Motivations, Exile, Spirit of Splitting, Political Combativeness of the Supreme Poet

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Abstract: : In this essay the author examines the biography and the words of Dante's political experience. In the works of the Poet, we find the models of the social psychology of responsibility in the extreme situations caused by a universal political choice.

As a man forced to live for long years as a refugee, banned, exiled, Dante Alighieri has an existential motivation that is topical in every age: he projects painful defeat into an eschatological vision, the condition of a loser in the society of his time, of the condemned without appeal.

The personality of Alighieri is the archetype of political passion and the psychology of philosophical and militant intransigence. Why does a man keep fighting while being aware of the irrevocability of his historical defeat?

Instead of falling back in the attention to "particulare", the Poet investigates the meaning of history and gives us the ideal model of politics, illuminated by the eschatology of Salvation. Witness to the last, even when "here everything falters" (V. Klemperer).

The defeat in politics turns into primacy in history, in awareness and in language. Dante is imprinted in the character of the Italians. Not for everyone, but certainly for Italians who love freedom and service to their homeland.

Dante's political psychology is "as a living construction of an intellectual unity and an ethical [unity], conforming to a conception of reality" (Gramsci). In short, it is the perfect representation of self-awareness in which theory and practice finally unify. Self-awareness requires giving a transcendent meaning to the commitment of life, limited by nature over time, for a high purpose, for the universal values of the common good that are to be achieved, on the social, religious, psychological and moral.

Dante is an immense mine where you can dig to understand how the real motivation is built; how the political subject is formed; how a man resists; because the witness does not cease

even in the face of exile and extreme suffering.
This problem is of capital importance in the present time of the eclipse of ideal values. The question is: why do some use their intellectual energies even after an irremediable defeat? Of which they are also aware. Why do they sacrifice the years of life, bearing sacrifices consequent to their strenuous will to pursue a project of society?

In a time when the lie pervades and dominates public affairs, becoming a permanent and refined method of government (according to the reading of Hanna Arendt), when all this happens because the dominant motivations of the action of "politicians" (or more precisely, of the personnel that should represent a general function) are merely private interest (economic-material or narcissistic: it does not make much difference) then re-reading Dante as a passionate and suffering intellectual-political person can make us rediscover a paradigm of pedagogy, precisely political. It can show us how in opposition to the 'Particular', a thrust to transcendent commitment is formed and activated in the soul and intellect of those who have so much self-love that motivates them to think of a civil government in-depth and in the name of rational honesty.
Dante conveys an archetype of inner feeling, of having to be in the political sphere. He fights for it, demonstrating through and through how he conceives a universal plan that transcends individual destinies. Because the political conception becomes one with the private moral sphere of the Poet's existence, setting himself as an admirable example of that "the private is political" which six and a half centuries later will impose itself as a popular slogan. However, beyond the banal cliché, those who use it are often not even aware and they do not understand the profound meaning and the duty it entails.
Dante, subjected to the outrage of the exile and of expulsion from the historical and philosophical construction of the City-State, following the defeat of his part without the possibility of a comeback, he cultivates a radical "spirit of splitting[1]" which draws on Christianity to corroborate its universalistic design with a great choice of myths and figures of the classical tradition, of which the 'Inferno' is only a marvellous concentrate, starting with Virgil himself.
In the Inferno, Canto VI, where Dante encounters Ciacco Dell'Anguillara, the Poet shows the inevitable suffering and irrevocable fate of the defeated in politics.

E quelli a me: «Dopo lunga tencione
verranno al sangue, e la parte selvaggia
caccerà l'altra con molta offensione.

Poi appresso convien che questa caggia
infra tre soli, e che l'altra sormonti

[1] *G. Sorel, Le système historique de Renan, Paris, Jaques, 1905 (in F. Aqueci, Una cosa da nulla. il futuro della morale in George Sorel, «Critica marxista», 5/2007, pp. 41-48). The figure of the "spirit of splitting" consciousness is taken up by Antonio Gramsci, who made it a powerful explanatory concept of irrevocable dissent and which pushes people and classes to elaborate a vision of the world in radical pragmatic dissonance from the dominant ideological apparatuses: " spirit of splitting, that is the progressive acquisition of the conscience of one's historical personality, spirit of splitting that must tend to expand from the principal class to to the potentially allied classes; all this demands a complex ideological work" (Quaderni del carcere, 3, 49, 332-3, B, a c. di V. Gerratana, Torino, Einaudi 1975).*

con la forza di tal che testé piaggia.

Alte terrà lungo tempo le fronti,
tenendo l'altra sotto gravi pesi,
come che di ciò pianga o che n'aonti.

Giusti son due, e non vi sono intesi;
superbia, invidia e avarizia sono
le tre faville c'hanno i cuori accesi»[2].

Politics is violent confrontation, which resolves disputes with weapons and extreme coercion. Despite the fact that the guelfi Bianchi (White Guelphs, Dante's party) have expelled the guelfi Neri (Black Guelphs), they will return to power almost three years later favoured by the help that the pope (Boniface VIII) subtly provides by delegitimizing the political party of Alighieri.
The moral decadence of the Florentines will facilitate the oppression of the defeated, under the pressure of "pride, envy and avarice", deadly sins that only inflame the hearts of compatriots.
Thus, also the name of Dante is written in the 'Libro del Chiodo', the existing repertoire of the bills against the Ghibellines and the White Guelphs, for the infamous accusation of rebellion against the City-State, which definitively excludes them from public life, with graduated penalties up to exile and death.
Among the condemned, Dante Alighieri is branded as guilty of embezzlement during his priory (1300). Also, he is accused of having acted against the Pope and Charles of Valois, against the peaceful state of Florence and the Guelfi, of having caused the split of the Guelfi of Pistoia and the expulsion of the Guelfi Neri (Black Guelphs) party.
Therefore, the Cante de 'Gabrielli da Gubbio imposed Dante's exile on January 27, 1302, and on March 10, even the death penalty.
Dante's awareness of an irrevocable sentence demonstrates the dramatic dilemmas in the psychology of political dissent: when it involves high costs and cannot be compensated again in life. Dante and Aeneas appear to come together in this, sharing a similar fate, one of military and political defeats and consequent escape and exile. The theme that strikes us is that of defeat in politics, when the personal existential dimension is inseparable from the destiny of the general party, which leaves no other way to possibly escape it than the dishonour.
How does a man manage to "stick to the point"? Why does the loser - aware of the impossibility of revenge - push his intellectual production to very high peaks? Why in a moment of extreme suffering does the mind produce unprecedented insight? Moreover, why does the awareness of this power of

[2] *'And he to me then: "After struggling long / they 'll come to bloodshed, and the boorish party / will drive the other out with much offence. // Then, afterward, the latter needs must fall / within three suns, and the other party rise, / by help of one who now is 'on the fence.' // A long time will it hold its forehead up, / keeping the other under grievous weights, / howe'er it weep therefor, and be ashamed. // Two men are just, but are not heeded there; / the three sparks that have set men's hearts on fire, / are overweening pride, envy and greed." (The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri. The Italian Text with a Translation in English Blank Verse and a Commentary* by Courtney Langdon, vol. 1 (Inferno), Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918.

the mind reinforce the determination to testify to the last?
There is no political reform without intellectual, moral reform. It is one of the distinctions between mere ambition and commitment that gives meaning to the existence of some individuals. Six centuries after Alighieri, Antonio Gramsci, writes from the darkness of his prison: "every collapse brings with it an intellectual and moral disorder. We need to create sober, patient men who do not despair in the face of the worst horrors and do not celebrate nonsense. Pessimism of intelligence, optimism of the will "[3].
We perceive the reflections on the psyche and pride in the liberating function of Dante's tirade.

«Ahi Pisa, vituperio de le genti
del bel paese là dove 'l sì suona,
poi che i vicini a te punir son lenti,
muovasi la Capraia e la Gorgona,
e faccian siepe ad Arno in su la foce,
sì ch'elli annieghi in te ogne persona!»[4]
(Inferno, canto XXXIII)

«Ahi serva Italia, di dolore ostello,
nave sanza nocchiere in gran tempesta,
non donna di province, ma bordello!»[5]
(*Purgatorio*, canto VI)

Everything is political in the Divina Commedia. The condition of exile and the suffering for the motherland, Florence. Dante gives a character to Italian patriotism, which still remains today. The irrevocability of the condition of exile as a hopeless exile, returning to the homeland pushes the refugee to outline a great eschatological design of the new historical political order: the Empire as a world government which has the mission of leading to the pacification of peoples and of Italy.
We read in point 7 of Epistle VI: "Le sante sanzioni delle leggi dichiarano appunto, e la ragione umana dopo attento esame stabilisce, che i pubblici domìni delle cose, per quanto a lungo trascurati, non possono mai estinguersi, e, se pur svigoriti, impugnarsi; poiché ciò che contribuisce all'utilità di tutti, senza danno di tutti non può perire o anche essere infirmato: e questo Dio e la natura non vuole, e il consenso dei mortali profondamente aborrirebbe"[6].

[3] *Antonio Gramsci, Quaderno 28 (iii), pp. 10-13, edizione a c. di V. Gerratana. Einaudi, Torino, 1975.*
[4] *"Ah, Pisa, foul reproach of those that dwell / in that fair country where the sì is heard; / since slow thy neighbors are to punish thee, // then let Caprara and Gorgona move, / and make a hedge across the Arno's mouth, / that every person in thee may be drowned!" (The Italian Text with a translation in english blank verse and a commentary by Courtney Langdon vol. 2 (Inferno), Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918).*
[5] *"Ah, Italy, thou slave, thou inn of woe, / ship without pilot in a mighty storm, / not queen of provinces, but house of shame!" (The Italian Text, therein).*
[6] *"7. Nempe legum sanctiones alme declarant, et humana ratio percontando decernit, publica rerum dominia, quantalibet diuturnitate neglecta, nunquam posse vanescere vel abstenuata conquiri; nam quod ad omnium cedit utilitatem, sine omnium detrimento interire non potest, vel etiam infirmari; et hoc Deus et natura non vult, et mortalium penitus abhorreret adsensus". Published in A. Montefusco, G. Milani (editor),Le lettere di Dante: Ambienti culturali, contesti storici e circolazione dei saperi, Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, 2020*

Here, in reading Dante, one engages in a critical-active relationship to the present miseries of politics, cultivating - almost to the limit of heroic imagination - the utopia of justice due to a change in politics. Thus, politics, which we have learned to understand, with Machiavelli, as ontologically separated from morality, works to absorb the ethical sphere to the point of suppressing it even as a mere instance—eventually, recovering it as a "limit concept", as a thought of high goals, which transcend the petty load of tactical operations, of power urges and celebrations of a role, in those who hold any position of power.

The Political passion is framed here as a universal projection of present history, the one experienced with the news, in the clashes, with the mobilizations and with the projections of citizenship, through an elaborate, rich, sincere, poetic and philosophical belief. We want to emphasize that the genealogy and evolution of political passion are a relevant issue even in the current era, characterized by a disconcerting crisis of the public spirit (Gramsci) and the prevailing bias to pursue the Particular (Guicciardini a century and a half later).

Dante, the father of both the Italian language and the archetype of political passion, of the spirit of party and political movement, still stands out in front of us as a model of consistency and sacrifice, and of the fire that burns permanently, creating the thread that guides the progress of the action, science and philosophy that connotes his biography: real and also ideal for emulation, the moral promise that the party man makes to himself as a foundation of a permanent commitment. Until it becomes total investment, vocation, exaltation, fanaticism.

Thus we feel the solitude in the political exile of a genius who had complete knowledge and awareness of the historicity of the time he lived, of the universal that was and would remain after him. Furthermore, he was able to face the suffering of exile, drinking the bitter chalice every day.

Exile, exiled, ostracized, ostracism

It has been appropriately observed that "The itinerancy connected with the exile determined for Dante the cultural detachment from Florence" and then generated "an ideal figure of a poet-prophet". All of this, in the face of an unprecedented violent sentence, which at that time entailed the ultimate fate of dying for the exiled person. "Called wargus, wolf, forced to wander around the wilderness", exposed to the unpunished contempt of anyone who dares to do so. Dante, therefore, is banned, and he reacts by overturning the stigmatization in a great eschatological vision of politics, giving us a monument of thought that overcomes the silence of the centuries. The cruel humiliations are framed in the ruthless accuracy of Cacciaguida's prophecy, an ancestor of Dante:

Tu lascerai ogne cosa diletta
più caramente; e questo è quello strale
che l'arco de lo essilio pria saetta.

Tu proverai sì come sa di sale
lo pane altrui, e come è duro calle
lo scendere e 'l salir per l'altrui scale

E quel che più ti graverà le spalle,
sarà la compagnia malvagia e scempia
con la qual tu cadrai in questa valle;

che tutta ingrata, tutta matta ed empia
si farà contr´ a te ma, poco appresso,
ella, non tu, n´avrà rossa la tempia.

Di sua bestialitate il suo processo
farà la prova; sì ch´a te fia bello
averti fatta parte per te stesso.

(Paradiso, Canto XVII)[7]

The universal prototype of the exile is described in an accurate page of the Convivio[8]

3. Ahi, piaciuto fosse al dispensatore dell'universo che la cagione della mia scusa mai non fosse stata! ché né altri contra me avria fallato, né io sofferto avria pena ingiustamente, pena, dico, d'essilio e di povertate.
4. Poi che fu piacere delli cittadini della bellissima e famosissima figlia di Roma, Fiorenza, di gittarmi fuori del suo dolce seno - nel quale nato e nutrito fui in fino al colmo della vita mia, e nel quale, con buona pace di quella, desidero con tutto lo core di riposare l'animo stancato e terminare lo tempo che m´è dato -, per le parti quasi tutte alle quali questa lingua si stende, peregrino, quasi mendicando, sono andato, mostrando contra mia voglia la piaga della fortuna, che suole ingiustamente al piagato molte volte essere imputata.
5. Veramente io sono stato legno sanza vela e sanza governo, portato a diversi porti e foci e liti dal vento secco che vapora la dolorosa povertate; e sono apparito alli occhi a molti che forse che per alcuna fama in altra forma m´aveano imaginato: nel conspetto de´ quali non solamente mia persona invilio, ma di minor pregio si fece ogni opera, sì già fatta come quella che fosse a fare.
6. La ragione per che ciò incontra - non pur in me, ma in tutti - brievemente or qui piace toccare: e prima, perché la fama oltre la veritade si sciampia; e poi, perché la presenza oltre la veritade stringe[9].

[7] *"Thou shalt abandon all that thou hast loved / with greatest tenderness; and of its shafts / this is the one which exile's bow shoots first. // Thou shalt find out how salt another's bread / is wont to taste, and what a painful thing /is going up and down another's stairs. // But what will bow thy shoulders most will be / the bad and foolish company, with whom / thou 'It fall into this vale; for all ungrateful, // mad and malevolent will it become / against thee; but soon thereafter, it, not thou, / will have its forehead red with blood. Its deeds // will furnish proof of its bestiality; /hence well-becoming will it be for thee / to have made thyself a party by thyself". (The Italian Text with a translation in english blank verse and a commentary by Courtney Langdon vol. 3 (Paradiso), Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918).*

[8] *Convivio (I, iii, 3), Convivio di Dante Alighieri, a cura di S. Gentili, in Letteratura Italiana, Le Opere, diretta da A. Asor Rosa, vol. II, Einaudi, Torino, 1992.*

[9] *(3)" Ah, if only it had pleased the Maker of the Universe that the cause of my apology had never existed, for then neither would others have sinned against me, nor would I have suffered punishment unjustly—the punishment, I*

The extreme and unjustly inflicted suffering is overturned in an acceleration of the historical-political vision of a great *"project for the organization of culture and language and at the same time of universal poetry and an ideal figure of poet-prophet that already emerges in the rhymes of exile and finds its fullest realization in comedy. Dante is aware of constituting an original Christian vulgar epos, novel recreation of the high poetry of the Latin epos"* (Mercuri, cit.).

The exile was meant to cause profound humiliation, affecting the person's self-esteem. In those who had held leading roles in civil government, such as Dante, it could inflict a wound as a result of the frustration of self-esteem, of disqualification from the knowledge of his own greatness of vision and practical skills in various fields, including the most eccentric ones to intellectual production, such as fighting with weapons (Dante was at the forefront of the battle of Campaldino). Moreover, instead of being experienced as ostracism and outrage to dignity, it causes a formidable acceleration towards a cosmic vision that explores the process of degeneration of the world in detail: "we will lean the balance of our judgment on reason rather than sentiment[10]".

The exul immeritus reacts by turning to a grandiose design, which gives rise to poetry, philosophy, theology, the science of politics and justice. And still, in the character of the Italians, Dante's word is installed and allows them to bring out, unexpectedly, the will and subjects of the ruling class. Without this anchoring, we would only have to repeat Foscolo's words "all is lost".

Dante, since his name is written in the 'Libro del Chiodo', suffers an irrevocable stigma, which is combined with ostracism. He is sentenced to be ignored, rejected, excluded. It is the paradigm of total exile formulated in the prophecy of the great-great-grandfather Cacciaguida in Canto XVII of Paradiso. All those who are ostracized - both on the scale of the small social group and of a broad cross-sectional and "trans-communal" environment - still undergo severe relational dissociation. With violence - explicit or silent - natural and daily interpersonal contacts, spontaneous friendships, affections, exchanges of words and opinions are expropriated. They are always shunned and rejected on the side-lines. This is a central theme of social psychology, which can also affect ostracized genes. We owe to Professor A. Zamperini the complete description of a condition full of never-ending suffering, with the alternation of feelings of loss, mourning, defeat, moral knowledge, coercion suffered, dissidence, endurance in holding the position while "here everything falters" (Klemperer, the exile in the house of the philologist author of Lingua Tertii Imperi).

mean, of exile and poverty" // (4) Since it was the pleasure of the citizens of the most beautiful and famous daughter of Rome, Florence, to cast me out of her sweet bosom—where I was born and bred up to the pinnacle of my life, and where, with her good will, I desire with all my heart to rest my weary mind and to complete the span of time that is given to me—I have traveled like a stranger, almost like a beggar, through virtually all the regions to which this tongue of ours extends, displaying against my will the wound of fortune for which the wounded one is often unjustly accustomed to be held accountable. // (5) Truly I have been a ship without sail or rudder, brought to different ports, inlets, and shores by the dry wind that painful poverty blows. And I have appeared before the eyes of many who perhaps because of some report had imagined me in another form. In their sight not only was my person held cheap, but each of my works was less valued, those already completed as much as those yet to come. // (6) The reason why this happens, not only to me but to everyone, I briefly wish to touch on here: first, because esteem inflates things with respect to the truth, and secondly, because presence diminishes things with respect to the truth"; (Princeton Dante Project).

[10] *"… rationi magis quam sensui spatulas nostri iudicii podiamus"* (*De vulgari eloquentia*, I, VI, 3°)

Transcendent values move people because they feel that their existence, highlighted by a need for meaning, is linked to high goals of justice, honesty, safeguarding life and humanity. Dante's universal model presents itself as a parable of how they are aroused and how they are translated into common action, self-discipline, mutual respect between comrades in a universal pledge. Furthermore, Dante makes us think of the contemporary search for the logic of collective action and the three conditions of a progressing pledge.

The first is the solid common conviction in specific transcendent values, rooted in one's personality and that reflect the aspirations and needs connected to the sufferings of one's social being.

The second condition is the anchoring to a tradition that has given shape and depth to thought and self-awareness.

Finally, the third: the resolution to decide for oneself and apply a set of democratic rules, that are themselves standards for the procedures of common practice: in the succession of public spirit, political conscience, self-love that pushes towards responsible and persevering practice.

We hardly ever investigate why and how a person takes a political position, to the point that it motivates them to throws their life around it in a total investment. Politics is assumed as a prerequisite. And it is not explained. How does political passion arise? What are the motivational elements? What symbolic resources? Which expressive apparatus?

The circle of immigration and exile acts as a reinforcement of motivation when one has fought and has been defeated. A cybernetic problem of motivation, reaction, reinforcement was born with the disinterested vocation to represent an ethnic group, a community, a family, a class.

The relationship of responsibility towards the society has been replaced with the technique of manipulation to the limit of deception of the community. Nothing, since then, has been verifiable of what has been declared and how it has been acted upon.

How do we see people: wisdom or anger?

Political passion, its consequences in the course of existence, the price of defeat, up to the consequence of exile and perennial persecution, were recurring figures of conscience in Italy's renaissance. Moreover, they find their paradigm in Dante's biography. Nevertheless, they constituted an existential dimension for psychoanalysis, starting with the story of its founder, Freud, exiled following Hitler's Anschluss. In evoking this part of Dante's biography, the destiny of the "fugitive Ghibellin" finds reinforcement in the will of Ugo Foscolo, who was himself exiled after Campoformio.

"Da' colli Euganei, 11 ottobre 1797.

> *"Il sacrificio della patria nostra è consumato: tutto è perduto; e la vita, seppure ne verrà concessa, non ci resterà che per piangere le nostre sciagure, e la nostra infamia. Il mio nome è nella lista di proscrizione, lo so: ma vuoi tu ch'io per salvarmi da chi m'opprime mi commetta a chi mi ha tradito? Consola mia madre: vinto dalle sue lagrime le ho ubbidito, e ho lasciato Venezia per evitare le prime persecuzioni, e le più feroci. Or dovrò io abbandonare anche questa mia solitudine antica, dove, senza perdere dagli occhi il mio sciagurato paese, posso ancora sperare qualche giorno di pace? Tu mi fai raccapricciare, Lorenzo; quanti sono dunque gli sventurati? E noi, pur troppo, noi stessi italiani ci laviamo le mani nel sangue degl'italiani. Per me segua che può. Poiché ho disperato e della mia patria e di me, aspetto tranquillamente la prigione e la morte. Il mio*

cadavere almeno non cadrà fra braccia straniere; il mio nome sarà sommessamente compianto da´ pochi uomini buoni, compagni delle nostre miserie; e le mie ossa poseranno su la terra de´ miei padri…[11]*".*

And in front of his brother's tumb:

In morte del Fratello Giovanni
Un dì, s´io non andrò sempre fuggendo
di gente in gente, mi vedrai seduto
su la tua pietra, o fratel mio, gemendo
il fior de´ tuoi gentili anni caduto:
la madre or sol, suo dì tardo traendo,
parla di me col tuo cenere muto:
ma io deluse a voi le palme tendo;
e se da lunge i miei tetti saluto,
sento gli avversi Numi, e le secrete
cure che al viver tuo furon tempesta;
e prego anch´io nel tuo porto quiete:
questo di tanta speme oggi mi resta!
straniere genti, l'ossa mie rendete
allora al petto della madre mesta[12]*.*

Across the seven centuries that separate us from the death of the Poet, the plea of 'thinking of high goals' from Dante's work continues and renews itself. It calls us to turn to maiores nostri and react to the present's miseries, to that "all is lost" of the Ortis by Foscolo.

[11] *"From the Euganean Hills, October 11, 1797*
The sacrifice of our fatherland has been consummated: everything is lost, and life, if it will be granted us, will be left only to cry on our misfortunes, our infamy. My name is on the proscription list. I know it; but do you expect me surrender to those who betrayed me in order to save myself from the people who oppress me? Do console my mother. Overwhelmed by her tears. I obeyed her and left Venice to avoid the first and fiercest persecutions. Will I have to leave also this old refuge where I can still hope to find some peaceful days without abandoning forever my unfortunate country?
You frighten me, Lorenzo… how many unhappy souls! And we, alas, Italians ourselves, we wash our hands in Italians' blood. As for myself, let come what may. Because I have given up hope about my fatherland and myself, I am waiting calmly for imprisonment and death. Al least my body will not fall into the hands of foreigners. My name will be quietly mourned by the few worthy people, the companions of our pains, and my bones will rest in the land of my fathers".
Ugo Foscolo, The Last Letters of Jacopo Ortis (is a novel by Ugo Foscolo, considered the first epistolary novel of Italian literature (Three Italian Epistolary Novels: Foscolo, De Meis, Piovene: Translations, Introductions, and Backgrounds, Translated by V. Traversa, aus – American University Studies, Peter Lang). Ed. It., 2005, Rizzoli, Milan 1999.

[12] *Ugo Foscolo, On the Death of His Brother Giovanni / In morte del fratello Giovanni, "One day, if I am not to keep on fleeing / from people to people, you'll see me seated / on your stone, o my brother, weeping / for the fallen flower of your gentle years. // Our mother, alone now, drawing out her late day, / speaks about me to your mute ashes: / but I stretch out deluded palms toward you / and even though I greet my roofs from afar, // I feel the hostile Gods, and the secret cares / cares that were a tempest to your life, / and I too pray for the quietness of your haven. // This is all that remains to me today of so much hope! / Foreign people, when the time comes, give back my bones / to the bosom of my grieving mother!" (Ugo Foscolo: Poet of Exile, G. Cambon, Princeton University Press, 2014*

Dante's political exile – and its overturning that he realizes through his timeless work - maintains its pedagogical strength even towards those exiled without a formal ban from a 'reverse totalitarianism' – one where there is a void of public opinion and a consequent dimming of the awareness of capital responsibility in those who carry out an intellectual profession and from there it assumes political representation in institutions and parties. In this sense, the exile has not ceased.
However, Dante's heritage confirms the power of grand and insightful visions that can 'act': both in the virtuous formulation and in the mediocre or miserable vulgate, in the alignment of elites and masses, in the figures of popularism, elitism, populism, demagogy; with the obstinacy of the dramaturgical roles of the "rulers"; in the miserable fury of the crowds that also lead to atrocities. The poet's lofty invective evokes long and painful thoughts and experiences and contrasts them with the expedients of daily greed.
Dante's work reintroduces the archetypal figures of those who have reached knowledge, and therefore his ego is bound not to betray the intellectual clarity but to always submit to the commandment of truth. Furthermore, he is capable of unleashing the power of the spiritual leader, as a leader who exhorts and educates to pursue high goals: "you were not made to live like brutes but to serve virtue and knowledge".
Thus, how can we not try to shake up from the cultural collapse of memory the civil and democratic traditions rooted in the history of Italy, the moral Danteism of Ugo Foscolo, in his speech of January 22, 1809, at the University of Pavia?

> *"O Italiani, io vi esorto alle storie, perché niun popolo più di voi può mostrare né più calamità da compiangere, né più errori da evitare, né più virtù che vi facciano rispettare, né più grandi anime degne di essere liberate dalla obblivione da chiunque di noi sa che si deve amare e difendere ed onorare la terra che fu nutrice ai nostri padri ed a noi, e che darà pace e memoria alle nostre ceneri", orazione inaugurale della cattedra di eloquenza dell'Università di Pavia, 22 gennaio 1809, "Dell'origine e dell'ufficio della letteratura"*[13].

The forms of thought and action that exploded, then repressed, sank, and finally rose again in Italy have their archetype in the admirable synthesis that we find in the legacy of the Poet. Who, in the misery of the time that we live in our country, has not heard resound in the soul "ahi serva Italia di dolore ostello" ("Oh servant Italy, hostel of pain")?
Dante, therefore, and Dante again. Because that universal genius allows us to grasp the value of other literature work, certainly important, but not comparable to the legacy of Alighieri. Dante takes us into the folds of hell with all the complex phenomenology of the human and the inhuman. Disseminating in the circles - and then continuing in the other two great stages - experiences of humanity on figures of synthesis, since then no longer abandonable by the readers (and less and less by those who have heard them by great actors interpreters) opens us the view of ideas on archetypes

[13] *O italiani, io vi esorto alle storie... I Clarensi e il Risorgimento. Testimonianze inedite*, edit. La Compagnia della Stampa Quaderni della Fondaz. Morcelli-Pinacoteca Repossi, 2011 - "O Italians, I urge you to stories, because no people more than you can show no more calamities to pity, no more errors to avoid, no more virtues that make you respect, no more great souls worthy of being freed from oblivion by anyone he knows of us that we must love and defend and honor the land that nurtured our fathers and us, and that will give peace and memory to our ashes ", inaugural prayer of the chair of eloquence of the University of Pavia, 22 January 1809, "Of the origin and office of literature".

that others repeat: important authors have offered us to pragmatism in the face of the urgencies of the present time.

A non-philological, but suggestive combination: the one between the human behaviour of Dante's inferno and Philip Zimbardo's acquisitions on the Lucifer effect, that is, on responsibility in extreme situations where the individual is crushed by authority. The evil conformism to the constituted power that induces in the sleep of conscience ordinary people and pushes them to be scrupulous executors of atrocious orders, such as to dissolve any threshold between human and inhuman. The executors of extermination in the camps of Auschwitz, in the prisons of Abu Ghraib. Or the truncheons of the "Mexican butchery" in the Diaz school in Genoa in July 2001.

Dante Alighieri and Philip Zimbardo: how to juxtapose them without arousing rejection for this connection? No one is claiming this, of course, but the comparison is only worth to mention how the universal is continuously actualized, if it is really the universal. Crossing the enormous theory of tragedies and passions along seven centuries, and reaching us, always embodied ourselves in episodes of history. And constantly replicating the great ideological power, as a returning Weltanschauung.

In our inner reliquary where we keep the references for our efforts to resist conformism, the misery of daily micro-compromises, the many fetishes scattered in our experiences - from school to professional ones - in the continuous push or inducement to sell our freedom to the immanent obtuseness of organizations, of every organization, Dante is the anchor not to lose the dimension of faithful observers of the religion of freedom.

For those who cultivate in their hearts, and despite the growing insistence of trashy media manifestations, the passion for politics, understood as an illusory ideal of science-guided action and as taking an intellectual and public position on the perennial problem of civil power, and as elaborating the knowledge of a link of responsibility between the person (starting with one's own) and the course of history - micro-history and macro-history - of one's own contemporaneity, for those who dedicate a part of their thoughts and reactions to politics, Dante's biography constantly returns as an intellectual and moral anchorage at the same time.

I am therefore grateful for the opportunity (and for the patience) granted to me to be able to write in these pages a thought of politics, as of a projective imagination linked to Dante, to his archetype of philosopher and political activist, who testified to the last, with the way of exile and with all the consequent human suffering that characterized his "taking sides".

Thus, I will only refer here to the thoughts, disciplining them in the form of a thesis, which the return to sections of the poet's biography, the finding of these in passages of his work with universal definitions, pushes to transfer them to the urgency of today's questions. And I will report on how Dante's memories remain anchored in political passion, on the way it is aroused, on the links with the person's biography that are reinforced or, on the contrary, that are broken. When political passion involves costly choices, even capital. And so it is connected to the general idea of life, it even puts it at risk.

However, some are even pushed to the extreme sacrifice of suffering torture and going to the gallows. I take up (and perhaps here the comparison will seem forced) the reflections of Philip Zimbardo and Zeno Franco on the heroic imagination as a minority chance that the individual encounters in facing the power of the situation. "The decision to act heroically," the two American social psychologists argue, "is a choice that many of us will be called upon to make sooner or later. Conceiving heroism

as a universal attribute of human nature, not as a rare characteristic of the 'heroic chosen few', heroism becomes something that appears in the range of possibilities for every person, inspiring perhaps quite a few of us to respond to such a call".

Similarly, how much and how 'situations matter' in evil, 'social situations can have deeper effects on the behaviour and mental functioning of individuals, groups and national leaders than we would readily believe possible, some situations can exert such a powerful influence on us that we behave in ways we would not have predicted, could never have predicted[14].

The heroic imagination can be understood as a combination of transcendental values so strongly anchored in the self with a special form of self-esteem. But the heroic imagination after one has fought and lost, experiencing the extreme condition of loneliness and physical and psychic torment, and the antidote to the cognition that one is dead in life "You will leave everything you love more dearly, and this is the arrow that the bow of exile first shoots out. You will feel how salty the bread of others is and how hard it is to go down and up other people's stairs".

The posthumous prophecy of exile works as a key to ennoble political passion, which does not allow for discounts and even less gratuitousness. But how is commitment formed and therefore political passion rooted? What stages does it go through to become an ineliminable moral focus, an unfailing commitment? When does the defeat experienced on several occasions drive one to find both an insight into events - contemporary or historical of the distant past - and the endurance of immense sacrifices? Dante, politically, is a loser, with no possibility of rematch. Although he is absolutely aware of this, he does not cease to elaborate a titanic, universal thought of history. And here our recollections keep coming back to him, bringing him close to Antonio Gramsci, as the prototypical figure of a moral hero of politics. And to Giordano Bruno or Tommaso Campanella when the latter writes in a madrigal:

"Stavamo tutti al buio. Altri sopiti
d'ignoranza nel sonno; e i sonatori
pagati raddolcito il sonno infame.
Altri vegghianti rapivan gli onori,
la robba, il sangue, o si facean mariti
d'ogni sesso, e schernian le genti grame.
Io accesi un lume; ecco, qual d'api esciame
scoverti, la fautrice tolta notte,
sopra me a vendicar ladri e gelosi,
e que' le piaghe, e i brutti sonnacchiosi
del bestial sonno le gioie interrotte:
le pecore co' lupi fur d'accordo
contra i can valorosi;
poi restar preda di lor ventre ingordo"[15].

[14] *L. Ross, R. Nisbet, The Quest for Community: A Study in the Ethics of Order and Freedom,* Italian edition *La persona e la situazione,* Il Mulino, 1998, quoted by Philip Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect: How Good People Turn Evil (L'effetto Lucifero,* Italian edition: Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2008, pag. 319).

[15] *"We were all in the dark. Others drowsy / of ignorance in their sleep; and the paid musicians / sweetened the infamous sleep. / Other seers ravished the honors, / the stuff, the blood, or made themselves husbands / of every sex, and*

The change in the background against which the common sense of psychoanalysis is projected is remarkable, at a time of the inflation of desire (imitative, competitive, appetitive and the other variants illustrated by Réné Girard) and the drying up of political passions transcending the particular. In the founding giants, the ethical project was that of a moral philosophy, of a self-reflexive thought that founded the sense, the direction of a pragmatics. In the terrible tragedies of the twentieth century, it became clear that the very implication of the discovery of the unconscious had raised the violent repression that totalitarianism moved against this intellectual approach and against the realism that followed. Violence, physical coercion, were the means employed to shut down. The organised and capillary ideological mobilisation of the masses accompanied their daily life like an asphyxiating gas. In the time we live in now, moral self-consciousness is instead the target of "inverted totalitarianism", an important concept handed down to us by political philosopher Sheldon Wolin to frame a type of power that rests on a "hybrid consensus", fuelled by a planned media narrative (from news channels to fiction, from reality shows to situation comedies). In this perspective, the idea of the 'real' is fuelled by the myths and expectations of a culture 'that privileges the pleasure principle over the reality principle, mass desires and dreams over the sober analysis of the constraints imposed and the possibilities suggested by actual historical conditions"[16].

With such instruments of manipulation at their disposal, those in power are tempted to shape reality according to their own self-interested worldview, i.e. to systematically increase the quantity and quality of the lies they have always used to govern. In essence, this non-violent "totalitarianism" dissolves the concept of public opinion as a collective instance of criticism and control, and systematically structures a mixture of public and private spheres, of politics and business.

The expression of this totalitarianism is a government of desires and a symbolisation of the desirable that would have extinguished the unconscious and at the same time the conscience of the 'desiring' subject himself. The unjustly forgotten lesson of the Frankfurt School, on the planned manipulation of minds that marks the political conduct of power, both by conspicuously authoritarian means and by permissiveness, which is rationally governed, is therefore back in the news. With the infosphere (L. Floridi, 2002) of the algorithms of the pervasive digital accesses, the "mathematisation of social relations" is perfected - instant by instant - thanks to the continuous tailing of the person, to whom stimuli and reinforcements are administered, even in the most intimate sphere of subjectivity, constantly drawing the profile in its evolution, in the experiences, in the selected sequences of his personal and environmental interactions.

mocked the wretched people./ I lit a lamp; behold, what bees come out / to find me, the advocate taken away night, / above me to avenge thieves and jealousies, / and those wounds, and the sleepy ugly ones / of the bestial sleep, the interrupted joys: / the sheep with the wolves agreed against the valiant dogs; / then remain prey to their greedy belly", Explanation of Campanella himself: "It narrates that, being the world in the dark, and each one hurting his neighbor so much, and that the Sophists and Hippocrites, preaching flattery, make the world sleep in this darkness; he, lighting a light, had against the deceived and deceivers, etc .; and that those, like sheep accorded with wolves against dogs, are then devoured by wolves, according to the parable of Demosthenes ". It is found in the biography of Campanella, published with a wide selection of poetic texts, by Domenico Romeo, Stavamo tutti al buio, Città del sole edizioni, 2018.

[16] *Sheldon Wolin (1922-2015), Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism, University Presses of California, Columbia and Princeton, 2008, Italian edition Democrazia SpA, 2011, Fazieditore, pag 62-70. However, the beautiful preface by Remo Bodei counteracts the wrong title.*

One of the results is that the dimension of homo politicus – his duty to be in civil government, hence in a state – has been removed from the mass experience that the democratic traditions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had engendered, between the European revolutionary movements of 1848 and the dissolution of the popular parties at the end of the twentieth century. Therefore, even any modest contribution to slowing down the oblivion of the history of political participation, built with the diffusion of the culture of the public sphere, i.e. of history, of the common dimension of people in society that characterised the experience of the generations between the two world wars, is beneficial.

We suffer from the expulsion from every public place of the gratuitousness of political passion nourished by ideals, elaborated with awareness, honesty, sincerity, in order to be projected into responsibility: that is, the link between the internal forum and the public sphere.

Public spirit, ethicality, commitment and willingness: Dante Alighieri still speaks to this intellectual moral sphere that suffers from the expulsion of dialogue from the public sphere. It has always been remembered that everything is political even in comedy. The condition of exile and suffering for the homeland Florence, the psychology of political dissent, even if it entails extreme costs that can never be compensated for in life. The theme of defeat in politics. Pride. The pair of figures of Aeneas and Dante. Exile, search for refuge after defeat. Dante imprints a character on Italian patriotism, a character that persists to this day.

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