

MARTÍN GRASSI

The Ghost of Totalitarianism

*Religion in
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132

Mohr Siebeck

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Martín Grassi

The Ghost of Totalitarianism

Deconstructing the Pneumatological Nature
of Christian Political Theology

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Preface

This book was written during my research stay at the *Institut für Hermeneutik* as an *Alexander von Humboldt* fellow. I worked under Prof Dr. Cornelia Richter's guidance over almost three years, bringing together philosophy of religion, systematic theology, and political theology, combining the hermeneutical method with that of deconstruction. Those years (2018–2020) were really exciting, and building my argument on the origins of political Totalitarianism by attending to one of the most important and elusive concepts of western culture, that of spirit (*spiritus, pneuma*), was one of the best philosophical adventures I have ever lived. At first this task seemed to be impossible to handle, for there were so many centuries to cover, so many disciplines to attend to, so many theological theories, and so many concepts that were connected to that of the spirit that I was about to quit. Nevertheless, the argument was built with patience, mainly by attending to the semantical displacements that were made possible by linguistic connections. Concepts as economy, monarchy, organism, deification, *perichoresis*, *apokatástasis*, *oikeiosis*, and many others, suddenly related to each other thanks to the semantic field that the ambivalent word *stasis* opened. My argument, thus, was built on the idea that the idea of life and of living beings was characterized in western culture by the use of the prefix *autos*, and by the need to overcome the inner division (*stasis*) inherent to this reflexive nature of the living, in order to achieve unity and stability (*stasis*). Therefore, this book is a continuation of my book on the bio-theo-political paradigm of autarchy, in which I aim at deconstructing the western idea of life¹. However, if the aim of that book was to dismantle this paradigm of autarchy to allow a more relational metaphysics of life, in this book my main goal is to show how western culture has been unable to think on plurality without making of it an organized totality. Both books aim, therefore, at thinking on community from a different and new perspective. Both of them, however, are works of deconstruction, that is, of showing how these paradigms of autarchy and of totalitarianism were somehow built over the centuries.

Buenos Aires, July 2024

Martín Grassi

¹ Grassi, 2022.

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Introduction

1. A Ghost That Haunts Our Western World

“Thou shall not fear ghosts!”: the commandment was meant to drive out fear, but in its very tone, in its exclamatory nature, it is implied that there is something to fear, there is a reason to be afraid. Though we know that they are not real, our strongest beliefs are shaken to the core under the sound of that word: *ghost*. In the stillness of the night, when confidence is needed most, ghosts climb through our closed windows onto our pillows and disturb our peaceful sleep. There is nothing we can do against this primal and archaic fear, for we do not fear the beasts outside, but the ghosts within. Ghosts are not real, they do not walk our bedroom’s floor, but wander through our inner hallways; and in their wandering around they reset our mental furniture and beckon us to follow. In their phantasmagorical body, they are even more present than flesh and bones, and the very boundaries between fantasy and reality, between the dream world and the waking world, are put into question. Ghosts are not real, indeed, but they do structure our reality: Hamlet never heard his father’s words so clearly as when they came out of his toothless and lipless mouth. Inhabiting the no man’s land, laying at the liminal space, ruling over the boundaries they themselves draw, ghosts shout to the outside and to the inside, they dispose the relationship between these border lands of our life. Within the in-between space of boundaries, they become hosts in our own (claimed) domain; once you let them in, you are relegated to be a guest in your own house. During daylight, during nighttime, ghosts haunt us without reprieve: they are already imprinted on us, screaming into the silence what we should or should not do, speak with no sound and wound our souls with dull knives. They are rulers in our own castle. For “ghost” is not the name of an outsider, but the name of our being essentially unfamiliar with ourselves; ghosts cry “you do not belong to yourself”. With their reflective darkness, ghosts blind us: we cannot see anything further, they have no depth, they cast no shadow. And in their lightness, ghosts are really a weighty burden. Ghosts chain us to our past, to our debts unpaid, to our unhealed wounds. The haunted self must face its horrid occupiers, hunt them as trucelessly as they haunt its domain.

To hunt ghosts is not, however, an easy task, for ghosts are only seen when they are called. In their majestic sovereignty, they are only seen when we are ready to kneel towards them, when we are ready to refer to them by their Name.

In the empty chambers of our haunted interiority, ghosts wait for their call: they must be summoned if we dare to hunt them. Against them, we can only use a counter-spell, the very spelling of their names. Out of their concealed chambers, once they are taken out by the breathing of their name, ghosts can be seen. The exorcism takes place only by one strategy: calling out the demon within. And there is no end to this hunting, for lifeless ghosts know no dying. Ghosts will stay with us, no matter how powerful the exorcist is. The ghosts we deal with are not a private matter, and they are not born with us: ghosts wander through the inner hallways of humankind, in the common birthplace of our inner consciousness, that is, history. All of us, Western people, already know many ghosts, but there is one of them – these fascinating creatures – that we particularly fear: the ghost of Totalitarianism. Its crimes, still etched in our bleeding memory, awaken our angst in the face of its monstrosity: we cannot but fear that this *Leviathan* may get near our ship again... In the face of its possible future coming, we cry “*¡nunca más!*”, never again. In the expectation that it will come again, we engage a desperate struggle against this inexorable Ghost which prowls through our actions and discourses. In the ultimate despair that its future coming arises, we cannot but fight still. And in order to match up this Ghost, we need to know the name beneath its name. And in order to find its name, we must look for its habitat, that is, language. The ghost beneath the ghost of totalitarianism is to be found in the different and diverse discourses that ground our Western history. Indeed, the ghost of Totalitarianism traverses our biological, theological, and political concepts and schemes, and shapes our understanding of community under its spell. As *archaeologists*, we must root out the birthplace of this ghost, and examine the soil that enables it to grow. Even if in the Western world we are not as fearful of this ghost today, as we were decades ago, Totalitarianism must be hunted before it possesses us completely: our seemingly democratic and pluralistic societies are still haunted by this ghost. The COVID-19 Pandemic has deeply shaken our confidence as Western citizens in the individual freedom and has revealed the tremendous political powers of subjection. The ghost of Totalitarianism is showing its uncanny face once again, and it is there, just about to jump over us. If we should neutralize this ghost, then we must name it and leave it in the open. Hence, it is only by a critical deconstruction of the schemes behind our discourses on community, life, and politics that we can hope for a more effective exorcism. We are not to win this battle against the Ghost of Totalitarianism... however, we must give a good fight, our best fight, and, perhaps, hold the Ghost at bay.

2. Theology and Philosophy as Archaeological Discourses: Some Methodological Issues

In hunting the ghost of Totalitarianism, every discourse must be examined. The name of this ghost seems to be a political one, for Totalitarianism is a political phenomenon, and therefore it would seem appropriate to attend to social sciences, such as political sciences, sociology, psychology, anthropology. However, my strategy in this book is to question theology and to look at it in order to find the way to summon this ghost and keep it at sight. One could wonder why philosophy should go for theology nowadays, especially considering that we are in a secular age. Even more, why should I inquire *Christian* theology to undertake the mission of thinking about community, that is, a universal topic, regardless of a specific religious tradition. I would answer, firstly, to the latter question: our Western tradition is shaped by Christian theology, and our way of thinking is immersed in a language and a conceptual frame that it is pierced by the Christian event. This essay is not a theological book in the usual sense of that term, since it looks at theology not with a religious commitment, but from a historic and critical standpoint. In order to understand what community and the political means for us, Western citizens, we need to understand its theological basis.

Yet, there is still a more important reason, besides history, for which to examine theology. I would argue that philosophy can only be inasmuch as it stands before theology. Philosophy aims at the foundations of our world, at the very grounds of our moral, political, biological, cosmological beliefs. Philosophy is, therefore, an arche-typical discourse and, as such, only finds a partner in theology. Both, theology and philosophy, are found in the beginning (*en arché*) and become orphan brothers, for they lack a father and a mother, they are both self-constituted, they do not come from anyone else: their umbilicus refers to no-womb, for they are born out of themselves as they postulate the origin and the foundations from themselves. Each one of them constitutes their father and identify with Him. In this impossible fatherless filiation, they both find *in Word* the reason for their birth. As *primordial languages*, philosophy and theology are assumed as no-one's sons, as de-generated brothers; they are both non genea-logically archeo-logical. As brothers, philosophy and theology compete in a phallic way, just to claim which of them is carrying the *phallus*, the very symbol of power and of law constitution. They compete "in the Name of God", for God is the Name of the anarchic principle of reality, of the abyssal ground of our world. "In the Name of God", philosophy and theology are alienated, and confused. They are both *proto-anti-agonists*, for they both fight each other dialectically, moved by the claim of the *protos*, the First, the Ground of all which exist. In this fight, philosophy and theology grip the same weapons and, in the roar of their clash, they get confused with each other, they imitate and mirror each other, they project one into the other, and they become brothers

in their orphanhood. The Word (*logos*) is what brings them together: they both suffer from a need to speak, they are both constantly spilling/spelling words, unceasingly wanting to say something about the principles of reality.

But now, how could these words coming from philosophy and theology claim their filiation to the *name of God* (to the *language of origins*, to archeology)? This is what really matters. The way in which philosophical and theological languages speak about the foundations of our world is through *analogy*. Every discourse on what it is primordial stems from our daily experience and is carried out analogically, predicating some feature as being essential to what should be absolute or fundamental. Let us take an example: man is defined as *an animal that has language*, as a rational animal. His specific difference regarding its genus comes from rationality, and that feature is what makes man important in comparison to the rest of the animal kingdom. So, intelligent life is the uppermost way of living, the most perfect kind of living. The criterion for analogy concerning living beings is, therefore, intelligence or, better, reflexivity. If God is a living being, then God is the perfect living being, an absolute Intelligence, *thought of thought*, as Aristotle would say. Our world is, thus, painted with the brush of analogy: the world itself, as an ordered and significant system, shows itself as being structurally scaled. Every being is posited in one or another echelon, typified according to an axiomatic rule which give each thing a certain ontological value. Rigorously speaking, what is really meaningful in archeologies is not the *reality-value* of analogical proceedings, but their *truth-value*. In other words, it is not important if God is really an absolute intelligence, or not; what really matters is the performance of the analogy that makes Him an absolute intelligence, and makes humans the most dignified beings in the animal kingdom. Distinguishing the truth – and the reality – values enable one to understand the performance of analogy, which compounds effectively the axiological and ontological meaning of the different elements in the world by establishing a unique criterion. Analogy, thus, organizes the world “in the Name of God”, that is, in the Name of what it is considered to be the criterion for perfection and majesty (*id quo maius cogitari non potest*, as Anselm of Canterbury said). Those who think critically, therefore, should not consider the reality-value only, but mainly the truth-value of analogical proceedings: in other words, it should examine the very *criterion* of analogy, which, most of the time, is not even noticed and remains unchallenged. Theology as far as it operates maximally with analogy, in its triple way of *via affirmationis*, *via negationis*, *via eminentiae*, represents the ultimate discourse on the world and claims for its ultimate truth. Theology makes explicit this analogical operation by reflecting and theorizing on the main *analogon* (that which identifies itself with the criterion for analogy): God. Therefore, theology constructs the world by establishing its ultimate ground “in the Name of God”.

Philosophy, in turn, drawn to its critical task, pulled by its passion for questions, is bound intimately to Theology. Our thinking cannot understand itself

but understanding the world which constitutes, and, thus, it is only facing the constituted world that our thinking can be critically examined: only in the *expected* world we are building, can we *in-spect* our architectural design of the world. As archaeological discourse, philosophy can only find in theology the unfolding of the *arché*, of the *principle*, of the *ground* of all reality. Hence, philosophy, in its will to detent “the Name of God”, is turned into *ancilla theologiae* in two possible ways: either serving the theological construction by offering it conceptual elements or functioning as the element of de-construction. As a deconstructive process, philosophy rummages the analogical operations driven by Theology and intends to discover its semantic criterion, revealing its arbitrariness. I would claim that philosophy is defined, essentially, by this second moment of *deconstruction*, but this entails that, in this deconstructive movement, philosophy is bound to theology as its servant, for deconstruction is only possible when facing the theological building. Philosophy would lack its name if it were not for its fraternal link to theology, being the latter the elder brother. At the same time, philosophy cannot be just deconstruction, for it also detents “the name of God”: is in “the name of God” that philosophy sets forth on a deconstructive journey. Deconstruction, thus, is but the precursor of its constructive movement, there where it confuses with theology, there where it turns into theology. As it is the case with Plato, in the very birth of philosophy, where the discourse on the *arché* arouses firstly as deconstruction (philosophy) to erect the theological building later, philosophy and theology are linked together in their silence and muttering in the face of the *absolute*, that is, facing the substantialized criterion of the analogical procedure. Plato’s imperative of suspending the hegemonical mythical discourses is paired to the imperative of an authentic discourse on the foundations of reality, that is, *theology*.¹ In this double imperative of constructing and de-constructing, philosophy and theology get confused forever, without any possibility of distinguishing each other. Whereas theology would represent the ultimate truth of our *Weltanschauung*, philosophy would represent the task of questioning this very World-view. One could say, thus, that whereas “theology” is the name for the discourse on the principles and grounds of reality that draws on constructing our world, when the archeological discourse draws back in a deconstructive way it is then called “philosophy”. In other words, whereas theology normalizes the discourses, philosophy produces exceptions.

However, philosophy and theology are still competing siblings to the throne, for they both speak “in the name of God”. As a worldview is conformed with in the plays and interplays of language, metaphors blossom from the soil of the lived world (*Lebenswelt*) and build our discourses. Certainly, most of our

¹ The first time that the word *theology* appeared was in Plato’s *Republic* and has a very important political meaning, for it is the duty of Socrates and his friends (the architects of the ideal state) to fix “the rules (τύποι) by which poets should forge their myths”, that is “the rules concerning the discourse on the gods (τύποι περι θεολογίας)” (*Republic*, 379a).

concepts are already metaphors which are no longer seen as such. The task of thinking, therefore, has to do with some kind of resurrection of these *dead metaphors* or even with searching for new metaphors in order to think in alternative ways. A *living metaphor* enable us to think more, to leave behind what is usually considered as being evident and ultimately established. Philosophy aims at challenging the *pensée*, the thoughts that have been already thought of and that seem to be unquestionable. Philosophy is an art that is willing to create concepts, to think again and in a different manner the problems of human existence. Evidently, philosophy is in the need of using the vocabulary and the concepts of its own tradition, and a whole new metaphorical language for philosophy is neither possible nor advisable (for one could be using “new” concepts quite innocently, without a proper examination of their historical and semantic roots). The challenge is, then, to create new concepts, to find new metaphors, within the philosophical tradition, that is, within the *game-rules* of philosophizing. In aiming at a *pensée pensante*, a thinking that is not comfortable any longer with the already established traditional concepts and ways of thinking, one should, on the one hand, de-construct the meaning of certain philosophical/theological concepts, and, on the other, get lost in the possibilities of new metaphors and concepts to come. On the one hand, thus, de-struction is not just a game or a *de-mode* kind of thinking, but a philosophical imperative, or even, an ethical imperative. “Deconstruction is justice”, claimed Jacques Derrida. This means that deconstruction is only working because of the unconditioned need to make justice to the Other, to what is always left aside, unthought, untreated, mistreated, marginalized. Deconstruction is not *destruction*, but a prelude to a new way of conceiving the world. Deconstruction is the gesture itself of thinking again, of taking the task of thinking seriously. On the other hand, the search for new metaphors means that the deconstructive moment needs to be overcome and that the critical dimension of thinking must call for a *poetical* dimension of it (that is, a constructive and creative work of thinking). This search for metaphors will be successful, of course, if one attends the world of different discourses advanced from the different sciences and cultural expressions. However, and this is most important, both deconstruction and constructive thinking are not something one could decide to do (as if one were in control of the thinking process). Thinking (speaking) is something that does not belong to anyone, but that happens historically. It is something that emerges without any sufficient reason. Philosophy is not about *creatio ex nihilo*, but it is about articulating what is already happening in our discourses and in our ways of describing the world. We are all sons of our times, in one way or another. The task as philosophers, as I understand it, would imply the need to give a holistic view of a coming worldview, growing from the new metaphors and the new urgencies that our contemporary fellow beings are driven by. Under this task I stand, at least. Under this imperative of philosophy I stand, although it would be more suitable to say that I stagger, for I do not stand over

any solid and rigid ground, but over the fluid and moving stream of language. In this wide, fast-flowing stream, different aspects of our daily life are mixed up and dragged together. Philosophy, from its very beginnings, is but the attempt to stop this flowing in order to define the different, mixed and confused elements of our experience. Philosophy faces theology to build itself as a critical discourse only by suspending the semantical force of theological truth-making analogies: philosophy's birth is called *epoché*.

3. *Pneuma, or How to Hunt the Ghost of Totalitarianism: Mapping the Book*

In examining our Western world-view, one needs to find a red-thread that could organize the whole inquiry. Hunting the ghost of Totalitarianism entails to find a name by which we can summon this despicable creature. My strategy is to focus on the concept of *pneuma*, the name of the ghost, its very name, as a matter of fact. By leading a history of the concept of *pneuma*, I aim at deconstructing the building of Western politics, showing how the performance of this concept is to be found in different discourses, and mainly focusing on its paramount role within Christian theology. In short, I will show that the concept of *pneuma* performs the totalization and organic unity built from a plurality of elements: *pneuma* is the concept that explains and grounds the category of *totality*. In order to show this performance of the concept of *pneuma*, I divided this book in four different parts, starting with the ambivalent Greek concept of *stasis* and ending with the resolution of this concept towards unity. The two other parts are named after the two Latin translation of the Greek word *oikonomía*: *dispositio* and *dispensatio*. This structure reflects how, by means of an organizational model, a fragile totality made of a plurality of elements comes to be a strong and indivisible unity. This structure reflects the nature of my inquiry, one that can be identified with the name of *Political Theology*. If the concept of *pneuma* is working in many discourses, it is in theology that this concept will show all of its strength and reveal its ultimate performance. Since I focus on Christian theology, the structure of the book reflects the *economical* nature of God's sovereignty, expressed by the Trinitarian scheme. The whole book aims at depicting the drama of the sovereign God, which must re-unite the plurality of elements (both things and persons) and must re-appropriate His creation by His intervention in history, a re-appropriation that will only be fulfilled in the End of times (*apokatástasis*), mainly performed by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the figure of the Holy Ghost the one that turns the whole creation into a whole totality by organizing plurality, by subjecting every singular entity to the single life of God. To show how the *pneuma* works is to show the Christian theological grounds of Western Totalitarianism.

The first part, called *Stasis*, introduces the main deconstructive frame within which the critical examination of the totalitarian paradigm and the role of the Holy Spirit will be developed. In chapter 1, I show how life was characterized by the ideas of reflexivity and appropriation. Living beings are self-related beings that produce their own vital processes by themselves. Expressed by the Greek prefix *autos-* (self), vital operations are always reflexive, as one could find in the concepts of self-reproduction, self-regulation, self-determination, self-government, and so forth. The real question, therefore, is to explain how living beings achieve their unity by a continuous process of appropriation. Since disaggregation is death itself, living beings must act upon themselves to ensure their unity and inner coherence. This understanding of life – which I call the *bio-theo-political paradigm of autarchy* – has shaped our biological, ethical, political and theological discourses. However, the main challenge of this paradigm of autarchy is how to maintain unity and cohesion within a system that, due to its reflexivity, is doomed to division and disaggregation. The ambivalent Greek word *stasis* means at the same time “to be standing” and “to stand up”, and so it is used to refer to strong unities that are standing (note that words like State or statue come from this Greek word), but it is also used in political science to refer to civil strife. Hence, as a reflexive totality, living systems are subjected to change and therefore must achieve equilibrium and inner organization to keep their unity and avoid death or disaggregation. I will show this inner drama of living systems in different discourses like biology, politics, ethics and theology: in all of these discourses, a common understanding of self-organized systems that allows for semantic displacements between them is made clear. Interestingly enough, this *inner drama of living systems* is the reason why thinkers so far apart both in history and in their philosophical traditions such as Plotinus and Jean-Paul Sartre, argued that God could not be considered a living being, for unity and perfection are the main features of the divine. This fundamental insight on the ambivalence of the word *stasis* as grounding our understanding of living systems will be the frame within which the concept of spirit (*pneuma*) will play its organizational and totalizing role.

In chapter 2, after showing the key importance of the concept of *stasis* in our understanding of life and of self-organized systems (such as the city), I will introduce the discipline that will frame the examination of the Holy Spirit in the book, namely, *Political Theology*. This discipline explores the articulation between the political and the theological discourses. In its constitution as a discipline, however, Political Theology is often thought of as a discipline that belongs to theology and that examines the practical questions concerning how the Christian community should engage the public sphere. Nevertheless, Political Theology can take some distance from this epistemological rooting in Christian practical affairs and acquire a more universal dimension in exploring the semantic displacements between theological and political discourses that give meaning to each other. Within this latter understanding of Political

Theology, *secularization* can be considered a critical program that elucidates the co-implication of the religious and the political spheres in the shaping of Western culture. Hence, Western Political Theology, in its dependency from the Greco-Roman and the Jewish-Christian traditions, examines these semantic displacements between both discourses and understands that neither theology is developed without political concepts and analogies, nor the political without theological ones. Political Theology in the 20th century – mainly through the works of Carl Schmitt, Erik Peterson, Jürgen Moltmann, Jan Assmann and Giorgio Agamben – shows that neither the theological discourse is indifferent to political discourse, nor the political is immunized from the theological. The Trinitarian dogma represents, in this matter, a particularly important laboratory where this interdependency can be examined. However, Political Theology still has not engaged properly with the key role that the Holy Spirit, as the Third Person of the Trinity, plays in this semantic co-implication of politics and theology to understand our Western world-view. This monograph is, therefore, a further exploration within Political Theology from a pneumatological perspective. As I intend to show, Political Theology has been mainly dependent on the core idea of *stasis*, for both political and theological discourses seem to meet in the need to overcome the dangers of inner division, and therefore it is this same concern that brings them together, being the Holy Spirit the principle that performs unity out of plurality by means of organization, subjection and transparency.

The following two parts of the book are named after the two possible Latin translations of the Greek word *oikonomía*. This Greek word has a paramount importance in Christian theology and refers to the way in which God creates and redeems humankind by the interaction of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Moreover, this word is also articulating the theological and political with the ideas of sovereignty, but also of government, for *oikonomía* refers to the administration of the household. The first part, then, will focus on the meaning of *oikonomía* as *dispositio* and the dispositional performance of the concept of spirit (*pneuma*).

Chapter 3 is the first chapter of this part on *dispositio* and explores the connection between economy and organization by presenting the role that the *pneuma* plays in Ancient natural philosophy. Economy, for the Greeks, is not about administrating objects, but mainly about how the house lord should administrate living beings, such as slaves, wives, and children. Economy has a monarchic structure and facilitates the understanding of a plurality of elements by its subjection to a single sovereign by an organizing principle. This economic-monarchic scheme can be traced in Aristotle's biology, where *pneuma* is a circulatory element that organizes the bodily parts, being the instrumental body of the soul. The Stoic school turned this physiological concept of *pneuma* into a cosmological one, for *pneuma* is the very element that keeps everything together by circulating around the whole cosmos (a cosmos that is depicted

both as if it were an organism and as if it were a city). The theological and the political discourses are intertwined very clearly in a very influential cosmological work attributed to Aristotle called *De Mundo*. In this treatise, the *pneuma* is connected to the *aether* as a circulatory and organizing principle by which the sovereign God rules the cosmos. This work is one of the most important documents on Political Theology, for it depicts God in terms of a political ruler, but also because the difference between ruling and governing is problematized in it. Moreover, I will also examine Philo of Alexandria's work, *De Opificio Mundi*, for he offers a paramount synthesis between the Greek and the Jewish theology, and also articulates explicitly monarchy and monotheism. In contrast to Hellenism, the work of Philo is not just a cosmological treatise, but also a theology of history, for Judaism is not just a cosmological, but mainly a historical and soteriological religion. Hence, this treatise will play an important role in Christian theology. I must stress here that my monograph does not intend to be a historical research on the concept of spirit, but a deconstructive essay that explores some key texts in which my hypothesis that the concept of *pneuma* has a totalitarian drive can be found. As a deconstructive essay, it faces the whole of the Western tradition in an attempt to offer a new map by which we can find some new orientations for critical research.

In Chapter 4 I examine the way Christian theology adopted the concept of *pneuma* to refer to the *power of God that organizes and conserves the universe* in its totality. Although during the first centuries of Christian theology the proper actions of the Son and those of the Spirit concerning the cosmos were not very clearly distinguished, as a general understanding one could claim that whereas the Son was identified with the *Logos* as the formative and the intelligible cause of creation, the Spirit was depicted as the principle of conservation and organization of the cosmos, keeping everything together and constituting a whole out of a plurality of entities. Although the Christian concept of *pneuma* comes both from Jewish and Christian Scriptures and from Greek philosophy, one can find a continuity between the cosmological and the soteriological performance of the Holy Spirit due to the common idea of "keeping everything together" and of "ordering and conserving", as I will show in Augustine of Hippo's cosmological pneumatology. Hence, it was hard to distinguish between the Holy Spirit and the platonic idea of a *World-soul*. In this need to clarify the differences between the soul and the spirit, the 12th century faced the challenge of clarifying the concept of *spiritus* (*pneuma*), which had an important role in many different discourses (theology, cosmology, physiology, psychology). Since the use of analogy was an important feature of those times, the concept of *pneuma* started to flow freely from one discipline to the other, bringing together the far-edges of its meaning as the warm-air material element and its significance as the name of the Third person of Trinity. As Hugh of Saint Victor claimed, in the midst of this quasi-equivocity, the only property of *pneuma* that one could find in all of these different discourses was "subtility" (*subtilitas*). Although with

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