

DIVIDUUM AND (RE-)ITERATION OF THE UNIQUE AND SIMPLE ONE

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Introduction

In a recent international debate on the political philosophy, an impressive and theoretically fruitful concept of the *one* seems to emerge, as evidenced by the editorial publication concerning an international conference “Politics of the one”¹. Although one of the most important topics of contemporary political thought, namely about how to conceptualize the relation between *one* and *many*, two items that should be considered indispensable with regard to the theme, seem absent². Firstly, the ‘political’ category in itself in referring to the concept of *one* (metaphysical, mathematical, etc.) imposes its plurality both because the politician cannot in any case be so alone (without the city or demos and much less its class) and because any political phenomenology of the one separates (almost religiously or mystically) an unity radically heterogeneous to any concept of ‘metapolitical’³ or non-political one, namely every

1. The acts are collected in the volume: *Politics of the One. Concepts of the One and the Many in Contemporary Thought*, ed. by A. Magun, Bloomsbury New York – London – New Delhi – Sydney, 2013, 255.

2. Towards the end of “Introduction” of the quoted *Politics of the One*, Magun narrates the notable occasion of origin of this volume due to the interest of one’s notion, and especially in Badiou’s philosophy, shared with Alexey Chernyakov (1955-2010). With different seminars the subject was widely spread in Russian academic circles at St. Petersburg from 2006 until 2010 and involved various thinkers from diverse, not only European but also North American backgrounds. This activity in July 2010 led to the celebration of the international conference on the subject from which the publication of the volume is derived (for more details cf. A. Magun, *Introduction*, in *Politics of the One...*, XI-XXI, XXI).

3. It is unthinkable to trace, even in extreme synthesis, semantic and conceptual ambivalences as well as semantic-philosophical stratifications of the noun “metapolitics” during its four century of known history. Its first attestation (according to the actual knowledge) is due to its presumed inventor or coiner, Juan Caramuel y Lobkowitz (1606-1682), Cistercian monk, great mathematician (like Leibniz) and theologian, for his inedited scroll *Metapolitica* cf. J. Velarde, *Juan Caramuel, vida y obra*, Pentalfa, Oviedo 1989, 390) and A. Buela, *Disyuntivas de nuestro tiempo, ensayos de metapolítica*, Ediciones

one that somehow conjoins itself or interferes with the political domain, beyond the ‘apolitical’ (mathematical, geometric, geographic, demographic, statistical etc.) one, namely every one that somehow is definable regardless of the political sphere –even though this distinction provokes problems. Secondly, the exploration of whether the conceptualization of such a relationship in political philosophy is eligible, and if eligible, to what extent it can be so, seems to lack. Some eligibility should be focused on a cryptically uncontrolled dialectics of biunivocal opposite (one/many) aimed at a not obvious, perhaps paradoxical or schizophrenic, still more rigid unification than any conception of monistic one.

But observations on the concept ‘dividuum’ offered by Gerard Raunig especially in his first contribution in the third part of that collection titled “The plural singular” will be faced, for the interesting stress related to the second critical, just outlined point⁴. Investigations on his framework more attentive to the multiple in itself will be exposed, but with the aim of recovering the theoretical ‘wonder’ of the unique (and not quite of one for its manifold declinability and the various ‘events’ that have already declined it in a too plurivocal and multiform way). His proposal tends to categorize a ‘condividuality’ from the notion of dividuum functional to mask rather a uniqueness of the unique in its simplicity of constitutive (re)iterability beyond the enchantment of only scarcely ‘henophilic’ or purely ‘misohenic’ nature. After all, in general it shows the attitude the being only captured by multifaceted misogyny for attempting to scatter the fairly frequent theoretical mortgage of an identity’s ‘dictatorship’ of a totalitarian one involving a symmetrical or parallel anti-communitarianism felt dilemmatic, partly revisited with instances of contemporary globalism. This sort of *horror unius* (almost to replace the old *horror vacui*) is manifested more pressing than the intention of founding the ontology of the many or the double so to base with a certain force the political theory of the multiplicity from one or the other or

Barbarroja, Madrid, 2012, p. 213). It is to highlight that all tradition of the thinking of politics is oriented by a basic ‘division’ between object and science, reality and theory so to influence also definition of metapolitics. In this way it becomes a mere issue of epistemological research. The metapolitical or metapolitics is to intend only everything that is or may be somehow ‘adjacent’ to the political or the politics at every level, as for example intuition, cultural movement, critique referred to what is generically understood or felt as political world.

4. G. Raunig, “Dividuum and Condividuality”, in *Politics of the One...*, pp. 131-146. Raunig’s second contribution, proposed as the last and at the end of the entire volume, “More than Two: The One as Singularity in Ambiguity” (ibid., pp. 245-252) should be reconnected with the first absolute of Jean-Luc Nancy “More than One” (ibid., pp. 3-12). The just quoted “Dividuum and Condividuality” is the English translation on German original outlines, as said in the first not numerated endnote at p. 141, for the chapter of the first, then not yet edited, volume of the following book: G. Raunig, “Gilbert von Poitiers. *dividuum*, Subsistenz, Ähnlichkeit”, in *Dividuum. Maschinischer Kapitalismus und molekulare Revolution Band I*, Wien u. a. (transversale texts), 2015, 61-84, available on transversal.at/books/dividuum – the chapter is the last of the first part entitled “I. Dividuum”.

more than one on the same ontological deficiencies of the one itself and (theological) oversimplifications operated by the Western henological tradition.

Raunig's return to *dividuum* of Gilbert of Poitiers, proposed to strengthen through a fast (a bit 'arbitrary') contextualization of the division the horizon of recent thinkers of the community (Esposito, Agamben, Blanchot, Nancy)⁵ seems yet again another essentialist theological, but not enough simplification⁶. The separateness of Gilbert's *dividuum* based on the (linguistic and semantic) distinction by means of notions as individual, singular and whole so that one is not purely individual and therefore neither whole nor dissimilar, makes this proper *dividuum* something split, divisional, similar and, ultimately, *an* alone absolute *one* among others. In conclusion, *dividuum*'s conformity is established by the fact that it 'with-divides' form with the other(s)⁷ without discerning which other(s) it is to deal with, suggesting intuitions of a mechanic anarchism and creative extremisms of the many that pretend to be a transformationalist continuum

5. R. Esposito, *Communitas. Origine e destino della comunità*, Einaudi, Torino 2006, p. 163; G. Agamben, *La comunità che viene*, Einaudi, Torino, 1990 (Bolla Boringhieri, Torino, 2001), p. 93; M. Blanchot, *La Communauté inavouable*, Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1983, p. 90. Nancy's text is already quoted in the precedent footnote.

6. Although it is impossible to discuss community's issue in every aspect which has been developed in the twentieth century, its three dilemmas (vagueness, *minus*, appropriation), as defined by Raunig, are mere false paradoxes of politics of the one, for which the fundamental lexicographic, semantic and theoretic question whether this formula "the politics of the one" is allowable or rather the formula "the one of (or/and in) the politics" is more correct, is neither alluded. Beyond discourses on the political (leftist/rightist) parts constituting a particular item without direct relation to the question at issue, that ought to be postulated in and of itself, the criticized influence of Benjamin's messianism on Agamben's *vague* description of community is to outline. Raunig expressly specifies: "Agamben describes coming politics as a struggle between the state and the non-state, or, more precisely, as the "insurmountable disjunction between whatever singularities and the State organization." (cf. G. Raunig, "Dividuum and Condividuality", in *Politics of the One...*, p. 133). Insurmountability of such a disjunction is a key word misunderstood by Raunig who believes that "the claim of the messianic-coming" is to grasp as "*overcoming* the state apparatus of protective identity and obligatory social bond" (my *curative*). Instead, in Agamben's purpose the exact opposite direction is given, because in it the dialectical above alluded essence between the politics and metapolitics, entirely ignored by Raunig, is evocated; but it has to be specified. It's better to use 'apocalyptic' than 'messianic' (too hypostatized). The political differentiates itself from the metapolitical quite by the state apparatus in the sight of self-protection more or less determinable or clear to the metapolitical. Therefore vagueness and unclarity are constitutive not for coming community or metapolitical state, but quite and exclusively for political actual state, since, in order to determine metapolitics as non-state and thus culminating ultimate state of mankind, an apocalyptic breaking is claimed with the consequence that the political *overcomes* the disjunction from everything that differentiates *ontologically* from the metapolitics, and so prevents the state from becoming non-state or jointing to it by moving or involving also non-political means as the struggle or juridical, ethical, religious, etc. powers.. Certainly, all these 'ones' have multiple and reciprocally separated lives, each in its own sphere.

7. Raunig begins his intervention by wondering "Which With for the Many?" (G. Raunig, "Dividuum and Condividuality", in *Politics of the One...*, p. 131). In attempting a reply, he almost rhetorically attacks the "with" bound to notions like "common", "com-munity", such to be affiliated to the Latin *communis* that, on its turn, is a composed term originated through *munus*. The latter noun is explored in a prejudged univocal sense regarding legal Roman taxation for extracting the suggestive bond with the term *minus*, whereby *communis* should echo diminution that addition. This semantic association is by no means significant because the Latin adjective *munis* originally means "courteous", "kind" and should have derived from the root 'mei' (from which also *migro*) in a semantic range of *generic* exchange. It is incompressible in the quoted question whether, why and how a "with" is to think with the reference to the *many*. The multiple one is not less simple and unique than the unitary one; indeed the *formal* ('dividual') *co*-implication and hence *co*-inclusion of the one and the many are the sole reliable logic for reflecting on a "with for the many".

of more than one or a continuously interrupted one unable to be a or the one. It is, therefore, almost dogmatically assumed as a functional definition because of the postulated opposition to an undisputed vision of deprecated one, mainly investigated only in view of tackling totalitarian or globalist phenomena (in a phobically more emotional than a conceptual or theoretical way), as evidenced through the alluded multiple ontologies of polymorphic and metamorphic multiplicity (Deleuze, Negri)⁸ or “ultra-one event” (Badiou).

Gilbert Porreta’s’ *dividuum* or the divisible one not less than the indivisible one

It is very surprising to observe how, after an intensive and totalizing activity of metaphysical deconstruction in the Western thought, conceptual distinctions are uncritically assumed and transformed into a methodological and axiomatic procedure, especially in the field of political theorization. With the impression that in this way some adequate philosophical categories may be drawn, a ‘transcendent’ doctrine (no other qualification seems possible) is proposed with the irreducible difference that it concerns no real entities *beyond* ‘empirical’ immanence but quite and precise phenomena ascribable to a world which is understood as ‘commonly’ given and perceived. Still more surprisingly, the idea of accrediting faithful capacity of theoretical foundation to the language and particularly to etymologies which are revived from ancient texts with a specific and almost holistic predilection to Latin and German words (perhaps for their bigger

8. The theme of Deleuze’s influence on Raunig is complex. Limited to *dividuum*’ concept Deleuze’s statement of the becoming ‘dividuals’ is to highlight, as the following quotation expresses: “On ne se trouve plus devant le couple masse - individu. Les individus sont devenus des ‘dividuels’, et les masses, des échantillons, des données, des marchés ou des ‘banques’” (G. Deleuze, “Post-scriptum sur les sociétés de control”, in *L’autre Journal*, 1, may 1990, pp. 240-247, 244). The individual become dividual is a mechanic modification due to technical attitude, the political power uses certainly in view of the social control, but mainly by urgency of supporting itself, holding its ‘freedom’ of domination over *individuals*, whose becoming dividual should be deplorable and always risky. Indeed, the dividuality makes awkward any control or at least imposes a need of collection, junction, a sort of induced unification or better *identification-individuation*. The reminder may remain vague, non-individual and non-individualized, but what is to be politically controlled, must be reduced to well-individualized one and possibly with risks of any kind. M. Hardt, A. Negri, *Commonwealth*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts 2009, p. 451. One of Negri’s concepts, Raunig draws, reinterprets and re-thinks, is ‘transversal concatenation’, developed in the context of a rejection of the takeover of state power in favor of constructing an immanent and ongoing ‘revolutionary machine’ from the components of ‘insurrection, resistance and constituent power’. Constituent power, the most significant of them, is presented as the ontological ground of ‘revolutionary’ aesthetic processes, and limits these processual expressions to collective experiments with ‘alternative forms of organization’.

9. L. Valente, “Un realismo singolare: forme e universali in Gilberto di Poitiers e nella Scuola Porretana”, in *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 19, 2008, pp. 141-246, also for bibliography of other sources or texts of any type on this medieval author and his cultural context it is referred as well as Raunig’s article at issue.

‘conformity’ to what is presumed to want to demonstrate, and since the main principle is deduce from a Latin medieval thinker).

During the twentieth century, within the debate on trinity’s dogma, and in particular on the determination of the relations among the three divine persons, Gilbert’s position is worthy of attention for diverse motivations, but the difficulty lies on founding a contemporary modality of a philosophical category in the field of political science. His fundamental distinction between *naturalium rationes* and *theologicae rationes* is based on Boethius’ *quo est* and *quod est* which the bishop of Poitiers renames respectively “subsistence” (*subisistentia*) and “subsistent” (*subsistens*). In natural order the only specification considered by Raunig concerns *quo est* (subsistent) for its meaning of being *through* something (subsistence) which, on its turn, is in its same subsistent, whereby both are singular, while a further attempt to interpret the *dualistic dichotomy* of Aristotelian binomial substance/accidents should be argued so that it represents a form of inconceivability of a singular which is not simultaneously judged plural, also in accordance to Nancy. Instead, Raunig emphatically insists on Gilbert’s illustration of distinction in the domain of *rationes theologicae* in order to evince *persona*’s definition and so finally *dividuum*’s notion.

The first conceptual difference of theological realm derives from the necessity of respecting not only the unity and oneness of the subject at issue (God), but also its simplicity that should be in conflict with any perspective of divisibility. The theological inapplicability of dualistic scheme relating to natural subsistence makes Gilbert speak about “essence” (*essentia*) referring to *quo est* and that’s the “divinity” (*divinitas*), and *quod est* designating the trinity (of one *deus*). Beyond the eventual theological and heretic questions, it is relevant to highlight that in Trinitarian doctrine the distinction of these two elements and the enumeration of the three persons are claimed to exclude any *possibility* of being *not one* quite in virtue of being three and not more. In other words, just because the divinity must be inevitably *one*, God must consequently be three persons with no ontological condition of numerical multiplication nor addition, since the three and solely the three “is” essentially ‘in-con-divisible’ and indivisible *quod est*, but *is* the same *quo est* resting without any *cum*. The “with” is impossible for the fact that no con-division and therefore no con-dividuality is producible, otherwise the essence should be absurdly tripled. A divine person neither substantiate other *two* persons, nor can con-join with them, if not as pure complete co-identification with the essence alone. These considerations lead to argue that no iterability is possible and solely where two is the numerical consequence of one, the iteration becomes a process

of *individuation* and so of constituting an individual relating to a dividium two. In trinity's relation, the two can never divide itself from one, but not even one from itself in that one is never *different* from one with the unique and always self-identifying essence. One is the same one in being the two *essentially* and *exclusively* in the *same* mode in which both of them manage themselves with regard to the *three*. No form of dichotomy nor of trichotomy but solely of henotic self-individualizing whereby each can be itself *simultaneously* 'with' and 'without the other two', therefore *within* both of these. Such a 'with' is useless and incompetent to constitute a con-division, because there are not its con-dividing and con-divided components, but to realize its constitutive 'out', that's to conserve the unchangeable essential uniqueness and simplicity, the absolute singleness, the singularity not evolvable into a dialectical interaction with the plurality because of a mere impossibility to be but the alone. In this way the 'true' nature of one is conceivable, whereas the conceivability of the two is deprived of the possibility of its own one, which is not coinciding with the solely possible alone one, so that all is one and in one solely. A one coinciding with its own two posits in itself the three of it and of its own two, but not *numerically* in the sense that the affirmation of the alone possible two as own impedes to an otherness of two from one, namely that it can be adjunctive to itself, can be *jointly, independently together*. And that is possible only because the three is already essentially (logically?) present as unjoint *proprium* of one and its two which cannot be together, but *are* the same unique essence.

This formalism is also informative for the political one, yet analogically. Theological essence is to be read politically as non-essence without allowing the wholeness of the one to be excluded in spite and instead of the ineluctable multiplicity. No opposition between individuum and dividium is contemplable in both the realms. What unequivocally emerges, is the absolute paradigmatic 'universality' of *number* in all its *power of conditioning* every other discourses or elements, but provided that it might be also *innumerable*, indeed ought to be so. The one is at most a consequence, not a presupposition of the number. The number has to be in some size 'un-decodable', neither individualized nor dividualized; it is a real cipher which escapes to any attempt of deciphering it. At the same time, the number cannot be presupposed but by one and 'universally' as well as absolutely not 'transversally'. And this in politics' domain looms an indisputable *fact*, an inviolable necessity; it is its true *instituent* power. Analogically, as one in theological dogma is insuppressible, so it is in politics which is not approachable by the political science without such a theoretical 'dogma'. The difference of the two *ones* consists on the fact that theological one is transcendent and so immutable, fixed, one

and solely one, the political one is contingent, 'erratic', oscillating one in front of non-one, quite because the numerability is *inessential* to the political one which tends to be the *common*, the maker of the common, and the accommodating to it and to the having in common to all, while the theological one is by essence numerable, *is* common to itself, namely simplifies numerically itself *with* itself. From another point of view, for the one the difference doesn't consist only in being neither the many, nor (the) few. In the dichotomy one/other(s) a trichotomy is met: one/few/many with an innumerable variation of typologies (minorities and majorities), and above all the less is not truly less than the more. An underlying reason is the 'aspiration' of the political to the all, but which is really nothing, and therefore to 'compenetrate' the total essence of being. In this point the two realms find a contact: what theologically as well as politically is one, is so only because such a one is *number* able to 'conclude', namely to put *numerically* its 'termination', as the sort of 'doing *the* number'. In the Trinitarian dogma somehow the essence are what does produce effectively number, but what does determine their number, and thus *the* number of them, is the one, namely not only the unity but also the peculiar totality inherent to this (numeric) unity. In the political 'fact', analogically one, few and many produce number, only one does produce *the* number, but, unlike the theological one, that political does conclude the termination not in all. The political one totalizes without anything, com-penetrates the others so to be it alone, to conclude all (peculiar all) to itself and not into all (coinciding with all). The political one, in order to subsist, needs to determine *partially* and *partial* every other eventual one and non-one, to 'organize' the claimed insufficiency of their one or non-one, indeed its own *factual* nullity. The *nihil* is not yet duly thought, especially in politics. And the not appearing all is just the nothing. The apparent all of the political one does not appear so, because it does make all other one appear apparent, solely undetermined in perennial and variously non-organized dialectics of a few and many, wherein the one is a bit more than a null multiplicity or zero, and thus a little less than one. One, little, few, many, all, nothing are the *numerical* (neither qualitative nor quantitative) categories that are not yet considered, above all, scrutinized relatively to the political one, and more peculiarly to the politics in general. One is somehow *numerically* asymmetric; in other words, it seems to result that one is, so to say, more than other numbers for the place or the number itself it occupies; but conversely, one is something less without other numbers. In the political realm, one, even though it keeps this prerogative, strives to occupy all but *exclusively*, taking upon itself the 'prerogative' of assigning peculiar prerogatives inevitably due to the others, which otherwise should be unable to be *instituted*. The political

one constitutes the others which are made a form of its (re)iteration or its undifferentiated nothing, so the mode of authorization of *repeating* itself, even through infinite, still more (presumed) revolutionary self-restorations, because it makes itself a future, its future and so the unique possible future, decides always eschatologically its meta-politics in general. One and solely one always repeats itself in spite of reciprocal conformities or not conformities, as Sisyphus' labor.

The continuum of this 'abstractness', propagandized as the unique essence of all for its intangible, uncontrolled dialectics always is to combine with the inescapable chronic discontinuity, not the sensible, aware or unaware, sensation of time passing, but its historical partitions (past, present, future) fulfilled with the fullness of the again and again perpetuating one which cannot tolerate any type of rivalries, even less the rival many. *Dividual* in being condividual has no effectiveness of multiplying the form of one. Quite the contrary, it is one of possible and concrete multiple forms of conserving and reaffirming solely 'totalitarian' substance of the political one and the politics of one for its exclusive and particular in substitutability. The political is only a specific and emblematic paradigm of the one and leads its one to persist and insist in its absoluteness respectively with, amid and against the many continuously enforced to a prevailingly, overwhelmingly anonymous dis-jointure in whichever position they take with regard to the one. A similar rift necessarily contaminates and then infects hybridly the logic of the many in their opposition of being complex (insecure) as to present itself purely and inconsistently as not-one, like no one with implications of anarchism not fixable at (some)one. The politician cannot ignore constitutionally the 'tradition' of the uniqueness of its unique one and so 'betrays' the much and the many, the little and the few (also Raunig's aesthetic revolutionarities) by uniting all in his simple uniqueness because there is not any one whichever, but as that only one which is the sole true or simple and, after all, can be propagated and reiterate as such or at least as the usual absolute one. The politics of the one, therefore the politics in itself is possible, hence really is, solely as totally recurring one and nothing else, in the same way in which a divine person performs the unique and total divine essence and nothing else.