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# The plague and the end of times

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## Preliminary observation

Given the current propensity for defamation, which has increased as a consequence of the social effects of the plague that has fallen on the world, it should be clarified that the following reflections have their own autonomy and specific subject. They find, however, their epistemological premises in two books by the author: *Arcana Imperii. Tratado metafísico-político* (2018) (*Arcana Imperii: Metaphysical-political treatise*) and *Summa Cosmologiae: Breve tratado (político) de inmortalidad* (2020) (*Summa Cosmologiae: Brief (political) treatise on immortality*). These correspond to volumes III and IV, respectively, of the polyptych *The community of spectres*, published by the editors Miño e Dávila. These lines were written during the compulsory confinement due to the pandemic known as COVID-19.

1.

An indisputable sign of the New Eon is the clear evidence that the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church does not believe in God. Spiritual leader

of one of the oldest forms of Christianity in the West, the Pope, as well as the entire hierarchy of the Church (with the exception, of course, of certain orders, especially female ones), decided to decline any action that, in the past, would have been a duty of faith: caring for the sick, exposure to the dangers of helping others, entrusting yourself to God, assisting prelates, the personal comfort of the faithful. Certainly, this defection does not find its cause in lassitude, political opportunism or in the inexperience of an institution that had precisely made the administration of earthly life an evangelizing mission. We must not deceive ourselves: the Pope and the ecclesiastical hierarchy simply fear to die as a result of exposure to the plague. When the Pope fears death, the evidence of his messianic endowment becomes illegitimate and shows the absolute decline of fides. The Pope, in short, no longer believes in dogmas like that of the resurrection, since he doesn't trust them for the spiritual protection of his pastoral in this life of viral threat. In a similar context, what is therein implied imposes itself: if he does not believe in dogmas, then he does not believe in God. It is not about questioning the private conscience of the Supreme Pontiff. On the contrary, it's about taking to task his praxis. In this sense, the Pope acts *as if* he does not believe in God. This suffices for a discussion about the public consequences of his act of disbelief. Without this belief, the universal *Ecclesia* is an empire that overthrows itself. Consequently, this has immediate effects on the secular states of the world. The secularization of Modernity may well camouflage its theological-political origin, but the collapse of the theological institution has not resulted in the liberation of earthly power from the ties of inherited dogmas. On the contrary, as Earth's government institutions tied their fate to the theological-political matrix of universal *Ecclesia*, the overthrowing of the empire drags with it all constituted powers into the realm of radical nihilism. Therefore, the world of the Posthumous, can now develop on a

planetary scale without any conditioning or censorship. The struggle for the New Universal Domain has begun.

2.

Was the beginning of the epidemic deliberate? Is this a virus by natural mutation or a virus of human *design*? Were, in fact, the protocols of the Chinese laboratories violated? And, if so, did this happen voluntarily or involuntarily? These questions are of the highest relevance, but are matters for future historiography. Is there an exaggeration regarding the biomedical dimension of the coronavirus? Would epidemiology, in this case, be covering up an original plan of world domination? Again, epidemiology and political science will be able to answer that in the future. If such a thing as a future is possible. Right now, we have to deal with *facticity*: the plague is here. We will start, then, from this premise as a necessary methodological caveat at the moment when historical archeology still lacks temporal distance and the empirical materials to operate with: because it's an ongoing phenomenon, its archive has not yet been constituted.

3.

We're certainly not experiencing a new episode of the establishment of the state of exception as a rule or policy norm. We are going through a period of plague. The plague brings with it the state of exception as an inherent element. For the first time in Gaia's history, the plague is global. There follows, then, a global state of exception. Its appearance does not represent a particular novelty, but, on the other hand, its global character,

needs to be scrupulously considered. The historical episode known as the «plague of Athens» which occurred around 430 BC, was one of the deadliest episodes in the fatal cycle of the Peloponnesian war. We can also consider that the subsequent arrival of the sanctuary of Asclepius to the city of Athens must be read with the lacerating memory of the epidemic as a historical background. The most fruitful historical account we have of the modalities of the plague and its immediate effects on the forms of life in the city of Athens belongs to Thucydides.

The plague started in Ethiopia and passed through several geographical areas until it arrived in Athens via the Piraeus. Thucydides' description of the social phenomenology of the plague follows a pattern that had already been established by Homer in the *Iliad*. Among citizens, the effect was devastating. There were those who chose to abandon their sick, as well as others who died from contagion by the sick they were taking care of. Religious piety was broken because, «defeated by the spread of the disease, they grew tired of lamenting those who died» (Thucydides, *Historiae*, II, 51). Directly related to this aspect, burial practices were completely subverted:

«To unseemly burials in face of the lack of what was necessary for the continuous burials they had previously carried out; some put their dead on someone else's pyre, setting them on fire, in anticipation of those who had piled them up, and others, while burning other corpses, threw what they carried over and set out to march.» (Thucydides, *Historiae*, II).

This collapse of the city's religious unity was followed by an inexorable absolute collapse of all forms of legitimacy of divine and human institutions:



«Also in all other aspects, the disease was the beginning of anomie (anomías) for the city [...] Neither the fear of the gods nor the law of men (*theôn dè phóbos he anthrópon node*) had been obstacles, considering that it was the same to be respectful or not, when they saw that everyone perished equally, and because they believed that no one would live until the trial to pay for their crimes but that a much greater punishment was already upon them, and before it fell on them, it was natural for them to enjoy of something in life.» (Thucydides, *Historiae*, II).

The expression used by Thucydides leaves no room for doubt: the plague precipitates the city in a radical anomie (including catastrophic hedonism). In fact, Lucretius provides the great philosophical paraphrase of Thucydides' historical account when he writes:

«For religion, then, had no weight, nor the power of the gods (*nec iam religio diuom nec numina magni prendebantur enim*); the present pain was excessive. In the city, the burial rite with which those people buried their dead was not observed; all the people were startled, in great disturbance (*perturbatus enim totus trepidabat*), and each buried his own as the occasion presented itself. The sudden need and destitution led to many horrors: some placed their relatives on pyres raised by others, with great shouting, and applied torches to them, sometimes sustaining bloody fights instead of abandoning their corpses. (Lucretius, *De natura rerum*, VI, 1276–1285).

In these verses, which are among the crudest verses of ancient philosophy, there's a theoretical challenge. Here, the city is not thought to be *tanquam dissoluta*, but on the contrary, it is historically and effectively decimated. In Thucydides and Lucretius, therefore, there is no legal metalanguage that takes in the sovereign exception, since all sovereignty - human and divine - erodes until it disappears completely. It is not,

therefore, a state of the law (as with the exceptionality of its permanence in a suspended state), but a current state of the world. If we recall it here its because we can evidently compare it to our current situation, except, perhaps, for the fact that in our time no mass indulgence would be permitted before the Great Orgone.

In the plague of Athens, as a central episode of the Peloponnesian War, there comes a time when the whole social scaffolding reaches its zero degree, and both human and divine rights give in, in the face of natural disaster. The absolute depoliticization of the human world is succeeded then, by the absolute politicization of nature, which only speaks the language of death. In this sense, zoopolitics begins by order of non-human nature, the first foundation on which to measure the entire order of the community. The appropriation of the ungovernable and potentially deadly natural, is the first constitutive political act, and the zoopolitical gesture consists precisely in the construction in the realm of the world, of a habitable ecosystem for the human animal.

However, no human political community can be constituted without being fully aware of its co-original relationship with the sphere of *physis*, to which it also inextricably belongs. Therefore, the powers of the non-human natural are a primordial political force that overdetermines any decision in the world of men: if this dimension of nature as a political agent in the constitution of the human *societas* is not painstakingly considered, the aporias of law will not cease to multiply in ways which make the legal order a mere act of human decision based purely on the arbitrary will of the legislator.

Meanwhile, episodes like the plague of Athens (which, while an irruption of the devastating natural has the capacity to constitute itself as a

paradigm for theoretical reflection) remind us that there is no policy for man which is not based, precisely, in the in-decision inherent to the control of the non-human natural. In other words, the decisionism of the law, more than covering up its own normative anomie, acts as a fiction that conceals the political dimension of the natural that, *in extremis*, knows no *nómos* other than death (although this may act as a condition of the living, as biology incessantly shows).

The *anomie* of the plague (or, in this case, of its consequences) is, therefore, nothing other than a return to the stage where men must measure themselves again with the space of natural life and death, from which they were never removed, other than by the technical means of a right that fills that original confrontation in the form of an order that is as necessary as it is deaf to the circumstances that act as an impenetrable soil of all its theoretical outline. That is why, when all fictions and metaphors of law expire, takes place among the moderns what Hobbes called the «state of nature». Something that, far from being a «mythologema» as has sometimes been suggested, constitutes one of the deepest insights of modern philosophy about the scope of politics.

#### 4.

Usually, when a philosopher receives too much attention from the academic world, a process of lay canonization takes place that covers up access to the intended meanings. Such is currently the case with Michel Foucault's work. Some, not without a suspicious rush that only seems to reflect opinions that did not dare to be formulated previously, felt it opportune to repudiate him in the midst of the global plague. It seems to me a clear sign of the irremediable end of the Revolutionary ideal

(something to which Foucault himself had already admitted) which has intermittently animated the previous century. Other great living philosophers have been speaking out about the plague these last weeks. One of them was insulted in perfect conformity with the rules governing mass press. Another was ridiculed, and another, more than falling into, has put himself at ridicule. There are those who were unable to resist the temptation to surrender, purely and simply, to *gossip*. I perceive, in this scenario, the decline of contemporary intellectual culture but, mostly, the absence of any sensible perspective in the face of a catastrophe: far from the blend of ideas, another anomie imposed itself, the conceptual one, and also, it must be mentioned, resentment, that at this moment impacts world Academia as another form of plague; a situation that leads us inexorably to conclusions that nobody seems willing to draw.

In 1976, Foucault published the book *Discipline and Punish*. Using 18th century military archives, the philosopher gives an account of the measures that should be taken when a plague ravages a city: large-scale confinement, normativity of behavior, surveillance, denunciations, reconfiguration of normality and abnormality, establishment of exile-closure. The «fear of the plague», Foucault points out, allows for this complete social metamorphosis. Nothing new, pointed out the philosopher, because it deals with «all the mechanisms of power that, even today, are disposed around the abnormal». It is worth quoting *in extenso*:

«(...)there is an exceptional situation: against an extraordinary evil, power is mobilized; it makes itself everywhere present and visible; it invents new mechanisms; it separates, it immobilizes, it partitions; it constructs for a time what is both a counter-city and the perfect society; it imposes an ideal functioning, but one that is reduced, in the final analysis, like the

evil that it combats, to a simple dualism of life and death: that which moves brings death, and one kills that which moves.» (Foucault, 2002: 208).

Nothing new, we could now also say. But that would not be a correct statement. It's true: the dreams of a perfect society that the plague stimulates are celebrated everywhere in the mass media and social networks; the simple dualisms between life and death are expressed in other notions more adapted to current times or the capacities of the administrators; the counter-city is sought after and pursued with care. The scale of events, however, changes its purpose substantially. But first, a clarification is necessary: Foucault does not deny the biological reality of the plague, nor does he question the effectiveness of the methods for its eradication (it would be laughable to believe that this would be his position, given his obvious erudition on the history of medicine). He points out something different, that is, the price that every political decision implies, given that life itself is a form of power and the will to power does not cease in times of plague. On the contrary, curing the plague means taking on the inevitable consequences of the will to power. The efficiency acquired in the fight against the plague meant, then, that the social engineers applied their technopolitics to redesign the whole social fabric: the foundations of the already dissolved disciplinary society were thus laid.

Hence, we will now have to pay, except for a much higher price, because the scale of the events places us in front of the dilemma of the inevitable: the fight against the plague implies that the measures for its control are not exempt from the exercise of power. And power has a predilection for social experimentation. In fact, this appears to be a constitutive part of its nature. In order to live, to heal ourselves, it will be necessary to accept

the greatest experiment in history: the omnicomprehensive reconfiguration of the entire civilizational foundation of the earth's orb according to parameters that very few know and that basically, nobody controls. I have tried, in previous writings, to delineate the radiography of this new Eon, which signals the triumph of the Posthumous and the definitive end of the *Homo* era. The emergence of a New World Order is the inevitable price to pay to be saved from the plague. It is not an alternative, but a conjunction: one cannot ask for one without accepting the other. The kingdom of the Posthumous did not need the plague to manifest itself, since it was born long ago, inadvertently. The plague, however, will give an irrepressible boost to its establishment. Nothing will be the same when we are cured and the dead incinerated (on the other hand, no one knows, as I write these lines, on which side of the binomial they will end up in): our bodies and our sexualities, the ways of production and the ways of life. Political tradition had a name for a mutation of this scale that no one (or very few) dares to mention today: Apocalypse.

5.

A contemporary obstinacy, with its roots in Enlightenment, prevents us from understanding that the Apocalypse marks a theological-political phenomenon and, more precisely, the end of time. It happens that apocalypses have succeeded throughout history: the end of ancient civilizations, the advent of Christianity, the modern Revolutions that wiped out the economic and cultural ecosystem of the medieval world. Now, again, we have another such case. But the capitalization of the word is now more justified than ever: we are facing the Apocalypse, given that techno-mutation is measured on a planetary scale.

A singular misunderstanding hangs over the name Apocalypse, which makes philosophy treat it with suspicion today. In fact, a lack of understanding of the apocalyptic tradition is another sign of the decline of politics in the contemporary world, which must be lamented, as the word belongs to the political grammar of the West and marks the end and beginning of civilizational caesurae. It does not imply inaction; on the contrary, its modalities belong to the most conspicuous heritage of action: Marxism, can finally be seen as a secularized apocalyptic form.

As an enlightened pen from the twentieth century wrote: «if revolution means opposing the totality of the world a new totality which, being equally comprehensive concerning its foundations, reinstates it and rejects it, then the apocalyptic is essentially revolutionary» (Taubes, 2010: 29). Contemporary Apocalypse does not constitute a conservative Restoration neither, as certain voices alarmed with justice preach in the Newspaper. We are dealing with a new Great Mutation, the largest that the History of the living humans of Gaia has known since Paleolithic times and that supposes the advent of the Kingdom of the Posthumous, who will change, forever, the face of the Orb. Judging from what we've seen so far, the horrors have only just begun. In the words of ancient Western mystical theology: Katéchon as finally risen.

## 6.

The epidemic is the biological modality of a Language Pandemic. SARS-CoV-2 has its correlate in the virus that affects language and pushes it to the end of metaphysics. It is a recent affliction for talking beings: it is not part of the historical genetics of Language, but it is the result of the choices of those who decided to relinquish (or cause, with a firm purpose,

the loss of) all and any destiny of freedom for the inhabitants of Gaia. The quasi-transcendentals of Modernity that Foucault spoke of, that is, Life, Work and Language, are precisely subjects of the Great Mutation towards the New Eon. Basically, zoopolitics has an accidental character in the thickness of the transition and in the substantial character of the changes: we are before the rise of Omega, that is, of the Anti-number and universal digitization as a new Whole. It's not therefore, just a thanatopolitics; what is being outlined on the horizon is Anti-life, something that is beyond any proper categorical understanding of the great System of Metaphysics, whose foundations have been reduced to rubble in all the corners of the planet with the intention that no speaking being can emit the pronoun «I» as a mark of insurmountable singularity. The Algorithmic Liturgy only admits inclusion without surplus: Universality will now be the anti-metaphysical Absolute never before achieved. Omega is the new hidden God who rules the destinies of mortals and immortals when all the *Nachleben* of the world past is finally stopped and expelled from the wheel of Time.

7.

The Masters of the world, their spokesmen, representatives and lackeys of varied types intend to present blackmail in the form of a noble cause: quarantine or death; confinement in life or death in freedom. There is no doubt that these educated Masters know the mass that we all constitute and know it permeated by hypermodern speech. In the past, perhaps the majority would have chosen freedom, albeit risking their own lives. Let's be clear: choosing is inevitable and that is the unavoidable tragedy of our condition. The Masters of the world know this perfectly well, but they want to manipulate the answer. They claim to do this for the sake of life.



Everything they undertake, however, feeds doubt, for while saving lives today (who could judge them petty or disagree with such a high purpose?), they prepare tomorrow's catastrophes and sacrifices. There's no lack of those who, with the brutal honesty of power, propose right now to use the pandemic as a weapon of ethnic cleansing. The dream of many would be the production of a natural Holocaust which would exempt of all guilt the criminals who wish it, to purify society from those living beings they believe should be eliminated.

In reality, the more experienced Masters have no other objective than to make exhausted speaking beings utter, by their own volition, the final words of desperation: «May sleep and death come! You who promise nothing, but who keep everything» (Kierkegaard, 1901–1906: 52).

Evidently, blackmail cannot be deactivated by the simple choice of life over death. The choice for a critique of the life-death pair is a task of the greatest relevance, but pedantic or inopportune for those who face the risk of imminent death. We, speaking beings, will have to accept that we either establish by our own (both collectively and individually) how we want to live the human tragedy of death (or of life), or others will do it for us. In Kantian terms, either speaking beings abandon their perpetual historical childhood (where no original innocence is nestled), or slavery in life awaits them around the corner. It just so happens that one only abandons childhood as rupture and tragedy. Bad news for the dreams of happiness of the inhabitants of the present millennium. Perhaps the time has come for philosophy to emerge from its lethargic and voluntary exile on the campuses of the world's universities and raise its voice again to remind us, at once, what are the inevitable problems of existence in this world. Without false concessions, or empty promises, without insolvent optimisms or pessimisms at the disposal of the lazy. In short, without forgetting philosophy's inaugural commitment to the forms of truth,

because anti-philosophy *can*, but *shouldn't*, prevail.

8.

At the hour of agony of the ancient world, Libanium asked himself: «could a man walk again the paths of life, after having buried friend after friend, knowing that he only keeps intact the goods he possesses?» (Orationes, VII, 10). Our current question is even more urgent, since after the pandemic, not even the goods of the world (which, in any case, Libanium already underestimated) will remain standing. Neither Good, nor the goods, or friendship. Are we, by any chance, prepared to live in such a world? As Guy Debord wrote premonitorily in 1971, «the *terrible* choices of the near future, by contrast amount, to but one alternative: total democracy or total bureaucracy» (Debord, 2007: 92). The course of the world up until the moment I write these lines, where the ideal of Revolution seems ineluctably faded and where no other different but utopian transformation of the world is foreseen, makes us fear that the second option is the one chosen by the Posthumous. Will anyone dare to challenge them? And, if the answer is affirmative, is there any chance against them? A new gigantomachia of History as begun, maybe, now yes, as a last chance. Even if all is lost, it would be desirable that philosophers do not take up an unseemly role in the dispute.

## 9. Post-scriptum

Before the storm, it's worthwhile to clarify that the statements made here about the faith of ecclesiastical hierarchies does not extend to the faith of believers. The distinction is important. In the same way, the exhortations

in the text for an awakening of philosophy also concern, as an opinion in this case theology, on which it is necessary to place hope. The word philosophy is used in this text as the fearless name of a collective onto which all knowledge can be added if it is in accordance with the premise of not giving in to the proposed *future* world announced by the Posthumous. The proposal of a world is not the equivalent to opinions or recommendations on the treatment of the *current* pandemic. On this, and on how it should be treated, other thinkers in the world (is it necessary to mention respectable doctors?) have expressed enlightened comments in a scenario that, as is well known, changes daily. This distinction is also important.

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**Translation by Susana Mouzinho**

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