

connection to Bacon's and Descartes' philosophies – he claims that Bacon's *medicina mentis* inspired the negative part of the *Tractatus*, and Descartes' direction of the mind inspired the positive parts (p. 166). D'Agostino captivatingly engages with this division of influence, as Spinoza dealt with the two philosophers (p. 174, 178).

D'Agostino focuses on the emergence of intellectual power in Spinoza as a means of comparison with Descartes' *Regulae*; as such, Spinoza's method involves the intellect reflecting on itself (p. 180). Through the emendation of the intellect, a true *medicina mentis* develops (p. 186): The intellect is an *absoluta potentia* or *vis sua nativa* (p. 202). By this means, it is possible to find something immovable and permanent concerning human life in its entirety.

Studying a juvenile text generally considered to be Spinoza's introduction to philosophy, D'Agostino nevertheless demonstrates Spinoza's transformation into an independent thinker. While growing out of Bacon's and Descartes' philosophies, his *medicina mentis* slightly differs from theirs. Indeed, Spinoza opposes Bacon and radicalizes Descartes (pp. 192, 197). This is the fundamental achievement of this book. In the end, D'Agostino brilliantly connects this differentiation with Spinoza's attempts to go beyond his predecessors, which may explain the incompleteness of the *Tractatus* (pp. 214-216).

D'Agostino concludes the volume with several final considerations about the similarities between these three fundamental texts. His promising theme that early-modern philosophy developed as a combination of theory and practice results in D'Agostino's brilliant reconstruction of a sort of synchronicity or original coexistence [*coorigi-*

*narietà*] of practices. Following the thread of the spiritual exercises, the book presents several innovative interpretations of Bacon, Descartes, and Spinoza, which makes it a crucial addition to knowledge, especially useful for early-modern scholars to ground the history of ideas, but also to open room for new studies related to this book (for example, on early modern *medicina mentis*). As a result, this book is a fundamental volume for the early modern studies.

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*Giambattista Formica*<sup>1</sup>

### Persons Making Judgements. A Reform for Epistemology?

📖 L.F. TUNINETTI, *Persone che giudicano. Lineamenti di epistemologia*, Urbaniana University Press, Città del Vaticano 2016 («Manuali – Strumenti di studio e ricerca»), 312 pp.

The book of Luca F. Tuninetti, *Persone che giudicano. Lineamenti di epistemologia (Persons Making Judgements. Outlines of Epistemology)*, can be read on two different levels. On the surface, the volume looks like a textbook of epistemology with a Thomistic approach, and proposes an introductory path to the student who is new to the study of epistemology. On a deeper level, Tuninetti's book is not just a textbook of epistemology, but a work that tries to look at knowledge in general, as well as at a whole series of concepts related to it, in a new way.

Before dwelling upon the elements of greater novelty in the volume (that the reader will find treated in a systematic way in the last four chapters), it will be useful to outline the structure. After a preface in which the author principally presents the content and the main theses, the volume is

<sup>1</sup> I thank Vincent Petruccioli for the help in the English translation of the review.

see A. SANGIACOMO, *Sulla compiutezza del De Intellectus Emendatione di Spinoza*, in *Rivista di storia della filosofia* 2010/1, pp. 1-23. Y.Y. MELAMED (ed.), *The Young Spinoza. A Metaphysician in the Making*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2015.

articulated into ten chapters; it ends with some up to date bibliographic indications for further inquiries, a general bibliography, and respectively an index of terms and names.

Even if one can foresee some aspects of that which in the following pages will become characteristic of the entire volume, the first two chapters are fundamentally introductory. A brief outline of the essential moments of reflection on knowledge from the history of philosophy is presented, from ancient classical philosophy up until the most recent debates in analytic epistemology (chapter 1). Next, the philosophical approach with which the study of knowledge will be taken on is introduced, explicating its basic vocabulary and clearing up what, according to the author, should be the task of epistemology (chapter 2).

The four successive chapters are dedicated to the study of the cognitive activity of human beings, which, for Tuninetti, is naturally ordered towards the knowledge of reality. Initially, the most relevant results of the scientific research on cognitive activity of the last hundred and fifty years is presented and, immediately, the author reflects on what the philosophical research points out about this same activity (chapters 4-6). Re-evaluating the more radical claims of contemporary naturalism, the author maintains that scientific research on the cognitive activity of human beings cannot, in any way, substitute philosophical reflection, even if the latter cannot ignore that which scientific activity will present. That which distinguishes philosophical inquiry from scientific inquiry on cognitive activity is, according to Tuninetti, the search for those causes that are not observable and that are, at the same time, explanation of that which is observable. This presupposition allows the author to make clear the nature of the philosophical perspective within which he situates his own research on cognitive activity. This brings him, in other words, to take a certain distance from the current philosophy of mind

– towards which he shows a great interest – and to present (considering the most recent literature on the subject) the “psychological” philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, seen as a continuation and deepening of Aristotelian themes (chapter 4). This argument is treated more in depth with specific parts dedicated, respectively, to cognitive activity of the sensorial order (chapter 5) and to cognitive activity of the intellectual order (chapter 6). His treatment induces Tuninetti to see judgment, the mental act which is expressed linguistically in the proposition, as the apex of all cognitive activity of human beings or, more generally, as the point towards which our knowledge is ordered. Knowledge, in fact, even when it does not reach the truth (and therefore is not properly knowledge), always expresses itself with a claim to know the truth and, consequently, always turns into a judgment.

After following the progression of the first six chapters of the book, the reader can clearly see a claim that will be decisive for the continuation of the work. For Tuninetti, the subject of knowledge is not the transcendental subject, someone to consider in third person, but the empirical subject, the person ‘in flesh and blood’, who makes judgments thanks to the employment of her/his cognitive faculties. It is a point that the author seems to have gained not solely from his study of the work of Thomas Aquinas, but also through that of the work of John Henry Newman, the other philosopher upon whom Tuninetti has previously paid much attention and that, even if in a less explicit way, is as present as Thomas. All things considered, knowledge is always personal knowledge, even if it cannot happen outside of a social context, and in as much as the claim to know the truth becomes manifest in a judgment (that place in which our intellect recognizes something as something).

The last four sections of the book are dedicated to the inquiry into the epistemological consequences of this personal con-

ception of knowledge (chapters 7-10). First, the author considers the role that reflection on judgments plays in the cognitive life of human beings and clarifies how this reflection (proper to the epistemological inquiry, given that it turns on the value of our judgments) cannot but assume the form of a dialogue, even in the absence of another person as interlocutor (chapter 7). Then, he concentrates himself in a systematic way on the three aspects of a judgment that come to distinguish themselves in the epistemological dialogue: certainty, intended in a psychological sense, which always accompanies the judgment of the person who advances the claim of knowing (chapter 8); the truth of the judgment, which interests the one who makes an assertion just as much as the one who reflects upon its value and that in the epistemological dialogue cannot but configure itself as objective (chapter 9); justification, which is decisive for the person who reflects on the value of a judgment and brings her/him to inquiry as to its sources (experience, inference, and testimony) (chapter 10).

What I have sketched above regards only the structure of Tuninetti's book, which, in reality, reveals itself to be extremely rich for the attention that he gives, along the course of the book, to a series of concepts and questions related to the phenomenon of knowledge and debated both in philosophy and in contemporary culture. Most interesting are certainly his analyses of the notions of belief, prejudice, opinion, probability, doubt, faith, authority; just as is his defense of the relativity of perception (in addition to that of immediate realism) and the explanation of how it can generate errors, namely, illusions and hallucinations; the presentation of the Thomistic (dis)solution of the mind-body problem; the clarifications as to the nature of concepts, how they are formed and exist in the intellect; and, lastly, the critique of relativism, of the principal contemporary truth theories (a clarification of the notion of truth in Thomas Aquinas is proposed) and of cer-

tain rigid alternatives present in the current analytic epistemology (foundationalism vs. coherentism; internalism vs. externalism, etc.). I limit myself to listing these discussions that the book offers because I am more interested in highlighting the most characteristic elements of the proposal of Tuninetti.

Above all, in the background, lies the recovery of a traditional idea of knowledge. It is an indubitable merit of the author that he is able to present this traditional idea in such a way as to revive it. According to this conception, the term 'knowledge' indicates the relation that the human being establishes with reality as whole, and, therefore, not with a particular type of object, but, rather, with every kind of object. For this reason, the notion of knowable is a transcendental notion. The term 'knowledge', furthermore, indicates the perfection towards which all of the cognitive activity of the human being tends, which is to say every type of cognitive activity of ours (perception, conceptualization, reasoning, etc.) The place in which knowledge manifests itself, as previously stated, is in judgment: the mental act with which one recognizes something as something and that is expressed linguistically in a proposition.

Using this conception, the author draws a conclusion – supported by the inquiry on cognitive activity that he has made – that presents itself as the center around which his entire epistemological proposal turns: the person that knows is the person that makes judgments and not the person that reflects on the content of judgments, whether they be her/his own judgments or those of others. Judgment, therefore, and not reflection on judgments, is the apex of all human cognitive activity. In and of itself, according to Tuninetti, reflection would not be necessary, nor sufficient, for producing knowledge, which, on the contrary, requires only the exercise of our cognitive faculties. The purpose of reflection is, rather, that of examining the claim to knowledge that cannot but be advanced by

the person that judges. The greatest limit of modern epistemology (from Descartes onwards) lies, according to Tuninetti, in the identification of the person who knows with the person who reflects on the content of judgments, while instead it is the person who judges the person who, in a proper sense, knows. Distinguishing between judgment and reflection, the author does not intend to negate that there is some sort of reflection that accompanies the judgment of the one who knows: the one who judges, in fact, in some way is aware of her/his own cognitive activity. Nevertheless, this form of reflection cannot be confused with the kind of reflection that deals with the content of the judgment, examining its value, and that, consequently, presupposes that a judgment has already been formed.

Even if it is not the reflection on the judgment that produces knowledge, it nevertheless, according to Tuninetti, plays a crucial role in the development of knowledge. Through reflection, in fact, each one of us has the possibility to consider the results of her/his own and others' cognitive activity: we have the possibility, in other words, to examine the value of the judgments that we normally make, in our role as persons who judge, who live together with other persons who judge. And this consideration is essential either for going deeper or for continuing or for reopening an inquiry, if it is true that the knowledge of the truth is the objective of any inquiry.

Another interesting aspect of Tuninetti's proposal is the way in which he characterizes the examination of the value of judgments that takes place in reflection, because according to him, this examination always takes a dialogic form. Every time a person X, making a judgment, advances the claim of knowing a truth  $p$ , another person Y, while reflecting on the value of  $p$  (on its effective truth), finds herself/himself in the position of having to accept or refuse such a claim. The one who judges is always (psychologically) certain of  $p$ ; she/he recognizes the truth of  $p$  and, at the same time, has reason for believing that  $p$ . If these

three conditions (certainty, truth, justification) were not jointly present in the judgment of X, she/he would not be able to advance the claim of knowing something and, therefore, in matters of fact, according to Tuninetti, would not be making a judgment. On the other hand, reflecting on the value of  $p$ , a person Y becomes aware of the claim to knowledge advanced by X – beginning from the certainty that accompanies her/his judgment – and begins to interrogate her/him as to its legitimacy (which is to say as to the effective truth of  $p$ ), through the request for and the examination of the reasons that X has for believing that which she/he believes. For the one who reflects, therefore, differently from that which happens for the one who judges, certainty, truth, and justification always manifest themselves as distinct. This clearly does nothing other than confirm that judging is not reflecting and that the one who knows is the person who judges. Reflecting on the value of  $p$ , Y has, in the end, the possibility of accepting or of rejecting the claim of knowledge that X advances, or, in other words, of making her/his own the judgment of X, or of refusing it. Within this dynamic – which clearly can articulate itself in an extremely complex epistemological dialogue, of which the present schematization is but an idealization – the reflection upon a judgment does not behave only the one who reflects (Y) but also the one who judges (X), because in this way the latter is called to reflect on her/his own judgment. Both of the interlocutors benefit, therefore, from the epistemological dialogue that develops with reflection. In fact, with the explication of the reasons that Y asks of her/him in the epistemological dialogue, X has the possibility to deepen or to reopen the inquiry, while Y, making her/his own the judgment of X, has the possibility of beginning and carrying forward a new inquiry. It is in this sense that reflection on a judgment contributes, according to the author, to the development of knowledge.

It would be an error to think that what Tuninetti writes regards only of handful of

particular modalities of knowledge acquisition for a subject S (for example, that which happens by way of testimony) and therefore that his discourse lack the generality necessary in order for it to extend itself to the phenomenon of knowledge in a broad sense. In fact, a dialogic form and the scheme outlined above give form to his reflection of the value of every judgment for a subject S, which means, therefore, both the reflection on her/his own judgments and that on the value of the judgments of others. In the first case, X and Y, or, the one who formulates the judgment and the one who reflects on the judgment, would be the same physical person, or rather the same subject S, who can have reached the judgment  $p$  by way of experience, inference or testimony; in the second case, X and Y would be two distinct physical persons and S would be that person who in the epistemological dialogue reflects on the value of the judgment  $p$ , therefore, Y. Even if the author does not consider in detail those cases in which X and Y are the same physical person – almost always his examples consider X and Y as distinct persons – he lets one get a glimpse of the way in which his epistemological proposal can be extended to those other cases. For example, he affirms: “When a person reflects, she/he looks at her/his own judgments from a point of view that is different from the point of view that she/he occupied in the moment in which she/he made those same judgments and, in this sense, one can speak of a dialogue with oneself. It could be held that dialogue with the other comes, in matters of fact and by right, before the dialogue with oneself. In any case, considering the dialogue between two persons helps to understand what is the sense of the reflection that a person does within oneself” (§ 7.3). Persons who reflect on their own judgments, examining their value, it is as if they were dialoguing with themselves. I wanted to cite this passage of the volume because, even if it does not seem to be the principal concern of the author, his epistemological

proposal seems to be able to extend itself in order to include even those ambits of knowledge – I am thinking above all of those more methodically regimented such as the mathematical disciplines – in which reflection is indispensable for the development of that discipline’s field of knowledge.

In any event, the principal concern of Tuninetti seems to be another, that is to say, that of questioning one of the main “dogmas” of modern epistemology (which it currently, in different ways, continues to be influential) which, in a kind of ‘slavery’ to the skeptical objection, became more preoccupied with minimizing error than with knowing the truth, and, therefore, assigned as fundamental to epistemological reflection the task of exploring the possibilities and the limits of knowledge. On the contrary, epistemology should ask itself what is the truth (that towards which our knowledge is ordered), how we reach it and how we justify the claim to have reached it.

At this point, a well-known passage from the ‘Introduction’ of Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* comes to mind, where the philosopher of Stuttgart asks himself (rhetorically) about the possibility that the fear of falling into error in much philosophy that preceded him might not reveal, in reality, a fear of knowing the truth: “Now, if the fear of falling into error generates diffidence towards the science that, without preoccupation of this kind, gets immediately to work and begins to really know, then it is not clear why, conversely, there it must not be generated a diffidence towards this diffidence and that one might need fear that such a fear of erring might be already, in and of itself, an error” (GW 9, p. 54). Even if the approach of Tuninetti is far from that of Hegel, the former could make his own the words of the German philosopher.

The book is without a doubt worthy of attention for the claim it advances, for the new light it sheds on knowledge, and for the possibilities of development that it shows. Its principal theses merit further study in specific areas, and the work de-

serves the possibility to be read in other languages besides Italian.

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*Vassa Kontouma*

### À propos de la *Source de Connaissance de Jean Damascène. Une lecture sous le prisme de la métaphysique*

📖 S. MARKOV, *Die metaphysische Synthese des Johannes von Damaskus. Historische Zusammenhänge und Strukturtransformationen*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2015, XIV + 461 pp.

En raison de sa célèbre formule programmatique « Explorons les discours des sages païens [...] ». Car tout artisan a besoin d'instruments [...], et la reine doit avoir quelques servantes à son service »<sup>1</sup>, la *Source de Connaissance* de Jean Damascène est depuis longtemps considérée comme un écrit – ou un ensemble d'écrits – annonçant la méthode scolastique au crépuscule de l'âge patristique. Menées depuis plusieurs décennies, de très fertiles recherches ont toutefois relativisé ce point de vue, et replacé l'œuvre damascénienne dans le contexte qui est le sien, c'est-à-dire celui du Patriarcat de Jérusalem au VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, voire de la Palestine sous domination umayyade<sup>2</sup>. Mais à vrai dire, cette produc-

tion abondante a fait la part belle aux domaines philologique, historique ou hagiographique, reléguant au second plan la réflexion à caractère philosophique ou théologique. Pour S. Markov, la plupart des recherches récentes relèvent ainsi d'une approche fondée sur l'étude de la transmission textuelle (p. 6 : « genealogisch »), au détriment de l'analyse conceptuelle (p. 7 : « problemanalytisch ») qu'il entend adopter. Car son but est de suivre le cheminement des concepts, avant celui des textes et de leurs traditions, pour identifier les grands axes de la « synthèse métaphysique » de Jean Damascène.

La réflexion très dense qui en résulte a fait l'objet d'une thèse de doctorat préparée sous la direction des professeurs Andreas Speer (Cologne) et Georgi Kapriev (Sofia), et soutenue en 2010. L'ouvrage publié en 2015 en est directement issu. Il est divisé en deux grandes parties, précédées d'une introduction dressant l'état de la question et énonçant la problématique (pp. 1-16), et suivies d'un bilan (pp. 431-437) complété de nombreux graphiques récapitulatifs (pp. 439-445), d'une bibliographie principalement anglophone et germanophone (pp. 446-452), et de deux index (pp. 453-455 ; pp. 456-461) :

I. *Die Struktur des metaphysischen Systems des Damascenus*, partie divisée en quatre chapitres traitant successivement de la gnoséologie et du système conceptuel caractérisant l'œuvre philosophique de Jean Damascène (pp. 19-83), du thème de la connaissance de Dieu et de la méthode métaphysique mise en œuvre dans son œuvre hérésiologique et triadologique (pp. 84-146), de son traitement des questions anthropologiques (pp. 147-202), de ses développements relatifs au concept de volonté (pp. 203-256).

II. *Die Rezeption des metaphysischen*

contribution *John of Damascus (c. 655 - c. 745)*, in V. KONTOUMA, *John of Damascus. New Studies on his Life and Works*, Ashgate, Farnham, Burlington 2015, I, pp. 1-43.

<sup>1</sup> IOANNES DAMASCENUS, *Dialectica* 1, 53-58, ed. B. KOTTER, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos I*, De Gruyter, Berlin 1969, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> L'essentiel des travaux contemporains se fondent sur la monumentale édition critique des œuvres complètes du Damascène par B. KOTTER, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos I-V*, De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 1969-1988, poursuivie par R. VOLK, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos VI-VII*, De Gruyter, Berlin-New York-Boston, 2006-2013, T. THUM, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos VIII* 4-5, De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston 2018, et J. DECLERCK, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos VIII* 6-7, De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston 2018. Pour un *status quaestionis* récent, nous nous permettons de renvoyer à notre