

Resisting the Plague: Immunopolitics and Beyond

*Resistiendo la plaga:
inmunopolítica y más allá*

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Resumen

El autor considera algunas cuestiones planteadas por las principales figuras de la llamada Teoría Italiana, Giorgio Agamben y Roberto Esposito, y por las reflexiones de Di Cesare sobre las inmunodemocracias contemporáneas, centrándose en el papel de los tonos afectivos en la apertura/cierre de nuestra relación con el mundo y en la configuración de nuestra comprensión de la pandemia de Covid-19 ; así como para teorizar la pérdida de la rebeldía en los regímenes biopolíticos contemporáneos. Desafiando la viabilidad del paradigma inmunitario para pensar la posibilidad de una acción política transformadora y recurriendo a los análisis fenomenológicos de Max Scheler como fuente de algunas claves conceptuales cruciales para explorar la relación entre la capacidad humana de trascender la dimensión biológica de la “vida desnuda” y la posibilidad de resistencia a la lógica autoinmunitaria que actúa en las sociedades modernas tardías, busca probar la existencia de un enfoque teórico alternativo y más radical de la libertad en el racionalismo crítico o “Trascendentalismo de la acción” formulado por los filósofos italianos y los antiguos resistentes Mario Dal Pra y Andrea Vasa.

Abstract

The author takes into account some of the questions raised by leading figures of the so-called *Italian Theory*, Giorgio Agamben and Roberto Esposito, and by Di Cesare's



thoughts on contemporary immunodemocracies, focusing on the role of affective tones in opening/closing our relation to the world and in shaping our understanding of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as for theorizing the loss of rebelliousness in contemporary biopolitical regimes. Challenging the viability of the immunitarian paradigm in order to think the possibility of transformative political action; and resorting to Max Scheler's phenomenological analyses as providing some crucial conceptual keys to explore the relation between the human capacity for transcending the biological dimension of "bare life" and the possibility of resistance to the auto-immunitarian logic at work in late modern societies, she probes the existence of an alternative and more radical theoretical approach to liberty in the critical rationalism or "Trascendentalism of action" formulated by Italian philosophers and former resisters Mario Dal Pra and Andrea Vasa.

Palabras clave

Pandemia, *Teoría italiana*, Lógica inmunitaria, Rebelión, Resonancia, Trascendentalismo de la acción.

Key words

Pandemic, *Italian Theory*, Immunitarian logic, Rebellion, Resonance, Transcendentalism of action

In this respect our townsfolk were like everybody else, wrapped up in themselves; in other words they were humanists: they disbelieved in pestilences. A pestilence isn't a thing made to man's measure; therefore we tell ourselves that pestilence is a mere bogey of the mind, a bad dream that will pass away. But it doesn't always pass away and, from one bad dream to another, it is men who pass away, and the humanists first of all, because they haven't taken their precautions.

Albert Camus,
The Plague

In his “reflections on the plague”, which first appeared on his Quodlibet blog¹ during the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic, Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben invited his readers to ponder not about the epidemic itself, but the people’s reactions to it and, more precisely, about «the ease with which an entire society has acquiesced to feeling itself plague-stricken, to isolating itself at home, and to suspending its normal conditions of life, its relationships of work, friendship, love, and even its religious and political convictions» (Agamben, 2020a). Among the bewildering questions brought forth by his philosophical interrogation concerning the plague, which he identifies with the global condition of modernity, Agamben especially insists on the biopolitical implications of the contemporary loss of any religious as well as political faith. Insofar as «people no longer believe in anything other than a bare biological existence, which must be saved at any cost (Agamben, 2020a), the human condition is reduced to a “bare life” (Agamben, 1998) consumed by fear (of losing one’s life) and incapable of rebellion. Agamben (2020b) detects in fear, since Hobbes the foundation and justification of tyrannical power, the emotional tone at the core of the political paradigm of modernity, which he traces back to the negation of the human capacity for transcending the dimension of thingness and biological life that, echoing Rosa’s 2013 sociological analyses, he conceives to be associated with the typically modern loss of our relationship to the world. From this perspective, *theorizing* about the Covid-19 pandemic in the midst of its global outbreak testifies to the philosopher’s capacity of retrieving the non-modern or post-modern capacity for transcendence, which consists in taking this unprecedented and disruptive event into account not *per se*, that is to say, by focusing on its objective dimension, like political theorists or medical scientists do in their global race against time to unravel the mechanisms of this new pathogen, but investigating the attitudes or types of relation to the world which orient our perceptions, understandings and conducts of life faced with the epidemic.

The Italian philosopher draws on Heidegger’s *Being and Time* the idea that the very openness-to-the-world of a human being’s existential structure is constituted by a specific affective tone that is, therefore, primary in order to grasp our ways of relating to it. Now, the problem with Agamben’s reflections on the pandemic is that, by inverting the heideggerian priority of anguish over fear, and assuming the latter to be the original affective tone that discloses the world in its intramundane and



insurmountable thingness, thus, condemning the human being faced with the virus to a will-to-powerlessness (Agamben, 2020), they do not provide an adequate account of the affective openness-to-the-world in which they suggest the possibility of transcending our *relation of relationlessness*² to the world should be sought for. Hence, one cannot but agree with Italian philosopher Roberto Esposito, who traces Agamben's theory back to what he designates as a "destituting" or de-politicizing approach to politics, which draws precisely on Heidegger's thought the negation of the human capacity for transcending what is given – in Agamben's words, the plague understood as an alienated relation to the world – that turns the human openness-to-the world into a potentiality without actuality (*impolitical*), thus deactivating transformative action (Esposito, 2020, pp. X-XI, 3-70).

The aim of this article is to expand on Agamben's intuition of the primary character of our affective tones in the understanding of the plague, challenging the viability of the so-called "Italian Theory" in theorizing the loss of rebelliousness in contemporary biopolitical regimes. In order to do so, it suggests that we resort not to Heidegger's but rather to Max Scheler's phenomenological investigations into the "order of the heart" and his personal formulation of *epochè* ("phenomenological reduction") as providing some crucial conceptual keys to explore the relation between the human capacity for transcending the intramundane dimension of actuality (Agamben's "bare life") and the political dimension of rebellion or resistance to the plague, probing the existence of an alternative and more radical theoretical approach to political action in the critical rationalism or "transcendentalism of action" formulated by Italian philosophers and former Resistants Mario Dal Pra and Andrea Vasa in the aftermath of World War II.

1. As political thinker Hannah Arendt points out, the term "theory" (gr., *thēoria*) derives from the Greek word *theatai*, 'spectators': it refers to a peculiar act of understanding an event ("spectacle"), that takes place on the stage of life at a certain historical moment, the meaning ("truth") of which is attained only from an external position, "implying a view that is hidden from those who take part in the spectacle and actualize it", thus, entailing the spectators' withdrawal from the scene, in other words, a "deliberate, active non-participation in life's daily business" (Arendt, 1971, p. 93). Arendt associates theory with the Aristotelian concept of *schōle*, which

is not leisure time as we understand it, the leftover spare time of inactivity after a day's work "used for meeting the exigencies of existence", but denotes the deliberate act of abstaining, of holding oneself back (*schein*) from the ordinary activities determined by our daily wants (*hē tōn anagkaiōn scholē*), in order to act out leisure (*scholēn agein*), which in turn was the true goal of all other activities» (Arendt, 1971, p. 93).

While all human activities including political life (lat., *vita activa*) were originally identified with the negation of such pause or halt (*otium*) in the frantic fabric of daily occupations – derivatively named *nec-otium* or *a-scholia* (Arendt, 1998, p. 14-15) –, the act of theorizing denoted a specific way of taking part in the "festival" of life³, one,

that is, which is not aimed at the pursuit of fame, power or material gain, but at observing the events that take place on life's "stage" from a position that allows to grasp the whole and ponder on the most beautiful things⁴.

Now, it may well be argued that when the Covid-19 zoonotic disease first struck the world's population, most people's lives bore interesting resemblances to the lives of the all-too-ordinary citizens of Oran, the Algerian city hit by an epidemic of bubonic plague in 194* in Albert Camus's 1947 novel, *The Plague* (Camus, 2006, p. 36): devoted to hard working, but solely with the object of making money (Camus, 2006, p. 35), with a penchant for commerce, their lives were chiefly absorbed in doing business (*nec-otium*). In the French writer's fiction, the inhabitants of the modern city of Oran were thoughtless and timeless: their absence of reflection was closely related with the "heightening of the pace of life" that sociologists consider a crucial experience of modernity (Rosa, 2013, p. 131)⁵, and political theorist Hannah Arendt interpreted to be the modern reduction of the capacity of thinking to sheer "reckoning with consequences" (Arendt, 1998, p. 322) and the shrinking of the complexity of all human activities, including political action, to laboring.

By abruptly interrupting the hyper-accelerated chain of late modern social relationships and processes of mass production, transportation and communication, the 2019-20 Coronavirus pandemic negated the negation of *otium*, forcing certain categories of laborers as well as youngsters to withdraw from their extrojected lives punctuated with time-consuming activities and to fold back upon themselves, trapped and lost, just like the inhabitants of Oran in Camus's novel, in the labyrinth of cement and tar of their houses and districts, doomed to fall prey to the Minotaur of boredom (Camus, 2008a). But this double negation did not entail the affirmation of *scholazein* as its consequence. And this was even more so for those categories of professionals traditionally committed to theorizing, such as philosophers, intellectuals, teachers and scholars, for whom "spatial distancing" actually meant being locked down in the safe space of their homes, nailed to their computers and tethered to the virtual arena of e-learning and remote working that melted the last remnants of the age-long distinction between the public and the private spheres. Turned into "time-juggling players", incapable of dwelling in or *inhabiting* time (Di Cesare, 2020, p. 20), these professionals have been compelled to readjust their conduct of life at a heightening pace in order to handle extraordinary, disruptive events through an effective "event-oriented time praxis" (Rosa, 2013, p. 236), the extremely flexible and dynamic logic of which bares interesting resemblances with the business strategies that pervasively regulate the globalized educational systems. In doing so they were caught to the point of asphyxia (Di Cesare, 2020, pp. 19-20) in a timeless "undifferentiated time" (Rosa, 2013, p. 103) that could not be more different from the ancient Greek disengagement from worldly affairs.

The Covid-19 epidemic seems to have intensified, rather than suspended, the late modern temporalization of time described by sociologist Hartmut Rosa (2013), thus, achieving the erosion of the strategic conduct of life⁶ which was typical of modern the "sovereign", i.e. stable and monadic self-identities (Rosa, 2013, p. 237), and its replacement with situational, i.e. temporally unstable shape-shifting



identities – “if one understands identity as a sense of who one is that provides an ability to orient oneself and to act, then situational identities are quite conceivable as, so to speak, logical vanishing points of heightened individualization and acceleration” (Rosa, 2013, p. 239, my italics). From this perspective, viral metamorphosis seems to mirror the late modern situational logic that dissolves the traditional understanding of the Self as *substance* and detects in the individuals’ ways of handling the contingencies and vicissitudes of life, i.e. their *style* (Rosa, 2013, p. 240) and their *habitus*, the only consistent elements of internal continuity. Resistant to transformative astonishment and thoughtfulness (*thaumazein*) just like Camus’s “exiled by the plague”, these individuals turned their metropolis into massive barren waiting rooms during “lock-down” (Camus, 2006, p. 183), just to throw themselves with stubborn and almost frantic determination into their habits as soon as they could, invoking their right to disobey the biosecurity measures in order to defend their liberties and vehemently demanding to *open up* their countries for the sake of business (*nec-otium*)⁷.

In his seminal work on biopolitics, leading thinker of the so-called “Italian Theory” Roberto Esposito detects in the concept of liberty one of the great political categories of modernity, along with those of sovereignty and property, which he interprets to be artificial, linguistic and institutional constructions developed by human reason, “a sort of natural immunitarian system” that preserves the vital organism against the aggression of external agents (Esposito, 2004, p. 57, my italics) in order to preserve life (*conservatio vitae*). Resorting to the notion of ‘immunity’ to define the relationship between life and law⁸, the Italian thinker conceives politics to be an artificial procedure for managing life by negatively protecting it against natural hazards (Esposito, 2004, pp. 41, 47). Interrogating the etymon of the words ‘liberty’ and ‘freedom’ (gr. *eleuthería*, lat. *libertas*), Esposito draws attention to the root of these terms (*leuth* or *leudh* and *frya*) which refer to the acts of growing, opening and blooming⁹. Now, modernity is characterized by a negative conversion or “immunitarian turn” of the term which dissociates liberty from the affirmative and connective meaning of its germinal root, replacing it with the modern negative or privative acceptance of *freedom from* any interference. According to Esposito, the advent of what Isaiah Berlin called the negative concept of liberty marks an “entropic process” that closes the subject back upon herself, turning her into an autonomous unity (*individuum*), unavailable to the Other and relentlessly trying to gain and keep control over herself and the vicissitudes of life. The Italian philosopher traces this immunitarian logic at the very heart of the modern juridical and political categories, among which the notion of ‘sovereignty’ is recognized to be the most powerful organizational answer to the modern problem of the self-preservation of life (Esposito, 2004, p. 54-55)¹⁰.

In her philosophical considerations on the Covid-19 pandemic, Donatella Di Cesare (2020) draws on Esposito’s thesis of a ‘global autoimmunity crisis’ caused by a paroxysmal activation of these life-preserving mechanisms which is not determined by any real aggression/contagion from an external danger or pathogen. In its increasing demand for preventive immunization measures, the immunitarian logic of late modern societies turns on the same social body negating that very life it was

intended to defend. Following philosopher Byung-chul Han (2017), Di Cesare (2020) detects in capitalism one of those immunitarian mechanisms aimed at keeping death in check through limitless accumulation of capital, that have run out of control, turning life against itself for the sake of life's protection ("capitalist asphyxia"). This aporetic logic is apparent in the contradiction between the constitutional rights to work and to health triggered by public health emergency measures to contain the Coronavirus contagion, which brings the short-circuit of contemporary biopolitics to the fore. The lethal grip in which "immunodemocracies" (Di Cesare, 2020) hold life (*bíos*), achieving what Esposito (2004) defines as the naturalization or biologization of contemporary politics, was made apparent in the association of the Covid-19 pathogen with industrial, i.e. man-made pollutants as the world's population experienced those measures of lock-down and confinement that the workers of ex-Ilva's steel plant in Taranto, their families and the residents in those areas of the Italian city hit by toxic emissions on "wind days", had started suffering long before the pandemic outbreak. So while Italian political philosophers certified the failure of neo-liberal governance in handling the pandemic and saluted the regained autonomy and primacy of the political over the economic sphere (Portinaro, 2020), in her violent attack against the extension of the state of emergence at the end of July 2020, deputy and leader of the far-right sovereignist party Fratelli d'Italia, Giorgia Meloni, would charge the Italian government, that those bio-political measures had adopted in order to protect the lives of its citizens, with "sentencing to death" thousands of economic activities, symptomatically pleading for sovereignty in order to preserve *nec-otium*. The (auto)immunitarian turn is apparent in radical right-wing narratives of the Covid-19 pandemic, in which the semantic root of liberty as 'growth' shrinks to the economic dimension of profit (Di Cesare, 2020, p. 75)¹¹, while the "meta-immunitarian device"¹² of sovereignty is twisted to denote the self-determining and internally homogenizing process of eradication of potentially lethal conflicts aimed at defending the integrity of the borders of the political body (Nation-State) from the threat of external agents, thus, identifying the virus in/with the stranger, the migrant or the outcast.

Just like the *sovereign* Self, the *sovereign* State presents an internal contradiction: walled off, it *withdraws* and collapses on a monadic singularity incapable of "co-appearance" (*comparution*)¹³ and con-tact with the other-than-oneself, jealously holding on to a self-referring form of static spatial and cultural identity that the very late modern capitalist acceleration of social processes, from which it draws its vital lymph, dissolves. Confronted with the pandemic, contemporary 'immunopolitics' takes the interdiction on contact (*noli me tangere*) that governs the juridical construction of modern 'negative liberties' (Di Cesare, 2020, p. 33) to the extreme point where the life-saving imperative of physical or 'social distancing' *rules out* the relation with another¹⁴ closing the Subject in and on itself. The self-conservative syndrome (Esposito, 2004, p. 109) reaches paroxysmal levels when dealing with the preservation of the educational community in public health emergency. On the one hand, the (auto)immunitarian contradiction between the right to health and the right to work (of students, as well as their parents) reverberates in recent European debates about school reopening with in-person learning. In August 2020, the increase in Covid-19 cases, also among minors,



threatened the governments' attempts at 'normalizing' the pandemic with quarantines and further periods of shutdown, the economic costs of which have been the object of anxious assessments¹⁵. On the other hand, during confinement 'distance education' or home-schooling intensified the virtualization of the students-teachers relationship, increasing the individuals' withdrawal from co-appearance and co-construction of knowledge. Providing them with mute, generally anonymous avatars, behind which to retreat from visual contact and communicative interaction, thus eluding what is often perceived to be the devaluing judgment of the others, educators and peers, 'distance education' has proved to be functional to the hyper-acceleration of mass production of "situational Selves", i.e. conformistically situated in their own global environment and frantically urged to absorb, accumulate and replicate pieces of information in order to handle and adapt to their environment's needs and dynamics.

As Byunh-Chul Han (2017, p. 41 and ff.) pointed out, the digital medium reduces communication to sheer emotional discharge and liquefies the individual's capacity to metabolize, express and share negative and positive feelings in reflexive narrative forms¹⁶. In the context of neoliberal psycho-politics, which reinforces the identification of liberty with unfettered emotional outbursts for the purpose of controlling and maximizing production and profit, thus, shrinking the time-space for theory (*ascholia*), the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic dislocates on the web, but does not disrupt the immunitarian logic of late modern biopolitical systems. Though not without some exceptions (Hattie, 2008; Hattie, 2012; cited in Rosa, 2019, p. 246), contemporary learning environments reproduce what sociologist Hartmut Rosa (2019) defines as the "dispositional alienation" that affects late modern societies, that is to say, a negative, repulsive or even hostile, Self-World or Subject-Object mode of relation, which lacks meaningful inner connection (*responsitivity*).

Echoing Scheler's phenomenological analyses on resentment and emotional contagion, Rosa (2019) suggests that we understand alienation to be a dis-order of one's attitude or capacity to relate to the world¹⁷. Identifying *resonance* with a two-sided bidirectional movement of 'af-fection' (being *touched* by something or someone that 'speaks' to us) and 'e-motion' (being capable of *responding* by establishing a connection), he roots alienation in a pathological, socially-induced atrophy of the human disposition to empathy and sympathy, which seals the individual off from living and meaningful contact with others and the world, locking her down in the self-referring and resistant "bubble" of her own Ego¹⁸. This attitude toward the world, brought forth in the devaluation of all good and value which escape the ego's control or possession, is associated with angst-driven self-consuming envy and hate.

In highly competitive individualistic environments, systematic exposure to envy¹⁹, malice and disparagement, when associated with a prolonged and pronounced awareness of impotence, are most liable to develop *ressentiment*²⁰, which Scheler identified in a more or less permanent state of value delusion (Scheler, 2007, p. 53) or axiological dis-orientation²¹ that precludes the perception of value of what is other-than-oneself ("World-closedness"), as well as the imagination of possibilities that exceed actuality. The jealousy of one's home or land in radical right-wing sovereignist narratives (Di Cesare, 2020, p. 59), the rise of hate speech and hate

crimes during the Coronavirus pandemic and the populist exploitation of mimetic contagion – a crucial affective dimension in current new forms of fascism (Lawtoo, 2019) – eventually associated with denial of the pandemic, concur to expound the (auto)immunitarian logic that regulates the contemporary hyper-consumerist “democracies of resentment” (Cusinato, 2013, p. 68). In their peculiar blend of conformist leveling and proliferation of new authoritarian vertical relationships – i.e. between populist leaders and their followers in the physical as well as in the virtual spaces created by the social media – these autopoietic systems (Cusinato, 2013; Cusinato 2017) bring about the withering of consciousness²² and the withdrawal of the egomaniac subject, incapable of transcending the closed horizon of her own natural or social environment and blindly committed to the neo-liberal imperative of enjoyment. What Agamben seems to disregard in his considerations on fear (of losing one’s life) is the fact that, although an elementary form of our relationship to the world (Rosa 2020, p. 110-ff), this emotional tone does not exert the primal function of opening-to-the-world, which in Scheler’s analyses is peculiar to the feeling of love. Instead, fear concurs to delineate the phenomenological profile of the modern man of *resentiment*, to which French thinker, journalist and novelist Albert Camus devotes a special attention in his reflections on the plague between 1941 and the publication of his 1951 philosophical essay, *L’Homme révolté*.

2. Anticipating Agamben’s thesis, according to which the plague had been present in late modern societies long before the Covid-19 pandemic outburst²³, Camus attempts at providing a phenomenological account of rebellion by focusing on the affective tone which is related to what he defines as the “horizontal transcendence” (Camus, 2008b, p. 326n) of revolt vis-à-vis of actuality, thus distinguishing (against Scheler) the figure of the rebel from that of the man of *resentiment*. The French author traces the advent of the (auto)immunitarian turn in Epicurus’ and Lucretius’ theories of social atomism²⁴, which reduce life to its biological dimension and consciousness to sheer sensitivity to pain and pleasure, walling up, metaphorically and physically, the human being within the numb construction (“citadel”, “fortress”) of the individual in an extreme attempt of defensive theoretical revolt against suffering and death (Camus, 2008c, p. 85-7). Focusing on the *emotional* quality of the Athenian plague of the late 5th century BC, the description of the pandemic that closes Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura* is likely to have inspired Camus’s disturbing identification of the plague with the Western invention of capital punishment, understood to be an (auto)immunitarian response to the unbearable fact of human death (“metaphysical revolt”) (Camus, 2008c, p. 87). The disease progression, “stiffening” and paralyzing the mental faculties of those who are infected²⁵, emotionally asphyxiating them until they die-to-the-world-and-to-others, turns the plague into the emblem of a dispositional and axiological disorder (“hate”) that, according to Camus, affects modern individuals and societies, and culminates in the Nazi-Fascist mass production of corpses²⁶ for the bio-political sake of securing and breeding life (that is worth living)²⁷. Thus, in the French writer’s homonymous novel, the plague cannot merely be reduced to the infective agent that hits the physical (virus) as well as the social organism (Nazi terror) from the *outside*: the plague lies in the



sovereign power of life and death over citizens; it is the very biopolitical *attitude* (Esposito, 2004, p. 53) that creates and justifies death penalty on the grounds of the need to preserve life (*conservatio vitae*)²⁸, which reaches its paroxysmal point in the modern invention of the “state of siege”, which Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben more recently identified with the “state of exception”²⁹.

This thesis should not be confused with more recent identifications of the Coronavirus with the sovereign power: in her thoughts on immunodemocracy in the times of the “plague 2.0”, Donatella Di Cesare (2020) provocatively evokes the power of the “sovereign virus”, which rules over that very political-administrative governance of public health emergency that is supposed to *rule the virus out*, thus, bringing the internal antinomy and structural vulnerability of the biopolitical order into full light. According to the Italian philosopher, in order to neutralize the auto-immunitarian crisis triggered by the antinomic character of that very logic of immunization which governs the bio-political governance of the Covid-19 pandemic, we need to immunize ourselves against the eidolon of absolute immunization (Di Cesare, 2020, p. 85). In other words, we must carefully dose the contagious poison (Di Cesare, 2020, p. 57). But *who* decides where the safe measure lies? In late modern societies which, according to Agamben (2020), believe in *nothing*, namely that are poisoned by nihilism, i.e. axiological blindness, the very preservation of life is subject to economic (d)evaluation. Hate, rather than fear, is the affective tone of that ecstatic, self-dissolving and emotionally contagious *communitas* (Esposito, 2004, p. 110; Esposito, 2006) searched for in electoral rallies, clubs and on disco dance floors after the lockdown: the acritical leap in the double negation of total de-immunization, flaunted by the expensive lack of fear of the crowds³⁰, is but the other side of the biopolitical coin. Now, according to Di Cesare, the “infectious dose” – of the virus as well as of human paranoia against an external enemy – is indispensable in order to provoke a positive, creative and democratic response of the political body, caught between its (auto)immunitarian construction and its communitarian/totalitarian dissolution (Di Cesare, 2020, p. 88). Resisting the virus marks that political threshold, or in Esposito’s words, the peculiar “projectedness” (*sporgenza*) (Esposito, 2004, p. 110) of the political “layer” (*faglia*), that “residue of transcendence that immanence cannot absorb” (Esposito, 2004, p. 61), in which the Italian theorist detects the specific creativeness of the immunitarian logic. This explains why in Di Cesare’s reflections on the “plague 2.0” the immunitarian “bubble” appears to be the insuperable horizon of our time. By resorting to the immunitarian logic in order to think against and beyond immunodemocracy, nonetheless, her argument falls prey to the same antinomy it intended to overcome, thus precluding the possibility to theorize that exceedingness of the political and its irreducibility to the juridical sphere brought forth by the state of exception.

3. In his 1962 notebooks, Italian antifascist intellectual Nicola Chiaromonte wrote that “enduring life without knowing what to answer, is the condition for having something to say” (Chiaromonte, 1995, p. 4). What we have suffered from life is what

we have to say. “Suffering” should not be understood here in a physical or moral sense, but in the acceptance, which is reminiscent of the tragic Greek *pathei mathos*, of “having been put to a test”. We suffer from life when we experience the “huge difficulty of recognizing exactly the test that existence submitted us to: what we have seen in enduring it” (Chiaromonte, 1995, p. 110). But, Chiaromonte adds, we rarely accept the test that ourselves, other people or the events we experience confront us with: we prefer to hold on to ready-made ideas, rather than try to find out as much as possible about *who* we are and *who* others are.

Developing Agamben’s (2020) provocative interrogation on the lack of rebellion in late modern societies, in which the auto-immunitarian pathological drift of biosecurity dissolves the human capacity for transcendence into a violent and grievous immanence, I propose that we turn to the *exceptions*, pondering on the affective tone which characterizes the type of relation-to-the-world brought forth in historical examples of rebellion, in order to challenge the possibility of theorizing human resistance to the plague. Anticipating Arendt’s considerations, Chiaromonte identified “theory” (*theoria*) in a form of withdrawal or “estrangement” from life’s occasions (Chiaromonte, 1995, p. 40) – although not from the world – which consists primarily in the human singularity’s disposition and availability to be *touched* by others and by the world. In this capacity for con-tact, which is reminiscent of Rosa’s “dispositional resonance”, lies the peculiar ex-centricity of the human being, expressed by the act of *seeing* (“consciousness” or *theoria*) alternative possibilities, exceeding sheer factuality as well as the ready-made schemes or opinions of the natural or social environment (Chiaromonte, 1995, p. 41). Theorizing, in this sense, is in itself an act (*praxis*) of resistance that situates itself outside the (auto-)immunitarian logic opening a time-space for new “constitutions of liberty” (Arendt, 1990).

Insofar as resistance is understood in the defensive, i.e. immunitarian acceptance of ‘withstanding’³¹, it expresses a self-centered attitude of environmental closure and axiological ‘blindness’ to the value of others and of the world (*nihilism*), which from the justification of moral and physical annihilation of the opponent as ‘enemy’ culminates in the totalitarian extermination camps (Cusinato, 2017, p. 412). This form of resistance³² reinforces rather than disrupts the biopolitical “plague”. Being “put to the test” of the Covid-19 pandemic, instead, and *see* something about our attitudes, our ways of relating to it, of thinking and acting when confronted with such unsettling event, entails that we dwell on the “expressive exceedingness” of the human being (Cusinato, 2017, p. 25) and work on that “point of transcendence” (Esposito, 2004, p. 56), in which Esposito traces the very beginning of that immunitarian logic that affects/infects the “bubbles” of our existences.

The pandemic reactivates the anguish of death smouldering beneath the feverish ego-centric struggle for social recognition, in which the inhabitants of contemporary immunodemocracies, like the prisoners of the Platonic cave, are totally absorbed, chained to the artificial reproduction of consumerist intemperance, distracted by envy and unconsciously deluded by the defensive *eidola* of autonomy, self-sufficiency and invulnerability (Cusinato, 2017, p. 410). A modern platonic cave



turning in upon itself with its back to the sea, the snail-like town of Oran in Camus's *The Plague* is the emblem of the modern (auto-)immunitarian "bubble". Like our cities during Covid-19 lockdown, the North-African town that, in the French writer's literary work, is ravaged by the bubonic plague epidemic, is sieged by the beauty of a in-human and human-less blooming measureless nature that presses against its city walls. Way before the plague, the inhabitants of Oran had withdrawn from beauty, defensively immuring themselves in the labyrinth of ennui (Camus, 2008a, p. 582-83):

[...] and at certain hours, however, what temptation to go over to the enemy! What temptation to identify oneself with those stones, to merge with that burning and impassible universe that defies history and its unrests! (Camus, 2008a, 583, my translation)

A careful reader of Nietzsche's as well as Scheler's works, Camus indicates the way out of the immunitarian cave in an experience of cathartic denudement of the Ego (Camus, 2008a, p. 584; Novello, 2010) and of the barriers erected by the immunitarian logic of instrumental rationality³³, that is reminiscent of the psycho-technique of "phenomenological reduction"³⁴. Contrary to Husserl, Scheler moulded his understanding of the concept of *epochè* by pondering on the greek notion of "katharsis", and considered "phenomenological reduction" to be an act of self-transcendence, the aim of which is not the bracketing of the world, but rather the subject's ex-position beyond the Ego and common sense in an attitude of love or openness-to-the-world (*Weltoffenheit*) (Cusinato, 2017, p. 375 and ff).

Far from expressing an attitude of alienation, or inability of the modern human being to attune with the world³⁵, the dis-quieting and dis-orienting "silence of nature", that comes in through the windows of the locked-down cities' stone and concrete walls, calls for the repositioning of human singularity. Beyond the restless chain of desires that divert the consumerist *homo ludens*, liberty consists in the ex-centric availability to a resonant relationship to the world³⁶, which discloses a different time-space experience. It is not surprising to find evidence of this existential *epochè* in René Char's lyrical diaries of the 1943-44 fight against Nazi-Fascism in the Southern France *Maquis*. The poet qualifies his fellow-resisters as "alchemists" by virtue of their power to strip themselves of their socially constructed Ego, their habits and opinions: when they abandoned their homes and families and chose to enter the Resistance, they relinquished their self-identities. The battle names they took marked the beginning of an ontogenetic process of radical transformation, which brought forth and pinpointed their consciousness (*theoria*) outside and beyond the individualizing schemes of immunitarian logic, on that "trans-individual threshold"³⁷ of a new collective being-*with* that is inherently also a being-open-to-the-world³⁸. In the poems of the French poet and resister, this cathartic process of re-birth is expressed in terms of an ex-position and axiological re-positioning of consciousness: "Enfonce-toi dans l'inconnu qui creuse. Oblige-toi à tourner. (Thrust into the unknown, which burrows deep. Force yourself to keep turning on yourself)" (Char, 2007, fragment 212, y italics). The image is strikingly evocative of the Greek concept of *periagoge*, which Plato considered to be the essence of education³⁹ and traced in

the capacity of a human being to disentangle from the ready-made ideas or opinions (*doxa*) of the natural and social environment in which she had been immersed all her life, and change perspective expanding or increasing her view on (the value of) things under the shock of an unexpected event or encounter. Like the liberated prisoner of the Platonic cave, the resisters *turn* their head *around* (*periagoge*), breaking free of the chains of conformist thought and conduct, and experiencing a painful sense of “nudity”, which derives from the reduction (*epochè*) of the Cartesian self-centered Subject. This act of “turning on oneself” (*periagoge*) disposes the singularity to a new *envy-free*⁴⁰ attitude of world-openness and resonant contact with others, allowing for what Scheler defined as an axiological reorientation⁴¹ or excentric re-positioning⁴² beyond the nihilistic devaluation of life brought forth by the autoimmunitarian crisis⁴³. Resonance with nature and with others is precisely what distinguishes the resisters’ attitude toward the world from that of their torturers, who are insensible to the exceptional and blinded by hate to the positive values of their opponents as well as of the civilians who sheltered them⁴⁴.

The dispositional eccentricity of these “outlaws” or “bandits” is manifest in the way that the French and Italian resisters, fighting against the nazi occupants and their fascist allies, experienced love, friendship and happiness in conditions of extreme deprivation, defying the ready-made ideas of what the late modern situational Selves are liable to encounter and label as ‘love’, ‘friendship’ and ‘happiness’ within their immunopolitical comfort structures (Rosa, 2020; Sloterdijk, 2014; Romitelli, 2015). The theoretical import of this form of resistance for challenging the rate of innovation of contemporary biopolitical systems (Esposito, 2004) is brought forth in Italian philosophers and former resisters Mario Dal Pra and Andrea Vasa’s post-war investigations into the “Transcendentalism of action” (*Trascendentalismo della prassi*), which I propose to interpret as an attempt of philosophical theorization of that “resonant” type of relation to the world expounded by Rosa in his recent sociological work.

Defined as a “practical rebellion” and a “critical resistance” (Dal Pra, 1950, p. 62-3) to all form of “theoricistic” theory, namely, all doctrine that claims to reveal/actualize/realize the *actual* universality of value or being, which is given to the subject of knowing as her objective (i.e., “real”) term of vision (from gr., *theoria*), “transcendentalism of action” constitutes a critical rationalist approach, which draws on Kant’s transcendental reflection and on the phenomenological notion of *epochè* to formulate its resolutely anti-metaphysical affirmation of the meta-actualistic power of human thinking *qua* action.

Against the “theoricistic” devaluation of human reason, which reduces the philosophical discourse to a mere tautological repetition of and passive adjustment to some principle (Being, Truth, Value) that is already given once and for all, and only accessible through a revelatory vision that justifies human practical interventions in the “cruel garden of the world” (Dal Pra, 1953, p. 279), Vasa and Dal Pra uphold the capacity of human thinking to transcend what is perceived to be a closed, “invincible horizon of facts” and to open it to new possibilities of life, as well as to new forms of theory and action (Minazzi, 2008, p. 83). In their view, far from being aimed at



preserving something given, thus, at reproducing (although with variations of dosage) an *a priori* value structure, human action integrates the rational demand for a possible, i.e., non-actualized meaning or value into the world. Rejecting all immanent and transcendent, idealistic and materialistic “theoreticism”, which neutralizes the human practical intentionality, thus, negating the very possibility of transformation, Vasa and Dal Pra delineate a form of anti-dogmatic “practical-pure inactualism” (*inattualismo pratico-puro*) allowing for the maximum openness on being at the historical level of possibility. By affirming the transcendentalism of action, they maintain the responsibility of human intervention into the world by suspending (*epochè*) the supposedly absolute determination and limitless validity of natural and passive criteria and intuitive schemes (Vasa, 1957, p. 344), i.e., evidence, which they consider to be “the extrema ratio of all metaphysics” (Dal Pra, 1952, p. 238; Dal Pra, 1953, p. 277), and opening new meta-ontological orientations that enhance truth through the practically limitless creation of meanings and values that cannot be given, but can only be enacted (Dal Pra, 1950, p. 64). Thus, the two Italian philosophers translate the “heritage without testament” (Char, 2007, fragment n. 62) of the historical experience of the Resistance into a “logic of praxis [which] is precisely the logic of the possibility of something new” (Dal Pra, 1951, p. 108), that exceeds all situations for the sake of the human liberty of interpretative initiative. From this perspective, no theory or interpretation can be excluded as wrong, the “speculativistic” logic of all forms of “verbal narcissism of experience” (Vasa, 1957, p. 347) representing but one possible choice or way of seeing the world, that is brought forth by an attitude of closure, evocative of what sociologist Hartmut Rosa describes as a *relationless relation* to the world.

Rooted in the unprecedented forms of democratic life experienced within and among resisters’ groups during the 1943-45 civil war in Italy⁴⁵, “Transcendentalism of action” provides the example of a new type of philosophical theory that renounces the metaphysical claim to rightfulness in order to allow for the maximum possible of practical-critical openness to the world. Conceived to be a “practical-rational challenge to the naturalness of being” (Vasa, 1952, p. 227), it dislocates the alleged forcefulness of the situation, rejecting the contemporary biopolitical reduction of being to its biological dimension (life), as well as all forms of realist or immediatist ideologies that justify power politics and unscrupulous exploitation of organic and inorganic resources on the grounds of a supposed “naturalness” of the economic, social and political orders.

Far from expressing a nostalgic (i.e., “theoreticistic”) celebration of the partisans’ political organizations during the Italian and French Resistance, Vasa and Dal Pra’s investigations (2017) contribute to the formulation of a (possible) future-directed theory of rebellion, or resistance to the plague that brings forth a radical notion of liberty. According to these two Italian (non-theoreticistic) theorists, liberty consists in the possibility of human thought to *re-orient* existence (Vasa, 1952, p. 229) through a positive active mediation of meaning, value and being. The conditions for such mediation or interpretation are not theoreticistically given once and for all to a merely contemplative subject of knowledge, but are constantly enacted anew. This practical engagement, that broadens the horizon of what human beings can love and

will (Vasa, 1952, p. 223), integrating their polyphonic being-to-the-world-together, originates from the unsettling experience of *not knowing the answers* to the test(s) of life. The anti-metaphysical “healthy suspension of the “given”” (Dal Pra, 1950, p. 63), that is to say, of absolute answers (*epoché*), exposes reason to the mortal risk of its own nothingness (Vasa, 1952, p. 230), eventually opening a time-space for meta-actualistic acts of volition that have no guarantees of success. Insofar as truth is not conceived to be a necessary object of contemplation, but the possible term of a theoretical-practical faculty “committed to the inactual” (Dal Pra, 1953, p. 280) and imbued with hope and a will to transforming the economic, social and political actual modes of existence by transcending the pseudo-naturalistic construct of “bare life” (Vasa, 1952, p. 228), Dal Pra and Vasa’s “Transcendentalism of action” allows for an ex-centric re-positioning of thought beyond the hegemonic immunitarian logic of domination brought forth by the contemporary “theoricistic” attitudes at work in biopolitical systems (and their critiques), thus, maieutically opening alternative possibilities beyond the autocratic closure of contemporary immunopolitics.

Notes

- 1 First published online on the 27th of March 2020 and translated into English for the online *European Journal of Psychoanalysis*, these thoughts on the pandemic are now collected in Agamben, 2020.
- 2 Although he never mentions Rahel Jaeggi’s interpretation of modern alienation as a relation of relationlessness to the world, Agamben’s (2020) reflections on the being-to-the-world of the plague-stricken modern subjects seem to echo these analyses (see also Rosa, 2020, p. 178).
- 3 Arendt draws on the famous allegory attributed to Pythagoras and quoted by authors such as Diogenes Laertius, Iamblichus and Cicero (Arendt, 1971, p. 93).
- 4 Ancient Greek thinkers designated this form of life committed at “doing nothing” (*skholazein*) as *bios theōrētikos* to distinguish it from active life (*bios politikós*) (Arendt, 1971, p. 200).
- 5 Rosa confirms that “the heightening of the tempo of life in the sense of a rise in the episodes of action and experience per unit of time” can be accompanied without contradiction by an increase in free time, which was actually experienced by every population group between 1965 and 1995, free time being perceived by actors as “a quickly passing quantity of time tied up in actions (and experiences)” (Rosa, 2013, p. 134) that could not be more distant from the Greek meaning of *scholazein*.
- 6 According to Gert Günter Voß, a “strategic conduct of life rests [...] on systematic planning, calculation and active mastery of the conditions and resources of life for the purpose of realizing life plans” (cited in Rosa, 2013, p. 237).
- 7 Donatella Di Cesare (2020) establishes a correspondence between the individuals’ “breathlessness” in hyper-accelerated late modern capitalistic societies and the Covid-19 pathogen,



which physically affects the respiratory system, bringing the pathology of contemporary self-identity into full fore.

- 8** 'Immunity' in bio-medical terminology denotes a living organism's ability to resist a pathogen, while in juridical-political terms it denotes an exemption (*dispensatio*) or protection from an obligation, that replaces the pre-modern communitarian society with the modern individualist model of social and political organization (Esposito, 2004, pp. 41-ff.).
- 9** According to Esposito (2004, p. 69) these etymological roots are connected with the semantic chains of love and friendship.
- 10** Individual rights and sovereign power are seen to be mutually functional to one another (Esposito, 2004, p. 162).
- 11** As Esposito (2004) points out, the logic of property intensifies the immunitarian mechanism, triggering a process of de-subjectivisation that drains the subject's vital energy, for the increase of which it was first applied.
- 12** The notion of sovereignty is aimed at protecting life against a scheme or procedure of protection that has proved ineffective or harmful (Esposito, 2004, p. 57).
- 13** Philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy (2010) detects in capital the "alienation of being singular-plural". Dislocating the monadic essence or substance of the Western metaphysical tradition, which still moulds the political lexicon of right-wing nationalist narratives, being singular plural in conceived to be a "co-essence" (co-, from lat., cum, 'with') in the sense of *being-many-with* (Nancy 2010, p. 30).
- 14** According to Di Cesare (2020), "social distancing" sets seal on immunitarian politics: this preventive measure, that abolishes the other in exchange for security, builds on the representation of the individual's body as a citadel, which must be protected against external threats.
- 15** Recent analyses of students' loss of lifetime earnings due to lockdown school closures (Adams, 2020) seem to confirm that education is submitted to the immunitarian logic that regulates the economic cycle of production just as death proved to be during the pandemics, according to Di Cesare (2020).
- 16** While feelings are reflexive, emotions are situational, volatile and lack performative orientation: the late modern consumerist imperative of individualist enjoyment is associated with an increase of emotional illiteracy and disorientation (see Cusinato, 2013, p. 68). Interpreting the capitalist asphyxia of contemporary "immunodemocracies" as a symptom of an emotional stiffening or "affective tetany" experienced by late modern self-identities, Di Cesare identifies immunization with anesthetization (Di Cesare, 2020, p. 36).
- 17** During the outbreak of the 2019-20 pandemic, 'distance education' has generally confirmed the fact that the "current pedagogical climate is more than averse to the idea of students and teachers touching each other, however metaphorically", i.e. establishing resonant students-teachers as well as learners-learned relationships (Rosa, 2019, p. 246).

- 18** See also Cusinato 2018, p. 196.
- 19** Defined as a (pathological) “passion for equality” since Tocqueville, envy may be interpreted to be a mechanism of control that secures the “liquid horizontality” of immuno-democracies by exerting a leveling pressure on the members of their social units and by discriminating and excluding what is strange(r) or perceived to be higher in rank or in possession of some thing or quality that is highly desirable (Cusinato, 2017, p. 48).
- 20** Associated with “self-poisoning” and “intoxication” due to a protracted impossibility to discharge one’s negative emotions in genuine and spontaneous deeds, as well as with *Schadenfreude*, namely, the pleasure at the misfortune of others, which turns into a will for self-destruction when directed inward and against oneself, resentment is defined by Nietzsche as a pathological condition, which affects the faculty of judgment, determining the negative and reactive axiological positioning of impotent, hetero-oriented and ‘nay-saying’ individuals (Nietzsche, 2008, III, § 15).
- 21** The German phenomenologist detected in the subordination of vital values to those of utility and profit, which characterizes contemporary capitalist society as well as late modern forms of bio-politics (Esposito, 2004), the emblem of *ressentiment* (Scheler, 2007, p. 110-ff).
- 22** Italian artist Luca Calò beautifully captures the late modern phenomenon of “dispositional alienation” in his “anthropo-structure”, *Il sonno della coscienza (The slumber of consciousness)* (2017): <https://www.gigarte.com/lucacaloartist/gallerie/14004/antropostrutture.html>.
- 23** See Tarrou’s confession in Camus, 2006, p. 204.
- 24** I propose to read Camus’s philosophical essay as a phenomenological exploration into the historical and political forms of what Rosa recently defined as “dispositional alienation” (Novello, 2019).
- 25** See also Segal, 1990, pp. 43-44.
- 26** For the analysis of Nazi “tanatopolitics”, see Esposito, 2004, p. 115-57.
- 27** Following Scheler’s phenomenological analyses of emotional contagion and the feelings of hate and love, Camus anticipates Hartmut Rosa’s argument, which traces in the Nazi-Fascist political movements an emblematic case of “pathology of resonance” or dispositional *alienation* (Rosa, 2019, pp. 219-20). In Camus’s pages, the systematic use and justification of violence and murder under the nazi-fascist “terrorist State” (Camus, 2008c, p. 213) is the consequence, on the level of social and political action, of a wide-spread “disorder of love”, namely, a pathological condition of the personal axiological experience, associated with despair, devaluation of human life and inability to transcend what is given (Camus, 2008c, p. 212-221; see also Novello, 2019, p. 431).
- 28** Camus, 2008c, p. 204 and ff. The ethical problem of patients’ triaging during the Covid-19 pandemic may be read in the light of the critique of the underlying bio-political attitude.
- 29** Camus resorts to this concept in his 1948 theatrical work, *L’État de Siège (The State of Siege)*, which represented the outbreak of the Plague, personified by a military dictator in nazi uniform



assisted by a zealous secretary, Death, in the Spanish city of Cadiz. Identified by Agamben with the “state of exception”, it consists in the normalization of the emergency measures and in the political fabrication of “bare life”, i.e. life outside legal (as well as medical) protection, for the purpose of State (bio)security (see Agamben, 2003; Agamben 2005).

- 30** See also Agamben’s use of Elias Canetti’s *Crowds and Power* (Agamben, 2020c).
- 31** From the latin re- “against” + *sistere*, take a stand, stand firm.
- 32** Hartmut Rosa (2019, p. 265) qualifies this peculiar state of resonancelessness as a “resistance to resonance”, which he traces back to the religious understanding of sin, considered by Martin Luther to be the condition of a relationless “soul curved in on itself” (*homo incurvatus in se ipsum*).
- 33** Cf. Di Cesare, 2020, p. 84.
- 34** For the import of Scheler’s phenomenological investigations in the genesis of Camus’s philosophical and political thought, see Novello, 2019.
- 35** Contrary to Hartmut Rosa (2019, pp. 266-7), who detects in the concept of the absurd the expression of an attitude of alienation, I suggest that in the French writer’s 1942 philosophical essay, *Le Mythe de Sisyphe (The Myth of Sisyphus)*, the formulation of the ‘absurd thought’ is indebted to Scheler’s phenomenological exploration into the notion of *ordo amoris* (see Novello, 2019) and expresses an attitude of openness-to-the-world allowing for a resonant relationship to the world.
- 36** Expressing the author’s capacity to listen to and be moved by the smallest and humblest things of nature, the experience of “consent to the stone” described in Camus’s lyrical essays (Camus, 2008a, p. 584) bears remarkable similarities to what Harmut Rosa (2019) defines as resonance.
- 37** By reinterpreting the principle of life preservation (*conservatio vitae*) from the dynamic and open perspective of its ontogenetic process with a specific focus on the idea of ‘continual rebirth’ of life in different forms, Esposito detects in Gilbert Simondon’s category of ‘transindividual’ a crucial concept to rethink the relation between life (*bios*) and politics beyond the immunitarian paradigm (Esposito, 2004, p. 199).
- 38** “Archiduc me confie qu’il a découvert sa verité quand il a épousé la Résistance. Jusque-là il était un acteur de sa vie frondeur et soupçonneux. L’insincérité l’empoisonnait. Une tristesse stérile peu à peu le recouvrait. Aujourd’hui il aime, il se dépense, il est engagé, il va nu, il provoque. J’apprecie beaucoup cet alchimiste” (Char 2007, fragment n. 30). This onto-genetic process of reorientation is powerfully evoked in Luca Calò’s “anthropostructure”, *Becoming (Divenire)*: <https://www.gigarte.com/luccalooartist/opere/168628/divenire.html>.
- 39** Plato, *The Republic*, book VII, 514b-ff.
- 40** According to Plato, freedom from envy is the condition for divine generative action; and in order for wisdom (*phronesis*) and intelligence (*nous*) to stem, philosophical dialogue must be benevolent and free from envy (*aphthonos*). Insofar as the Greek philosopher considers it to be a

remedy to the absence of *phronesis*, *periagogè* denotes a process of liberation from the fetters of envy that disorient and deform the value-ception of things within the immunitarian cave (see Cusinato, 2017, p. 411 ff.).

- 41** Cusinato, 2017, p. 48. In his reading of Plato's myth of the cave Scheler disconnects this "technique of conversion" (*techne tes periagoghes*) from the doctrine of platonic ideas: understanding the former not as an orthopedic 'straightening' of the subject's view in order to conform to an ideal object (i.e. the Good in itself), but rather as a re-orientation allowing for a *better* vision of what is "good-in-itself-for-me", he detects in *periagoge* the condition for an immanent re-evaluation of the world (Cusinato, 2017, p. 380-1).
- 42** Cusinato, 2017, p. 35-47, 375 and ff. While an organism or the self position themselves in their own environment, a singularity ex-centrally *ex-poses* herself by opening to the world (Cusinato, 2017, p. 42). Cusinato criticizes Heidegger's interpretation of *periagoge* in *Plato's Doctrine of Truth*, which reduces the process of education (*paideia/Bildung*) to an "orthopedic" correction of the subject's vision aimed at conforming to an idea-model (truth). In his view, *periagoge* is about exceeding a leveling and conformist perspective, opening up an anthropogenetic space of transformation (Cusinato, 2017, p. 38, 424).
- 43** "Un officier venu d'Afrique du Nord, s'étonne que mes «bougres de maquisards» comme il les appelle, s'expriment dans une langue dont le sens lui échappe, sont oreille étant rebelle «au parler des images». Je lui fais remarquer que l'argot n'est que pittoresque alors que la langue qui est ici en usage est due à l'émerveillement communiqué par les êtres et les choses dans l'intimité desquels nous vivons continuellement. (An officer over from North Africa is surprised that my «bloody Maquisards», as he calls them, speak a language he cannot understand, his ear being hostile to «speaking in images». I point out to him that slang is merely picturesque, whereas the language we are accustomed to using here has its source in the wonder communicated by the creatures and things we live in intimate daily contact with.)" (Char, 2007, fragment n.61).
- 44** Char, 2007, fragment n. 232. See also Camus, 2008c, pp. 85-7. The Nazi-Fascists' attitude of hate is also pointed out in various diaries of resisters during the Italian civil war (1943-35) - see Meneghello, 2018; Chiodi, 2015; Bianco, 2006.
- 45** As Fabio Minazzi points out, the political failure of these political 'laboratories' does not diminish the "intentioned moral universality" in which the very possibility of value of their meta-actual theoretical effort was rooted (Minazzi, 2008, p. 86); see also Romitelli, 2015.

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