

Fernando Pessoa

**Series 0 — 1. 2. 3. — \_**

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Ideally, to us, the idea of zero is the same as the idea of infinity. It is a transcendent idea, the form under which we conceive (if so I may say) the unknown. Zero is not-quantity, the Infinite is the not-known. But not-quantity is not-known. What is inf[inite]? More than n[umber]? No, for *more than* supposes number.

If B[eing] and N[ot]-B[eing] be ideas they are identical for they are our 2 forms of conceiving the unknown, or rather the 2 names we give to that form, if that may be called a form which is no form at all. If B[eing] and N[ot]-B[eing] be things (so to speak) only B[eing] exists, for N[ot]-B[eing] is by its essence (so to say, for it has no essence, neither is it permissible to [?] speak of it as it), for N[ot]-B[eing] is by its essence non-existent. It is not only unconceivable but supra-unconceivable, just as B[eing] in itself. And the reason for this is that although we think that we are conceiving B[eing], N[ot]-B[eing] as things as essences, in themselves we are still considering them as ideas. The most that human reason can say escaping the most it can from its own limits, is that N[ot]-B[eing] is Nothing, no [?] thing [?] The truth is that Being in itself (although Being have no Self) is Being (although not even an expression of identity is allowed of the unknown).

There is only one Zero, the *human* zero, not-quantity and [?] not-known, it may be said that negativity remains still, that still B[eing] has a N[ot]-B[eing]. My answer is that the quantity in itself is hidden from our reason. As for the quantity as we know it, i. e. as for the Unknown as B[eing] and N[ot]-B[eing] (ideas) all we can prove is either one or another of these things, equally good for our end:

I) B[eing] alone exists, N[ot]-B[eing] eliminate itself of itself.

II) B[eing] and N[ot]-B[eing] one in essence, are fundamentally identical.

To go beyond this to admit in the *Unknown* a truth. To say «I conceive in the Unknown one truth [...] which I call nothing. This is [...] Negativity is the bone of metaphysical systems. I have eliminated it in my system.

s. d.

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