

The Final Ecclesiast: Leopardi and the Contemplation of Nature

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Abstract

The Final Ecclesiast: Leopardi and the Contemplation of Nature situates Leopardi within the Western (pagan and Christian) tradition of natural philosophy, or the contemplation of nature. The paper gives a phenomenological reading of Leopardi's poetics of nature, a reading that discloses an empty, pure verticality of experience. While this structure draws Leopardi into the realm of religious phenomenology, Leopardi himself refuses, in his poetry, the typical religious transcendence of nature and rather remains rigorously within the finite embrace of the human, even as infinity and its nothingness hover beyond «the very last horizon». The paper defines this as an eco-poetic-phenomenology of the human in nature and argues that this structure of experience opens up a finite humanism that calls the human to the love of the human and also to the relativization of the human, to a contemplation of the human, and all the more to a contemplation of nature, that is free of anthropocentrism.

Keywords: Leopardi; phenomenology; poetry; nature; religious philosophy.