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THE TWINS OR THE REASONS OF CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN PHILOSOPHY

A very paranoid, but also very pushing, single and double ghost, naturally a bit of a Marxist one, is wandering in Europe – or rather in the sky above it, where the alchemical wedding of Philosophy and Ideology is celebrated. *It is* at least a hundred years old, only in its last incarnation (maybe there were others before), but it still carries very well its age. Its very masculine name is “Plan”, but someone else has seen it even in the female dress of “Techne”. Perhaps Techne is Plan’s mask or perhaps Plan Techne’s. We do not know. They are opposites, but they are also one, in the strictly structural meaning of occupying the same place in the Mendeleev’s table of contemporary demonic creatures. In fact both of them drive, determine, give shape to human life and society, without giving way to will and individual responsibility. Both are held responsible for that state of openness and mobility, which many persist in defining “postmodern”, even though modernity persists in surviving its posterity. Both make people unaccountable, make reality unreal, or contrariwise give the appearance of solid reality to what is only interpretation and will to power. Both serve the purpose of saying that the surface of the world does not correspond to its essence – but, for heaven’s sake, without any metaphysical implications. Both in fact are not what they seem, or rather, they do not seem to be of great reality, but that is exactly why they are.

21

If the ghost wears Plan’s mask, it has a will, an interest indeed. It works for someone’s sake, for someone’s interest. Or rather: people exercise their unspeakable interest through him. The Plan is usually secret, it is a trick, a conspiracy, an unspoken rule that one can only see by its effects – if one’s eyes are

penetrating enough to see such things, as happens with philosophers. So, for example, for decades its main avatar has been that “capital plan”, to which many still refer even in this terrible economic chaos. The “Capital Plan” is the worthy heir to the old but still alive “Protocol of the Elders of Zion”, as they both concern the global finance and the evil puppeteers who move it. Also, Plan’s plan is to take over the world (or maybe just keep leading it) pretending to provide goods and services and to make investments. But actually these are mere fictions. Its real purpose – or perhaps the Elders’ (of whom Plan is the mask) – is only to oppress, to enslave, to impoverish. It seems economy, but it is domain: Economy’s domain on Policy, or on the affairs of politicians and their servants. And to do this easily, the Plan can subvert the reality or rather its absence (or even convince us that there is an objective reality, no matter what).

22 If those who are enslaved by the Plan, or who should be considered enslaved in the eyes of those who can see it, do not feel like servants at all, if they even think they are free and live better, this should be read merely as further evidence of the Plan, of its dangerous hegemonic power. Hegemony is someone’s capacity to convince opponents that his interest is their reason, too. The Plan does this in a very natural way, thanks to its fundamental disguise; to unmask it and instead pursue a counter-hegemony, one will need appropriate officials, able to show the harmful character of the Plan to those who believe they benefit of it. This is the craft of the Wisest, or at least of those who would like to be such and therefore prefer to manage Wisdom instead of Economics: the clerics of Hegemony or Philosopher Kings.

Sometimes a shadow opponent to the Plan comes in the light, so to say. It is a sort of Counterplan, which is a plan indeed, but opposite to the previous one. The private nature of its model is changed within it into a public one, and therefore its wickedness capsizes in goodness. In fact it is public not only because it declares itself so, but above all in the morally superior sense of public ownership, public interest, collective decision. But it is public also because of the public statement, of the policy opposed to the secret of what is private, which is by etymology missing. The Counterplan is not only good for nature, but also loves to shine, as opposed to Heraclitean nature and to its own model that always lurks: once those who practice it or control it, that is the New collective Princes and their intellectuals, get a hold of power, they proclaim it joyfully as Five-Year Plan, Economic Planning, social Engineering.

This is the most important tool for the (public, of course) Party Power, and thus the aspiring Philosopher Kings’, i.e. the ideologues or Hegemony Officials who inspire it (inspiring, advising, guiding – not the risky ruling, according

to the same ambitious weak thought with which the fly-coachmen pretend to drive – führen – history’s patient ox). With the Counterplan they resist not only the capital’s evil plan but also the widespread petty Individual Interest, eternal row matter for any private Plan, large or small it may be. Instead, the counterplan is the powerful shape of the General Will. This was born from the creative philosopher’s walks in the ancient woods, where blood and soil mix. It was developed then by the philosophers’ new relationship with the twentieth-century power, which makes him not a scientist by vocation but a committed Hegemony clerk, an enrolled militant, a revolutionary by profession who is not satisfied with the old task of understanding reality, leaving that to the scientists’ calculating reason, but wants to gloriously transform the world following the good fairy tales of ideology.

This counterplan had a glorious but transient triumph in Russia and Italy in the Twenties, during the Thirties in Germany, and in China during the Fifties: well, Russia *and* Italy *and* Germany *and* China, in forms not too different from each other, whose common model was the concentrated sociality of the concentration camp. After that the Counterplan has unfortunately lost between ‘45 and 89 about all of its action field. For the Philosopher King almost nothing was left but the old role of agit prop, of unheard prophets, of time and manners regretter, of moralists in permanent, effective service, of painful or angry protesters against the factuality of the facts, of gatherers of uneven and unequal Multitudes, albeit the Hegemony clerks work for unifying them by the hatred of the Plan of Capital and maybe of the Elders of Zion who perhaps produce it. This is now the most noble task of philosophy. Belongs to this heroically unlikely strategy, though usually adopted in comfortable university departments, the denial of reality (but, if there were one, of its conceivability and, if it were thinkable, of its communicability). With a gesture opposite but symmetrical to Protagoras’ one, who apparently liked the democratic assemblies and saw at the gates the enemy Plato (or the Spartans, or Philippon, no matter), for fifty years on the aspiring Philosopher Kings declare acerbic the grapes too high for them; and therefore not existing the Kingdom that does not let them to play their role of consultant and advisor.

2.

Of this *weakness strategy* it is also part the discovery of the other ghost, the female but grim *Techne* (whose optimistic alter ego, revered long before its public demonization by contemporary philosophy, has been celebrated for

centuries under the again mainly name of Progress). It is a Fate, a Greek Parca, indifferent to the will of humans, who relentlessly follows her logic: she cuts the threads of individual and collective lives, knotting them at her pleasure, making with them multicolored fabrics that draw senseless shapes, indecipherable texts: no one can make anything about it. She has no purpose but her growth, so she is literally the Author of her own texture or text, but in this growing process overwhelms everything, every plan and counterplan, leaving us humans to play only the role of impotent microbes or worms used as yarns to be woven. She is not at our service, but we are in hers; it is not matter on which we operate, but we stuff for her actions.

24 If the regimes of counterplan sooner or later lose their supreme guides, their Führer, their Dear Leaders, their presidents, their Ayatollah (even if they did not let themselves be guided by the buzzing of the Philosophers dethroning them if necessary also from the honors of university Rector); if God, or rather only “a” god in lower case and indeterminate article, who is told to be the only possible escape to the darkness of our time, refuses to turn up; if existence is no longer prefigured in view of its end as it should, lacking indeed any goal; if the revolution that should makes progresses everywhere in the world mysteriously withdraws or becomes clerical and Islamic, compelling the poor Hegemony officials to the bitter-sweet sacrifice of praising those who – if they only could – would kill them right away, for homophobia or anti-communism or pure dislike for the chatterer class, which not only MPs but even more chattering intellectuals... if, in short, everything goes a bit wrong, albeit with the consolation and Shadenfreude a few economical crisis from time to time... the guilt cannot come out of an error in the very exact calculations – better, not in calculations that are the elected instruments of the Plan, but in the very precise and sublime thoughts of candidates Philosopher King who know the laws of history. Since all that is real is rational, or rather as the being has a story that only it knows and language and thought are its home and, in short, the whole cannot end badly and be incomprehensible, this should be held unshakably firm: history is destiny, and therefore its appointments are quite fixed, although they may be delayed. Calculations or, better, thoughts are perfect, and, if reality does not match with them, it is its fault, not theirs.

But the error can not be for sure neither the result of the particular will of individuals who failed to make themselves crowd or class and to recognize the leadership of the Party or the value of the race and then the leadership of the would-be Philosopher King leading them to become what they are: we know that the class’ consciousness or racial awareness should never be identified

with the vulgar, realistic, sociological belonging to such sublime entities, are not an empirical fact, but occur only as effects of the Guide of the Party and of its mobilization ability and thus from the Officials of Hegemony work – even if they can go wrong, if corrupted or misled by the circumstances.

Therefore, one should analyze the circumstances, what in reality or in the lack of reality lets go wrong projects, cultivated with so much passion and so much blood in the last century, of similar but opposite Utopias or Reich or Soviet republics: here we find our phantom of *Techne*. The fault of the very little utopian and even less planned direction towards which the world went after the end of atheistic religions of the twentieth century, must be of a dark force, that is overbearing, irrationally rational, (i.e. rational in its means, and precisely in its being pure means, but irrational because it lacks reasons), insensitive to the purposes, in fact pure mean, deaf to the arguments and the prophecies of the Philosopher Kings, impossible to drive because not aiming anywhere: the identical opposite of Progress, that hovers where it wants, as the Spirit does, unintelligible, that just do not want anything except himself – as the Spirit does. It is our phantom in its female mask of *Techne*. It is subtle and unnoticed: while Philosophers look around for gestures of the *Zeitgeist*, very difficult to read because as everyone knows it does not affirm nor deny anything but only hints – *Techne* produces dishwashers and birth control pills, reversing the age-old relationship between the sexes; televisions and mobile phones, going beyond the sense of place; cars that change the space and medicines that delay the anticipation of death and low cost flights and supermarkets and scooters that defiantly ignore the laws of the Class, Race and the Spirit, which would certainly be true if only this horrible invasion of tools due to the equally horrible profit and designed by calculating thought, had not shaken the crystal-clear landscape of Necessity.

Let's say that: how *incredibly convenient* is this peculiar position of *Techne* for those who invented it – though it is rather difficult to reconcile with the concrete history of technology itself. Just open a handbook in this field to see how many wastes, swings, misunderstood inventions, what's the prevalence of economic or political power over mere expansion of the productive forces. But these details are good only for historians and social scientists, absolutely negligible for Hegemony officials looking for the Being (and power) or for Philosopher Kings willing to fall into the pits in order not to look how the soil of history is made.

Actually, this thought makes it possible to justify every atrocity or stupidity or inhumanity blaming them on the implacable illogical logic of *Techne*

walking forward (pro-gredi), that equally tramples men and vineyards – not anyone’s fault. What is the difference, from the so abysmal height of the ideological point of view of an excellent hegemony officer, among a death camp and the mechanization of agriculture? Or among electrification and the dictatorship of the proletariat? So convenient opinion, especially if one has sung without repentance the beauty of reeducation and Red Booklet, if one has been enrolled, and maybe on some level one has tried to advise, guide, to become the Philosopher King supervising hegemony in one of the parties which have established Lager or Gulag, technically planning the destruction of a class or of a unwelcome “race” – alas, without success, perhaps because the technique was leaning, blindly supporting societies ruled by Capital Plan and housewives looking for sex without generation or for fun without Culture.

26 The technique has given, the technique has taken off, dust we are and dust we will return, possibly gunpowder or oil which feeds the Great Techne Machine: please no one will complain or ask for responsibility. Woe to judge on the ontic level the ontological drama; woe to seek individual liability where the Being, the time, the Nothingness, the Technique and similar paper-mache giants are acting.

3.

One might ask, at this point, why pretending that Techne (or its father Progress) and Plan (and perhaps behind him the Protocol) are the same ghost. They seem to be opposites, the one is all will to power, the other without emotions and will, as automatic as an avalanche. The reason is essentially moral, has to do with their being Other, hidden entities that can not be controlled but only hated and feared. About them it is not possible any theory, there is no science, just intuition of plots and conspiracies. There is a project that would include them, they are beyond the control and even beyond the field of the human: they plot against our nature, make even ourselves post-human.

The objection that perhaps they doesn’t exist, that they are just gigantic excuses or alibis, can not be accepted by honest hegemony officials, albeit now almost unemployed. In reality they are ghosts, that is sensibly supersensible entities: therefore they do not fall within the scope of empirical sciences. The claim to verify their existence falls within the same discourses of technology or in the plans of the Plan and should certainly be rejected. Only contemporary philosophy, albeit weak and non-metaphysical, has eyes insightful and suspecting enough to perceive them.

Philosophy, indeed, does not want to be any more meta-physical in the sense of narrating the foundation of physical reality; it realized gradually after Hegel to be too weak to compete with the world descriptions of science, even if this is part of its offspring and have a lesser claim about reality as a whole. After trying to measure the sciences with the balance of the court under the pretext of polish its mirror; having being obliged to given up this project if only for the incompatibility of the two metaphors crossed, philosophy has reversed its telescope: instead of staring at the starry sky – from bottom up – it tried to look down from the top, but not for the moral law – certainly for lack of confidence in the “me” that had to contain it – but on the City. From meta-physics has tried to get metapolitics. No longer contemplating the world, it has worked to change it. Or rather, to fit for being with those who tried to change it with weapons. The keyword of this benevolent attitude of contemplation of the geometric power of liberating violence, be it the Algerian killing an European and so freeing himself and also the corpse, or the intimate truth and greatness of National Socialism (the encounter between global technology and ‘modern man, another time an epiphany of Techné) was the Commitment, i.e. the historical process of a people which meets its historical Destiny. The words explain clear mind of what it is: in Italian “impegno” has the same construction of the French or English “engagement”, involving a pledge given to someone, an enrollment that has an economic content; the same idea is incorporated in the English “commitment”, which alludes to a mission taken together with others, giving oneself to a company, similar to the feudal relationship of “comites” – counts – to the lord, who then become accounts or of the Italian “compagni”, camerades who eat the same bread.

Europeans ghosts have grown up in the last century swallowing copious amounts of blood and flesh burnt in the ovens, but in a different way. Plan ghost was fed mainly by its enemies, through its dialectical reversal in counterplan. Millions of human beings were imprisoned, deported, killed on suspicion of being servants of the Plan (Capital) and wasteful or dangerous for the counterplan, as variously active or potential bourgeois, not ideological, rich peasants, suspicious cosmopolitan, Class or Race Enemies. On the contrary Techne has made itself worker and fighter and has been worshiped since the first Steel Storms a century ago, to the Total Mobilization that followed, up to and Stakanov to Sputnik. As long as it seemed to push towards the regimentation of the masses and thus towards the reconstruction of a Gemeinschaft albeit under the pale light of Metropolis, it was greeted with joy in the little convenient albeit not so technical Biedermeier salons of the Hegemony offi-

cials, who have always adopted a middle-class furniture (and sexuality), just moderated by the use of hills vacations cabins or by speeches of proletarian or völkisch heroism. When the *Techne*, apart from guns and radio from which one could hear the Leaders and Duci, began to produce cars and televisions, it ceased to appear fated.

But at some point, be it a matter of economics (the Plan) or technique (*Techne*), the cruel power of ghosts softened in marketing and design, Revolution and assertiveness were reduced to communication, also the War became predominantly Terrorism that is not naked power, much less a “geometric” one, but rather its communication, the symbol of a possible collective insecurity. The great movements slowly dissolved, apart from the old religious corporations, which had always training systems and civil service antithetical to philosophy. All this should have prompted the Philosophers to remake the move of Aristotle after the failure of Plato in Syracuse: maybe to keep selling themselves as tutors for the powerful but on the basis of an entirely lucid empirical competence; preferring analysis to myths, classification to utopias, limit to vision. Dismissing the royal claims but also the most unpleasant and humble habit of party functionary. This happened exaggerated and often blindly, but only in part, in the environment that defined itself as “analytical”. Outside the laborious lawyer style of the clumsy Wittgenstein heirs, the prophets and their reverent children have continued to cultivate the old ghosts, even the ghosts of ghosts.

28

If the Plan was dissolved into anarchy and inability to control the markets, it was described to the former king in home exile as even more mysterious and dark; hence it needed to be countered with counterplans verbally inspired by ramshackle criticism of political nineteenth-century economy, or, at least, by anyone who rebels against the “state of things existing”. If the technique from standardizing mistress of the great masses, became road and shop window seduction, just one of the dimensions of marketing or “aestheticization of everyday life”, which is basically flattery or prostitution, as Plato says, in the same measure as the *nouvelle cuisine* or cosmetics mass or the visual rhetoric – it was viewed by critics as irresistible “cultural industry” and mass Kitsch, for which regret the good old socialist realism and the empty shop shelves. Human relations have appeared in the pale light of archeology molecular sheer power, the thought has thought himself only as deconstruction and negative – while maintaining the old habit of courting sympathy for tyrants and potential murderers of its authors.

This has happened particularly in the broad European philosophical theater, now tempered by a couple of decades with increasing degree of self-dep-

recating wise humor. In the small Italian vaudeville, confidence in ghosts was proportional to the self declared weakness. The more one wanted explicitly useless and empty the philosophical thought, the more one was inclined to see in the skies above Europe ancient ghosts and to buy them for good. The parable of a good share of the Italian philosophy in recent decades is all here, in this desperate and irresponsible masochistic credulity.