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'[os mentis] mouth to mouth' with Nicola Masciandaro

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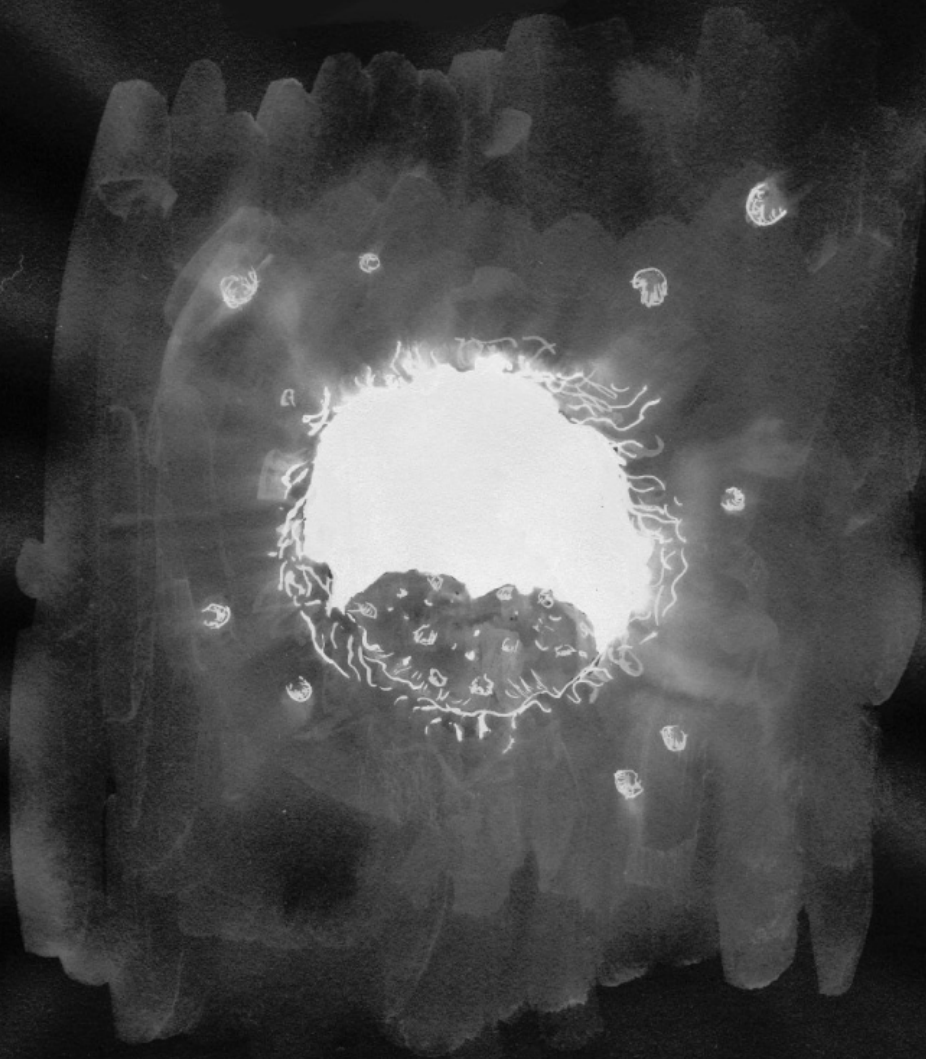
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MOUTH



'(os mentis) mouth to mouth' with Nicola Masciandaro

*'decaying into divinity: the culinary cosmology of a 21st century mystic'
- worms of heretical perversity, devil's cheese and seaweed -*

MOUTH

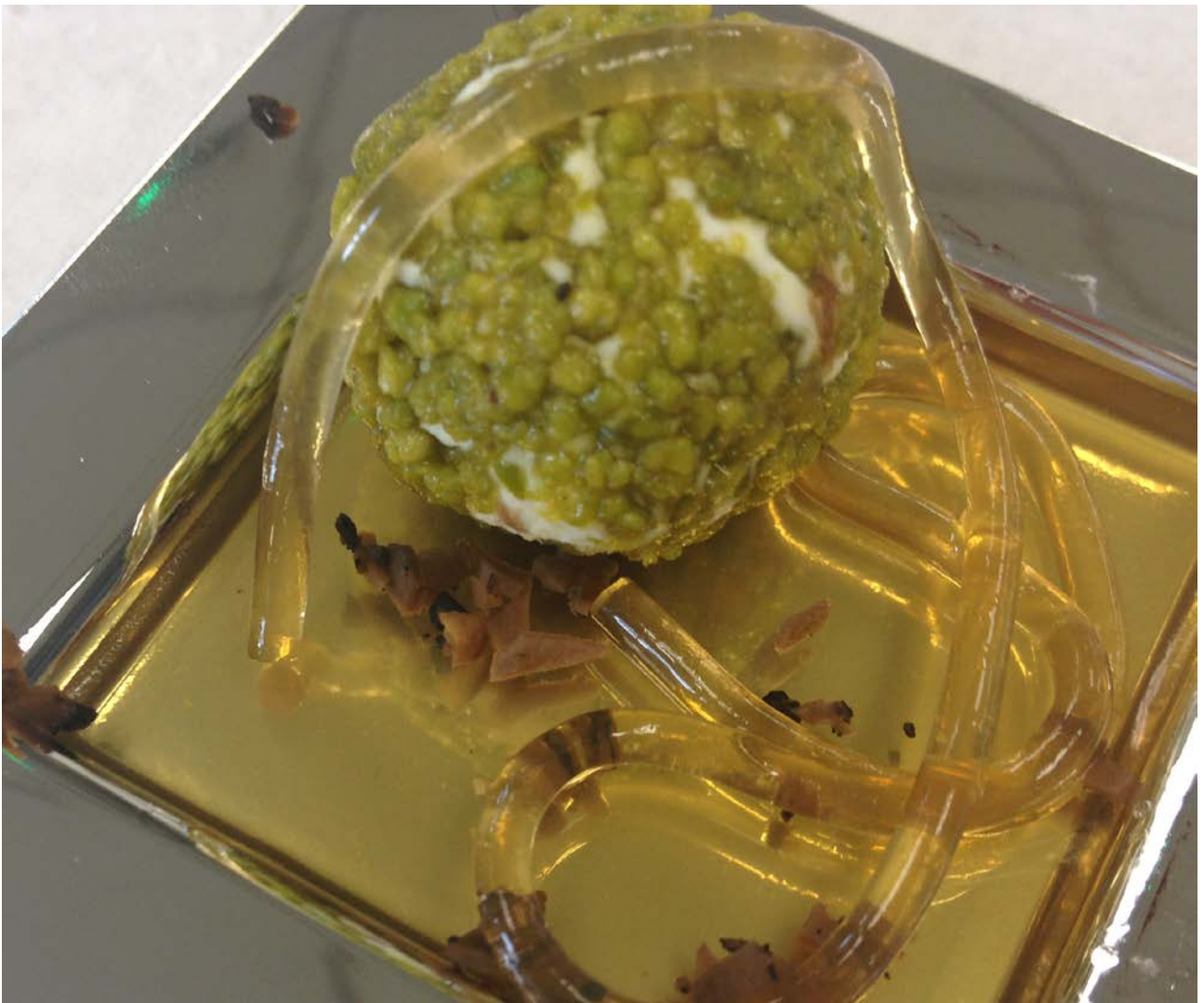


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Kathy Tynan and Matt Beeching for MOUTH at Weaponising Speculation, Independent Colleges, Dublin, 2-3 March, 2013;
above, menu card side a; here, menu card side b), 14.8cm x 10.5cm. Image courtesy of the artists



Mairtin Mac Con Iomaire and Pat Zaidan *Decaying into Divinity: The Culinary Cosmology of a 21st Century Mystic - worms of heretical perversity, devil's cheese and seaweed*, for MOUTH, Weaponising Speculation, Independent Colleges, Dublin, 2-3 March, 2013. Images courtesy of Caoimhe Doyle and Pat Zaidan

‘[*os mentis*] mouth to mouth’ with Nicola Masciandaro

MOUTH

(Edia Connole & Scott Wilson)

in association with Matt Beeching,
Mairtin Mac Con Iomaire, Kathy Tynan and Pat Zaidan

For NM:

(the ‘great man ... who in the midst of the crowd keeps
with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.’)ⁱ

With him I speak mouth to mouth: and plainly, and not by riddles and figures doth he see
the Lord.

- Numbers (12:8)ⁱⁱ

Teaching Augustine last night brought me across the cool expression ‘mouth of the mind [*os mentis*]’ which he uses to gloss the ‘mouth to mouth’ direct speaking with God in Numbers 12:8 ... I think the fun of connecting the *os mentis* formulation ... is that it exposes the ingestive aspect of intellect ... Mind as mouth, consciousness as [...] an animated image of ingestion as metaphysical act, pointing to the sense in which eating is a being.

- Nicola Masciandaroⁱⁱⁱ

Meanwhile, I learned a great deal, much too much ... and as mentioned, from mouth to mouth ... and I might as well at last begin to give you, my friends, a little taste of this philosophy, as much as I am permitted?

- Friedrich Nietzsche^{iv}

[After all ...] It is wisdom to savor what is good.

- Bernard of Clairvaux^v

With the speculative turn in philosophy there has been a surge of interest in mystical theology, of which Nicola Masciandaro is a leading exponent, and hence, the many studies arising from it, all strongly feature Nicola's thought. Rarely, however, do such studies attempt to present plainly the philosophical argumentation that underlies Nicola's work, and in the case of his own mystical writings such an understanding is particularly difficult to achieve because he notoriously eschews argumentation in favor of proclamatory exposition.

This paper is a prolegomena to a commentary on Nicola's work that would, following him, be infinite, that would be a work not so much 'on' him, but 'with' him in elaborating and embellishing his thought with ours and others, mouth to mouth. Before that, however, we have to try and locate ourselves in the philosophical tradition that informs his mysticism, the structures of thought and experience towards which his own is articulated. In particular here we focus on the Neoplatonic tradition exemplified by Dionysius.

Having said what this paper is, we may as well say what it is not. This paper is not, in its present capacity at least, an exposition of the Judaeo-Christian aspect of Nicola's thought. This is regrettable, because for Nicola, as for Dionysius, Moses is equally as important a figure as Plato. Two 'ascents' prefigure their mysticism: the allegory of the philosophers ascent to wisdom in Plato's *Republic* 7., and Moses' ascent to a 'dark cloud' on Mount Sinai in Exodus (19:18-19).^{vi} In both we find ascent to the darkness of excessive light, and in both a return to an opposed darkness of ignorance.

'Light is darkness, knowing is unknowing, a 'cloud,' and the pain of contemplating it, is the pain of contemplating more reality than can be borne: "Man may not see me and live (Exodus 33:20)."^{vii} Mystical sorrow is the sorrow of being, then,^{viii} 'more than a feeling, it is the live form of the refusal of the principle of Reason whereby the absolute is alone thinkable,' or as Nicola notes after Bonaventure, 'this sorrow is the *gemitus cordis* [groaning of the heart] that is the essential double of the *fulgor speculationis* [brilliance of speculation] whereby mind is deliriously led beyond itself.'^{ix} The entire vision of reality articulated here arises from the single fundamental principle that to be is to be intelligible. This, Parmenides Law, gives rise to what Nicola terms 'Exhibit X: the folly of

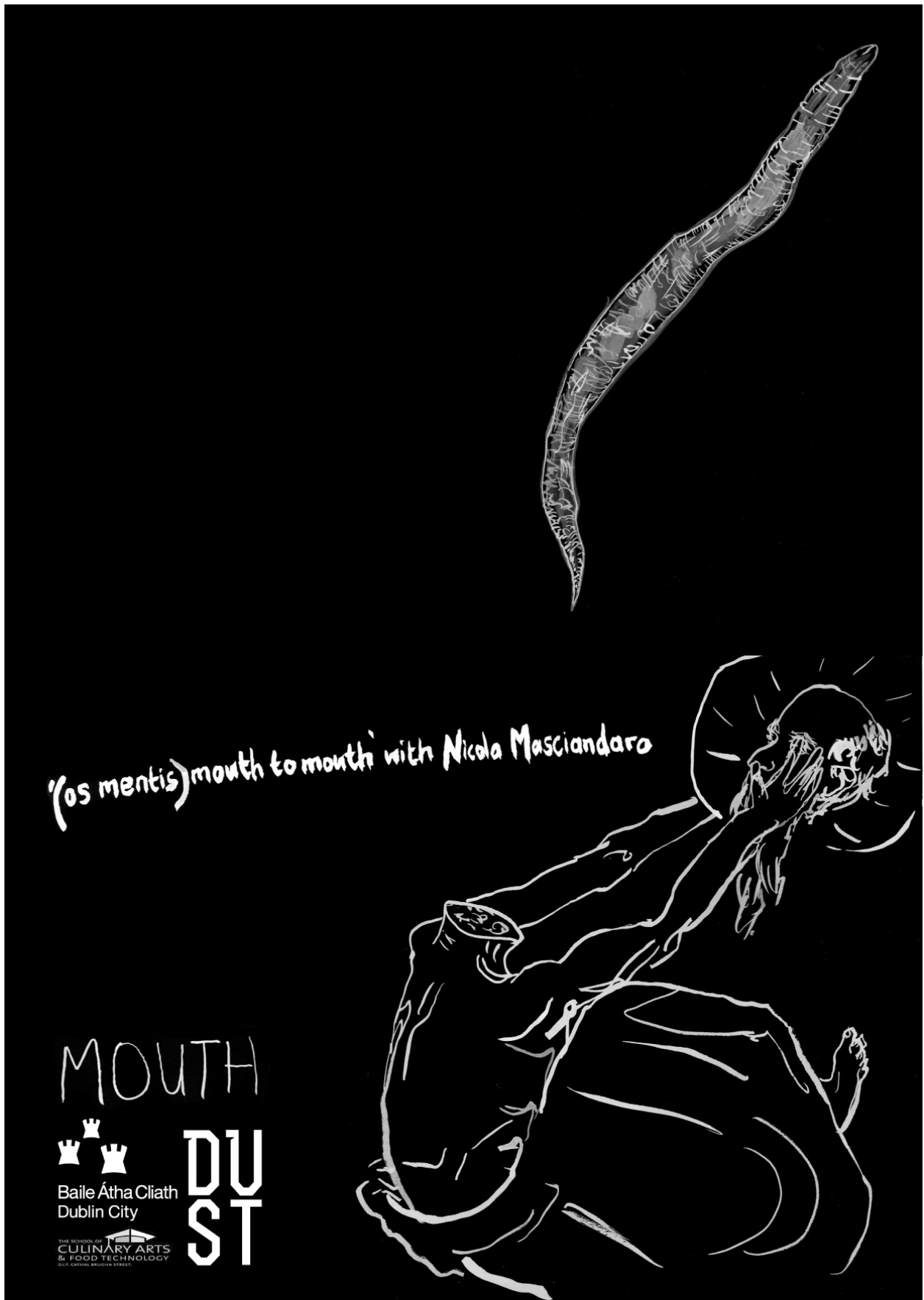
thinking that thought can pass beyond itself yet remain the correlate of oneself, [this is] the lie of all critique of correlationism that does not attack the correlation itself, the real -ism: you.’^x

And so, at the end of this paper, in an homage to Nicola Masciandaro, and ‘in order to really fuck the passions of finitude,’ we will invite you to ‘weaponize the correlation, to behead your being-in-the-world.’^{xi} After all, speculation alone is not sufficient, ‘Better to study than to be ignorant. Better to feel than to study. Better to experience than to feel. Better to become than to experience ...’^{xii}

‘Enter then into this () hole.’^{xiii}

This (), the largest of the breaches in the sheath that protects your body. This (), the principal material incorporator of the outside world. This (), the last defense, the point at which the *critical decision of incorporation* occurs.^{xiv}

MOUTH



Kathy Tynan and Matt Beeching for MOUTH at Weaponising Speculation, Independent Colleges, Dublin, 2-3 March, 2013; here, broadsheet side a; below, broadsheet, side b) 2013, 42cm x 29.7cm. Image courtesy of the artists

Mind beyond mind, word beyond speech, it is gathered up by no discourse, by no intuition, by no name. It is and it is as no other being is. Cause of all existence, and therefore itself transcending existence, it alone could give an authoritative account of what it really is.

- Dionysius, *Divine Names*^{xv}

But I am a worm, and no man.

- Psalm 22^{xvi}

How to express the otherness of the divine in human language was the central question that exercised the Pseudo-Dionysius. How to weaponize the speculation that the Thearchy^{xvii} is ontologically transcendent; beyond being, substance, and knowledge, and at the same time, the Cause of everything that exists.^{xviii} ‘For It is above every essence and life,’ he writes, ‘No light, indeed, expresses Its character, and every description falls short of Its similitude ... we rightly express its non-relationship to things created, but we do not know its super-essential, and inconceivable, and unutterable, indefinability.’^{xix}

As Enrica Ruaro has suggested, in scholarly discussions of this question the *via negativa* or path of negation is seen as the principal means by which Dionysius weaponizes this speculation.^{xx} In his *Mystical Theology*, key to this methodology, he writes:

The Cause of all is above all and is not inexistent, lifeless, speechless, mindless. [Nor is it ...] soul or mind. [It does not ...] possess imagination, conviction, speech or understanding. Nor is it speech per se, understanding per se. It is not number or order, greatness or smallness, equality or inequality, ... It has no power, nor is it power ... It does not live nor is it life. It is not substance, nor is it eternity or time. It is not wisdom ... spirit ... sonship ... fatherhood ... Darkness and light, error and truth - it is none of these.^{xxi}

For Dionysius, it is *more true* to say that God is not, rather than God is, because ‘being,’ ‘that which is,’ necessarily means ‘that which is available to thought’; thought is always the apprehension of some being, and since God is ‘beyond being,’ he is beyond intellection.^{xxii} God is precisely

unthinkable to us (indeed, Eruigena would go so far as to say God is unthinkable even to Himself).^{xxiii}



Kathy Tynan *Untitled (Pseudo-Dionysius)* 2013, ink on paper, 29cm x 21cm. Image courtesy of the artist

The doctrine that God is beyond being, and beyond thought, is not an ungrounded starting point or doctrine of faith for Dionysius, but rather the conclusion of a rigorous sequence of philosophical reasoning that began with Parmenides.^{xxiv} In first making explicit the idea of being as intelligible, Parmenides had said that one ‘could not know that which is not, for it is impossible, nor [could one]

express it; for the same thing is for thinking and being.’^{xxv} In establishing this correlation it necessarily followed that to think non-being would be to have no object or content for thought, to be not thinking anything, and hence not to be thinking. If we trace the development of this reasoning down through Plato to Plotinus we witness the birth of the *via negativa* in negative or apophatic theology (from Greek *apophatikos* meaning ‘negative,’ from *apophasis* ‘denial,’ from *apo* - ‘other than’ and *phanai* - ‘speak,’ intending (knowledge of God) obtained through negation).^{xxvi} According to which, to think or refer to the divine One at all is, inevitably, to treat it as some being. For even in thinking and saying it is ‘not this,’ we are precisely thinking and saying it is ‘not this,’ thought and language can deal only with beings. To say that the One is ‘not this’ is also, inescapably, to think it as something else; not as multiple and complex but as unitary and simple, because even the term ‘One,’ as Plotinus points out, ‘contains only a denial of multiplicity.’^{xxvii} And so, in the end, we must negate even such negative definitions, including the name ‘One’ itself, because all language represents conceptual definition and intellectual apprehension. The profundity of this statement arises from the fact that it would seem, as Paullina Remes puts it, ‘unity must be connected to a first principle [for Plotinus].’^{xxviii} But he himself says that ‘if the One - name and reality expressed - were to be taken positively, it would be less clear than if we did not give it a name at all; for perhaps this name was given it [he suggests], in order that the seeker, beginning from this, which is completely indicative of simplicity, may finally negate this as well.’^{xxix}

Geniune apophasis consists then, for Plotinus, not in any words or thoughts whatsoever, however negative or superlative, but in the absolute silence of the mind: ‘if you want to grasp the isolated and Alone,’ he says, ‘you will not think.’^{xxx} Far more specifically, Dionysius, who adopts this doctrine from Plotinus, and whose thought can be understood only in this context, says, that the union of minds with the One takes place ‘in the cessation of every intellectual activity,’^{xxxi} and that ‘ceasing from our intellectual activities we throw ourselves into the ray beyond being as far as possible.’^{xxxii} Similarly, in the *Mystical Theology*, he explains that we are united with the altogether unknown ‘in the inactivity of every knowledge,’^{xxxiii} and that ‘entering into the darkness above intellect we find not little speech but complete non-speech and non-intellection.’^{xxxiv} ‘[F]or it has neither word nor act of understanding,’ as we read in another translation, ‘and it is made manifest only to those who leave behind every ... light, ... voice, ... word, and who plunge into the darkness where dwells the One who is beyond all things.’^{xxxv}

As the repeated references to the cessation or absence of thought, qua abandonment here, indicate, this is not ‘mere mystical hyperbole, or an attempt to articulate some sublime experience,’ but

rather the strictly philosophical consequence of the correlation between being and intelligibility, from which it necessarily follows that to think non-being would be to have no object or content for thought, to be not thinking anything, and hence not to be thinking.^{xxxvi} As long as any speaking or thinking is taking place we are necessarily in the realm of beings, and being, and hence are not attaining to God. A ‘God,’ incidentally, who either is or is not anything at all, who could be perceived or grasped by thought, whether positively or negatively, would not be God.^{xxxvii} As Dionysius says, ‘If anyone, having seen God, understood what he saw, he did not see [God] himself, but something of those things of his which are and are known.’^{xxxviii}

Only this Neoplatonic argumentation enables us to grasp the meaning and philosophical justification of Masciandaro’s extreme ‘mystical’ formulations. In ‘Absolute Individuation,’^{xxxix} a text that radically disrupts our habituated understanding of mysticism as an experiential realization that necessarily dislocates the integrity of the individual, Nicola repeats this position, adopted by Dionysius and expounded by Eruigena in the *Perypheson*.^{xl} Here, in a crucial passage, we are perforce reminded of Plotinus, who, in ruminating the ‘One,’ had said: ‘Even to say ‘cause’ is not to predicate something accidental of it, but of us, *that we have something from it,*’ he continues, ‘... whatever that is in itself ... neither ought one who speaks say precisely “that” or “is.”’^{xli} All that we are left with, actually left with, on this view, is ‘in itself’ - ‘a flight of the alone *with* the Alone,’ then, in Masciandaro’s twist of Plotinus’ terms,^{xlii} the phoenix flight you can never properly undertake because it is your actuality.’^{xliii} ‘The radical spatio-temporal asymmetry of this [‘actuality’] curves and distorts the entire cosmos. It is the universal twist which reveals the identity of inner and outer worlds. Wrapped around the black () hole of the fact that I am me, everything is unveiled to be a vast mirror or speculative reality,’ where, or rather not where, the nullibiquitous not ‘not this’ or ‘*whatless* that [“I am That I am”]^{xliv} standing at the occluded placeless center of being, in the mirror itself, is equivalent to ...^{xlv} an essential stupidity, to my stupidity, to stupid human being: ‘I am an insider whose essence is to actually be a virtual absolute outsider.’^{xlvi}

Correlatively Christ would say, ‘I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people.’^{xlvii} ‘As if he were to say [comments Nicola, after Eruigena], I who am more than human penetrate the secrets of all nature, as a worm [penetrates] the bowels of the earth, which no one participating only in human nature can do’; or after Land: ‘If I am inhuman it is because my world has slopped over its human bounds, because to be human seems like a poor, sorry, miserable affair, limited by the senses, restricted by moralities and codes, defined by platitudes and -isms.’^{xlviii}

But I am a worm, and no man.^{xlix} This image of Otherness incarnate, given in what Masciandaro terms ‘the hellishly real impossibility that you are you,’¹ is an absurd, incongruous, stupid image, from Latin *stupere*, meaning ‘stupor,’ and from which ontologically if not etymologically we get ‘stoop,’ indicating the very same near-unconsciousness or insensibility: ‘the instant, dumb, unquestionable intelligence with which Dionysius’s corpse rises and picks up his head,’^{li} for example, as if in a drunken stupor, the holy man (... reeling with wine^{lii}) condescends to do something and in having the shoulders and neck habitually turned to the ground, precisely ‘turns’ (as if to enter into this () hole) as a worm); this is a tautology in fact, the worm does not turn, we worm - from Proto-Indo European *wer* meaning ‘turn,’^{liii} ... At any rate, Dionysius’ worming on this occasion is the perfect ocular analog of what Masciandaro terms ‘true stupidity,’ according to which the Absolute is alone thinkable, and therefore representable.^{liv}

[But] all this talk of ‘turns’ ... [he would say], [talk] that now infects every culture, of this turn and that turn, is only deferred, perverted desire to become, to *convert* to the worm you already are, to the multiple singular agency that is culture’s very ground. When we behold a wide, turf-covered expanse, [he would add] we should remember that its smoothness ... is mainly due to all the inequalities having been slowly leveled by worms. It is a marvelous reflection that the whole of the superficial mould over any such expanse has passed, and will again pass, every few years through the bodies of worms.

Inhabit the interface and turn into the worm that you are.^{lv}

As the only image the Thearchy applies to itself, worm is the prototype in a dissimilar imaging of the Absolute that operates as a functional counterpart to Nicola’s negative theology.^{lvi} Called cataphatic theology (from Greek *Kataphatikos* meaning ‘affirmative,’ from *kata* - ‘as an intensifier,’ and *phanai* - ‘speak,’ intending (knowledge of God) obtained through affirmation), this theory of dissimilar images is first presented by Dionysius in the *Celestial Hierarchy*. Here, having explained the distinction between similar and dissimilar images applied to angels or to the Thearchy itself in the scriptures, Dionysius outlines three levels of images present: high images, middle images, and low images, which proceed from the less dissimilar and higher in the ranks of sensible things to the more dissimilar and lower in the ranks of sensible things.^{lvii} The low images, which Dionysius himself calls stupid,^{lviii} are in fact preferable, he explains, because ‘If the negations respecting things Divine are true, but the affirmations are inharmonious, then the revelation as regards things invisible, through dissimilar representation, is more appropriate to the hiddenness of things unutterable.’^{lix}



Kathy Tynan *Untitled* (Nicola Masciandaro) 2013, ink on paper, 29cm x 21cm. Image courtesy of the artist

Toward the end of the second chapter of the *Celestial Hierarchy* (and the same topic returns in *Epistle IX*),^{lx} Dionysius discusses images that are distinctively applied to the Thearchy itself. He begins with the less dissimilar ('star of the morning' and 'light') and moves on the more dissimilar (('non-consuming) fire'), and then onto the most dissimilar ('sweet-smelling ointment' and 'corner-stone'), and having mentioned even more incongruous animal imagery (such as 'lion', and 'charging bear').^{lxi} Dionysius ends with that which is conceived as the lowliest and most incongruous of all 'viz. that distinguished theologians have shown it to us as representing itself under the form of a worm.'^{lxiii} The source of this reference is clearly Psalm 22,^{lxiii} in which the persecuted Christ raises his complaint to his Father while suffering on the cross, 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?'^{lxiv} which Dionysius interprets as lament, and then 'But I am a worm, and no man,' which is taken to be a self-definition of Christ himself.^{lxv}

In the earliest extant commentaries on Dionysius' text, this interpretation is supported and accompanied with an explanation: Christ calls himself "worm," we read, because like a worm he came to life from the Virgin Mary without sexual intercourse.^{lxvi} This 'old doctrine of spontaneous generation,' which is, as Nicola suggests, 'not only biologically incorrect but ontologically true of every entity,' - 'moved from within itself,'^{lxvii} - alleged that worms came to life, not through copulation, but directly from matter - as fleas from dust, they were borne of mud and dirt, and other animals corpses, in the so-called *generatio equivoca* authoritatively endorsed by the church fathers.^{lxviii} Though he himself remains silent on the matter, it is widely agreed^{lxix} that this doctrine, coherently synthesized by Aristotle,^{lxx} could not but have motivated Dionysius in his selection of worm as Otherness Incarnate.

The worms equivocal generation epitomizes its otherness to every form of animal life, but in particular to man, as is well shown in the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Problems*; one of which concerns what is proper to man with regard to his offspring. Aristotle asks: 'Why is it that, if a living creature is born from our semen, we regard it as our own offspring, but if it proceeds from any other part or excretion, we do not consider it our own? For many things proceed from decayed matter as well as from semen [he says, and then, having established an opposition between what is 'proper' and 'good' *qua* 'natural,' and what is 'improper,' and 'bad' and therefore alien or 'other' to man, Aristotle says] ... If then, anything should be born from our semen, for instance, *a worm from putrefying semen*, it must not be called our offspring.'^{lxxi}

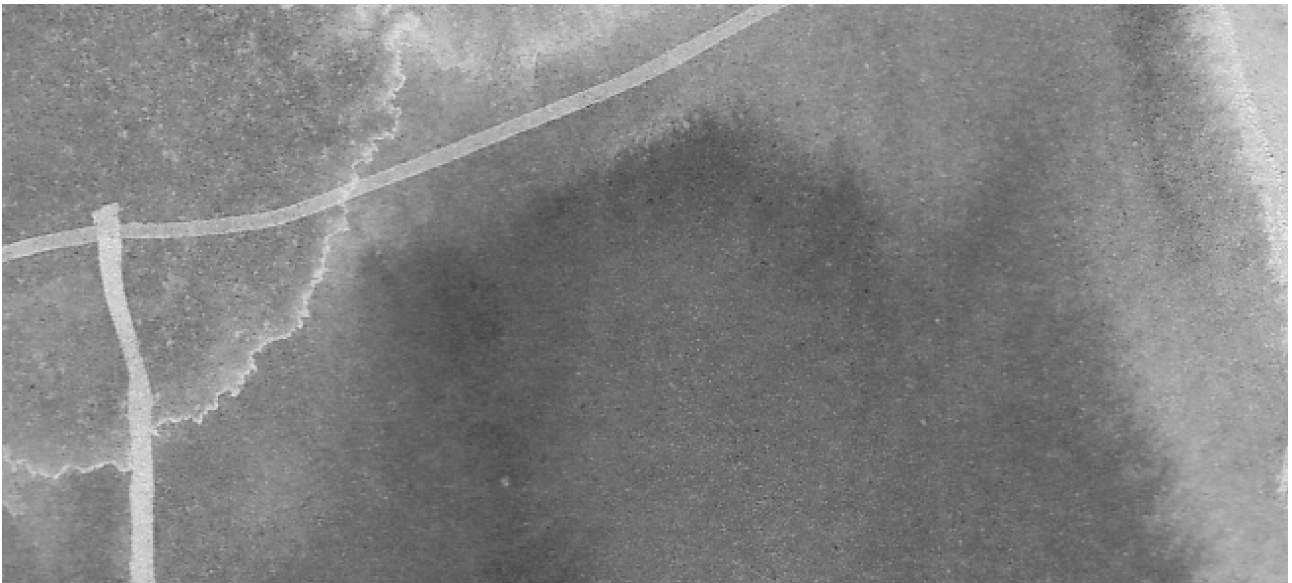
The worm is portrayed as 'Other' to man here, indeed to all forms of life produced through copulation, and it's Otherness is portrayed as a 'bad' otherness, emerging as it does from excretions

and putrefactions, which Aristotle adamantly adds ‘do not belong to us,’ but ‘are other and foreign to our nature.’^{lxxii} This portrait certainly could have preempted the worms place in the Dionysian doctrine of dissimilar images, in which worm is low otherness, and God, high otherness, and according to which - based on the equivocal generation of both Christ and worm, which emphasized the genetic dissimilarity and incarnate Otherness of both, with respect to the human and animal kind - these two entities can be compared, indeed, are connected in a certain mysterious way.^{lxxiii} As Nicola notes,

Worms is not a self-grooming we. It is the only, unbounded community - a line of openness that slashes through God, the human, the earth - the unimaginable ever-present perfect abyssal consummation of all in one.^{lxxiv}

Nonetheless this connection *qua* consummation here is itself better exhibited in what are offered as two alternate explanations behind Dionysius’ motivation to select worm as Otherness incarnate.^{lxxv} The first of these takes us momentarily back to Aristotle, according to whom, in writing *On Generation and Corruption*, one of the possible explanations of the origin of humankind is that the first human beings were [spontaneously] born from earth in the shape of worms: ‘with regard to the generation of human beings and quadrupeds,’ he says, ‘if, once upon a time, they were “earthborn” as some allege, one might assume them to be formed in one of these ways: either it would be by a worm taking shape to begin with or else they were formed out of eggs ... It is however less reasonable to hold that their generation would take place out of eggs,’ he adds. Moreover, in current times, he says, ‘it looks as though all animals produce a worm to begin with, for the fetation in its most imperfect state is something of its sort.’^{lxxvi} This ambiguity of the worm, who is portrayed as the radical opposite of man, and at same time considered to be his origin here, could certainly have been an inspirational source for Dionysius in his selection of worm as Otherness incarnate, insofar as it recalls the contradictory doubleness of God who is origin and Otherness at the same time.^{lxxvii} What this explanation lacks however, is a consideration of the worm’s place within the Dionysian cosmos, which, while speculative, is not only realist, but Neoplatonic. We would suggest then that this explanation is better situated in relation to Nicola’s work through a ‘deformed dynamic’^{lxxviii} that underscores this entire (Neoplatonic) tradition, which, of course, he himself is situated in.^{lxxix}

While Christian theological speculation speaks of the retention of personal identity in beatitude, the language of mystics such as Nicola, is distinguished by ideas of absorption into God, permeation by God, and divine ravishing, emphasizing the annihilation of the soul, and the disappearance of the self into the Godhead: ‘Being united in love in this way ... the soul becomes as it were changed into



Kathy Tynan detail from *Untitled* (Nicola Masciandaro) 2013, ink on paper, 29cm x 21cm. Image courtesy of the artist

[... God].^{lxxx} Everything goes back to Paul's word in Galatians, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'^{lxxxii} Varieties of this claim can be found throughout the mystical tradition, wherein the re-emergence of the negated self in God presents the self that is attained by abandoning itself, and its [true] identity discovered to inhere in the 'Other.'^{lxxxiii} 'The spirit dies, and yet it is alive in the marvels of the Godhead.'^{lxxxiii} Or as Nicola himself would say contra 'this self without a self,' which he terms 'metal head,' in opining the love of black metal as the love of that which 'materially makes and perceptually does what mysticism spiritually is': 'All love is a fire, but a spiritual fire. What a corporeal fire does for [metal], this fire ... does for an impure, cold and hardened heart ... and the mind changes into the similitude of him who inflames it. The whole mind becomes white hot ... flares up and, at the same time, liquefies in the love of God.'^{lxxxiv} Loss of self here is clearly related to loss of form and to loss of order.^{lxxxv} Deformity shows forth the reality of Form, it disorders to reveal the full nature of Order itself.^{lxxxvi} 'A soul in this state,' says Catherine of Sienna, 'sees that in itself it is nothing, that all its virtue, all its strength belongs to God, ...'^{lxxxvii} In Neoplatonic metaphysics disorder provides a proper description of the Absolute, both in its basic negativity and its unlimited potential, because the One is also properly described as 'the matrix of permanent possibilities of order'^{lxxxviii} - above all order, source of existence beyond existence, origin of movement without movement: 'Worm' is the 'Sign' of this disorder because 'It knows how to bring forth from its very powerlessness to do so.'^{lxxxix}

The second of the alternate explanations behind Dionysius' motivation to select worm as Otherness incarnate^{xc} tends to the etymology of the word 'worm,' which, according to one school of thought,

used to mean ‘dragon,’ until that meaning declined to mere ‘snake,’ and from then slowly to the lowly ‘earthworm’ we find in our garden today.^{xci} The ‘dragon’ meaning is said to have lasted for centuries however, as late as 1867 in fact; when William Morris could still write that wonderful line: ‘Therewith began a fearful battle twixt worm and man,’ and keep a straight face.^{xcii} According to another pagan school of thought ‘worm’ designated nothing like the exoticness of a fire-breathing monster but rather meant mere ‘matter’ itself, matter in *its* radical otherness.^{xciii} In Celsus’ *True Discourse*, for example, which makes use of this etymological association, we read: ‘But I would prefer to teach about the order of nature and say that God made nothing mortal ... And the souls work is God’s work but the nature of the body is different. In fact, in this respect,’ he says, ‘there will be no difference between the body of a bat or a worm ... or a man. For they are all made of the same matter, and are all equally liable to corruption.’^{xciv} There can be no doubt which of these etymological associations Dionysius himself adopted, because given the perfect structure of the celestial hierarchy, in which the lowest and highest elements are always related through incongruity, what could be more incongruous than to compare God to matter?^{xcv} Born of matter, and at the very bottom of the universe, ‘worm’ is best-suited to represent matter, but just as it can represent matter in its badness, it can also represent matter in its substantial goodness, thus serving as the living substantiation of the biblical statement, “everything is beautiful.”^{xcvi}

While Dionysius was most likely aware of this aspect of the Christian evaluation of the worm, as it perfectly fits the paradoxical construction of his theory of dissimilar images that underlies so much of Nicola’s work, this cannot be the last word on it, because Masciandaro’s metaphysics is not a form of “pantheism,” if by this we would read into the above statement the doctrine that “everything is God.” On the contrary, for Nicola, following the Neoplatonic tradition that Dionysius is situated in, every being, in that it is a being, *ipso facto*, is not God.^{xcvii} The God of Dionysius is ‘all beings and none of beings,’ ‘all things in all things and nothing in any,’ and in these formulas the ‘all’ can never be separated from the ‘none’: ‘Wherever we look, we are not seeing God, in that every being, and every object of thought, is not God; and wherever we look, we are seeing God, as he appears, for every being, every object of thought is nothing but a presentation [or appearance] of God.’^{xcviii} Nicola follows Dionysius in negotiating a path by means of the Platonic concept of appearance, which is taken up into the doctrine of being as Theophany, according to which, as we read in Plotinus:

The last and lowest of things, are in the last of those before them, and these are in those prior to them, and the one thing is in another up to the First, which is the principle. But the Principle, since it has nothing before it, has nothing else to be in, but since it has nothing to

be in, and the other things are these in which came before them, it encompasses all other things. The One, then contains, or better, is the undifferentiated containment of all beings.^{xcix}

Or, as we read in Masciandaro's maddening mystical formulation:

The worm stands for not standing for anything. It even knows how to bite off its own head, to swallow itself whole. 'What should I do now?' And a voice said, 'Eat! Eat Yourself!' He had no choice but to eat, so He ate Himself! At that moment He found that He was Everything.^c

ⁱ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self Reliance and Other Essays* (New York: Dover, 1993), 23; from the climactic sentence of Nicola Masciandro's 'The Sweetness (of the Law),' available from: The Whim, <http://thewhim.blogspot.ie/2013/01/the-sweetness-of-law.html> (accessed February 20, 2013); 'As much a law as not a law: the real principle of universal synthesis and sweetness (of the law), a sweet new style that is always invented by the few who are concerned only with what they *must* do, the "great man . . . who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude." In relation to Nicola's own 'Sweetness'/sweetness, it has been noted that 'In a world of cosmic personalism the "great men" theory of history is valid. Great men do produce historical discontinuities that are crucial. But they make these changes within a framework of historical continuity. They become crucial as pivotal characters precisely because there is a broad historical milieu which is ready to be pivoted. The "great man" is nothing without the "little men," past and present, who have participated in the development of the historical setting that at last makes a radical break with the past. The law of God is one important aspect of historical continuity. It is man's tool of dominion, and the measure by which man is either blessed or judged. It speaks to men in all eras because man is still made in God's image in all eras. Thus, it is true, as the French proverb says, that "the more things change, the more they stay the same." It is also true that as things stay the same — man's creaturehood, God's law—the more things are able to change. The radical discontinuity in a person's individual life is ethical: from death unto life, from the old creature to the new creature, from condemnation to blessing, from rebellion to obedience, from covenant-breaking to covenant-keeping. Without this discontinuity, every man stands condemned by the original discontinuity of Adam's ethical rebellion. Adam inaugurated a continuity of death by his act of rebellion. The continuity of spiritual death will otherwise prevail in each person's life apart from the discontinuity of regeneration'; Gary North, *Moses and Pharaoh* (Tyler, Texas: The Institute for Christian Economics, 1986), 175-176. Elsewhere, we read: 'The products of putrefaction are to be traced to the Soul's inability to bring some other thing into being'; Nicola Masciandro, 'WormSign,' available from: The Whim, <http://thewhim.blogspot.ie/2011/01/wormsign.html> (accessed February 20, 2013).

ⁱⁱ The circumstance that God spoke to Moses not by dream or vision (12:6) but mouth to mouth (12:8) is adverted to as proof of the peculiar favor shown to Moses by God: God admitted him to an intimacy of intercourse he did not accord others. Still, even though Moses is thus distinguished, there is no distinction drawn between the revelations given through him and those given through other prophets in point either of Divinity or of authority. And beyond this we are told that we have no scriptural warrant to go on contrasting one mode of revelation (dreams or visions) with another (mouth to mouth). The etymological research into the Hebrew words - of which there were at least three: ro'eh/roeh, nabi/n'adi and hozeh/chozeh - representing 'prophet' (from Greek *prophetes*, from *pro* - 'before' or 'for,' and *phenai* - 'speak') in the Old Testament does, however, connote a definite difference, and accordingly a degree of heterogeneity in (grades of) prophecy (qua mystical vision; see below). Of all three Hebrew words, which are found in 1 CH 29:29: 'Samuel the seer (ro'eh), Nathan the prophet (nabi'), Gad the seer (hozeh),' W. Graham Scroggie notes, 'Roeh means one who is taught in visions divinely brought, and is usually translated as "seer", that is, one who sees. Chozeh means one who beholds, who gazes, and is used constantly with reference to the prophetic vision. N'adi is from a verb which means "to cause to bubble up." This is the word most commonly used, and signifies "to pour forth words abundantly," from the divine prophets having been supposed to be moved rather by another's power than their own" (Gesenius); hence we read that "men sent by God spoke as they were impelled by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). So the N'adi is "the utterer of a divine message, one who conveys to his fellows truth otherwise hidden, and imparted to himself by God for them. He is, in short, the mouth of God's mind towards men (Findlay). It would seem that the same person are designated by all these words, the first two pointing to the prophets power of seeing the visions presented to them by God, and the last, from their function of revealing and proclaiming God's truth to man... This is pointedly illustrated by Exodus 4:16; 7:1, where Moses is seen to be the "mouth" of God to Aaron, and Aaron the "mouth" of Moses to the people ... The bearing of all this on the subject at hand must be apparent ... "How did they discern what was the will of God, under what conditions, and in what way did they receive divine communication?" A fairly exhaustive answer to these inquiries will be found in Numbers 12:6-8 ... [Where] It will be observed that communications were by "visions," "dreams," and "mouth to mouth." Between the first two there is no precise distinction, but the third was a special mode of communication, and of rare occurrence.' See Scroggie, *Is The Bible The Word of God?* (Philadelphia: The Sunday School Times Company, 1922), 25-26. See also Albert C. Knudson, *The Beacon Lights of Prophecy* (New York and Cincinnati: The Methodist Book Concern, 1914), 2, 12 and 13, and Israel Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem* (UK: The Macmillan Company, 1920-21), 68; Zangwill concurs with Scroggie that the Hebrew *nabi* means a mouthpiece; *roeh* [and ..] *chozeh* a seer; the 'prophet' proclaimed the message given to him, as the 'seer' beheld the vision of God. Knudson notes that 'much stress has been laid upon an annotation found in i Sam. 9. 9, which originally belonged after verse u. We here read that "Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a prophet was to beforetime called a Seer." From this it is inferred that the name "prophet" was not applied to Samuel in his own day. He was then called a seer. And it is true that he is to be distinguished from the members of the prophetic bands of his day. None of their wild frenzy belonged to him. He was a calm, clear-sighted man,' 12. On this note A.C. Spearing has stated that for the Middle Ages, it was the explicitly visionary element in Scripture that provided a major justification for a literature of dreams and visions; in citing Numbers 12:6-8 she says: 'This distinction between the two ways God speaks, either "in a vision, in a dream" (*in visione, ... per somnium*) or, very occasionally "mouth to mouth" (*are ad os*) and "not by riddles and figures" (*non per*

aenigmata et figuras), was to be of great importance when the Fathers of the church came to discuss mystical experience as one kind of dream or vision ... [the] visions of St. Paul [II Corinthians 12:1-4] and St. John [Apocalypse 4:1-2] were to be taken as types of mystical experience by theological writers such as St. Augustine and St. Gregory'; Spearing, *Medieval Dream Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 11-13; see also Jessica Barr, *Willing to know God: Dreamers and Visionaries in the Later Middle Ages* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2010).

ⁱⁱⁱ Personal communication over two emails, February 8, 2013 and February 15, 2013; Nicola is referring here to Book XII of Augustine's *On Genesis*: 'On the Heavenly Paradise: different kinds of vision,' where, in having outlined three kinds of visions (or 'grades of prophecy,' apropos St. Thomas in the *Summa Theologica* II, 2, qu. clxxxiv) - bodily (with the eyes), spiritual (with the human spirit), and intellectual (with the attention of the mind), Augustine says of the third: 'There the glory of the Lord is to be seen, not through some significant vision, whether of the bodily kind such as was seen on Mount Sinai, or of the spiritual kind such as Isaiah saw or John in the Apocalypse, not in code but clearly, to the extent that the human mind can grasp it depending on God's grace as he takes it up, so that God may speak mouth to mouth with any whom he has made worthy of such conversation - the mouth of the mind not the body, which is how I consider we have to understand what is written about Moses [Numbers 12:8]'; see *On Genesis*, trans. Edmund Hill (New York: New City Press, 2002), 495. What is the relevance of all this for Nicola? Well, firstly, if we follow St. Thomas in the *Summa Theologica*, Part 1, qu. 12, art. 2, where he argues that God cannot be known in this life in His essence, but by his effects alone, the notoriety of mystics such as Nicola is that they maintain God can be known in His essence in this life, that the attainment of the union of the soul with God, however fleeting, is possible; 'Thus in the thrust of a trembling glance, my mind,' said Augustine, in his account of his first purely contemplative glimpse of the One Reality, 'arrived at That Which Is. Then indeed I saw Your *invisible things which are understood by the things that are made*; but I lacked the strength to hold my gaze [*nota bene, 'chozeh, 'one who gazes'*] fixed, and my weakness was beaten back again so that I returned to my old habits, bearing nothing with me but a memory of delight and desire as for something of which I had caught a fragrance but which I did not yet have the strength to eat'; see Book VII. Cap. XVII in *Confessions*, trans. F.J. Sheed (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2006), 133. Augustine's reference to eating God, here, brings us nicely to what Nicola calls, above, the 'ingestive aspect of intellect,... pointing to the sense in which eating is a being.' Augustine's vision is an 'intellectual vision,' the third and highest kind, in which he beholds God with his mind, and more specifically with the 'mouth of the mind,' as he mentions apropos Moses. He wants to eat God but doesn't yet have the strength. How then does this point to the sense in which eating is a being? Well, it could be that eating is a being concreated in the mystical vision, in the union of the soul with God; as Nicola notes after Plotinus 'Contemplation (*theoria* [which, we can add here, is linked to the 'gaze,' *chozeh*; the one who beholds qua 'speculation']) and its object constitute a living thing, a Life, two inextricably one'; see Plotinus, *The Enneads*, trans. Stephen McKenna (New York: Burdett, 1992), 3.8.8., as cited in Nicola's commentary on Stephen Shakespeare, 'Of Plications: A Short Summa On The Nature Of Cascadian Black Metal,' in *Glossator* Vol. 6, Black Metal, eds. Nicola Masciandaro and Reza Negerastani, available from: Glossator.org, <http://glossator.org/> (last accessed February 23, 2013). For instance, both Augustine and St. Thomas agree that it is said in the person of God: *No man shall see me and live* (Exodus, xxxiii, 20). Augustine addresses this in addressing Paul's rapture (2 Cor 12:2-4), when, in acknowledging the certainty that he was indeed 'snatched up to the third heaven,' he addresses Paul's uncertainty, apropos different grades of prophecy or mystical vision, about the nature of alienation from the body when this happened: 'whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows,' Augustine will go on to say: 'whether it left his body totally and simply dead or whether while the soul was in some way still there animating his living body, his mind was torn away to see or rather hear the *inexpressible words* (2 Cor 12: 4) of that vision'; see Augustine, *On Genesis*, 469-470. As Nicola has noted on the ontology of *theoria*/contemplation apropos *chozeh/hozeh*: the 'one who beholds,' who 'gazes,' such vision is the *telos* of all speculation: '*visio sine comprehensione*, as Cusa defines it,' or as we read elsewhere: 'Seeing more than is comprehended - cf. Levinas' thought "which thinks more than itself" - is precisely ... vision without comprehension, [it is] speculation' ... 'It is the opening of reality measured by the space of the eclipse of *what* by *that* [and since ...] "The process of perception ... runs parallel to the process of creation, ... the reversing of the process of perception without obliterating consciousness amounts to realising the nothingness of the universe as a separate entity"'"; see Nicola Masciandaro, 'Absolute Secrecy: On the Infinity of Individuation,' available from: The Whim, <http://thewhim.blogspot.ie/2012/07/absolute-secrecy-on-infinity-of.html> (accessed February 10, 2013), and Stephen Shakespeare, 'Of Plications: A Short Summa On The Nature Of Cascadian Black Metal,' in *Glossator* Vol. 6, 36.

^{iv} Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Section 9: What is Noble? Aphorism no. 295, in *The Nietzsche Reader*, eds. Keith Ansell Pearson and Duncan Large (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing), 360-361: 'Meanwhile I learned much, all too much more about this god's philosophy and, as mentioned, from mouth to mouth - I, the last disciple and initiate of the God Dionysus, may now be finally allowed to begin to give you, my friends, a little taste, as much as I am permitted, of this philosophy?' In the post-*Zarathustra* period Nietzsche increasingly identifies with this Greek god-philosopher, even signing his letters, 'Dionysus,' in his last half-mad months of lucidity. His use of the 'mouth to mouth' formulation is fortuitous here as it suggests the extent to which prophecy is by no means a simple phenomenon. As Knudson has noted in relation to the historicity of prophecy, 'we may distinguish the rank and file of the prophetic order... [OT] prophets come into special prominence at two important crises of the nations history during the Philistine wars of the eleventh century and the Syrian wars of the ninth century. But they are frequently referred to by the canonical prophets, and appear as late as the time of Nehemiah (6. 10-14). It is probable, then, that they formed a

continuous institution in Israel, at least from the eleventh century before Christ down into the postexilic period. Groups or bands of prophets first appear in the time of Samuel (i Sam. 10. 5-13). They then apparently moved about the country devoting themselves to a rather extravagant type of religious life. They carried musical instruments with them, and by means of music and song seem to have worked themselves up into a state of frenzy. Indeed, so conspicuous a feature of their life was this physical excitement that they were called madmen (2 Kings 9. n; Hos. 9. 7), and the verb "prophecy" came to be used in the sense of "rave" (i Sam. 18. 10). They were thus ecstatics, resembling to a certain extent modern dervishes and the ancient Greek worshippers of Dionysius. They also bore some resemblance to the prophets of Baal in i Kings 18. 25-29. The latter fact has led to the theory that prophecy was not an independent institution in Israel but was borrowed from the Canaanites. In support of this view it is claimed that the Hebrew word for "prophet," nabi, was of foreign origin. But this claim is without adequate foundation. There is, it is true, no verbal root in Hebrew from which nabi could have been derived; but this is also true of many other Hebrew words ... which no one thinks of regarding as loan-words. Then, too, the name nabi is applied to a number of persons before the time of Samuel, such as Abraham (Gen. 20. 7, 17), Moses (Deut. 34. 10), Miriam (Exod. 15. 20), and Deborah (Judg. 4. 4). This does not necessarily mean that these persons were called prophets in their own time. We may have here simply the view of a later writer [see above footnote on this point],²⁻³ On Knudson's point that Israeli prophets were ecstatics that resembled to a certain extent modern dervishes and the ancient Greek worshippers of Dionysius, he later notes that prior to the time of Samuel prophecy had, in Israel, been confined to individuals; 'Here and there a person was seized with the Spirit of God (compare Judg. 5. 12; 6. 34; 14. 6, 19). But in the time of Samuel whole groups of men were thus affected. The prophetic spirit became contagious,'³ Knudson then notes that the reason for this new development was probably the national and religious crisis brought about by the victories of the Philis times: the ark had been captured, Shiloh desecrated, and the land in a large part subdued,'³ While this is fascinating, what is of particular interest here is the nature of prophecy in relation to what Knudson identifies as its contagion, insofar as this further suggests the extent to which prophecy is by no means a simple phenomenon, but contains different and discordant elements, that are to a certain extent pan-historical. Hence in the *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche was able to say: 'Either through the influence of the narcotic drink, of which the hymns of all aboriginal humans and peoples speak, or with the invigorating springtime's awakening that fills all nature with passion, these Dionysian impulses find their source, and as they grow in intensity everything subjective vanishes into complete loss of self-recognition. Even in the German Middle Ages singing and dancing crowds, ever increasing in number, moved from place to place under this same Dionysian impulse.... There are people who, from the lack of experience or thick-headedness, turn away from such manifestations as from "folk-diseases," mocking or with pity derived from their own sense of a superior health. But of course these poor people have no idea how corpse-like and ghostly their so-called "health" looks when the glowing life of the Dionysian swarm buzzes past them; see Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*, in *The Nietzsche Reader*, 45. Consider what is given by Zangwill in relation to Jeremiah, the 'greatest of OT prophets,' as the definitive definition or 'scientific diagnosis' of prophecy proper: 'He is mocked and derided and there is upon him the fear of even graver persecution. Nevertheless, "If I say I will not make mention of Him/ Nor speak any more in His name/ Then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire/ Shut up in my bones./ And I weary myself to hold it in,/ But cannot."' , 68. Is it not the same mystical sorrow and holy foolishness unfolding here, 'visible and readable' in all its social dramas, that we find in the time of Symeon, for example, who, in having spent a number of years in the desert, fasting, praying, and through silence separating himself from all earthly bonds, decided to return to the city in order to "mock the world" (εμπαίζω—to ridicule, make dance, make fun of; or that we find in the Middle Ages, in Margery of Kempe's uncontrollable sobbing, for example: 'so loud and wondrous that it made the pepyl astonyd'? See Andrew Thomas, *The Holy Fools: A Theological Enquiry* (PhD: University of Nottingham, 2009); see also Nicola Masciandaro, 'Eros as Cosmic Sorrow,' in *Mystics Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 1-2 (March/June 2009), pp.59-103; and *The Book of Margery of Kempe*, trans. Lynn Stanley (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001), 50.

^v *Sapientia Sapor Boni*. 'Perhaps *sapientia*, that is wisdom, is derived from *sapor*, that is taste, because, when it is added to virtue, like some seasoning, it adds taste to something which by itself is tasteless and bitter ... For in nothing is the victory of wisdom over malice more evident than when the taste for evil - which is what malice - is purged away, and the mind's inmost task senses that it is deeply filled with sweetness'; see Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs*, trans. Irene Edmonds, 4 vols. (Kalamazoo Mi: Cistercian Publications, 1980), 85:8-9, IV.204-5, as cited in Nicola Masciandaro, 'The Sweetness (of the Law).' As Nicola states here, 'the deep logical connection between the gustatory and the elective is shown in IE root *geus*: to taste, chose (origin of both *choose* and *gustus*). As knowledge proceeds via discrimination, so is pleasure or disgust also a choice. The horizon of knowledge is governed by the ethics of taste.' Nicola's entire oeuvre, is, to borrow his words, moved 'toward realizing the profound relation between wisdom and taste, *sapientia* and *sapor*, according to which truth is always a matter of discriminating for and through oneself the difference between good and bad, a process of tasting or providing its *right flavour*,' or as we read elsewhere: "The Psalmist says ... *Taste and see. Taste* refers to the affectus of love; *see* refers to the intellect's cogitation and mediation. Therefore one ought first to surge up in the movement of love *before* intellectually pondering ... For this is the general rule in Mystical Theology: one ought to have practice before theory. For *this* is what you do anyway'; see Nicola Masciandaro, 'The Severed Hand: Commentary and Ecstasy,' in *English Language Notes* 50.2 Fall/Winter 2012, 96.

^{vi} See Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 7-18. See also William Johnston, 'Moses the Mystic' in *The Wounded Stag* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1998), 24-35. For this synthesis in Dionysius' work, see especially the *Mystical Theology* 1000D-

1001A in, for example, *Pseudo Dionysius: The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 137. For this synthesis in Nicola's work, see especially 'Secret: No Light Has ever Seen the Black Universe,' available from: The Whim, <http://thewhim.blogspot.ie/2012/04/secret-no-light-has-ever-seen-black.html> (accessed February 20, 2013).

^{vii} Turner, 18. Turner is citing Exodus (33:20). St. Thomas notes, 'If the connatural dependence of our understanding on phantasms prevents us in this life from understanding other pure spirits, much less can we in this life see the divine essence, which transcends all angels. Of this fact the following may also be taken as an indication: The higher our mind is raised to the contemplation of spiritual things, the more it is abstracted from sensible things: but the final terminus to which contemplation can possibly arrive is the divine substance: therefore the mind that sees the divine substance must be totally divorced from bodily senses, either by death or by some rapture. Hence it is said in the person of God: No man shall see me and live (Exodus, xxxiii, 20)'; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans. J. Rickaby (London: Burns and Oates, 1905), 216. See also Johnston on this point, he says 'A solid theological tradition, rooted in Exodus itself, states unhesitatingly that Moses did not see God. His audacious prayer to see God's glory meets with a clear refusal [... Exodus 33:19-20]. The Lord then comes down in a cloud; Moses is filled with awe as the Lord passes before him; but the face of God he does not see. And this scene finds an echo in the fourth gospel which firmly declares that "no one has ever seen God ..." (John 1:18)... In his ... study, *Western Mysticism*, Edward Cuthbert Butler ... maintains that the tradition that neither Moses nor anyone else sees the face of God is firmly grounded throughout Christian theology. However, the other theory, that Moses and Paul enjoyed a fleeting vision of God, is found in Augustine and Thomas ... Augustine based his claim principally on the text of Numbers that God spoke to Moses "mouth to mouth" ... Edward Cuthbert Butler rightly says that this text (like others stating that God spoke to Moses face to face) says nothing about the beatific vision... "In the face of ... biblical evidence [Cuthbert Butler says], and of the grave philosophical difficulties involved, it may well be thought that but for St. Augustine's *ill-founded speculation*, accepted and endorsed by St. Thomas, the idea of the vision of God's essence by any man would not have found a place in the theological tradition"; our emphasis [St. Thomas himself says: 'Further, the Lord said to Moses: "I speak to him mouth to mouth, and plainly, and not by riddles and figures doth he see the Lord" (Numbers 12:8); but this is to see God in His essence. Therefore it is possible to see the essence of God in this life. *Praeterea, Num. XII dicit dominus de Moysse, ore ad os loquor ei, et palam, et non per aenigmata et figuras, videt Deum. Sed hoc est videre Deum per essentiam. Ergo aliquis in statu huius vitae potest Deum per essentiam videre.* St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae XI-XIII I^a q. 12 a. 11 arg. 2*; leaving Cuthbert Butler behind, Johnston then goes on to say] The old Theologians were fascinated by the picture of Moses entering the darkness. Remember how God came down in a thick cloud. Sinai was wrapped in smoke. "And the people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was" (Exodus 20:21). In his *Life of Moses*, Gregory of Nyssa, watching Moses enter the thick darkness, claims that [... he] did have a direct vision of God, a knowledge which is ignorance. Graphically he describes how the mind (the mind of Moses or any mystic) travels beyond all sensible seeing, beyond all imaginative seeing, beyond all understanding and reasoning until it *sees God in darkness*,' Johnston concludes via Nyssa and St. John of the Cross that we see God through 'faith', and that in 'naked faith this dark vision of God is filled with mystical suffering,' 31-32.

^{viii} This is obviously an over-simplification due to time/ space constraint here in the introduction, see rather Masciandaro, 'Eros as Cosmic Sorrow,' particularly pp. 81-82, and in relation to what follows: ' This sorrow leads to the joy, not of enclosure, but of escape, identified by Levinas as "the need to get out of oneself, that is, to break that most radical and unalterably binding of chains, the fact that I [*moi*] is oneself [*soi-meme*].' Yet the *Clouds* sorrower does not break out of self *into* anything, a new container, but is rather purely opened from within via the very ecstasy of escape, via becoming "abil to reeseive that joye, the whiche revith fro a man all wetyng and felyng of his beyng" (44. 1560-61).'

^{ix} Nicola Masciandaro, 'Absolute Secrecy: On the Infinity of Individuation.' Masciandaro is referring to the prologue of the *Itinerarium* here, where Bonaventure invites the reader of the work to enter upon it with a deep longing, with prayerfulness, and with the groanings of inner man, 'so that he may not believe that reading is sufficient without unction, speculation without devotion, investigation without wonder, observation without joy ... knowledge without love ... or reflection without divinely inspired wisdom,' see *Bonaventure - The Souls Journey Into God, The Tree of Life, The Life of St. Francis*, trans. Ewert Cousins (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 55-56.

^x Nicola Masciandaro, 'Absolute Secrecy: On the Infinity of Individuation.'

^{xi} Nicola Masciandaro, 'WormSign.'

^{xii} Masciandaro, 'WormSign.'

^{xiii} Masciandaro, 'WormSign.'

^{xiv} This is our variant on a statement made by Paul Rozin in 'Food is Fundamental, Fun, Frightening, and Far Reaching' in *Social Research* 66 (1999), 9-30. In ' "Truly the Ear Tests Words as the Palate Tastes Food (Job 12:11)": Synaesthetic Food Metaphors for the Experience of the Divine in the Jewish Tradition,' Jonathan Brumberg-Kraus situates Rozin's statement in a discussion of Job (12:11, above), and says 'when Job compares the palate's tasting of food to the ear's testing words, he's referring precisely to this sort of "critical decision" whether or not to *incorporate* his friends words, to take them intimately to his heart.' We similarly cite (a variant of) Rozin's statement here in the context of Nicola's work, as a figurative aside to what he calls above the 'ingestive aspect of intellect.' Brumberg-Kraus' text is available from: Wheaton College.edu, <http://wheatoncollege.edu/faculty/files/2011/07/Brumberg-Kraus2009.pdf> (accessed February 20, 2013).

^{xv} CH I (588b). This translation is from Colm Luibheid, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987).

^{xvi} Psalm 22 (21:) 6.

^{xvii} This term is used by Dionysius to define the divine unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; for a discussion of the term see Enrica Ruaro, 'God and the Worm: The Twofold Otherness in Pseudo Dionysius's Theory of Dissimilar Images,' in *American Catholic Quarterly* (Vol. 82, No. 4, 2008), fl, 581.

^{xviii} See Ruaro, 581; Eric D. Perl, *Theophany: The Neoplatonic Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007), 5-34; Dermot Moran, 'Neoplatonic and Negative Theological Elements in Anselm's Argument for the Existence of God in the Proslogion' in *Pensees De L' < Un > Dans L'Histoire De La Philosophie*, Jean-Marc Narbonne and Alfons Reckermann, eds. (Laval: Laval University Press, 2004), 199-202.

^{xix} CH II, 3 (140B-141A). This translation is from John Parker, *The Works of Dionysius the Areopagite*, 2 vols. (London: James Parker, 1897-1899).

^{xx} Ruaro, 582.

^{xxi} MT: CH IV, V (1040D - 1045D); Parker translation.

^{xxii} Perl, 6 - 34.

^{xxiii} Moran, 200. See John Scotus Eruigena, *Periphyseon (De Divisione Naturae [On the Division of Nature])*, eds. I.P. Sheldon-Williams and Edouard A. Jeunneau, trans. John. J. O'Meara, 4 vols. (Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1999-2009), IV.73.

^{xxiv} Perl, 5-16.

^{xxv} Parmenides, fr. 2.7-8 and fr.3 in *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 7th ed. (Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1954), 1:231, as cited in Perl, 117; Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides [1942-43]* trans. Andre Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington and Minneapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), available from: Internet Archive, http://archive.org/stream/Heideggerparmenides1942-1943/Heidegger-Parmenides_djvu.txt (accessed February 10, 2013).

^{xxvi} We follow Perl's argument here; Perl's *Theophany* is the culmination of more than twelve years of research into the Neoplatonic thought of Dionysius; taken together with that of Plotinus and Proclus, *as philosophy*, not 'mysticism,' if that be taken to mean something other than philosophy, i.e. as a rationally justified, coherent account of the nature of reality.

^{xxvii} As cited by Perl, 12.

^{xxviii} Paulina Remes, *Neoplatonism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 38.

^{xxix} Perl, 12; Contra Vladimir Losky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1976), 31, Perl notes in an aside of how in refusing to attribute to God the properties which make up the matter of affirmative theology, Dionysius was aiming expressly at the Neoplatonist definitions: 'He is neither One, nor Unity'; and that in negating the name 'One' Dionysius is simply following the precepts of Plotinus here. See Perl, 117.

^{xxx} As cited by Perl, 12-13.

^{xxxi} DN 1.5, 593C; Parker translation.

^{xxxii} DN 1.4, 592 CD; Parker translation.

^{xxxiii} MT 1.3, 1001A; Parker translation.

^{xxxiv} MT III.1, 1033C; Parker translation.

^{xxxv} MT I. 2, 1000C; Luibheid, translation.

^{xxxvi} Perl, 14.

^{xxxvii} Perl, 14. Perl specifically says: 'A "God" who either is or is not anything at all, who could be grasped by thought whether positively or negatively, would not be God but a being, and as such finite and created.' Perl refers here to a comparable reading available from John Jones, which is interesting in relation to our translation taken from Luibheid below; see Jones, 'The Ontological Difference for St. Thomas and Pseudo-Dionysius,' in *Dionysius 4* (1980), 119-32, and idem, 'A Non-Entitative Understanding of Be-ing and Unity: Heidegger and Neoplatonism,' *Dionysius 6* (1982), 94-10.

^{xxxviii} Ep. 5, 1065A; Perl's translation. Luibheid's translation reads quite differently: 'It is in this sense that one says of the divine Paul that he knew God, for he knew that God is beyond every act of mind and every way of knowing. He says too that "inscrutable are his ways and unsearchable his judgements," that "his gifts are inexpressible," and that "his peace passes all understanding," for he found him who is beyond all things and he knew, in a way surpassing any conception that the cause of all surpasses all,' 265-266. This Epistle opens with a discussion of 'divine darkness,' as that "unapproachable light" where God is said to live. Nicola and Eugene Thacker based a symposium on this concept of 'divine darkness' in the context of Francois Lauruelle's Non-philosophy, called 'Dark Nights of the Universe,' which was held in NY, in 2012; details are available from: Recess, <http://www.recessart.org/activities/5136> (last accessed February 10, 2013). Thacker also presented a paper on 'Divine Darkness' at the 'Dark Materialism' conference, sister to the BMT Symposium 'Melancology,' held in 2012, it is available from: The Backdoor Broadcasting Company, <http://backdoorbroadcasting.net/2011/01/eugene-thacker-divine-darkness/> (accessed February 10, 2013).

^{xxxix} Nicola Masciandaro, 'Absolute Secrecy: On the Infinity of Individuation,' available from: The Whim, <http://thewhim.blogspot.ie/2012/07/absolute-secrecy-on-infinity-of.html> (accessed February 10, 2013).

^{xl} John Scotus Eruigena, *Periphyseon* IV.73.

^{xli} As cited by Perl, 12.

^{xlii} Plotinus says “phuge monou pros monon” (*Enneads* 6.9.11) [the flight of the alone to the Alone],’ as cited by Masciandaro in ‘Absolute Secrecy: On the Infinity of Individuation.’ Masciandaro’s translation would seem to be derived from either Plotinus *Enneads* in *The Essential Plotinus*, trans. Elmer O’Brien, or *The Enneads*, trans. Stephen McKenna; See footnotes (36) in WormSign. Masciandaro notes that these are Plotinus’s ‘dying words.’

^{xliii} Masciandaro, ‘Absolute Secrecy: On the Infinity of Individuation.’

^{xliv} Exodus 3:14. Though we have inverted the punctuation here, Masciandaro’s term ‘*whatless* that,’ is, as we show here, drawing on a translation of the response God used when Moses asked for his name: ‘I Am that I Am.’

^{xlv} Masciandaro, ‘Absolute Secrecy: On the Infinity of Individuation.’

^{xlvi} Masciandaro, ‘Absolute Secrecy: On the Infinity of Individuation’. We have unjustly condensed Masciandaro’s text here, it specifically says, in the lead up to this statement: ‘... the exacerbated actuality of the mystical subject is not an effect of visionary experience, but its content as it were—a virtual virtual whose realness is infinitely in excess of all presence. The mystical secret is one’s identity with the immanent hiddenness of secret itself in its radically literal sense of something set apart, severed, disjoined (*secret* is substantive of the verb *secerno*). Mystical vision is the unitary realization of oneself as *radical actuality*, a pure actuality or absolute individuation, the infinite haecceity of nothing/everything, next to which one’s person is necessarily an indivisible division—as figured in Dionysius’s legendary cephalophory, a perfect emblem of the non-difference between individuation and the divine *actus purus* if there ever was one. In one direction, mystical vision secrets the subject, unites it with the Hidden. As John of the Cross says, “we call mystical wisdom ‘secret’—and it is actually so— because it has the characteristic of hiding the soul within itself . . . so engulf[ing] souls in its secret abyss that they have the keen awareness of being brought into a place far removed from every creature.” In the other direction, mystical vision hacks open the subject, evaporates and airs it into the limitless open of perfect, primordial actuality, a totally simple and unimaginably flat place, not of profound wisdom, but of sublime stupidity, the instant, dumb, unquestionable intelligence with which Dionysius’s corpse rises and picks up his head. “Tunc erigens se sancti viri corpus exanime, apprehendit propriis manibus sanctum caput abscissum” [Raising itself, the lifeless body of the holy man then grasped with his own hands the sacred severed head]. The stupidity of which the philosopher accuses mysticism is his ownmost, disregarded stupidity, his deferred intoxication whose literally returning repression is the post-conference drink. This stupidity, “the very stone which the builders rejected” (1 Peter 2:7; Ps. 118.22), is the cornerstone of mystical intelligence. This intelligence, the real intelligence of intelligence, is the actuality of a knowledge that surpasses memory, of a pleasure that surpasses its object. The “custom of such Souls,” says Marguerite Porete, “is to understand much and to forget quickly . . . and she is inebriated not only from what she has drunk, but very intoxicated and more than intoxicated from what she never drinks nor will ever drink.” *As though foreign to it, absolutely foreign*. I am not an alien, but something stranger still, an insider whose essence is to actually be a virtual absolute outsider. The hellishly real impossibility that you are you is the true stupidity according to which the absolute is alone thinkable.’

^{xlvii} Psalm 22 (21): 6.

^{xlviii} Masciandaro, ‘WormSign.’ Masciandaro provides a full break-down and translation of the extended commentary on this Psalm: ‘John Scotus Eriugena comments Psalm 22.6:

For none of the material things in nature is more lowly than the worm, which is conceived from simple earth. Nevertheless, through this is represented the incarnation of the Word of God, which transcends every sense and intellect [Phil 4.7]. ‘Who will explain his begetting?’ [Acts 8.33, from Isa 53.8, cf. Augustine, Expositions of the Psalms: ‘In what sense “no man”? Because he is God. Why then did he so demean himself as to say “worm”? Perhaps because a worm is born from flesh without intercourse, as Christ was from the Virgin Mary. A worm, and yet no man. Why a worm? Because he was mortal, because he was born from flesh, because he was born without intercourse. Why “no man”? Because In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; he was God (Jn 1.1)'] It can also be understood thus: ‘I am a worm and a human is not,’ that is, I am a worm and human is not a worm. As if he were to say, I who am more than a human penetrate the secrets of all nature, as a worm [penetrates] the bowels of the earth, which no one participating only in human nature can do. With the sense agrees that which is written in another Psalm, ‘and my substance in the depths of the earth [PS 139.15], that is, and my substance, which is wisdom in itself, subsists in the depths of the earth, that is, the innermost folds of created nature. ‘For the divinity beyond being is the being of all.’ Thus the worm that penetrates the hidden things of all creation is the Wisdom of the Father, which, while human, transcends all humanity (Commentary on the Dionysian Celestial Hierarchy).

See also, for second reference: Nick Land, *Thirst for Annihilation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 93-94. Herewith Land, (punctuation ours - with particular reference to Masciandaro’s closing-remarks in ‘WormSign’ outlined below):

God savours Himself, says Eckhart. This is possible, but what He savours is, it seems to me, the hatred which He has for Himself, to which none, here on Earth, can be compared (could I say: this hatred is time, but that bothers me. Why should I say time? ... Why should anyone be interested in time? I cannot imagine. The scrawniness of an arm, a finger, an enigma of a face; these things (hurt). Time, on the contrary, is as vacant as a marriage, or God alone in the dark, 94.

Of importance to the proposed relevance of [God's hatred toward] time in Land, here - and with specific reference to Masciandaro's Neoplatonism - is Woodard's dark vitalism, which occurs over and through time, in *Slime Dynamics* (Winchester and Washington: Zero Books, 2012):

Summed up, for Deleuze, Guattari, Bergson and Merleau Ponty, vitalism cannot be a thing (since genes are what is passed on, not life itself) and it cannot be a force because it says nothing about life itself as a force, only that it develops but not how. What all the aforementioned critiques leave out is *Time* as something beyond thought which is the force of vitalism (life emerges over time) and the substance of vitalism is not the germ plasm trumping heredity but space as it is filled with life, 9.

Vitalism, as it has been articulated here, is a minimalist metaphysics which operates on reality by way of following an ontological cascade mirroring the cosmological procession of forces and matter. At the root of this vitalism is the forces of forces following from an original One, a One not as pure unification but the possibility of 'isness' itself stemming from the original explosion of time and space as well as from the resulting emanations, immanences, emergences and transcendences. That is, vitalism is a mental shadow of the progression of the universe, from the speculative moment before the Big Bang, as highly condensed mass, to its extension into time and space and matter, to biological life, and finally to reflective thinking. The above mentioned ontological cascade moves (in philosophical terms) from the Real, to Materiality, to Sense, and finally to Extelligence. Or, put in terms of the levels of possibility, to the configurations of matter and energy, to the interaction of stimulus and sense, ending with the extension of ontic being via symbols, structures, technologies et cetera. The degenerate take on vitalism and the Neo-platonic One will be taken together as a dark vitalism, 10.

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A few remarks must be made on this subject. The body of a large worm consists of from 100 to 200 almost cylindrical rings or segments, each furnished with minute bristles. The muscular system is well developed. Worms can crawl backwards as well as forwards, and by the aid of their affixed tails can retreat with extraordinary rapidity into their burrows. The mouth is situated at the anterior end of the body, and is provided with a little projection (lobe or lip, as it has been variously called) which is used for prehension. Internally, behind the mouth, there is a strong pharynx...which is pushed forwards when the animal eats, and this part corresponds, ... with the protrudable trunk or proboscis of other annelids. The pharynx leads into the oesophagus, on each side of which in the lower part there are three pairs of large glands, which secrete a surprising amount of carbonate of lime. These calciferous glands are highly remarkable, for nothing like them is known in any other animal. Their use will be discussed when we treat of the digestive process. In most of the species, the oesophagus is enlarged into a crop in front of the gizzard.

This latter organ is lined with a smooth thick chitinous membrane, and is surrounded by weak longitudinal, but powerful transverse muscles. Perrier saw these muscles in energetic action; and, as he remarks, the trituration of the food must be chiefly effected by this organ, for worms possess no jaws or teeth of any kind. Grains of sand and small stones, from the 1/20 to a little more than the 1/10 inch in diameter, may generally be found in their gizzards and intestines. As it is certain that worms swallow many little stones, independently of those swallowed while excavating their burrows, it is probable that they serve, like mill-stones, to triturate their food. The gizzard opens into the intestine, which runs in a straight course to the vent at the posterior end of the body. The intestine presents a remarkable structure, the typhlosolis, or, as the old anatomists called it, an intestine within an intestine; and Claparede has shown that this consists of a deep longitudinal involution of the walls of the intestine, by which means an extensive absorbent surface is gained... The circulatory system is well developed. Worms breathe by their skin, as they do not possess any special respiratory organs. The two sexes are united in the same individual, but two individuals pair together. The nervous system is fairly well developed; and the two almost confluent cerebral ganglia are situated very near to the anterior end of the body.

See Charles Darwin, *The Formation of Vegetable Mould*, available from: Project Gutenberg, http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk_files=1448720 (accessed February 10, 2013).

¹ Masciandaro, 'Absolute Secrecy: On the Infinity of Individuation.'

^{li} Masciandaro, 'Absolute Secrecy: On the Infinity of Individuation.'

^{liii} Psalm 78 (:65); this is one of Dionysius' favorite sources of symbols: 'the Lord awoke, like a strong man, powerful but reeling with wine.'

^{liiii} Mark Forsyth, *The Etymologicon* (London: Icon Books, 2011), 175.

^{liv} Masciandaro, 'Absolute Secrecy: On the Infinity of Individuation.'

^{lv} Masciandaro, 'WormSign.'

^{lvi} Consider how the 'speculative turn' itself has been variably identified with apophatic and cataphatic modes of mystical theology in ways that pit these terms against each other as though they were contrary rather than complimentary qualities. See for example Daniel Whistler, 'Improper Names for God: Religious Language and the "Spinoza Effect,"' *Speculations III*, available from: [Speculations Journal.org http://www.speculations-journal.org/storage/Speculations%203 Whole Issue Ver2.pdf](http://www.speculations-journal.org/storage/Speculations%203%20Whole%20Issue%20Ver2.pdf) (accessed February 15, 2013), and Daniel Coluciello Barber, 'Namelessness and the Speculative Turn: A Response to Whistler,' available from: [Speculations Journal.org http://www.speculations-journal.org/storage/Namelessness%20and%20the%20Speculative%20Turn_Barber.pdf](http://www.speculations-journal.org/storage/Namelessness%20and%20the%20Speculative%20Turn_Barber.pdf) (accessed February 15, 2013). We follow Bernard McGinn here in noting that apophatic and cataphatic discourses are complimentary rather than mutually exclusive; see McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism: 12-1350* (Crossroad Publishing Company: New York, 1998), 230. On this point see also Elizabeth A. Andersen, *Mechtild of Magdeburg: Selections - The Flowering Light of the Godhead* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1998). For a contrary account, and one that exclusively aligns cataphatic with 'affective' mysticism, and apophatic with 'speculative' mysticism, and then proceeds to produce further sub-categories of mystical personalities, apropos piety, based on these, see Urban T. Holmes III, *A History of Christian Spirituality: An Analytical Introduction* (Harrisburg PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2002). For a counter-critique see Barbara Newman, 'Gender,' in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Christian Mysticism* ed., Julia A. Lamm (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2013), 41-55. Against authorship stemming from Evelyn Underhill, who Eugene Thacker follows in *In The Dust of this Planet; Horror of Philosophy, Vol. 1* (Winchester and Washington: Zero Books, 2011), for example; who Coluciello Barber, in turn, follows above, Newman notes how 'Empirically, a close reading of mystics shows, on the one hand, that 'speculative' does not always mean 'apophatic,' and on the other, that *such categories constitute a spectrum* rather than a dichotomy,' 83 (our emphasis). Such a dichotomy is not present in Nicola's mysticism, his understanding of the relationship of these two modes of mystical theology is highly sophisticated however and a proper exposition of it goes beyond the reach of this paper insofar as it pertains to the chief dynamic of Dionysius' thought, *remaining-procession-return*, not dealt with herein; suffice it to say that John Marenbon's analysis of the Dionysian adaption of the Neoplatonic paradox of procession and return serves to elucidate Nicola's exposition of the inter-relationship of apophatic and cataphatic modes: 'In commentaries on Plato's *Parmenides*, it had become the practice to apply the series of negations found in Plato's dialogue to the One (whose absolute transcendence had been stressed ever since Plotinus), and the series of positive statements to the hypostases which emanated from the One ... Consequently, he [Dionysius] applied both series of statements, positive and negative, to God himself. God is at once describable by every name, but only metaphorically, by reference to his manifestation of himself in his creation; and he can be described by no name - every attribute may be more truly negated of him than applied to him positively'; see Marenbon, *Early Medieval Philosophy (480-1150)* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), 19. This mirrors the cosmos of Dionysius which is produced by the procession of the One in the act of creation *ex nihilo*, and the return of all that is created to the One from which it comes; see David Williams, *Deformed Discourse* (Exeter, Devon: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 23-60. Consider, then, the above in relation to an exposition of apophatic and cataphatic modes in Nicola's thought: 'The love of black metal twists toward absolute cosmic exteriority along a mystical path of intensive inversion. Ordinate mysticism takes an *inward* and *upward* path to God as the source and goal of everything, withdrawing from the exterior phenomenal world in order to ascend beyond it to the One in a movement that is anabatic, apophatic, and anagogic (Plotinus, *Enneads*, 4.8.1; Augustine, *Confessions*, 7.10,16; Pseudo-Dionysius, *Mystical Theology*, 1.1). The love of black metal, reversely and contrarily, leads *downwards* and *outwards* into a paradoxically disordered and multiple cosmos that is no less divine, pursuing a musical path that is catabatic, cataphatic, and apogogic (a path, however, that necessarily twists these terms according to its own essential negativity)'; 'On the Mystical Love of Black Metal (P.E.S.T. Abstract),' available from The Whim, <http://thewhim.blogspot.ie/2011/09/on-mystical-love-of-black-metal-pest.html> (accessed February 22, 2013).

^{lvii} CH II, 1-3.

^{lviii} Qua 'incongruous,' apropos of Proclus, or 'absurd,' qua 'absurdities.' See Parker's translation; and see Ruaro, 586, and 583, respectively.

^{lix} CH II, 5 (145A-B); Parker translation.

^{lx} CH II, 1-3 and Ep. 9/IX (1104B-1105C).

^{lxi} CH II, 5 (144D-145A); Luibheid translation.

^{lxii} CH II, 5 (144D-145A); Parker translation.

^{lxiii} As above: Psalm 22 (21:) 6.

^{lxiv} Psalm 22 (27:) 46.

^{lxv} Ruaro, 588.

^{lxvi} Ruaro, 588; for Christological commentary on the worm see Masciandaro WormSign, as above.

^{lxvii} Masciandaro, 'WormSign.'

^{lxviii} Ruaro, 588.

^{lxix} Ruaro, 588.

^{lxx} See Aristotle, *History of Animals* (Elibron Classics: London, 2005), 539a-b, 550b-557b, 569a; Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption* trans. H.H. Joachim (733a, 758a-b; 762a-763a), available from: Pink Monkey <http://pinkmonkey.com/dl/library1/gp006.pdf> (accessed February 10, 2013).

^{lxxi} Ruaro, 590; See Aristotle, *Problems in Aristotle in Twenty Three Volumes*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge and Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1965-1990), IV.13, 878a-34. Alternate translation available from: Project Gutenberg, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12699/12699-h/12699-h.htm> (accessed February 10, 2013).

^{lxxii} Aristotle, *Problems* IV.13, 878a-34.

^{lxxiii} Ruaro, 590- 591.

^{lxxiv} Masciandaro, 'WormSign.'

^{lxxv} Ruaro, 590-592.

^{lxxvi} Ruaro, 592; See Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption* 762b28-763a7. As Ruaro notes Aristotle's standard view is that the human race is eternal, this is just a brief, if intriguing, hypothetical discussion.

^{lxxvii} Ruaro, 592.

^{lxxviii} Or 'Leper Creativity,' or even 'Slime Dynamic' apropos Woodard, though Woodard would seem to suggest that what separates his 'dark vitalism' from the Neoplatonic tradition is a notion he has that the Neoplatonic One, apropos Plotinus, is 'transcendent,' whereas his One is radically immanent: 'merely the generative material sum as the speculative epoch prior to the Big Bang (2012, 58.' However, as Perl has noted, and as is evident throughout Nicola's oeuvre, 'In Neoplatonism, in Plotinus, Proclus, and Dionysius, divine transcendence is conceived so radically that it coincides with divine immanence,' 112.

^{lxxix} See David Williams, *Deformed Discourse: The Function of the Monster in Medieval Thought and Literature* (Devon: University of Exeter Press, 1996).

^{lxxx} Williams, 83; see Catherine of Sienna, *Little Talks With God [The Dialogue of Catherine of Sienna]* trans. Henry L. Carrigan Jr. (Brewster, Massachusetts: Paraclete Press, 2010), 3; Thomas Mc Dermott OP, *Catherine of Sienna; Spiritual Development in Her Life and Teaching* (New York: Paulist Press, 2008).

^{lxxxi} Galatians 2:20. On this point see Simon Critchley, *The Faith of Faithless: Experiments in Political Theology* (London and New York: Verso, 2012), 130.

^{lxxxii} For a treatment of this in our previous work see Edia Connole and Scott Wilson, 'A Taste of Faith: Experiments in Culinary Psychology,' available from: Arrow DIT - Dublin Gastronomy Symposium 2012, <http://arrow.dit.ie/dgs/2012/june512/7/> (accessed February 10, 2013).

^{lxxxiii} See *Life of Blessed Henry of Suso by Himself*, Ch. LVI, 'Of the Very Highest Flight of a Soul Experienced in the Ways of God' (cited in Critchley, 2012: 130).

^{lxxxiv} Nicola Masciandaro, 'On The Mystical Love of Black Metal [MS],' forthcoming; Masciandaro is quoting the opening prayer from *The Cloud of Unknowing* ed. Patrick J. Gallacher (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, 1997), 21. Of interest here is the worms place in a discussion of black metal music. As Darwin notes in a discussion of their senses: 'Worms do not possess any sense of hearing. They took not the least notice of the shrill notes from a metal whistle, which was repeatedly sounded near them; nor did they of the deepest and loudest tones of a bassoon. They were indifferent to shouts, if care was taken that the breath did not strike them. When placed on a table close to the keys of a piano, which was played as loudly as possible, they remained perfectly quiet. Although they are indifferent to undulations in the air audible by us, they are extremely sensitive to vibrations in any solid object. When the pots containing two worms which had remained quite indifferent to the sound of the piano, were placed on this instrument, and the note C in the bass clef was struck, both instantly retreated into their burrows. After a time they emerged, and when G above the line in the treble clef was struck they again retreated. Under similar circumstances on another night one worm dashed into its burrow on a very high note being struck only once, and the other worm when C in the treble clef was struck. On these occasions the worms were not touching the sides of the pots, which stood in saucers; so that the vibrations, before reaching their bodies, had to pass from the sounding board of the piano, through the saucer, the bottom of the pot and the damp, not very compact earth on which they lay with their tails in their burrows. They often showed their sensitiveness when the pot in which they lived, or the table on which the pot stood, was accidentally and lightly struck; but they appeared less sensitive to such jars than to the vibrations of the piano; and their sensitiveness to jars varied much at different times... The Peewit (*Tringa vanellus*, Linn.) seems to know instinctively that worms will emerge if the ground is made to tremble; for Bishop Stanley states (as I hear from Mr. Moorhouse) that a young peewit kept in confinement used to stand on one leg and beat the turf with the other leg until the worms crawled out of their burrows, when they were instantly devoured. Nevertheless, worms do not invariably leave their burrows when the ground is made to tremble, as I know by having beaten it with a spade, but perhaps it was beaten too violently.' See Darwin, *The Formation of Vegetable Mould*.

^{lxxxv} Williams, 81.

^{lxxxvi} Williams, 81.

^{lxxxvii} Williams 81; see Catherine of Sienna, 29.

^{lxxxviii} Williams, 83.

^{lxxxix} Masciandaro, 'WormSign.'

^{xc} Ruaro, 590.

^{xcⁱ} Forsyth, 175-176. Nicola treats the etymology of ‘worm’ in WormSign, and in using the Wedgwood and Atkinson *Dictionary of English Etymology*, finds an intriguing link to ‘swarm’: “Worm. As. wyrm, G. wurm, Lat. vermis, worm ; Goth, vaurms, serpent; ON. ortnr, serpent, worm. Sanscr. krmi, a worm ; Lith. kirmis, kirminis, kirmele, worm, caterpillar; kirmiti, to breed worms; Let. zirmis, maggot, worm. The origin, like that of weevil, lies in the idea of swarming, being in multifarious movement, crawling. Pl.D. kribbeln, krubbeln, krcmelen, krimmeln, kriimmeln, to be in multifarious movement, to swarm, boil. ‘Idt was daar so vull, dat idt kremeled un wemelde:’ it was so full that it swarmed. Up kribbeln (Hanover krimmeln) la/en: to let the water boil up. Du. wremelen, to creep ; Da. vrimle, to swarm ; vrimmel, a swarm.’ See Nicola Masciandaro, ‘WormSign.’

^{xcⁱⁱ} Forsyth, 175-176.

^{xcⁱⁱⁱ} Ruaro, 590.

^{xc^{iv}} Ruaro, 591; see Origen, *Contra Celsum* IV. 52 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); see Ruaro, ‘Resurrection: the Hope of Worms. The Dispute between Celsus and Origen on the Resurrection of the Body,’ for a discussion of the role of the image of the worm as to represent matter (and the material part of man) in Celsus’ polemic against the Christian theory of Resurrection, available from:

^{xc^v} Ruaro, 591.

^{xc^{vi}} Ruaro, 591.

^{xc^{vii}} DN V (824A): ‘But beings are never without being which, in turn, comes from the Preexistent. He is not a facet of being. Rather, being is a facet of him. He is not contained in being, but being is contained in him. He does not possess being, but being possesses him’; Luibheid translation.

^{xc^{viii}} Perl, 33-34; see DN VII (872A): ‘He is not one of the things that are and he cannot be known in any of them. He is all things in all things and he is no thing among things. He is known to all things from all things and he is known to no one from anything’; Luibheid translation.

^{xc^{ix}} As cited by Perl, 24.

^c Masciandaro, ‘WormSign.’