself. This leads to a paradox: if it comprehends itself fully, it is greater than itself; on the other hand, since at the level of

⁽¹⁾ W. BEIERWALTES, *The Revaluation of John Scottus Eriugena in German Idealism*, in J. J. O'MEARA & L. BIELER (eds.), *The Mind of Eriugena*, Dublin, 1973, p. 190.

⁽²⁾ B. STOCK, *The Philosophical Anthropology of Johannes Scottus Eriugena, Studi Medievali*, ser. 3^a, VIII (1967), pp. 1-57; J. TROUILLARD, *L'Unité humaine selon Jean Scot Érigène*, in *L'Homme et son prochain*, Paris, 1957, pp. 298-301; B. MCGINN, *The Negative Element in the Anthropology of John the Scot*, in R. ROQUES (ed.), *Jean Scot Érigène et l'histoire de la philosophie*, Paris, 1977, pp. 315-326; F. BERTIN, *Les origines de l'homme chez Jean Scot*, *ibid.*, pp. 307-314; B. STOCK, *Intelligo me esse: Eriugena's Cogito*, *ibid.*, pp. 327-336; T. TOMASIC, *Negative Theology and Subjectivity. An Approach to the Tradition of the Pseudo-Dionysius*, *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 9 (1969), pp. 406-430; and J. GRACIA, *Ontological Characterization of the Relation between Man and Created Nature in Eriugena*, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, XVI, 2 (1978), pp. 155-166.

⁽³⁾ At *Periphyseon* IV, 770a, Eriugena compares the problem of human nature to the hydra which grows new heads as soon as they are cut off. Like the hydra, man has a *fons quidam multiplex*. For Books I-III of the *Periphyseon*, I am quoting from SHELDON-WILLIAMS's edition; for Books IV-V, I use MIGNÉ, PL CXXXII.

⁽⁴⁾ For Eriugena to contain is equivalent to comprehending, circumscribing, defining something. See J. GRACIA, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-158.

intellectual knowledge, knower and known are one, if it comprehends itself fully, it must be equal to or identical with itself. Eriugena's discussion of this problem reveals his concern to articulate a form of knowing by which human minds can know themselves and each other, in a non-dominating manner, which I have named, mutual recognition.

Translated into modern philosophical terminology, Eriugena is concerned to express the manner in which human beings have self-consciousness and self-knowledge. Moreover, at the very heart of subjective self-awareness, for him, there is a dynamic process of inter-subjective communion, which binds men together and orients them towards the Divine Self. To know the self fully it is necessary to know other minds and, ultimately, the Divine Mind. Awareness of our own nature must involve becoming aware of God in Whose image we are made.

But the dialectic of self-knowledge has a negative moment also. Just as God is said not to know *what* He is because He is infinite and incomprehensible, i.e. unbounded and undefinable, and to know only *that* He is, similarly, the human mind is said by Eriugena to be ignorant of itself and does not know its true nature. This ignorance of self has a dynamic component however, the ultimate unknowableness of the human self is, for Eriugena, the highest evidence that we are made in God's image (IV, 771 b), and this orients us towards God. The unknowableness of God, on the other hand, throws the subject back to reflect on his own powers and limitations. In accordance with Eriugena's Dionysian inheritance, the negative moment in the dialectic of self-knowledge is more important than the positive for gaining true wisdom. But, given this emphasis on self-ignorance, how can the human mind be said to know itself at all?

2. Self-Definition

In a marginal addition (in Eriugena's supposed hand) to the Reims Ms of the *Periphyseon* printed in Migne, PL CXXII, Book I, 485 a-b, the pupil asks whether man or angel can define himself or another. The master answers

Videtur mihi neque se ipsos neque inter se inuicem diffinire posse.
Nam si homo se ipsum uel angelum diffinit maior se ipso est et angelo.
Maius enim est quod diffinit quam quod diffinitur.

In Book IV, 768 b of the Floss edition of the *Periphyseon* (PL CXXII) the master states

Possumus ergo hominem definire sic: Homo est notio quaedam intellectualis in mente divina aeternaliter facta.

How are we to reconcile these conflicting passages? In the first Eriugena argues that human nature cannot define itself because it would then be greater than itself, in the second, he offers a definition⁽⁵⁾. Albeit, this definition applies, as the student immediately adds, to all things made in the Divine Wisdom (768 b).

The answer, I argue, lies in Eriugena's understanding of self-knowledge as involving a harmonious dwelling together of intellects in mutual recognition, a view of *intersubjective* non-exclusive knowledge very different from the modern post-Cartesian private introspective form of self-knowing. To grasp this, it is necessary to first discuss some of the wider claims of Eriugena's philosophy.

3. Nemo intrat in celum nisi per philosophiam («Annotationes in Marcianum»)

The aim of philosophy is to awaken human beings to their full potential as humans, and to bring them ultimately into unity with God in *theosis (deificatio)*⁽⁶⁾. Human nature has fallen away from unity and is now in an imperfect, alienated state. Philosophy, and dialectic in particular, is employed to bring humankind to an awareness of this alienation and lead to the recollection and return (*reditus*) of human nature to itself. This fall of human nature mirrors the very process of explication and reintegration of the universe from its source, and this whole ontological process is itself mirrored by the movement of the human mind outwards from formless intellectual intuition through reason and ratiocination to the manifold domain of sense. Reason is the mediator between the noetic and the sensible world, and the aim of philosophy (and of the dialogue itself) is the Platonic aim of redirecting our gaze away from the objects of sense (phantasies), and the passions, and, by developing the rational and intellectual powers of the soul through reasoning and argument, leading to the contemplative vision of

⁽⁵⁾ There are many kinds of definition — from genus, species, name, a priori, a posteriori, from contraries, etc. (I, 474d) but in general Eriugena operates with three kinds of definition. Definition *per genus et differentiam* which he calls substantial definition, definition from the circumstances which surround the thing (IV, 772b), and the more genuine substantial definition which states *that* something is and not what it is. But see also I, 483c-d where only what completes and perfects the nature is a true substantial definition.

⁽⁶⁾ On *theosis* see M. LOT-BORODINE, *La déification de l'homme selon la doctrine des Pères grecs*, Paris, 1970.

the unified intellect where all humans are one, and human nature is restored to unity. Dialectic is the means by which we are made to recollect the forgotten truth about our true nature, and understanding the truth ultimately brings about the truth. As Eriugena says at *Periphyseon*, IV, 780 b-c

Nam et nos, dum disputamus, in nobismet invicem efficimur. Siquidem dum intelligo quod intelligis, intellectus tuus efficior, et ineffabili quodam modo in te factus sum. Similiter quando pure intelligis quod ego plane intelligo, intellectus meus efficeris, ac de duobus intellectibus fit unus, ab eo, quod ambo sincere et incunctater intelligimus, formatus.

He goes on to point out that the intellect is one with its power of understanding

Non enim aliud sumus, aliud noster intellectus; vera siquidem ac summa nostra essentia est intellectus contemplatione veritatis specificatus (780 c).

This latter point develops Eriugena's idealist conception of human nature. We are our intellects first and foremost, and it is the aim of philosophy to awaken us from our dogmatic materialist slumbers which keep this truth from us. Eriugena will therefore produce a number of arguments to show that the spatio-temporal world with its individual material substances is really a production of the human mind itself⁽⁷⁾! We will then enter a world where, as in Berkeley, God and His Ideas (which include the human and angelic spirits) are the only true substances (*ousiai*). All else is *phantasia*, and it is selfish phantasies which Eriugena identifies as the cause of our non-unity with God.

4. Human Nature and the One

The aim of philosophy is to attain the formless One. The One is best understood in Eriugena (and in Christian Platonism generally) as an indescribable unity of minds for which the dwelling together of the three Persons of the Trinity provides the paradigm. Although Eriugena

(7) Specifically his argument that place and time (and all they contain) are actually in the mind. *Periphyseon* I, 485c-d. See M. CRISTIANI, *Lo spazio e il tempo nell'opera dell'Eriugena*, *Studi Medievali*, ser. 3*, IX (1968), pp. 167-233 and J. F. COURTINE, *La Dimension spatio-temporelle dans la problématique catégoriale du «De Divisione Naturae» de Jean Scot Érigène*, *Les Études Philosophiques*, 3 (1980), pp. 343-367. For another interpretation which stresses Eriugena's realism see J. MARENBOON, *From the Circle of Alcuin to the School of Auxerre*, Cambridge, 1981 and IDEM, *John Scottus and the «Categoriae Decem»*, in W. BEIERWALTES (ed.), *Eriugena. Studien zu seinen Quellen*, Heidelberg, 1980, pp. 117-134.

stresses the transcendence of the One above «all that is and all that is not», above *ousia*, above *nous*, nevertheless he is at pains to emphasise the proximity of human nature to the One. In its unity, human nature is omniscient and omnipotent, a perfect *imago Dei*, differing only from God *in subjecto*, which for Eriugena means in numerical difference only⁽⁸⁾. Indeed the hidden One manifest Himself as *Verbum* which becomes man through *inhumanatio*, and thus *Verbum* and man are *una substantia* (745 a) although at Book V, 911 c, he states that it is only in the Son that humanity is united to deity in a single substance. The perfect man is Christ (743 a), and paradise is nothing other than perfect human nature in which God «goes walking» (841 c-d). If not identical with God, then all humans are at least capable of being perfect images of God, reflecting His essence, and allowing God to contemplate Himself in these images. Thus in the *Homilia*, 291 a⁽⁹⁾, Eriugena says that the meaning of Matthew 10, 20 is

Non uos estis qui lucetis, sed spiritus patris uestri qui lucet in uobis, hoc est, me in uobis lucere uobis manifestat, quia ego sum lux intelligibilis mundi, hoc est, rationalis et intellectualis naturae; non uos estis qui intelligitis me, sed ego ipse in uobis per spiritum meum meipsum intelligo, quia uos non estis substantialis lux, sed participatio per se subsistentis luminis

an explanation he repeats at *Periphyseon*, 522 b. Thus human nature is a mirror of the Divine, or as Eriugena translates Maximus (*Versio Ambiguorum S. Maximi*, PL 1220 a):

Dicunt enim, inter se invicem esse paradigmata Deum et hominem,

man and God are paradigms (or examples) of each other. A paradigm is that through which something else may be understood, an example, an image, a form. We can thus summarize the relation between man and God diagrammatically as follows

HOMO	Verbum	DEUS
MAN	Paradigma	GOD
	Imago (theophania)	
	Idea (notio)	

It is clear that this relation can easily be expressed in terms of Eriugena's definition of man as *notio intellectualis in mente divina*. For man to come to understand himself is to see himself as a mirror or image of God, thus the first step towards knowledge of God is knowledge of self.

(8) Two identical objects differ only in that they are numerically distinct. This is problematic in the case of non-material beings which lack matter as an individuating principle.

(9) É. JEANNEAU (ed.), *Jean Scot. Homélie sur le Prologue de Jean*, Paris, 1969.

5. Self-Knowledge

Self-knowledge is thought of in various ways. On one level self-knowledge is a kind of self-creation, since in the highest intellection, being and knowing are one, knowing may in a certain sense be said to produce being. Before knowing the mind is said not to be, as he remarks at *Periphyseon*, I, 454 b

nam et noster intellectus prius quam ueniat in cogitationem atque memoriam non irrationabiliter dicitur (non) esse. Est enim per se inuisibilis et nulli praeter deum nobisque ipsis cognitus est; dum uero in cogitationes uenerit et ex quibusdam phantasiis formam accipit non inmerito dicitur fieri⁽¹⁰⁾.

Eriugena speaks as if the act of knowing itself is generative or creative of the self, although he does also allow that before thought the mind has a hidden implicit knowledge of itself. He says that these two moments of hidden and explicit self-knowledge are affected by the Fall so that «the mind does not know itself although naturally (*naturaliter*) it knows itself» (II, 610 c), and it must now seek to learn rationally *how* it knows itself. On another level he speaks of self-knowledge as something begotten of the mind (*mens etenim et notitiam sui gignit*, 610 b-c) as reason is born of it (II, 577 c *nascitur*). He is tempted to speak of human nature as self-created or as the first form (*a seipsa formari, vel certe principalem formam esse*, IV, 768 a)⁽¹¹⁾, but he accepts the Catholic faith as teaching that the mind is formed by God. Nevertheless he settles for the idealist formulation derived from his reading of Dionysius that the being of things is their being thought by the (Divine) mind. But the being of human nature is identical with its being thought in the human mind in self-knowledge:

Itaque si notio illa interior, quae menti inest humanae, rerum, quarum notio est, substantia constituitur, consequens, ut et ipsa notio, qua seipsum homo cognoscit, sua substantia credatur (*Periphyseon*, IV, 770 a).

Therefore there is the same idea or *notio* present in both the human and the Divine minds, the thoughts of man and God's thoughts are one and

⁽¹⁰⁾ The *non* is added by the editors of the SHELDON-WILLIAMS volume because «it is required by the sense» (p. 228). However Eriugena regards the attribution of being as relative, see especially I, 443b ff. According to the second mode at 444ab if we assert that the mind before thought is, then that following thought is not truly, and vice-versa. As a matter of fact, Eriugena regards the mind as both being and non-being, hence the confusion.

⁽¹¹⁾ This doctrine becomes explicit in Meister Eckhart. See R. SCHUERMAN, *Meister Eckhart. Mystic and Philosopher*, Bloomington-London, 1978, pp. 29 ff.

the same, or more carefully, to think intellectually is to participate in the Divine Ideas. In the highest form of self-knowledge the idea we form of ourselves is one with the idea through which God thinks us. To say we are formed by God and to say we are formed by our own mental activity is to speak of the one operation from two different points of view. But another distinction must also be allowed. To speak of man as an idea in God's mind or as an idea in our own mind is still to speak of the intellectual essence of humanity, which is one, eternal, unchanging. Besides this intellectual concept of humanity there exists actual individual concrete humans living in place and time. Not only can human nature be thought of in the purely intellectual Primary Causes (*causaliter*) but human nature must also be considered in its local, temporal state (*effectualiter*) (771 a)⁽¹²⁾. In the primary causes humanity has only a generic non-individual knowledge of its nature, in the effects humanity knows itself specifically. Eriugena however fluctuates between allowing humanity to know itself in the Causes, and arguing on the other hand that at this stage it is known only to God. But this apparent contradiction can be partly resolved by the introduction of the dialectic from genera to species to *atoma* or individuals, where if one level is, the other level is not. Therefore at IV, 776 d ff, he states that humanity receives its knowledge of itself both in the primary causes and in the created effects:

Nam in illa primordiali et generali totius humanae naturae conditione nemo seipsum specialiter cognoscit, neque propriam notitiam sui habere incipit; una enim et generalis cognitio omnium est ibi, solique Deo cognita. Illic namque omnes homines unus sunt ... Ut enim omnes formae vel species, quae in uno genere continentur, adhuc per differentias et proprietates intellectui vel sensui cognitae non succumbunt, sed veluti quaedam unitas nondum diuisa subsistit, donec unaquaeque suam proprietatem et differentiam in specie individua, intelligibiliter vel sensibiliter accipiat: ita unusquisque in communi humanae naturae nec seipsum nec consubstantiales suos propria cognitione discernit, priusquam in hunc mundum suis temporibus, iuxta quod in aeternis rationibus constitutum est, processerit.

His view that man does not know himself as an individual but only as the genus humanity in God is itself to be qualified by the view that man does not know himself as to *what* he is at all, and that this self-ignorance is

⁽¹²⁾ To think about created things under their dual aspects of existing in the Primary Causes *causaliter* and in the generated spatio-temporal effects *effectualiter*, is to contemplate things according to the second and third divisions of nature. It is best to understand the return of all things as involving the recognition that these two divisions are just two perspectives (*theoriae*) on the one reality. See D. MORAN, «*Natura Quadriformata*» and the *Beginnings of «Physiologia» in the philosophy of Johannes Scottus Eriugena*, *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale*, 21 (1979), pp. 41-46.

even higher than his understanding of himself in the genus as an intellectual idea in God's mind, as he argues at IV, 771 b

Laudabilis namque in ea est, se nescire quid sit, quam scire quia est, sicut plus et convenientius pertinet ad divinae naturae laudem negatio ejus quam affirmatio.

There is therefore a hierarchy of self-knowing: At the lowest level there is individual self-knowledge in the effects where the individual knows himself from the circumstances in which he is instantiated, then there is the higher form of self-knowledge by which we know that we are united as a single Idea in God's mind, and then highest of all is our ignorance as to what we are, where we no longer have any form or definition at all. All three forms of self-knowledge are bound up together in the dialectical movement of *exitus* and *reditus* and all three forms are necessary for the full knowledge of human nature in all its aspects. To understand humanity under these different aspects is the task of *multiplex theoria* and Eriugena's philosophy in general revolves around the possibility of contemplating the essence in its various manifestations (for example the *quinque modi* of being and non-being, which set forth the equivocity of being in a new and unusual manner)⁽¹³⁾.

The contemplation of something from many perspectives is like sharing in other viewpoints, transcending one's individual particularity in order to gain a fuller universal understanding. Learning to transcend one's isolated point of view in order to attain the universal and the eternal is for Eriugena part of the business of the liberal arts and dialectic in particular⁽¹⁴⁾. It is the liberal arts which organise the definitions of things in a rational manner. Indeed all knowing is contained within the

⁽¹³⁾ This complex area of Eriugena's ontology has not yet been satisfactorily studied. Eriugena begins the *Periphyseon* with a very subtle articulation of the several ways in which things may be said to be and not to be, which includes Platonic, Aristotelian, Dionysian and other elements, but he does not seem to apply his discriminations through the rest of the book, although I would argue that these modes of being are invaluable for understanding Eriugena's precise meaning. See D. MORAN, «*Natura Quadriformata*»: *The Understanding of Nature in the «Periphyseon» of John the Scot, Paideia, Special Medieval Volume VI* (originally 1980 but forthcoming), and D. O'MEARA, *The Concept of «Natura» in John Scottus Eriugena (De Divisione Naturae, Bk I), Vivarium, XIX, II* (1981), pp. 126-145.

⁽¹⁴⁾ On Eriugena's high evaluation of the liberal arts see R. ROQUES, *Remarques sur la signification de Jean Scot Érigène*, in *Miscellanea André Combes I*, Roma-Paris, 1967, pp. 245-329; J. CONTRENI, *Inharmonious Harmony: Education in the Carolingian World, Annals of Scholarship*, 1,2 (1980), pp. 81-96, and IDEM, *John Scottus, Martin Hiberniensis, The Liberal Arts, and Teaching*, in Michael HERREN (ed.), *Insular Latin Studies*, Toronto, 1981, pp. 23-44; G. MATHON, *Les formes et la signification de la pédagogie des arts libéraux au milieu du IX^e siècle: l'enseignement palatin de Jean Scot Érigène*, in *Arts libéraux et philosophie au Moyen Âge*, Paris-Montréal, 1967, pp. 47-64.

liberal arts and the liberal arts themselves are eternally conjoined with the mind, such that it is difficult to say whether it is the mind which confers eternity upon the arts or the arts which make the mind eternal (486 c-d). Thus the relation between the mind, its arts of defining and the definitions themselves is important. It is not just a matter of the mind containing the definitions and the arts, the definitions define and contain the mind too. Eriugena strangely classifies definitions as among those things which both understand and are understood i.e. definition as an intentional noetic act (485 a). Eriugena argues that the mind, its art (or skill, *peritia*, V, 766 c) and its definitions form a triad like the Trinity (767 c). To study the mind is to study its powers and acts as if they were related subjects understanding one another in mutual recognition. Both the mind and its powers and definitions mutually understand each other (*se invicem intelligentia*, 767 c) and form one another. The role of the arts is to bring us to an awareness of this intersubjective aspect of self-knowledge.

But there is another «trinity» in the mind. The mind, its knowledge that it is and its ignorance as to what it is can also be understood as belonging together as a triad. In fact the definition which only asserts of man *that he is*, is regarded by Eriugena as the only truly substantial definition:

sola etenim ac vera usiadis definitio est, quae solummodo affirmat esse, et negat quid esse (768 c).

And this is the answer to the paradox of self-knowledge. In so far as we operate with an essential definition of man, while it is true to say that he cannot be defined affirmatively, he can be defined in an infinite non-specific way — when we assert that he is but deny that he is anything in particular. Indeed the definition of man as *notio intellectualis in mente divina* is of this type — it tells us that man is but does not distinguish him from the rest of creation.

In contemplating these definitions of man we reach self-understanding and begin the *reditus ad Deum* which is an infinite spiral (919 d) which nevertheless arrives at its goal (919 c). This progress is a gradual coming together of human minds so that they are ultimately understood as one — just as the candles in the Church blend into one light, voices in a choir into one harmonious sound, many become one⁽¹⁵⁾. Human minds come

⁽¹⁵⁾ *Periphyseon* V, 883a ff. For the history of these images see J. PÉPIN, *Stilla aquae modica multo infusa vino, Ferrum ignitum, luce perfusus aer. L'Origine de trois comparaisons familières à la théologie mystique médiévale, Divinitas, II* (1967), pp. 331-375. Eriugena also uses the image of many persons looking at the one golden ball without one act of looking interfering with another.

together in mutual self-understanding which does not seek to encompass, dominate or «define» or contain the other. Rather all together participate in a form of non-dominating existential mutual recognition which is more an ignorance than a knowing, a kind of infinite loving and sharing in the mystery of human nature. This indeed will lead to the incomprehensible love at the heart of the One. All humans will dwell together and will then begin to reason with God on the rich mystery of *natura* as Eriugena says at *Periphyseon*, IV, 843 b:

Ideoque interdixit Deus humanae naturae, visibili creatura delectari, priusquam veniret ad perfectionem sapientiae, in qua posset deificata de rationibus rerum visibilium cum Deo disputare.

In this image is contained the sum of Eriugena's philosophical vision, the aim of philosophy is to seek through self-understanding to return to ourselves and God so that together we may reason and dispute concerning the beauty of the universe. I believe no interpretation of his philosophy which does not give full emphasis to the intersubjective dialectic can be other than partial and possibly misleading.

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LA CRÉATION DE L'UNIVERS DANS L'HOMME SELON JEAN SCOT ÉRIGÈNE

Dans le Livre IV du *Periphyseon*, Jean Scot Érigène développe sa conception de l'homme en partant d'une interprétation du récit biblique sur la création et la chute de l'homme. Au début de son exposé, le maître fait comprendre à son disciple pourquoi la création de l'homme a été racontée deux fois par l'auteur biblique: en fait, l'homme a d'abord été créé dans le genre animal, et ensuite comme image de Dieu. À un certain moment de la discussion, le disciple pose la question: si Dieu a voulu faire l'homme à son image, pourquoi l'a-t-il créé dans le genre des animaux? N'aurait-il pas été plus glorieux pour Dieu de choisir un être purement intellectuel exempt de toute animalité pour en faire son image⁽¹⁾? Dans sa réponse, le maître fait remarquer que, si dans la création Dieu a choisi l'homme pour être son image, c'est parce que c'est en lui qu'il a voulu créer tout l'univers⁽²⁾. En effet, tous les philosophes s'accordent pour affirmer que toute la création subsiste dans l'homme. Car l'homme est la seule créature qui rassemble dans l'unité de sa structure complexe tous les niveaux dont se compose l'univers: corps, vie, sensibilité, raison et intellect. Toute la création se retrouve donc dans l'homme⁽³⁾. Si dans le récit de la *Genèse*, la création de l'homme n'est présentée que le sixième jour, il ne faut pas s'en étonner. Cette ordonnance du texte montre, en effet, avec plus d'évidence encore, la dignité de l'essence humaine qui dépasse tous les autres êtres créés. Car si la création de l'homme avait été racontée au début du récit, on aurait pu

⁽¹⁾ «Sed adhuc quaero cur Deus hominem in genere animalium creavit, quem ad imaginem suam et similitudinem facere voluit? Gloriosius quippe videretur omni animalitate fieri absolutum ...» (IV, 762 B).

⁽²⁾ «Propterea Deus hominem in genere animalium voluit substituere, quoniam in ipso omnem creaturam voluit creare» (IV, 764 B). — Le maître se défend d'abord de vouloir scruter les motivations de la volonté divine («quis enim cognoscit sensus domini?»); mais il remarque qu'il est légitime d'étudier le résultat objectif de l'action divine («quid voluit deus facere?» — et non: «cur voluit?») et de se demander ce que Dieu a voulu créer en faisant précisément l'homme comme son image.

⁽³⁾ «Constat enim inter sapientes in homine universam creaturam contineri» (IV, 755 B; cf. 760 A). C'est dans ce sens que Jean Scot explique les paroles divines «prêchez l'évangile à chaque créature»; l'expression «omnis creatura» signifie simplement «l'homme», car toute la création subsiste en lui (cf. 774 B).