GENEALOGIES AND ARCHIVES OF THE POSSIBLE

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This is a particularly interesting text, not only for its opening up of research perspectives, but also —and this is something I would like to emphasize— for the way it contributes to the definition of the tasks of political philosophy in its specificity.

A first contribution in this direction comes from the genealogical approach that was adopted. References to Michel Foucault's research are anything but occasional —I recall, for example, the recent article devoted to the theme of labour in Foucault's *Truth and Juridical* Forms and *The Use of Pleasure* (Faitini, 2022)— both in method and, conversely, in the original choice to distance herself from some analyses of the contemporary that use Foucauldian categories. Indeed, the author declares that she does not want to "equate ethics, governmentality and ideology" (Faitini, 2023, p. 32), thus grasping a limitation of those critical theses that, while moving away from the intention of clarifying the dynamics of the contemporary, end up producing a reinforcement of the iron cage in which we would find ourselves.

In order to counter this outcome in particular, Tiziana Faitini puts to work another trait of the Foucauldian genealogical approach which can be found in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History* (1971/1991), particularly in the French philosopher's reinterpretation of the concept of *Herkunft* (descent). Descent not only as an object but also, and above all, as a research posture and a disposition toward historical sources which allows for "the

discovery, under the unique aspect of a concept, of the myriad events through which —thanks to which, against which— it was formed" (p. 81).

The author does not, however, simply assume this indication operationally. She also puts to work another indication related to the genealogical approach, namely the emergence of her own research question, in this case professional ethics, in a non-linear nor preliminarily acquired cross-reference between source inquiry and the urgencies of the present. On this matter Faitini is clear in reformulating what is at stake in the text's conclusions: "rethinking our work-democracies is an urgent task," she declares (2022, p. 224).

Such purpose is instantiated in Faitini's work in two forms. The first is to outline a field of inquiry that acts as a counter-history —in the author's terms, as a counterpoint— to Max Weber's hegemonic thesis on solidarity, on the "elective affinities" between Protestant ethics and capitalism, condensed in the professional ethics of Protestantism. By sticking to the same intersection of theology, economics, and politics, Faitini shows another history of the profession and its ethical dimension. More precisely, their relationship is not approached as that between productivity and virtue, between the attainment of wealth through labour as a sign of divine grace, but rather a nexus between profession and citizenship, as well as between profession and social and political inclusion. In this perspective, which, I repeat, works on the same dimensions of the economic, the political and the theological, the chapters devoted to *professio* in Roman and medieval culture provide an entirely different framework for orientation.

I thus arrive at the second form in which the above purpose is realized. The sources consulted by Faitini (2022), in resonance with the urgency with which her research moves, transform history in an archive of the possibilities for the present. I believe I move in consonance with her intentions, having found confirmation of this impression in a sentence of the text, where she hopes to set the conditions for other possibilities (Faitini, 2023, p. xix). Thus, it is research that, precisely because it foregrounds the nexus between labour and citizenship, provides tools for investigating the crisis of the contemporary in the specific declination given within the tradition of not liberal but social democracies, that is "postwork society in which political bonds are no longer forged through productive work" (Faitini, 2023, p. xvi).

This aspect is often neglected when addressing the new neoliberal reason, in favour of a homogeneous ratio that would be exercised at the global level. While from a critical point of view this thesis can be problematically fruitful, it ends up concealing the specific, situated resources that different political cultures might offer. In this sense, Faitini (2022) proceeds:

The codification of ethical precepts in each country and field has been influenced both by the history of the bodies and professional associations, and by different legal frameworks. Nevertheless, and although the timing and contents are distinct, a general and somewhat homogeneous diffusion of the tool of ethical codification in the twentieth and twenty-first century is clearly evident. (p. 31)

I want to underscore a final contribution to the definition of the tasks of political philosophy. From what has been said so far, it seems clear how that if politics refer to an investigation of the forms of associated life in their historical becoming, the term philosophy decisively indicates a work on concepts, which themselves become the subject of critical inquiry. Not inconsequently, the question of how the work of critique is exercised arises, taking into account its characteristics of conceptual articulation, historical differentiation, and affirmative capacity. The answer to such question, I would say, should encompass its capacity to open up alternative perspectives to the dominant ones.

I now come to an internal aspect of the discussion. In the first chapter, where the field of scholarly debate is circumscribed, a proliferation of self-made codes "often classed 'as soft law'" (Faitini, 2023, p. 24) is indicated. This codification enterprise is then distinguished into a prudential level, a disposition to work where codes, anthropological and ethical models are produced; and a metaethical level —less investigated by ethics studies— which deals with the relationship between professional ethics and widespread morality.

I take occasion from the sentence in which the objectives of the work include an investigation of the "multifaceted valorisation" (Faitini, 2023, p. 101) of professional activities in contemporary Europe. In fact, a further interest of this volume is the fact that it does not settle on the canonical partitions of modern, pre-modern and the related partitions between public and private, and thus between ethics and politics —in this regard, the passage refuses to place ethics in a heteronormative or transcendent dimension, as it assumes the ambiguity of immanent regulations, is very interesting (Faitini, 2023, p. 23).

Thinking about the use of premodern sources for the analysis of the contemporary —for example, about S. Sassen's *Territory Authority and Rights* (2006), but also about Paolo Grossi's work on medieval juridical pluralism (2017) or, in contrast, about the emergence of "civil", that is, private and non-state constitutions, recorded by G. Teubner (2012)— I consider that there is the opportunity for rethinking the issues at stake in the intertwining of ethics, economics, and religion: on the one hand, this tripartition needs

to be abandoned to identify a field of different regulatory and normative regimes that come into tension but may also offer unexpected alliances; and, on the other hand, the question of value, which participates in the ethical and economic by performing different regulatory functions, is a concept that we have to address anew with a genealogical approach (Thomas, 2002).

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