

The metastases of fire. Fire as a principle

My dreams, lions of fire and wonder tamed to pull
The golden tower that was my Soul's chariot,
Will stray through the desert, dying in the moonlight –
And I will only remember in the swaying of a palm tree...

Mário de Sá Carneiro (1937:15)

Instead of opening the text by writing 'In the beginning it was fire,' I prefer to write 'Fire is the beginning'. Or even better, 'Fire is the principle'

How can this be? Is fire not the combustion of the elements, the force behind telluric eruptions, the heat of the sun, the fever of passion, the transformative energy of the arts, and even cosmic radiation? Does not fire therefore presuppose the prior existence of the elements? Is fire, then, an emanation or a manifestation? Is it the source of genesis or the agent of annihilation?

To address this dilemma, I must first make a fundamental confession: in my personal mythology, there is no place for annihilation. Is not the very purpose of mythology to overcome death? As Fernando Pessoa wrote, "*Neophyte, there is no death*" (Pessoa, 1932, p. 2).

If annihilation is inconceivable, can we still speak of genesis? More specifically, can genesis be understood as *creatio ex nihilo* – the coming into being of existence from absolute nothingness? Put differently, can being emerge from non-being if non-being is conceived as pure nothingness?

Yet this formulation immediately gives rise to a paradox. The very notion of *non-being* already exists as a concept. But can a concept truly belong to nothingness? Does not the very act of conceiving non-being already confer upon it a mode of being? If so, the idea of an absolute nothingness from which being could emerge becomes philosophically untenable.

This line of reasoning exposes the limits, labyrinths, and illusions of language. Language does not fail because it lacks words, concepts, or expressive power, nor because of any deficiency of form or content. Rather, its limitation lies in its dependence on temporality. Language necessarily unfolds in a linear sequence, both in its expression and in its reception, whereas reality presents itself as an intricate web of simultaneous and interdependent relations.

This dissertation itself exemplifies that tension. Although it must necessarily be written and read in a linear order, it seeks to convey a reality that is fundamentally interconnected and simultaneous. Like a ball of yarn, its threads are inseparably woven together, even though they must be unravelled one by one.

But is not existence itself intrinsically temporal? At first glance, the answer appears to be yes. Yet is that the whole truth? Is existence nothing more than temporality? Do we truly understand the nature of time, or only our experience of it? Can time be apprehended in itself, or is it ultimately a construction of human consciousness: a framework through which we order experience and relate to the world?

At this point, it is worth returning to Spinoza. In the *Ethics*, he writes that "*time is not an affection of things, but only a mode of thinking*" (Spinoza, 1961, p. 138). Time, therefore, is not a property of substance itself but a product of consciousness. It is the framework through which we perceive, order, and interpret reality. If we were capable of an immediate and complete apprehension of substance, we would no longer be confined to the temporal perspective through which human consciousness ordinarily experiences the world.

This insight is inseparable from Spinoza's metaphysics. The philosopher identifies substance with God or Nature, expressed in the well-known formula *Deus sive Natura* – God, or Nature. For Spinoza, these are not two distinct realities but two names for the same infinite substance. Thought and extension are therefore not separate substances, but two of the

infinite attributes through which the intellect apprehends the essence of that single, infinite reality. The attributes are thus the modes by which the essence of substance becomes intelligible to thought.

God and Nature are not distinct entities. There is only one single, infinite substance. God is no longer considered a personal entity, a transcendent being or a creative power in the classical theological sense. Nature (*Natura*) is immanent: everything that is, and everything that exists, is in God and through God.

So, things (beings, thoughts, bodies) are modes of the single substance. In other words, in Spinoza's understanding, *Natura* contains two dimensions. On the one hand, there is the dimension of *Natura naturans*: *Natura* as active power, cause of itself (God). On the other hand, there is *Natura naturata*: the series of existing things and their modes (the world).

Raymond Abellio, an author who greatly inspires our project, had the merit of converting a distinction that initially appeared to be classificatory, into an opposition, or rather, a dialectical articulation. Articulation, because, for Abellio, instead of being contradictory, both terms are related to each other, involved in a genetic process, as the author observes:

Spinoza clearly hierarchised the successive modes of the single substance, but he hierarchised them linearly, he did not associate them and oppose them two by two in their perpetual dialectical confrontation, he saw only their unitary resolution as always potential, not their dualistic tension as always virtual. (Abellio, 1978, p. 255).

Abellio not only glimpses the dialectical tension between the terms, but also unfolds this tension into a *double dialectic*, opening Spinozian immanences to Husserlian phenomenology through the incorporation of the transcendental plane.

For if Nature, according to Spinoza, unfolds in *extension* and *thought* as attributes of substance, this introduces two new orders of variables into the equation, which are also opposed: variables in degrees of quantity – *amplitude* – and variation in grades of quality – *intensity*.

The first category concerns measurable, quantitative magnitudes, which are objective and discrete. The second concerns qualitative magnitudes, which are non-measurable, subjective, and continuous. On the one hand, material objects occupy space and can be described, analysed, and quantified. On the other, lived experiences unfold in time and resist reduction to numerical parameters.

Consider the example of a piano. Its physical characteristics – its dimensions, materials, acoustic properties, and frequency response – can all be measured objectively and reproduced with considerable precision. By contrast, the experience of hearing Claude Debussy's *Clair de Lune* cannot be captured in quantitative terms. While the instrument itself can be objectively described, each performance of the piece, and each act of listening to it, differs in expressive depth, emotional intensity, and interpretative nuance. These are qualitative dimensions that admit grades of intensity but cannot be meaningfully parameterised, because they belong to the realm of lived, affective, and ultimately transcendental experience.

While the piano's tone or tuning are instances of *Natura naturata*, the performance and the listening of *Clair de Lune* are instances of *Natura naturans*. To that extent, they are 'symbolic or meaning entities' in the mind of the performer or listener. They are an act of creation-recreation that preforms a genetic instance, which gives rise to the constitution of the musical spectacle: an experience that is often repeated without ever being a repetition.

At this point, it is important to recognise that we are not dealing with two separate realities, but with two inseparable dimensions of the same reality. One belongs to the order of **having** – the realm of things, products, and manifestations, which Spinoza calls *Natura naturata*. The

other belongs to the order of **being** – the realm of generative power, becoming, and desire, which he calls *Natura naturans*. These two dimensions are intertwined in human experience.

The first apprehends the world in terms of extension and measurable form; the second experiences it through intensity and lived meaning. Consider once again the example of a piano chord. As a physical event, it can be objectively described by its acoustic properties and measured with precision. Yet the experience of hearing that chord belongs to an entirely different order. Its significance depends on the listener's sensitivity, knowledge, and attention. Can the listener distinguish a major chord from a minor one? Can they recognise a diatonic harmony from a pentatonic one? Beyond such recognition, what memories, emotions, or associations does the chord awaken?

These questions cannot be answered by quantitative measurement alone. A chord becomes meaningful only through an act of informed listening. In this sense, hearing is not merely the passive reception of sound but an active process of constitution, through which the listener recognises the sound *as* a chord and invests it with aesthetic and emotional significance.

What is important to state is that every experience is an entangled event. Whether we are seeing, listening, tasting, or touching – even if we are simply hearing the harsh sound of jackhammers in a quarry – experience always combines objective stimuli with subjective impressions. Every perception is intertwined with memory, association, and imagination.

This is precisely the insight on which *musique concrète* is founded. It draws on the expressive intensity inherent in every sound, even the most ordinary, raw, or unexpected. No sound is experienced as a mere physical event. Once lived, it becomes part of a web of meanings, emotions, and recollections that continually recreates the world for the listener.

Every experience is therefore an act of recreation. It unfolds within the convergence of two simultaneous currents. One connects the present moment to its origins through memory and accumulated experience. The other opens the present toward what has not yet been heard, understood, or imagined, allowing new meanings and possibilities to emerge. Between these two movements, the apparent linearity of experience gives way to a richer and more complex fabric of interconnections.

We call FIRE the prodigy that allows us to transpose the labyrinths and the alleys of linear evolution. An internal and immanent fire, which is at the genesis of the transmutation of the elements, bringing the wonder, if not the paradox, of original recreation.

Fire is the principle of transformation. It fuses and it separates. It creates and it destroys, only to make new forms of union possible. Yet nothing is ever absolutely created, and nothing is ever completely annihilated. Fire does not produce *ex nihilo*, nor does it reduce to nothingness. Its true art is that of transformation through intertwining.

The myth of Prometheus, one of the foundational narratives of Greek mythology, offers a powerful expression of the symbolic meaning of fire. Prometheus – whose name means “the one who thinks ahead” – is the Titan, son of Iapetus, celebrated for his intelligence, ingenuity, and creative skill. Moved by compassion for the fragility of humankind, he steals the divine fire from Zeus on Olympus and gives it to mortals. In this myth, fire signifies far more than physical heat. It is the gift of *technē*: the power of craftsmanship, artistic creation, knowledge, foresight, and civilisation itself.

Enraged by this transgression, *Zeus* cruelly punishes *Prometheus*. He chains him to a rock in the Caucasus, where an eagle devours his liver every day. As *Prometheus* is immortal, his liver regenerates at night, making his torment eternal. Thanks to the intervention of *Heracles*, however, the torment is interrupted. The hero kills the eagle and frees *Prometheus* from the chains with which *Hephaestus* had bound him to the rock.

Symbolically, Prometheus embodies the creative spirit, intellectual foresight, and the human quest for knowledge. The fire he brings to humanity represents far more than physical flame: it symbolizes knowledge, *technē*, artistic creation, and the awakening of consciousness. Zeus, by contrast, embodies divine order, sovereign authority, and the law that preserves the established cosmic order.

It is therefore significant that the enforcement of Zeus's will requires more than his own command. The punishment of Prometheus depends on the intervention of Hephaestus, who forges the chains that bind the Titan, and on the presence of Kratos (Power) and Bia (Force), who compel the sentence to be carried out. Their participation highlights a defining characteristic of Greek mythology: gods and personified figures do not merely represent abstract ideas but embody the very powers they exercise. As will become clear later, this feature is essential for understanding the symbolic structure and deeper meaning of the Prometheus myth.

For the Greeks, the myth of *Prometheus* explains the birth of human culture. In modern times, Prometheus embodies the creator, the artist or the thinker who dares to challenge the gods. Let us look at Goethe, how at the end of the poem *Prometheus*, he rails against *Zeus*:

Here sit I, forming mortals
After my image;
A race resembling me,
To suffer, to weep,
To enjoy, to be glad,
And thee to scorn,
As I! (Goethe, 1777)

Hardly will one find a better interpretation of what fire is: the flame of audacity and the fever of rebellion. The transgressive act, as a means of denying repetition, in creation.

If we accept the opening maxim of the *Tabula Smaragdina* as expressing a fundamental principle – “*That which is below is like that which is above, and that which is above is like that which is below, to accomplish the miracles of the One Thing*” (Hispaniensis, 1140) – then the fire below, physical fire, may be understood as corresponding to the fire above, metaphysical fire. The two are not identical, but equivalent manifestations of the same principle, linked by a relation of correspondence grounded in the unity of being.

The model of the *One Thing* is the *Sphera*. As early as 1537, Pedro Nunes, chief cosmographer of the Kingdom of Portugal, when translating and commenting on the *Tractatus de Sphaera* by the cosmographer Johannes de Sacrobosco, wrote:

The Universal *Machina Mundi* is divided into two parts: Celestial and Elemental. (Nunes, 1537)

The expression *Machina Mundi* (Machine of the World) is indeed curious, insofar as, on the one hand, it presupposes that the world displays a mechanical behaviour and, on the other, that this mechanical behaviour is not, so to speak, autonomous. It is governed by a device: the *Machina Mundi*, which at the time was the armillary sphere.

For Pedro Nunes, however, the *Machina Mundi* is not a mere device. It is not, because its nature is dual. On the one hand, it is celestial; on the other, elemental. On one side, the ethereal essences; on the other, the natural elements.

Luís de Camões, in *Os Lusíadas*, takes up the idea of the *Machina Mundi* when, in Canto X, narrating the episode of the dialogue between *Tethys* and *Gama*, he writes:

<i>Quite uniform and perfect self-sustained,</i>	<i>The world's enormous mass you here behold</i>
<i>Like its great Archetype, who formed the whole</i>	<i>Ethereal elementary and round</i>

When Grama saw this globe, his mind remained
Extremely moved with awe beyond control.
Amazement and desire possessed his soul
The Goddess said "This model, which to thee
I give, doth represent the mighty whole,
Created world, that thine own eyes may see
Where thou shalt go and what thou dost desire to be.

Which an Almighty being thus did mould
With his omniscient wisdom most profound
Which ne'er began and by no limits bound.
Whatever round this mighty globe doth flow
Is God, but what God is, no man can show
For this, the human mind is not allowed to know
(Camões, X:LXXX)

Once again, we recognize that the *Machina Mundi* is both ethereal and elemental – at once spiritual and material. It is without beginning or end, and therefore unbounded and eternal. God encompasses this sphere, indicating that the *Machina Mundi* belongs to the divine order, even though its ultimate nature remains beyond human comprehension.

If it is true that “human ingenuity does not extend” to the Divine, it does not follow that knowledge of the *Machina Mundi* is without value. In *Os Lusíadas*, Tethys presents Vasco da Gama with the *Machina Mundi* not simply as a model of the cosmos, but as a metaphysical instrument of revelation.

Its revelatory power operates on two levels. First, it is temporal: it unveils both the present and the future, revealing “where you are going and where you will go.” Second, it is existential: it brings together the outward and inward dimensions of the journey, disclosing not only “where you are” but also “what you desire.”

It is therefore no coincidence that, immediately after this vision, Tethys begins her long prophetic discourse, revealing to Vasco da Gama the future achievements of the Portuguese navigators. The *Machina Mundi* thus serves not merely as a cosmographical representation but as a symbolic device through which knowledge of the world becomes inseparable from knowledge of destiny and of oneself.



Fig. 1- Almada Negreiros, *Tethys shows the Machina Mundi to Gama*, 1961, Polychrome incised relief, Entrance to Faculdade de Letras. Cidade Universitária, Lisboa

A polychrome relief by Almada Negreiros, placed above the entrance to the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, in Lisbon’s University City, illustrates the scene.

If the *One Thing* is the Sphera, and if the Sphera is the device that articulates, if not commands, what is below and what is above, since it is elemental and spiritual, then as Abellio used to say, it is where ‘the immovable motor that commands movement’ is located, thus establishing the correspondence between physical and metaphysical fire.

In my personal mythology, this correspondence constitutes a principle. Principle, not in the sense of a moment or initial impulse, but in the sense of a perpetual foundation.

Metaphysical fire is that which burns without being seen. That which burns without combustion. However, if combustion requires fuel and oxygen, what does metaphysical fire

burn without combustion, if a sole principle governs both? In other words, what are the metaphysical qualities that correspond to the material constituents that feed physical fire?

Later, we will discuss these considerations. For now, we will limit ourselves to calling for a suspension of judgement, before we understand where they might lead us.

If fuel and oxidiser are the constituent elements of *natura naturata*—the realm of created things—what are the constituent principles of *natura naturans*, the realm of creative becoming? Lacking a more appropriate term, I shall retain the word **essences**, already introduced to describe both the attributes of the gods and the qualities revealed by the *Machina Mundi*.

Just as physical fire arises from the interaction of the elements that sustain combustion, metaphysical fire emerges from the interplay of the essences that manifest it. The parallel, however, is not exact. Physical fire consumes the very elements that produce it; its fuel is finite and eventually exhausted. Metaphysical essences, by contrast, are inexhaustible. They are governed by principles of intensification rather than depletion. Because of their universal character and intrinsic purity, they are not bound by the contingencies of space and time, but retain an autonomy that transcends every particular circumstance.

At the dawn of the 20th century, Henri Bergson had already outlined his vision of the presence of a perpetual, dynamic and creative principle that was the driving force behind creative evolution, which he called *élan vital*.

When analysing biological processes, instead of observing a linear progression, built through a continuous succession and accumulation of novelties, Bergson observed a succession of ruptures and divisions, as he states:

Life does not proceed by the association and addition of elements, but by dissociation and division. (Bergson, 1911, p. 94)

For Bergson, evolution is not linear precisely because it is creative. Rather than being driven by a purpose, and rather than obeying a mechanism, life constantly devises new solutions by altering the range of possibilities at its disposal. Summarising his thinking, the author states:

Life, we have said, transcends finality as it transcends the other categories. It is essentially a current sent through matter, drawing from it what it can (Bergson, 1911, pp. 279-280)

In my personal mythology, fire is an active principle equivalent to Henri Bergson's *élan vital*: a beam of energy that inscribes itself in matter, animating it with the wonder of life, if it is not, after all, the flow of life itself.

At this point, the discussion reaches a critical threshold. Rather than remaining within the domain of reflexive questioning, it becomes all too easy to slip into premature answers and to construct a theory that intends to solve the problem. This is the path typically taken by science, which advances through provisional explanations. Here, however, the aim is not to resolve the question by proposing another explanatory model, but to remain attentive to the question itself and to the horizon of meaning it discloses. In this regard, Raymond Abellio used to say, recommending:

I believe, then, that in this domain [science], we are faced with a dialectic of perpetual overcoming. On the contrary, in *gnosis*, we are faced with the insurmountable; this is the drama, but it is an enlightening drama. It is therefore necessary to put into practice a dialectic of the *perpetual overcoming* before the *presence of the insurmountable*. This is where the inner conflict lies, that of the wise man (Abellio, 1987, p. 47).

Abellio's strategy for overcoming the drama of perpetual conflict and the persistence of the insurmountable is therefore dialectical. It seeks to illuminate this inner tension through the interplay of *science* and *gnosis*, allowing each to disclose what the other alone cannot.

If we designate the energetic principle that animates matter as the **principle of fire**, and distinguish between **physical fire** and **metaphysical fire**, the initial duality expands into a quaternity. Physical fire stands to the combustion of material elements as metaphysical fire stands to the inclusion of essences. The former is governed by the principle of entropy: it separates, homogenizes, and ultimately reduces matter to ash. The latter is governed by the principle of negentropy: it unites, differentiates, and gives rise to ever more complex forms of organization and life.

However, if combustion, on the one hand, separates the elements aggregated in bodies, entropically generating ash, on the other hand, it makes elements available for new associations, providing raw material for their recomposition, induced by the inclusion of essences, generating negentropy.

The way in which this current intervenes in matter is twofold. In its constructive aspect, it is intertwining. In its deconstructive phase, it is dissociation. Intertwining integrates and fixes. Dissociation detaches and liberates.

Thus far, our reflections have remained on the plane of processes, viewing reality from the perspective of temporal becoming. To borrow Abellio's image, we have stayed on the equatorial plane of the *sphera*: the plane where elements interact, where actions are performed, and where creative intentions take shape. It is the plane in which existence unfolds within space and time. Yet this is only one dimension of the sphere; to understand the whole, we must now turn to its vertical axis, where temporality gives way to a different order of intelligibility.

Yet life is not constituted solely by the horizontality of existence – the plane of interactions, actions, projects, and empirical experience. Beyond this horizontal dimension lies another, complementary one: the vertical dimension. Whereas the horizontal plane is the domain of becoming, where beings encounter one another in space and time, the vertical plane is the domain in which meaning is generated and knowledge takes root.

It is along this axis of verticality that the spiritual becomes inscribed in matter, and the sensible is transfigured into spirit. Here, experience is no longer understood merely as a sequence of events, but as a process of interiorisation and elevation through which existence acquires meaning.

The most profound journeys within the *Sphera* take place along its vertical axis. Like the ladder in Jacob's dream, this axis forms a bridge between earth and heaven, along which souls ascend and angels descend. What sets both movements in motion is desire: for souls, the desire to be liberated from the constraints of time; for angels, the desire to become incarnate in matter.

To travel along this vertical axis is to discover that between the sensible and the intelligible there exists an intermediate realm. Access to this realm is not gained through sensory perception or discursive reason, but through the cognitive power of the imagination. It is this domain that Henry Corbin designates as the *mundus imaginalis*: an ontologically real world of images, where symbolic forms mediate between material reality and spiritual truth. Imaginative perception is therefore not a subjective fantasy, but a genuine mode of knowledge, capable of revealing dimensions of reality inaccessible to the senses or to abstract thought alone, as the author says:

As a world beyond the empirical control of our sciences, it is a suprasensible world. It is only perceptible through *imaginative perception*, and the events that occur there can only be experienced by imaginative or imagining consciousness. Let me emphasise again that what is at stake here is not imagination as we understand it in our current language, but a vision

that is *Imaginatio vera*. And this *Imaginatio vera* must be recognised as having entirely noetic or cognitive value (Corbin, 1964, p. 15).

So, imaginative perception is neither illusion nor fantasy. Rather, it is a legitimate mode of knowing. What it reveals becomes perceptible only when consciousness moves beyond the confines of ordinary sensory experience, allowing access to a dimension of reality that cannot be grasped by the senses alone:

Of course, there may be topographical correspondences between the sensible world and the *mundus imaginalis*, one symbolising the other. However, it is not possible to move from one to the other without interruption. This is pointed out by many accounts. One begins, but at some point, there is a break in the geographical coordinates found on our maps. Only the “traveller” does not realise this at that moment. He realises it – with consternation or astonishment – only after it has happened. If he had realised, he would have been able to retrace his steps at will or show the way to others. However, he can only describe where he has been; he cannot show the way to anyone else (Corbin, 1964, p. 12).

The *mundus imaginalis* is the intermediate realm where matter is spiritualised and spirit becomes manifest. Access to this realm requires what might be called an inner awakening: “opening the eyes that remain closed within your open eyes”, as I once wrote somewhere. It is not achieved by withdrawing into fantasy, but by cultivating a mode of perception that transcends ordinary sensory experience while remaining fully attentive to reality.

To cultivate this form of perception, and to make oneself available for such a journey, is to enter the domain of art. For art is governed by the metaphysical fire that animates its unmoved engine: the creative force through which the visible and the invisible, the sensible and the spiritual, continually meet and are transformed.

To devote oneself to this exercise. To make oneself available to experience this journey is to devote oneself to art. As art is ruled by the metaphysical fire that runs its “*immobile engine*”.

Wim Wenders constructed a sublime metaphor for what means to travel through the verticality of the Sphera, in his 1987 film *Wings of Desire*. Able to hear the thoughts of human beings, *Cassiel* and *Damiel*, anthropomorphic angels who inhabit the skies of Berlin, are sensitive witnesses to human sorrows, and although they intend to comfort them, they are unable to do so because people do not feel, nor even suspect, their presence.



Fig. 2- W. Wenders, *Der Himmel über Berlin* (*As Asas do Desejo*), 1987.

This film is significant because it reveals the profound divide between the horizontal plane of worldly processes and the vertical plane of spiritual reality. Modern consciousness has become highly sensitive to the destructive and transformative power of physical fire, as evidenced by the increasing frequency of wildfires and the spectre of global warming. By contrast, metaphysical fire remains largely imperceptible. It is concealed behind a kind of symbolic smoke – a pervasive noise that obscures awareness of its presence and prevents recognition of its creative and transformative power.

In *Wings of Desire*, Cassiel remains beside a young man overwhelmed by despair, yet, despite his compassion, he is powerless to prevent the man's suicide. Daniel, by contrast, becomes increasingly dissatisfied with the immaterial condition of angelic existence. He longs to be incarnated, to experience the sensations, limits, and joys of a human body.

His passage into human existence is made possible through Peter Falk, a former angel who has renounced eternity in order to live among humans, while retaining the ability to sense the presence of angels. Perceiving Daniel nearby, Falk enters into an invisible dialogue with him, gently encouraging his desire for incarnation until it is finally fulfilled.

Once embodied, Daniel experiences the world with childlike wonder. The simplest sensations—drinking a cup of coffee, feeling the weight of his body, tasting the ordinary texture of everyday life—become revelations. He wanders through the streets of Berlin, seemingly untouched by the political drama of the divided city, although every step is accompanied by the silent presence of the Wall, which separates East from West just as the body marks the boundary between spirit and matter.

In the desolate expanse of Potsdamer Platz, he encounters a travelling circus and is captivated by the aerial grace of the trapeze artist Marion. Watching her suspended between earth and sky, he falls in love, discovering in that encounter the human experience he had long desired.

In the film, Marion personifies art through the mastery of her body, the beauty she brings to her movements, and the perfection with which she maintains her balance, showing that there is an intermediate plane between remaining immaterial, without interacting with the world, and embodying matter, allowing oneself to be entangled by the sensations of the world. This intermediate plane is the plane of art, i.e., it is the *mundus imaginis*.

Raymond Abellio was one of the few twentieth-century thinkers to regard art as more than an aesthetic or ethical practice. Without diminishing its role as an expression of beauty or perfection, he attributed to art a further, distinctly gnostic dimension. For Abellio, art is a mode of knowledge: it transforms the way reality is perceived and, in doing so, reshapes consciousness itself. Artistic creation thus becomes the culmination of the dynamic sequence *vision-action-art*, in which a renewed vision of reality gives rise to action, and action finds its highest expression in art:

... the uniqueness of any 'present moment' can only be evoked by a spherical sequence of three senaries, corresponding respectively to vision, to action itself, and to the art that crowns the action and constitutes another vision, this triple senary representing the smallest and most general structure of any 'quantum' of time (Abellio, 1965, p. 143).

For Abellio, art is far more than an activity or a technical skill that produces cultural objects called "works of art." It is a power of integration that, through creative action, transforms an initial vision of the world into a new mode of seeing. Art does not merely represent reality; it reconfigures perception itself. In this sense, it effects the decisive rupture of which Henry Corbin speaks – a break with ordinary perception that opens access to a deeper order of reality, as Abellio explains:

This integration must also take place at the level of germs. It is the artistic part of the act, the part that transcends its intention and which, apparently, is also a gift, an unpremeditated game about the world. Thus, if the action, when limited to fulfilling its naive and natural intention, has a double senary structure, it is, on the contrary, a triple senary that calls into question the art achieved, when it adds to the realisation of the act its unpredictable margin of realisation. This opens to a "new" time. The work of action is constructed; the work of art is constituted. Art makes us change time (Abellio, 1965, p. 150).

Art is a mode of knowledge because it enables us to see beyond what was previously visible. By integrating unpredictability into action, it transforms perception and opens new horizons

of understanding. I have called this capacity **spiritual intelligence** – a form of intelligence that, as Abellio suggests, is essentially free (Abreu, 2025).

For Abellio, art is always the threshold of a new epoch. In this sense, he maintains that there are three domains of human existence that ultimately resist every attempt at political, social, or cultural control: *sexuality, art, and death*. History repeatedly confirms their irreducible autonomy. *Sexuality* belongs primarily to the *physical plane*, *art* to the *spiritual plane*, and *death* to the metaphysical plane. Together, they reflect the classical triad of *body, soul, and spirit*.

We began by proposing that the fundamental principle is FIRE. We can now formulate this more precisely. FIRE becomes fully manifest only when it is activated simultaneously on two levels: as *physical fire* and as *metaphysical fire*. Their conjunction gives rise to the creative principle itself.

Only this double activation constitutes the FIRE of creation. And its highest manifestation is art.

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