

## Re-thinking the Common. Political/(im)political perspectives

Recognizing the need to think the common in new terms, the purpose of my intervention is to introduce a distinction between two promissory perspectives on this question in contemporary thought.

Both approaches, influential in contemporary political philosophy, have been thinking the Common from different perspectives and theoretical-conceptual matrixes, emerging from a need to oppose to the “policial”, post-political stance (J. Ranciere), represented by Neoliberalism, which is the epistemic knowledge-power complex that governs our lives. Neoliberalism appropriates for the project of a global market every creative potential, flooding our lives with an always renewed promised/injunction of (impossible) enjoyment and “remembering” the “totalitarian threat” that any form of the common potentially involves. It presupposes and poses the “human-capital” as the subject of the social, denying the very possibility of politics.

In this context, more than ever, the community reveals itself as the experience of a lack, as impossible and necessary. However, the perspectives to be analyzed not only avoid reproducing the traditional gesture of political philosophy: the construction of a fully, identical-to-itself, depoliticized community. They also share their suspicion towards the main political-academic responses that attempt to give content to the void of the community: particularistic communitarianism, tolerant liberal-multiculturalism and ethics of communication. These responses not only *reduce conflict to the problem of recognition*, but also derive the *common* from the *proprium*.

On the contrary, the perspectives to be examined here share the hypothesis of an impossible reconciliation of community. Antagonism is unavoidable because (the very subject of) the Common is ever-already outside itself: it *ex-sists* (Heidegger/Lacan).

The first, “political” perspective holds that even if the full realization of the common (full emancipation) is impossible, it is still necessary to re-fill the empty space of the community with subjective substance. For instance, Laclau’s political theory of empty signifiers as the place of a politically constructed universality (the *people*); Negri’s and Virno’s theory about the immanence of the *multitude* as the new subject of the common opposed to the *populus*; Ranciere’s notion of the part-of-no-part (the demos) as the place of the universality that strives to actualize the common and Zizek’s correlative thought of the “universal exception”.

The second, *impolitical* perspective limits itself to an ontological description of *inoperance* (Nancy), of the nothing-(we have)-in-common, and links this ontological condition to a reflection of the political from its limits, reversing its traditional categories. In this case, I will comment Esposito’s notion of *community as nothing-in-common, as common ex-position to a compulsory and threatening Gift* that cannot be denied and Agamben’s reflection on the *bare life*, the *singularità qualunque*, as the place of the *community-to-come*.

Through putting in tension these two promissory perspectives, my intention is to signal the possibility of a thought on the common fully aware of the deadlocks of any humanistic approach. In this sense, the problematic link that *impolitical* thought establishes between community and “affirmative” biopolitics,

opens the prospect to think the (im)possibility of the *common* in its ontological, immanent, a-subjective and *impersonal* void.