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# William James reader of Antonio Rosmini: the metaphysics of the concrete at the service of ecopedagogy

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## Antonio Rosmini, William James and ecopedagogy

There can be no doubt that William James<sup>1</sup> and Antonio Rosmini<sup>2</sup> are amongst the great authors universally recognized by science as having made a substantial contribution to human knowledge in a range of disciplines. The former is better known than the latter, although, as we will show in this article, their value is such that both of them can be numbered amongst the great geniuses of humanity, where there are no rankings, because they are all *ex aequo*. Besides, it was James himself who expressed his views on the thinking and the works of Rosmini, in particular with regard to his *Psicologia*<sup>3</sup>. However, while James, who according to the sources available, as we will show, had probably only read two of the works by Rosmini that had been translated into English<sup>4</sup> – *Psicologia* and *Sistema filosofico*<sup>5</sup>; works that he reviewed following his contacts and intellectual relationship with Thomas Davidson – he had great respect for Rosmini. On the other hand, scholars of his school of thought did not ascribe to the author what James considered to be due attention and a field of investigation to be explored and which he wanted to develop, that is, the comparison between his system of thought and that of Rosmini, in order to identify their points of contact and convergence.

In this regard, one of James' perplexities regarding Rosmini to be disambiguated, is specifically that relating to the relationship between *cognition* and *affection* in the Rosminian sense and in James' interpretation. It is necessary to point out that the English translation of Rosmini's work available to James did not allow the reader to fully understand Rosmini's position and therefore to find an answer to their critical observations.

James' metaphysical-psychological thinking is also a reference in the current context of the ecopedagogies, in particular with regard to *Biophilia* and *Gaia*<sup>6</sup> inasmuch as it is a hypothesis for affective ecology, specifically with regard to its efficacy regarding the *regeneration of direct attention*.

It must be said that *ecopedagogy* does not yet have a univocal and clear definition or even a sufficiently defined epistemological statute<sup>7</sup>. Geographically and historically speaking its poles of development start with critical pedagogy in Latin America (in particular that of P. Freire) in the wake of contemporary reflection of the post-human in the Anglo-American area and, in the didactic field, in a widespread and general call for sustainable education proposed by Agenda 2030, through the presentation of numerous pedagogical research and experimental teaching projects of both a quantitative and a qualitative nature in the context of outdoor education and environmental education. The emergence of ecopedagogical ponderings is also to be seen in African and Asian

cultural contexts. The chronological reconstruction of the development of the debate on ecopedagogies shows the absence of a genuine theoretical-practical discussion, highlighting instead the attempt at development by each main interpretative strand (from critical to post-human pedagogy) of its own instances, as well as the presence of various authors who have independently dealt with the subject, starting from their own research perspective (such as the aesthetic dimension)<sup>8</sup>.

This article intends, first of all, to indicate, in the illustration of a precise conception of the affective turning point of metaphysics, the interpretative theoretical hypothesis which is an attempt to respond to James' perplexities about Rosmini, in order to further highlight the points of contact between the two authors, which were, among other things, identified by James himself; secondly, it intends to show the how and why of the relevance of this interpretative hypothesis, for the purposes of the inter-multi-trans-disciplinary development of ecopedagogy.

## 2. Critical analysis of the interpretation of Antonio Rosmini presented by William James

W. James discovered the figure, the thinking and the works of A. Rosmini through Thomas Davidson and they became involved, amongst the many initiatives they took part in, with the *Metaphysical Club*<sup>9</sup>. Davidson himself translated Rosmini's principal works into English: *Sistema filosofico*<sup>10</sup> and *Psicologia*<sup>11</sup>, hence introducing James to the works, about which he later wrote reviews<sup>12</sup>.

I would like, above all, to mention James' opinion of Rosmini's *Psicologia*, set out in a letter to his wife dated 24th May 1890:

«At any rate, it does give me some comfort to think that I don't live *wholly* in projects, aspirations and phrases, but now and then have something done to show for all the fuss. The joke of it is that I, who have always considered myself a thing of glimpses, of discontinuity, of *aperçus*, with no power of doing a big job, suddenly realize at the *end* of this task that it is the biggest book on psychology in any language except Wundt's, Rosmini's and Daniel Greenleaf Thompson's! Still, if it burns up at the printing-office, I shan't much care, for I shan't ever write it again»<sup>13</sup>.

From this letter and from the author's comments we can draw two conclusions: a) in James' opinion *Psicologia* by Rosmini was a work of immense importance; b) James would have liked to work further on the draft of his work *The Principles*, but unfortunately this was not possible.

The point that James struggles to understand and to share in Rosminian theoresis is the following:

«Notwithstanding its fulminations on my misbelieving head, I still say that Rosmini's Being seems to me but one way of dogmatically affirming that our \*function of [intr.]

cognition is [‘true’ *del.*] a fact. To me it was not a fertile or suggestive way of making the affirmation»<sup>14</sup>.

At the end of this paragraph, I provide the theoretical arguments on the basis of which, in my opinion, it is possible to resolve James’ criticism of Rosmini, based on a misinterpretation mainly due to his limited knowledge of his works and the poor quality of the translation<sup>15</sup>.

With regard to the options of translation that did not grasp or elucidate these fundamental aspects of Rosmini’s thinking, I present this extract from my own work, in which I present the results of a comparison between Rosmini’s work *Del principio supremo della Metodica*<sup>16</sup> in Italian and the English translation, through the linguistic tool of *corpora analysis*<sup>17</sup>. I present entirely the extract of the results of the analysis about this argument, because it is important to understand how the way of setting the interpretation of the relationship between the thought of James and Rosmini has to be completed and consequently changed. I do this quotation because it is central about James’ and Rosmini’s conception of cognition, that is the field where we can find fundamental agreement of their thought.

«On analysing the list of words in the English translation, the conspicuous anomalous numerical mismatch of the word “*cognizione*” is immediately evident, since “*cognizione*” is used 86 times compared with 369 recurrences of “cognitions”. The word “*intellezioni*” (354 recurrences) is not translated literally into English. I then proceeded to extrapolate the concordances with “*cognizion\**” and “*intellezion\**” in Italian and of “*cognition\**” in English. The result is that the word “*intellezione/i*” has been absorbed by “*cognition/s*” as, incidentally, the translator states in the footnote number 80 to *Del principio supremo*: “The word in the original is *intellezioni*, which seems to me better expressed by cognitions than by anglicizing the word into intellections, which would require an explanation, or paraphrasing it by acts of the understanding”. This result allows me to reiterate what has already been expressed: the translation has levelled “*intellezione*”, which is absorbed into “*cognition*”. The immediate and evident consequence of this absorption, which is in fact reductive, is the disappearance/misunderstanding of the Rosminian “synthesism in synthesism”, which causes, in this case, also the failure to receive in English the affection in the intellection (insight) – Rosmini, in fact, speaks of intellectual affection – as a metaphysical-ontological-phenomenological aspect of reality, which from the outset constitutes the origin of the integration between endowment and performance with regard to the (phenomenological) structure, including the cognitive structure, of the human being. While “*cognizioni*” are often qualified by evaluative adjectives (the list is long and having studied them, I can mention here: “positive”/“negative”, “new”, “natural”, “simple”, etc.) and are often defined by their object, N+of+N, “of something” (of the number “three”, “of their particular goodness”, “of human/divine will”, of the “existence”, of “relationships” and “associations”, the “*intellezioni*” are generally not qualified by adjectives (amongst the adjectives attributed: “human, “new”) and when postmodified, only by indications of order (“second-order”, “third-order”, etc.). The distinction is, of course, lost in the English version, since both *cognizione* and *intellezione* was translated as “*cognition*”: this does not allow the reader to grasp the dynamics of the distinction and correlation between orders of affections, of intellections, of volitions and orders of reflections, precisely through the cognitions, in the way this dynamic was previously described and analysed in Rosmini, in particular starting from the pedagogical work *Del principio supremo della Metodica*»<sup>18</sup>.

It is therefore clear that, although the knowledge that James had of Rosmini's work was, for his time and for his milieu, among the most advanced of the period, it remains partial and incomplete. It is from this consideration of an overall nature that we can grasp how the bipartite evaluation that James gives of Rosmini, one extremely positive, the other posing critical questions, can lead to the exploration that James himself sought<sup>19</sup> precisely in overcoming the obstacles that have prevented him from fully understanding Rosmini. In particular, it is clearly wrong of James to include Rosmini's position within scholasticism:

«To us seems as if both Rosmini and the transcendental egoists were making the same mistake, trying to give preëminence each to a different one of two terms equally correlated in cognition, and so to alleviate that metaphysical disease, the unbridled lust after unity. We believe, however, that Rosmini clings a great deal the closer to the actual facts of psychology. But for this and all further matters we must now refer the reader fond of what Miss Edgeworth calls "the not inelegant labyrinths of metaphysics" to the book itself. Such a reader will not find that Rosmini makes all things clear; but if repelled by much that is obscure and scholastic in his pages, he will certainly gain that refreshment that always comes of contact with a mastermind»<sup>20</sup>.

That Rosmini is not counted among the scholastics is evident from the depth of the entire span of his scientific production, in particular in the works *Il razionalismo teologico*<sup>21</sup>, *Il linguaggio teologico*<sup>22</sup>, *Saggio storico-critico*<sup>23</sup>, *Logica*<sup>24</sup>, *Teosofia*<sup>25</sup> and his anthropological books<sup>26</sup>. On the other hand, it is a sort of mitigating factor to James' misunderstanding that in the course of the cultural history of the Rosminian question, in particular within the second phase, in all respects it has been part of the intentionality of a certain group of scholars, including Rosminists, to pursue the purpose of rehabilitating Rosminian thought as it conforms to Catholic orthodoxy through the "demonstration" of its complete ascribability to the (second) scholastic first of all, and then to the neo-scholastic<sup>27</sup>.

In all probability, we must attribute James' perplexity in failing to recognize the harmony of the Rosminian system of thought, finding inconsistencies in Rosmini's attempt to connect his philosophical system and his psychology, and also comparing it with his own system of thought, to this lack of direct knowledge.

It is clear that the entry point for an effective comparison between Rosmini and James can be found in comparing Rosmini's *Psicologia* and James' *Principles of Psychology*. It is no coincidence, in fact, that James wrote a lively review of this work by Rosmini:

«When one thinks of the mere quantity of labour which Rosmini accomplished in his not long life, one cannot refuse to him the title of being one of the very small number of intellectual giants of the world. He is of the race of the Aristotles, the St. Thomases, the Leibnitzes, the Kants and the Hegels. The mere cogitative energy of him, too, is fully equal to theirs. Every page he writes is filled with thinking as hard, subtle, and original as theirs; and his style is as clear and flowing as theirs is usually the reverse. His learning is prodigious too. In short, he is miracle of intellectual force, compared with whom a mere reviewer's mind is as a midge against an elephant. But Rosmini is a *dead* giant, and the reviewer can have it his own way with him, because *he* is alive, and writes for readers taught by all their Lockian and Protestant education to treat the kind of thing that Rosmini



represents-thoroughgoing, concatenated, and systematic ontologizing and theologizing by the conceptions of principle and term, substance and essence and act – as ‘scholastic jargon’ and so to close their ears»<sup>28</sup>.

After singing Rosmini’s praises here too, James enters into the merits of his critical observations, although moved by the intent to derive from his considerations on Rosminian thought a reinforcement to the vital theoretical nucleus by virtue of which, James unconsciously imagines, certain narrow structures of scholasticism will be overcome<sup>29</sup>.

«Scholastic jargon, too, it seems to this reviewer; only he has a bad conscience about saying it so shortly, and therewith turning Rosmini over to the disdain of many of our native philistines who at bottom are spiritually unfit to loosen his shoe. The last word has not yet been said about scholasticism. We are all scholastics without knowing it, so sure as we talk of things and acts and essence and force. But we don’t elaborate our scholasticism, because Locke taught us that to do so led to no practical use. The only practical gain which accrues to a scholastic from his elaboration of what we all believe, is what Rosmini calls “the experience in himself of a kind of jubilation and felicity, which is so peculiar as to be unlike any other feeling, and to bear testimony to its infinite source”. This is the rapture of all intellectual order and harmony; but our race would willingly part with it, if only thereby it could buy a new way of peeling potatoes, or of teaching children how to read. We renounce one thing, scholasticism another. It is not that the distinctions made by Rosmini and other Scholastics are false. On the contrary, they seem for the most part true. They are one way of seeing and naming the facts of life. But they are sterile: we can deduce from them no immediate practical receipts. To peel potatoes, we must look at other aspect of the world than substantiality and accidentality and the distinction between immanent and transient acts. Many are the aspects of every bit of reality, and all are equally true. But each carries us a different way»<sup>30</sup>.

James’ difficulty seems, to all intents and purposes, to be as follows: «indeed, in *Some Problems of Philosophy* the question of novelties became central: the same antithesis between monism and pluralism seemed to lead to the alternative between reality or the unreality of novelty»<sup>31</sup>.

The problem of the relationship between the one and the many is addressed and solved by Rosmini in *Teosofia* through the identification of the theoretical consistency of the moral form of being<sup>32</sup>. It is precisely this theoretical-speculative acquisition of epochal relevance that radically separates Rosmini from scholasticism and neo-scholasticism and not only clears up James’ doubts about Rosmini but the problems of coherence within James’ system. The “synthesism in synthesism” that I have identified in the metaphysical-theoretical-speculative structure of Rosmini’s thought is the logic, the method and the methodology through which to grasp the psycho-pedagogical implications of Rosmini’s identification of the theoretical plexus of the moral form of being. It is here that the affective turn of Rosmini’s metaphysics<sup>33</sup> with which to reread James’ system of thought resides. It is in particular the concentration on the synthesistic link between affection and cognition<sup>34</sup> that can allow us to reread James’ theory of perception in terms of identifying the cognitive value<sup>35</sup> of *feelings* and the value of sensitivity for the sense of intelligences, volitions, cognitions and reflections-judgments-choices-actions-deliberations-acts.

The last fragment of the reconstruction offered in this paragraph is the identification of the connection between philosophical-theoretical research and the question of the religious significance, always concerning the Rosminian moral form of being in synthesis with the real form and the ideal form. In this regard, Nicoletta Poli expressed himself on this subject in James:

«And what remains of James in this third millennium? Certainly, in this tormented historical period and with his intuitions, it is very relevant. Despite the contradictions noted in his metaphysical system, a philosopher who has been in a continuous spiritual ferment, a thinker who rationally seeks a collaborating God, is to be appreciated. [...] And, at a certain point, the psycho-philosopher had to move towards high peaks, towards “a *weltanschauung*” where intelligence and will proceed in agreement”. And, I would add, where psychology re-immerses itself almost as in an initiatory rite of a long time ago in philosophy. [...] And religion was the common ground of authentic encounter and fusion between psychology and philosophy. Where psychology ran aground, philosophy produced doubts and stirred the waters until a river of wine in flood took over»<sup>36</sup>.

For Rosmini, the moral form is always the crucible in which the search for meaning and religious experience intrinsically meld. Significant with respect to these topics, in an ecumenical and interreligious perspective, is the philosophical-theological question relating to the distinction and connection between religion and revelation as a specific experience of the Christian element<sup>37</sup>.

Central to all this is the correctness and pertinence of authentically philosophical questioning, that is, therefore, free in the search for truth, without which any revelation and religious experience of any kind would fall into a deleterious dogmatism, which is among that which has the most characteristics of the irreligious. With Rosmini and James the heart of philosophical questioning can only be metaphysics. From Parmenides onwards, the greatest philosophers that humanity has known have grappled with the definition of metaphysics; even those, such as F. Nietzsche, who felt they had to and/or could prove that the end of metaphysics was the necessary outcome to save philosophy, basically did nothing but certify that the metaphysical question is and will always be at the heart of philosophizing.

What would have happened if James had rewritten his work *Principles of Psychology*, what would have happened if he had understood Rosmini's thought more fully through further suitable translations? In all likelihood, among the most important acquisitions there would undoubtedly have been the delineation of a very significant philosophy (and epistemology) of education.

### 3. The affective turn of the metaphysics of the concrete and affective ecopedagogy

In the previous paragraph I documented and argued that the affective turn of Rosmini's metaphysics is in remarkable harmony with the metaphysics of James' experience<sup>38</sup>. In addition to this, I have indicated in the possible resolution of James' misunderstanding of Rosmini's thinking what in all respects I believe may be the corrective to James' theoretical contradictions, namely the development of his metaphysics of experience in the light of the moral form of the Rosminian being in the "synthesism in synthesism" of the three forms of being. The "concrete", that is, the person in action, in the singularity of their religious freedom, as a logical-ontological-theological structure in the integrated theory of human dignity of the original metaphysical-affective-symbolic structure of the believing conscience, is the Rosminian reinterpretation specifically obtainable from the comparison with the metaphysics of James' experience.

There are studies on the subject of ecopedagogy that have made use of a very significant aspect of James' concept: direct attention. Studies on these issues argue that making ecopedagogy interact with scientific-experimental themes such as *Biophilia* and *Gaia*, causes the important characteristic of the affectivity intrinsic to ecopedagogy to emerge.

The corollary of the thesis proposed in this article is that, in the perspective of the Rosmini-James comparison on the outlined coordinates of their metaphysics of experience and the concrete, one can reread in a Rosminian sense the direct attention of James to highlight the further implications of affective ecopedagogy that can be derived.

The epistemological-affective components of ecopedagogy<sup>39</sup> focus on the need to orient the mutual influence of religious transformations and those of social relations, in the light of and in view of propitiating the practical awareness of the need to promote, as a requirement that cannot be postponed for the future of man and the planet, the protection of creation, in the face of the undeniable nefarious and self-destructive effects of the current direction of the Anthropocene that demands the birth of a real Eozoic Era, of which the religious implications of *Gaia Hypothesis* and *Biophilia* are, in particular, an integral part. All this can be achieved by developing a methodology that expresses the historical-cultural analysis of education<sup>40</sup> with critical pedagogy, given the need to contribute to the definition of an integrated training system in the field of ecopedagogy capable of actively contributing to the affective and socio-anthropological transformations of the religious made necessary by the responsibility evidenced by the aesthetic-ethical consideration of the ecological crisis we are going through.

Ecopedagogies, in fact, imply and contribute to the elaboration of a true and proper anthropology of the freedom of conscience of the human person and of their dignity, of which religious freedom – also understood as the possibility of suspension of judgment and abstention from any form of expression of it – is freedom of conscience.

The aesthetic experience is intrinsically connected with the Rosminian fundamental feeling-affection and the Jamesian feelings<sup>41</sup>. James' direct attention is isomorphic to Rosmini's capacity for judgment of conscience as a speculative judgment of a practical judgment at least of the second order of reflection. For both Rosmini and James, cognition plays a crucial role in deciphering the *affezioni*-feelings which, in turn, are a constitutive dimension of the globality and complexity of the cosmological reality in which *Biophilia* and the *Gaia Hypothesis* have their subsistence and consistency, which, in turn, even before being hypotheses and scientific theories are structuring the ecosystem.

In conclusion, it is precisely by exploring the interaction of the theoretical-pedagogical dynamics (that is, mainly, of the philosophy of education) of ecological themes and their scientific-experimental theories that it is possible to identify one of the most fruitful areas in which the speculative convergence of the metaphysics of James' experience and Rosmini's concrete can open up new theoretical-practical elements in the development of theoretical and pedagogical insights, capable of valorising the worth and effectiveness of the affective in an ecological perspective.

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- <sup>1</sup> William James, New York, 1842-Tamworth, 1910. Among the works considered in particular for this article cf. W. James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, New York 1912, *Essays on Radical Empiricism*, curated by L. Taddio, Italian translation by Luca Taddio and Lisa Pizzighella, Mimesis, Milan 2009 and W. James, *A Pluralistic Universe* (1909), Anodes Books, Withorn 2019. On James, see M.H. DeArmey-S. Skousgaard (Eds.), *The Philosophical Psychology of William James*, University Press of America, Lanham 1986.
- <sup>2</sup> Antonio Rosmini, Rovereto, 1797-Stresa (Italy), 1855. For a biographical and intellectual profile of Rosmini cf. G.B. Pagani-G. Rossi, *La vita di Antonio Rosmini scritta da un sacerdote dell'Istituto della carità, riveduta ed aggiornata dal Prof. Guido Rossi*, 2 vols., Arti Grafiche R. Manfrini, Rovereto 1959 and the anthological dictionary by C. Bergamaschi, *Grande dizionario antologico del pensiero di Antonio Rosmini*, 4 vols., Città Nuova Editrice-Edizioni Rosminiane, Rome-Stresa 2001.
- <sup>3</sup> A. Rosmini, *Psicologia*, edited by V. Sala, 4 vols. Edizione Nazionale e Critica delle Opere di Antonio Rosmini (henceforth ENC), Città Nuova Editrice, Rome 1988-1989.
- <sup>4</sup> Nowadays, most of Rosmini's books are translated into English by Rosmini House, Durham. There are also other translations. In any case, I intentionally have decided to quote only Italian titles, except the ones that James used.
- <sup>5</sup> A. Rosmini, *Sistema filosofico*, in *Introduzione alla filosofia*, edited by P.P. Ottonello, vol. 2 ENC, Città Nuova, Rome 1979.
- <sup>6</sup> Cf. G. Barber, *Biophilia and Gaia: Two Hypotheses for an Affective Ecology*, in «Journal of Biourbanism» 1 (2011), pp. 11-27, R. Berto-G. Barber, *Biofilia e meditazione di consapevolezza*, in «Culture della sostenibilità», 10 (2012), pp. 140-160, G. Barbiero, *Ecologia affettiva. Come trarre benessere fisico e mentale dal contatto con la natura*, Mondadori, Milan 2017 and M. Schenetti-E. Guerra, *Emotions map making. Discovering teachers' relationship with nature*, in «Asia-Pacific journal of research in early childhood education», 2 (2018), pp. 31-56.
- <sup>7</sup> Cf. the bibliography on the topic of ecopedagogies that I compiled for the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia in 2021. Part of this work can be found in F. Bellelli, *Ecopedagogy and Religious Pattern: The Contribution of the Connection Between Rosmini's and the Vichian Thomas Berry's Humanism to the Education for the New Universal Context of Eozoic Era*, in "Global Conference on Education and Research (Gloecer 2021), June 8-10, 2021, in James, W. B., Cobanoglu, C., & Cavusoglu, M. (Eds.). (2021), *Proceedings of the global conference on education and research* (Vol. 4). USF M3 Publishing, <https://www.doi.org/10.5038/2572-6374-v4>, pp. 171-173. From a chronological point of view, it should be noted that most of the contributions on the topic of ecopedagogy are to be found from 2010 onwards, even though the first signs of research in this sense can be traced back to the nineties and the first decade of this century.
- <sup>8</sup> The figure and work of Thomas Berry, as well as their reception and development, stand as possible synthetic figures both of the historical path and of the propitiable theoretical-practical debate on the theme of ecopedagogies.
- <sup>9</sup> Cf. S.F. Tadini, *Thomas Davidson e la filosofia rosminiana*, Edizioni Rosminiane, Stresa 2016. Specifically, on pp. 32-33 we read [the original text is in Italian, this is our translation]: «[...] thanks to the intervention of J. E. Cabot and William James, the Charles Sanders Peirce's Metaphysical Club<sup>47</sup> was restored to life and Davidson became an active member». The text of footnote 47 explains: «The Metaphysical Club was founded by Oliver Wendell Holmes (Junior), William James and Charles Sanders Peirce in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in January 1872. Its activities ended in December of the same year, although Peirce, once he had moved to John Hopkins University in 1879, decided to found a new one. The Metaphysical Club, despite the name, was made up of philosophers who, critical of the metaphysical positions held in European thought, became spokesmen for

- ideas that contributed to the birth of American pragmatism, one of the most relevant and original philosophical phenomena of the nineteenth century». Although James owed to Davidson his encounter with Rosmini, in 1903 he wrote: «When I first knew him all was Aristotle. Later all was Rosmini. Later still Rosmini seemed forgotten. He knew some many writers that he grew fond of very various ones and had a strange tolerance for systematizers and dogmatizers whom, as the consistent individualist that he was, he should have disliked». (W. James, *Thomas Davidson: Individualist*, in W. James, *Essays, Comments, and Reviews, The works of William James*, F. Burkhardt-F. Bowers (Eds.), Harvard University Press, Cambridge and London 1987, pp. 86-96, here p. 88).
- 10 A. Rosmini, *Sistema filosofico* cit. The work was translated into English and published in the following edition: *The Philosophical System of Antonio Rosmini-Serbatì*. Translated with a Sketch of the Author's Life, Bibliography, Introduction, and Notes, by Thomas Davidson. London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co. 1882.
- 11 A. Rosmini, *Psicologia*, cit. The work was translated into English and published in London between 1884 and 1888 by Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.
- 12 The reference is to W. James, *Review to The Philosophical System of Antonio Rosmini-Serbatì*, trans. by Thomas Davidson (1882), in W. James, *Essays, Comments, and Reviews, the works of William James*, cit., pp. 379-383 and to review W. James, *Rosmini's Psychology*, *ibid.*, pp. 396-398, which appeared originally in «Science», August 1885, vol. VIII, No. 6, p. 13. With regard to the review of *Psicologia*, Tadini, in his research, found this interesting consideration by Antonio Stoppani on the work of W. James [the original text is in Italian, this is our translation]: «Although Antonio Stoppani, who translated the entire aforementioned article, preceded by a very precise reconstruction of rosminianesim abroad (cf. Rosmini abroad and a very recent article in New York Science, "Il Rosmini", 1885, year I, vol. I, pp. 131-132), rightly believes that William James seems to aim "rather than to exalt Rosmini, to revive in the two most powerful nations of the old and new world a little love for speculative studies in general" (*ibid.*, p. 137), nevertheless some passages of the review turn out to be decidedly flattering precisely towards Rosmini». (S.F. Tadini, *Thomas Davidson e la filosofia rosminiana*, cit., p. 98, note 14).
- 13 D.W. Bjork, *William James. The center of his vision*, Columbia University Press, New York 1988, p. 180.
- 14 W. James, *Essays, Comments, and Reviews, The works of William James*, cit., pp. 707-708.
- 15 To do this I refer, in particular, to two of my contributions: F. Bellelli, *L'importanza degli ordini di intellectione e degli ordini di riflessione nella pedagogia rosminiana: analisi storico-culturale di un vuoto della letteratura critica*, in «Rivista di Storia dell'Educazione» 1/2020, pp. 85-99 and F. Bellelli, *Genesi e ricezione della dimensione pedagogico-formativa della definizione rosminiana di persona in quanto diritto sussistente*, in «Annali di storia dell'educazione e delle istituzioni scolastiche» 29 (2022), pp. 42-58.
- 16 A. Rosmini, *Del principio supremo della Metodica*, in A. Rosmini, *Scritti pedagogici*, edited by F. Bellelli, vol. 32 ENC, Città Nuova, Rome 2019, English translation A. Rosmini Serbatì, *The Ruling Principle of Method Applied to Education*, translated by Mrs. William Grey, D.C. Heath and Company, Boston 1887.
- 17 The computer analysis program used was AntConc, an open-source program that analyzes files in.txt.
- 18 F. Bellelli, *Percorsi storici della pedagogia giuridica. Vico, Rosmini e la dignitas hominis*, Aracne, Rome 2020, pp. 276-277 [the original text is in Italian, this is our translation].
- 19 «Maybe some disciple of Rosmini may show a path down from his categories to the practical details of life. It were sad that such strenuous and, in many ways, such exquisite thinking as his should be among the mere superfluities of human history». (W. James, *Rosmini's Psychology*, cit., pp. 397-398).
- 20 W. James, *The Philosophical System of Antonio Rosmini-Serbatì*, cit., 383. In addition, in a letter from 14 October 1882 James wrote to Davidson: «As for Rosmini (Italy), *es versteht sich vor selbst* that I of which't understand him. When did ever a philosopher's misprizer understand him? I only object to his dryness from the *Nation* point of view. But I do object to scholasticism» (W. James, *Essays, Comments, and Reviews, The works of William James*, cit., p. 708).
- 21 A. Rosmini, *Il razionalismo teologico*, ed. G. Lorizio, vol. 43 ENC, Città Nuova, Rome 1992.
- 22 A. Rosmini, *Il linguaggio teologico*, ed. A. Quacquarelli, vol. 38 ENC, Città Nuova, Rome 1975.
- 23 A. Rosmini, *Saggio storico critico sulle Categorie*, ed. P.P. Ottonello, vol. 19 ENC, Città Nuova, Rome 1997.
- 24 A. Rosmini, *Logica*, ed. V. Sala, vol. 8 ENC, Città Nuova, Rome 1984.
- 25 A. Rosmini, *Teosofia*, ed. S. F. Tadini, Bompiani, Milan 2011.
- 26 A. Rosmini, *Antropologia in servizio della scienza morale*, ed. F. Evain, vol. 24 ENC, Città Nuova, Rome 1981 and A. Rosmini, *Antropologia soprannaturale*, ed. U. Muratore, 2 vols., 39-40 ENC, Città Nuova, Rome 1983.
- 27 Cf. F. Bellelli, *Le quattro fasi della questione rosminiana e la pedagogia*, in «Nuova Secondaria» 9 (2020), pp. 23-25.
- 28 W. James, *Psychology*, cit., pp. 396-397.
- 29 Again, regarding the overcoming of the scholastic in Rosmini I refer to my F. Bellelli, *Etica originaria e assoluto affettivo. La coscienza e il superamento della modernità nella teologia filosofica di Antonio Rosmini*, Vita e Pensiero, Milan 2014. On the compatibility between the declination in analytic philosophy of James' thought and the possible declination in the analytical sense of Rosmini's thought I refer to S.F. Tadini, *Rosmini e la nuova metafisica ontoprismatica: un dialogo possibile con l'ontologia analitica*, in F. Bellelli-E. Pili (Eds.), *Ontologia, fenomenologia e nuovo umanesimo. Rosmini rigenerativo*, Città Nuova, Rome 2016, pp. 59-75 and S.F. Tadini, *Teologia naturale rosminiana ed epistemologia riformata: le premesse per un possibile "dialogo ideale"*, in F. Bellelli (ed.), *Rosminianesimo teologico. Il divino nell'uomo e l'umano nella rivelazione*, Mimesis, Milan 2017, pp. 65-107. See also F. Bellelli, *Percorsi storici della pedagogia giuridica. Vico, Rosmini e la dignitas hominis*, cit., as regards the connection between the analytical elaboration of Vico's thought concerning linguistics and the juxtaposition on Vico and Rosmini on the topic of language.

- 30 W. James, *Psychology*, cit., pp. 396-398 and he goes on: «By a succession of accidents modern critics and men of science have stumbled on the aspects which lead to the ways of foreseeing and handling particular material events. Together, these aspects form the armament of the scientific and positivistic view of life, a hodge-podge of which we moderns are very proud, but of which, great as the practical fruits are, the speculative dignity leaves much to be desired».
- 31 N. Poli, *W. James: l'itinerario psico-filosofico per un mondo migliore*, Sillabe di Sale Editore, Condove (TO) 2016, p. 149 [the original text is in Italian, this is our translation].
- 32 Cf. F. Bellelli, *Etica originaria e assoluto affettivo*, cit.
- 33 By metaphysics of the concrete in Rosmini I mean the being in action of the original metaphysical-affective-symbolic structure of the believing consciousness as a speculative judgment of a practical judgment at least of the second order of reflection. For a classical conception on the theme of the metaphysics of the concrete cf. T. Melendo, *Metafisica del concreto. I rapporti tra filosofia e vita*, edited by A. Livi, Italian translation by M. Gaspari, Leonardo da Vinci, Rome 2005.
- 34 Cf. my speech entitled *Affezione della cognizione nel metodo e nella metodica di Antonio Rosmini*, 30 October 2021, at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia during the international conference of studies that I organized *Antonio Rosmini. Unità di scienza e santità*. The acts of this conference are published in F. Bellelli (ed.), *La metodica di Rosmini tra filosofia, teologia e pedagogia. Prospettive interdisciplinari*, Mimesis, Milano 2022 and in «Divus Thomas» 1 (2023), edited by F. Bellelli. The most part of the videos of the conference are yet published on the site of Rosmini Institute.
- 35 On this point see: W. James, *Pragmatism and the Meaning of Truth*, Layout and Cover Design Copyright, USA 2013, chapter 1, *The Function of Cognition*, pp. 116-131.
- 36 N. Poli, *W. James: l'itinerario psico-filosofico per un mondo migliore*, cit., pp. 150-153. On the religious theme in James cf. also R. Petrillo, *Il senso della presenza. Saggio sull'esperienza religiosa in William James*, La città del sole, Naples 1997. Among James' interlocutors on these issues there is also T. Flournoy. Cf. T. Flournoy, *La psicologia della religione. Principi, ricerche, prospettive*, Franco Angeli, Milan 2021 and T. Flournoy, *La Philosophie de William James*, Saint-Blaise 1911. On this specific topic (as well as on others) it would be very interesting to compare it with the thought and work of Fernando Rielo.
- 37 On the religious theme cf. F. Bellelli, *Teodicea rosminiana del verum/factum e teoria dell'evoluzione in Teilhard de Chardin*, in «The Rosmini Society. Rosminianesimo filosofico *International Journal*», n. 1-2 (2020), pp. 451-471; R. Guardini, *Religione e rilevazione*, Morcelliana, Brescia 2010; S. Zucal, *Romano Guardini, filosofo del silenzio*, Borla, Rome 1993; C. Fedeli, *L'educazione come esperienza. Il contributo di John Dewey e Romano Guardini alla pedagogia del Novecento*, Aracne, Rome 2008 and my video course *Rosmini and Guardini* on [cattedrarosmini.org](http://cattedrarosmini.org)
- 38 D. Lamberth, *William James and the Metaphysics of Experience*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2009. James consistently confronted Bradley by criticizing him. About Bradley cf. G. Rametta, *La metafisica di Bradley e la sua ricezione nel pensiero del primo Novecento*, CLEUP, Padua 2006. An interlocutor that James considered very significant was H. Bergson. On the latter cf. G. Leg, *Metafisica e scienze in Bergson*, CLEUP, Padua 2015.
- 39 I resume here some considerations that I have already expressed in F. Bellelli, *Ecopedagogia e responsabilità estetica nelle trasformazioni socio-antropologiche della religiosità*, in S. Polenghi, F. Cereda-P. Zini (Eds.), *La responsabilità della pedagogia nelle trasformazioni dei rapporti sociali. Storia, linee di ricerca e prospettive*, ebook, Pensa Multimedia Publisher, Lecce, 2021, pp. 171-178.
- 40 Cf. F. De Giorgi, *Educare Caino. Per una pedagogia dell'eschaton*, Morcelliana, Brescia 2014.
- 41 Cf. F. Stara, *Centralità del sentire e teoria morale in William James*, eum, Macerata 2009.