

As I feared, these pro's offer a really friendly ex nihilo: the freely offered gift of creation, the infinite hospitality. Such a nice ex nihilo hardly sounds like some patriarchal origin myth, or a motto of Christian imperialism. And as it stretches inclusively into a God evolving through the participation of its creatures, I think—wait—what you guys get from the ex nihilo I only get by deconstructing it. What was I thinking? Perhaps just that in the beginning when that plurisingular Elohim was creating this universe, the earth was *tohuwabohu*, darkness was upon the face of *tehom*, and the *ruach elohim* was vibrating upon the face of the waters...and I just could not find any nothing there. Nor have biblical scholars Jewish and Christian for a hundred years. But why write a book defending a verse of scripture? Am I a fundamentalist?

Something more was at stake: I have never experienced any creative emergence from a blank nothing. I have received shocks and gifts of newness; but all I had to do was squint and I could see, at least after the fact, their preconditions. The potentialities that got actualized--in unpredictable and indeterminate ways. Discerning the spirits means mindfulness of those possibilities. And if the doctrine of creation matters it is not as the inconceivably past first moment of matter, interesting as debates may be about what precedes the big bang. What matters theologically is what is materializing among us this day: this creation coming to be out of its oceanic potentialities. The word I trust is calling—*let it be*. Let something new, something good, something better take shape amongst us now, the 99%?, self-organizing at the edge of the chaos—the face of a deep that I at least have never had the luxury of ignoring.

But quadrilaterally speaking, experience is an inadequate guide even to scripture. And the tradition is deafeningly clear: *non de deo sed ex nihilo*. Creation happens in a void outside of God. The historian Gerhard May, an ex nihilo believer, demonstrates its emergence in a polemic against the Gnostic Bythus, depth. Irenaeus mocks this “profundity of nonsense”, in which creation is mediated by a female body, all moisture from her tears, all brightness from her smile.... This affective figure provokes the first expression of the full logic of ex nihilo[wait for it] “[the heretics] do not believe that God (being powerful, and rich in all resources) create matter itself...” Over and over the emphasis on manly power and property. Vs the heretics: but—curiose and curioser-- the first formulation of the *ex nihilo* is by the Gnostic Basilides, to keep deity disembodied. Well then-- Athanasius,: “But that out of nothing, and without its having any previous existence, God made the universe to exist thru his word, as he says first thru Moses: in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”[so he just ignores v 2]. And then skips to heb 11.3: “what is seen was made out of things which do not appear.” nice, but no ex nihilo. So if I want tradition reading scripture I get this traditional misreading. Augustine temporarily recognized in the *tehom* a somethingnothing—no mere nothing--and so avowed “multiple true readings.”

That is almost all I ask for. But multiplicity itself got repressed as chaotic. And so the logic of the one, in *imitatio dei* has treated much of matter as nothing, most

earthlings as blank slates. But to complete the quadrilateral, let *reason* in— not a homogenizing logic, but one disciplined by the relationalisms that have seemed chaotic—the open ended creativity of process theology, quantum indeterminacy, ecological webs of creaturely entanglement, enfolded in a divinity unfolded in utter embodiment—and yet always also birthing all things in the fluid ground, tehom. What is it or she? Certainly no thing. So is the emergent tradition of a *creatio ex profundis* a profundity of nonsense? It does wash out the unquestionability of the ex nihilo and its omnipotent unilateralism, indeed any unquestionabilities.

But it does not escape its own waves:

Deep calls to deep
At the thunder of your floodgates
All your waves and your billows
Have gone over me.
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