

REFONDER LE COSMOPOLITISME
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Much has been written on globalization and its reality. Sometimes, what is highlighted when discussing globalization is its strengths and the influence it has had on the instauration of a sort of international citizenship, so prolonging the project of the Enlightenment. On the other hand, theorists are often leery of the supposed advantages of globalization as long as it reduces the diversity to “the same”, which, in turn, favors the market interests. Without a doubt, it seems difficult to add something new and relevant to this discussion. This is why it might be more efficient to try to see how globalization little by little becomes more and more rooted on the feeling of life “in general”, having a crucial impact, for example, on the rhythm of the spirit of political discussions.

The book by Zarka has precisely to do with this, since it is a short essay (not much more than one hundred pages) that deals with cosmopolitanism. The author holds that the fundamental responsibility of individuals towards life in general has not been explored enough. So far, he argues, the study of globalization has focused too much on the dynamic and human aspects of the ethical problems typical of globalization (socioeconomic inequality, intercultural dialogue, clash of civilizations), and has given for granted that life in its biological dimension is guaranteed. Zarka is concerned, therefore, with the discussion around the natural human “essence” there might be beyond its biological substratum.

The notion of “cosmo-politics” refers to *cosmos* and to *politics*. In this case, *cosmos* refers to the modern idea that nature is no longer –or not only– ruled by reason. It refers, instead, to a fundamentally political idea. It is ultimately a very Kantian process (p. 7) through which we stop regulating the world and start to see it as something realized and alive “in itself” which constitutes the environment in which we are. Within this notion, *politics* refers to the community, to the polis and its management. *Cosmopolitics* refers then to everybody’s need to think the global and communitarian dimensions of the world reality. As opposed to strict politics, which thinks with and through borders, *cosmopolitics* concerns the broad common frame that precisely allows for or opens up the border.

Does this mean then that we can leave aside the strictly political reflection to grant all the importance to the issue of the holistic dimension of the world and the responsibility that derives from it? It is not this way

for Zarka. He rather suggests that we should be skillful enough to broaden our focus of attention in order to integrate within dialectics both the particular –that is, that which refers to the traditional polis– and the universal, the cosmos, which is the common reality without which no difference is possible.

Indeed, what Zarka suggests has to do with Hans Jonas' *Das Prinzip Verantwortung* (1979). Jonas did not encourage us to wake up from the lethargy to which the modern instrumental reason was leading us. The reason why he did not is not merely ecological –the irresponsibility of humanity towards its environment. What he focused on was human sustainability itself and its future. He pointed out the risk of the world collapsing as a living being, together with everything that lives in it, including man. From that moment on, it is no longer possible to think, with Fichte, that the subject is confronted with a no-self (the world) that encourages him to surpass himself ad infinitum seeking total progress. It is no longer the world what stands before a self that organizes it and judges it, but man, a man of flesh, who has to realize that he belongs to it. Or, as Zarka puts it, the Earth is not a phenomenon given to a subject who organizes it categorically according to his intuitions, but the real place of his existence and the horizon of its survival. The cosmopolitical responsibility towards humanity includes, then, the responsibility for what makes it possible, since the Earth does not belong to any subject, but transcends them all. It is in itself “inappropriable” (p. 35).

The Copernican turn must be deconstructed. The narcissism of the modern subjectivism has resulted in a perverse excess that puts in danger the survival of the most fundamental and basic *bios*. In this sense, we are not dealing with something new: the critique of instrumental reason has resulted in a critique of the anthropological strategy of reducing the environment to calculation and order, and life to mere availability. In short, the environment as a *res extensa*. The following logical step has been, as we have seen, to include within this objectivity available to the thinking being other beings, no longer known as such (Adorno-Horckheimer). This is why in the 1950s denunciation of this structure as a platform for the exploitation and the appropriation of the “other” –by the way, not really successfully –was commonplace. There is something else to be done. According to Zarka, we have forgotten the second phase of deconstruction, which precisely attacks the starting point of the first one: the very root of the problem, which is regarding the “natural” as inferior. This amnesia might be on purpose since, as he points out, there is a direct

relation between a notion of nature as something that is there to be exploited, and that is regarded as the private property of man, and the capitalistic will of power. The destitution of the ego must be followed by a deappropriation of the environment that hosts him, of the Earth with which the ego relates. A second gesture of deconstruction, even more radical, that results in the deduction of two rights: the right to *resistance* and the right to *precaution*. He holds that the former is *a priori* and that it is legitimized by the very reality of the “natural”. It is us who need the Earth to live and persist as individuals, and not the other way around. This is why we should resist against the arrogance of believing that we hold a power of mastery which is so unjust and so in-proper to a being who, to make matters worse, uses it against its peers. It is then a meta-political right which can be exercised within the political field (p. 46), because reality is always concrete, but oriented towards a solidary and confraternal look towards everything which constitutes the living world.

By way of contrast, the right to precaution is *a posteriori*, since it has to do with the pragmatic regulation that societies carry out as a reaction to the excesses of the technical power (p. 67). It has to do with the aforementioned principle of responsibility and with the active commitment to ensure the sustainability of the species and their “home”.

It seems obvious that the Earth as a creation and the divine imperative of taking care of it is reminiscent of Semitic ideas, but Zarka relates it, above all, to a pragmatic caution of a clearly temporal philosophy that, as such, is more uncertain than the Aristotelian *phronesis*, because its object is not the present occasion, but the future horizon (p. 75).

The cosmopolitan claim of Zarka is therefore linked both to the theoretical need of connecting politics with the very idea of globalization and his way of thinking the world, in its totality, as a horizon of future; and a praxis that has to do with the very need to rethink the urging and specially dangerous needs that sustainability puts on the table. It looks as if we have gone too far and now we have to rectify. Zarka, though, is not interested in reproaches, but in reverting the situation before it is too late. This is why the book concludes alluding to the human singularity in the midst of the “living”.

Cosmopolitics sends man back to Earth, but this is in no way reductive, since the particular responsibility of man’s reflection is not eclipsed. Max Scheler would argue that it is precisely this capacity for reflection which gives us our place in the world. And Zarka adds that this grants man the norms of his actions and productions. Being reflexive implies

transcending the particular to become aware of the universal frame, which is the condition of possibility of said particularity. It is a matter of a universality that assumes that the human species is a generality made of all the singularities that integrate it, and is itself nested within an even larger and more fundamental reality: the reality of the Earth.

It is true that within Zarka's work it is not clear why we should assume that the Earth is a living being, welcoming and balance, or at least neutral, as we could read between lines. As a matter of fact, it looks as if there are also several reasons to regard the Earth as little more than an ongoing battlefield for survival, both in the micro and the macro level. It should be taken into account that it is not the same to look after the human being sustainability than deriving, from this, an ethics of the living in general. In effect, it might be true that there is an underlying metaphilosophical or even Romantic idea of the biological reality, but what is undeniable is that the situation is delicate and, what is worse, could be otherwise. We have not done everything we could to avoid or correct some of the problems that haunt what we are, i.e. "nature". This is why Zarka is right in his fundamental claim: we need a cosmo-ethics that derives into a cosmo-politics because what is at stake is no less than the future of men.

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