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Reimagining revolution

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The philosopher Gilles Deleuze states: “there are images of thought that impede us from thinking.” That is, we have images of what it means to think (a force of will, an academic work) that block thought. Could we also say that there are “images of change” that impede us from changing? Images of what change is supposed to be (in this case, social or political) that block the practice of change itself.

These “images” of which we speak are diffuse models, preconceived ideas. They organise our gaze: what we see and do not see, what we value and what we do not. And they have at the same time an orienting function: they help us to move in the real, in what is happening (or they disorient us, if they are not adequate). They are both lens and compass.

There are images of thought that impede us from thinking. There are images of change that impede us from changing. Therefore, to think or change, we need to equip ourselves, to the degree that it is possible, with another *imaginary*: deposits or seedbeds of images that organise our gaze in a different way, that orient us in a different direction. Other lenses, other compasses.

The revolutionary image of change

The image of change par excellence during at least two centuries – let's say, from 1789 until 1976 – has been without a doubt the revolutionary image. It never consisted of a single image, but rather of a constellation: image of change, but also of militancy, of conflict, of goal, of organisation, etc. That is, a specific conception of social transformation implies a network or a whole bundle of images: modalities of commitment, forms of antagonism, figures of the enemy, organisational schemas, etc.

How is the revolutionary image of change to be characterised? We can take Hannah Arendt as a first reference. In the first chapters of her book *On Revolution*, in asking after the meaning of revolution, Arendt highlights two details of the French Revolution: the execution of the king and the new calendar (as is known, with the old world abolished, the Revolution marks year I of the new era and each month is rebaptised: Brumaire, Pluviôse, Germinal, Thermidor, etc.). These two symbols (properly material) take us very directly to a certain image of revolutionary change: it consists of the overthrow of the old order and a new beginning, an *absolute* beginning.

The revolutionary image of change is determined by a break, a radical discontinuity between the old and the new. All of it traversed by the idea of "historical necessity" that Arendt discerns in the metaphors of the revolutionary discourses: "irresistible current", "irrevocable storm", "unstoppable gale", etc. The revolution is a radical change and at the same time necessary.

It is not by chance that Hegelian philosophy will be the "language of change" for two centuries: its "system of images" (dialectic,

negation, overcoming or sublation) allows for sustaining and resolving this apparent paradox of an absolute change that is simultaneously absolutely necessary. My friend Juan Gutiérrez speaks of the Marxist and Hegelian "*pasodoble* of the No": the negation of the negation (the negation of what negates humanity) leads us to affirmation (a new world and a new man).

The pedagogical utopias of the French Revolution

In the work of the historian Bronislaw Baczko on the pedagogical utopias of the French Revolution, we can find a few concrete empirical developments that parallel Arendt's analyses. Although the majority of the revolutionary educational projects were only put into practise after (and with the thousands of limitations and contradictions that the real imposes on dreams), the pedagogical utopias allow us to clearly see then what and how the revolutionary images were in action.

What was the major challenge of the Revolution? The revolution is radical rupture and discontinuity, yet for it to persist, to reproduce and to endure, it is necessary to create "a new people", a people completely emancipated from the weight of the past. The principal objective of the Revolution is "to form the new Man for the regenerated City". New men finally liberated from prejudices, made according to the measure of the new time, modeled like clay by an educational power considered almost omnipotent.

The first step is to eliminate the old errors, the old superstitions, the old taboos. Only thus can an entirely purified world be built, in all of its details. "The past must be destroyed unto its last remaining vestiges …". It is not a matter of a few changes, of a handful of reforms. The old world can again take root, with its lot

of ignorance and oppression, through any remaining remnant. In fact, revolutionaries will never cease to attribute the "failure" of their aspirations to the ever renewed conspiracy of the old (which justified the terrorist resort to the guillotine as a supreme pedagogy).

It is in the school that the future of the Republic is played out. There, errors are corrected and new knowledges are transmitted. But not only: the school must take hold of the imagination and human passions, generating new behaviours: "frank ways, language without obscenities, the temperament and bearing of a new man".

A crucial debate then opens up: the dream of educating the new man presupposes the ideal teacher. But where is s/he to be found? Who will teach the teachers? Some will go even further: is not the idea of school another "vestige of the past"? It is what the more radical followers of Rousseau argue: the (revolutionary) society itself is the best school. The new order should be "breathable" out in the open, in the revolutionary assemblies and popular organisations, in the new calendar and the new toponomy, in the civic festivals and the recently created system of weights and measures. The education of the "new man" should not have spatial or temporal limits, but should rather "engross itself" directly in things, in places of permanent education, be ubiquitous.

In any case, the school (as model of society, rooted in a strong state organisation and a new elite of enlightened teachers-legislators) and revolutionary society (as a school of customs) take on the principal revolutionary challenge: to break with "organic life" (the family, communities of birth) and "to raise souls to the level of the Constitution"; to fill the breach and the divide between habit and law, between life as it is and life as it should be; "to imagine perfection and to then realise it".

Children, childhood, will be the principal object of revolutionary, pedagogical utopias, as a "blank page" upon which one can write without end. The child as the people to be; the people as the child to educate (or re-educate): the French Revolution is, according to Michelet, "the great revolution of infancy".

The angel of the Chinese Cultural Revolution

The idea-image of revolution inaugurated in 1789 does not exhaust itself there, but goes on to pervade (as a reference and inspirational model) two centuries of revolutionary efforts at social transformation (in many different ways, in different contexts).

Let us approach Mao Tse-tung's Great Chinese Cultural Revolution indirectly. In 1975, two French Maoist intellectuals and militants publish *L'Ange*, a book that proposes to evaluate the experience of French Maoism; an experience that curiously became massive *after* the profoundly libertarian revolt of May 68. Hundreds of young people break then with their (familial, geographical, social) environment and enter French factories, where they try to mix with the industrial proletariat and help them to overcome the classical organisational frame of the CGT, the straitjacket that had asphyxiated the subversive potential of May.

In 1974, the great Maoist organisational experience of the *Gauche Prolétarienne* comes to an end voluntarily and a crisis of meaning or direction takes hold of the pro-Chinese militants. Furthermore, soon after, dissident testimonials began to surface and circulate about the China that they idealised, for they connect more with an inspirational myth than with a socio-historical reality. *L'Ange seeks* to be at the same time a self-critical revision (though without regrets) of the experience and an updating of its commitment: "the

Angel we herald, that was always defeated, will triumph in an unheard of revolution". A strange and original, violent and intense book, beautiful in its own way (cold, metallic ...), that allows us to capture some of the images of change of Maoism.

For their evaluation, the authors ground themselves in a re-reading of the ancient christian texts, proposing an analogy between the Maoist experience and the first Christians. How so? In both cases, we are before mass movements: one (ascetic) in the Hellenistic world, the other (political) in modern capitalism. Both are comprised of a cultural revolution – beyond a political and ideological revolution – that aspires "to grasp what is most profound in man". And in both, there is a dualist/Manichean vision of the world according to which there exist two paths and two spirits (Light and Darkness) and between them, matters must be resolved, decided.

Communism does not have to be waited upon as the automatic outcome of the dynamic of the modes of production. Revolution is the collective gesture that breaks in two the history of the world: this radical voluntarism is the difference between Maoism and other Marxist-Leninist currents.

Thus, on the one hand, violence and fury in the deliberate inversion of all values, a fight without quarter against the ideological remains of the old world. A titanic effort to extirpate what has been reproduced since the beginning of time, a radical anti-culture where the position of the revolutionary is confounded in a first moment with that of the savage and the feral. In the case of Christianity, the destructive fury is expressed as the rejection of work, the hatred of the body and even of sex; in the case of Maoism, as the hatred of Thought (the desire to know for the sake

of knowing, vain curiosity), the forgetting of parents and the detachment from the Self.

“We desired sovereign amnesia ... We would have liked to burn the National Library to suffer properly (...) We summoned everyone from whom amnesia could be expected. We said with Mao: “Let the children come to me, they are like the sun at eight or nine in the morning”.

On the other hand, there was the desire for absolute purity. The battle is fought inside the human being, “each soul is torn in two, fighting against each other”. There is no indifferent moment in the fight against “the old things, the old ideas”. Since no one is red (or holy) by birth, everyone needs to be re-educated. The world, the flesh, is in the hands of the devil (capitalist), and we must go off to the desert or to the factories. Freedom is a radical exercise in uprooting the organs and the organic. Among Christians, it goes through the rejection of marriage and procreation, the practice of charity; among the Maoists, by the rejection of the bourgeois values of selfishness, distinction and vainglory, the practice of criticism and self-criticism, permanent self-examination.

And how to orient oneself, how to choose between “the two worlds, the two cities, the two masters”? Any Maoist militant can become a hero of the revolution by studying the thought of Mao Tse-tung and emulating other heroes (who in turn emulated others and so on until they reach the hero par excellence: Mao himself). The thought of Mao is summarized in the famous red book, practically a manual for the daily life of the militant written on the basis of semi-poetic sentences: the lodge or lodges of “precious stones of consciousness”.

Simplicity and purity: in the thought of Mao Tse-tung, “nothing is left of the old world”. It must be ruminated incessantly: before any problem, before any difficulty, before any decision (“if you do not study the President with assiduity / you will live in darkness / Study his works of truth well / and a red sun will illuminate your thoughts”). But it is a thought that cannot be understood if it is not first felt. “What it takes to understand Mao’s thought is not knowledge, erudition, intelligence, but faith in the way.” In truth, Mao’s thought is not the criterion for choosing the path, but the path itself.

Displacement

China’s Cultural Revolution functions as filter for analyses-revelation because of its extreme radicalness. Things did not go as far in the USSR: the debate between Lenin and *proletkult* was resolved in favour of the former (naturally). It is not possible to create a new order from nothing, said Lenin. It had to be built from the treasure of the past: bourgeois culture. Stalin himself answered the demand for a new language proclaimed by Mayakovsky. If the infrastructure has changed, argued the poet, pushing Marxism to an extreme, how can the superstructure not be changed as well? Stalin contested: language was beyond the class struggle. And the discussion was brought to an end.

It would take more work and space to properly ground these intuitions. But for now, it is only a matter of pointing out some of the stars that make up the constellation of the revolutionary image of change: the revolution is a war to the death between two worlds; the militant is the force of will that pushes what is towards what it should be; the goal is the New Man; the organisation is the conscious vanguard (organized in the Party, embryo of a State)

with an overall vision and purpose; the time of the revolution is thought of as a radical discontinuity, and at the same time absolutely necessary; etc.

Certainly, the images of revolutionary change and what is actually the revolution itself cannot be confused, a process that is always impure, contradictory, imperfect, unpredictable, uncontrollable. But what interests us here are the lenses and the compasses. The objective is not to judge or analyze them critically (for their responsibility in state terror, for example), but to understand them. The balance of the revolutions of the last century we leave pending for another time and place. In any case, it can be said (with Alain Badiou) that this balance will necessarily be "internal" for those of us who place ourselves subjectively on the side of revolutions and do not accept the conclusion that the very idea of radical transformation of society is undesirable and criminal. What has been definitively buried under the disasters of authoritarian communism is not the idea of social change, but the old constellation of the conscious vanguard, the planned change from above, the tabula rasa and the new Man. We are not interested at this moment so much in criticism as in proposing a displacement.

Zombie-images

In the recently occupied Puerta del Sol, which will quickly become known as the 15M movement, someone writes a sign that will immediately become famous (go viral): "nobody expects the Spanish revolution". Is this the revitalisation of the revolutionary imaginary, after the decades long consensus around the "end of History": representative democracy and the market economy as the unsurpassable horizon of humanity? I do not believe so. The phrase is only a humouristic deflection of a famous Monty Python sketch:

“nobody expects the Spanish inquisition”. This metaphorical, vague and ironic way of speaking of revolution is more a symptom of exhaustion, the exhaustion of a two centuries old imaginary.

Therefore, can we say that the current political movements (like 15M and the rest of the “occupy the squares movements”) are simply “reformist” movements that seek a few small changes within the frame of what is possible? Or should the exhaustion of the revolutionary imaginary lead us to pessimism (“no further change is possible”)? Neither one thing nor the other, as both reactions are in fact dependent on the centrality of the revolutionary imaginary.

We think that instead (with authors such as Alain Badiou or Santiago Lopez Petit) that we are crossing a “period of interregnum” or an “impasse”. This lull or impasse has to do with a “decoupling” between new forms of politicisation and the existing imaginaries of change. Collective practices experiment with new ways, but almost by touch, by feeling our way. And the old images of change, though saturated and exhausted, continue to fly over heads and bodies, like *zombie-images*.

What would be the problem with this “decoupling”? On the one hand, looking at themselves in the mirror-model of the old images of revolution, the movements gain a devalorizing, disempowering, saddening reflection of themselves. The zombie-images separate the lived experiences from what they are and what they are capable of.

The same 15M offers us a very clear example: despite being one of the movements with the greatest social impact in Spanish society of the last 40 years (profoundly questioning the political and cultural architecture inherited from the Transition, displacing the thresholds of perception and social sensibility, neutralising the

fascistoid tendency expanding throughout Europe), laments and complaints have never ceased to accompany it: “it changed nothing”. Without other lenses and other compasses, attached to the old images, the possibility of social transformation is again and again referred back to the forms and formulas already known: the party that, taking power (by electoral means this time), changes the laws and legal frameworks; in sum, macro-politics. Social change is change driven from above, or it is not.

On the other hand, the zombie-images weaken effective practices and lived experiences, giving value only to certain aspects of them, to the detriment of others: the massive, the moments of open insurrection, the epic, the hyper-visible, etc., are privileged. Another imaginary of change becomes necessary and urgent; images suitable to see and think a nonlinear, complex social change, with its high and low tides, processes and events, continuities and discontinuities; capable of giving value and visibility to the invisible and silent transformations, to changes that are interstitial and informal, unpredictable and involuntary, micropolitical and affective, bastard and impure; images in which we find friendship, value and power.

And not only do we need new images, but also *another relationship* to them. The old revolutionary imaginaries too often crystallised in a “technified myth” (Furio Jesi): transcendent, rigid, immobile. We therefore need not so much a “system of images” (finished and coherent), but a sort of fabric, an infinite patchwork, permanently in the making, always susceptible to being modified and altered, where everything adds up and nothing is left out, because each shred (each image) can have its moment and its occasion. It is not in fact a matter of negating or discarding the old revolutionary images of change (they can be one more thread of the patchwork),

but of complementing, multiplying and enriching the repertoire of the possible.

The "war of position" according to Antonio Gramsci

Where could we begin to look for inspiring images to re-imagine social change? What I propose at this moment, and only by way of indication,
are three possible sources. They are willfully experiences *of the past*. The revolutionary image of change was perhaps hegemonic, but it was not the only one and the past is a deposit of knowledges always subject to actualisation from the present. The new imaginary of change need not *break* with the past, but learn to recreate it, translate it and give it new meaning.

The first possible source of inspiration is the work of one author: Antonio Gramsci, the Italian militant-philosopher. Gramsci is a name completely internal to Marxist-Leninist thought, and yet his work is a fertile territory, in a new key. How is this possible? In part, we owe this to Mussolini. Gramsci had to invent an encrypted language to get past the censorship of the Italian fascist prisons: he spoke of "philosophy of praxis" to refer to Marxism, etc. Today, this same encrypted language reaches us, decades later, as a poetic language with a multitude of possible readings and meanings. This keeps Gramsci safe from being converted into a "dead language", as occurs with the greater part of Marxism-Leninism.

Another reason for the relevance of Gramsci is his conception of social change. In prison, Gramsci reflects deeply on a repeated failure. The revolution thought of as a "war of
movement" (characterised by speed, the frontal assault on power, its minoritarian character) functioned very well in Russia, but ran

up against a wall in Western Europe: the crushing of the Spartacist revolt in Germany, of the workers' councils in Italy, etc. What happens?

The war of movement, Gramsci believes, is only successful where society is relatively autonomous from the State and "civil society" (the institutions that construct social consensus: communication media, etc.) is "primary and indeterminate" (like Tsarist Russia). In Western Europe however, civil society is solid and protects the order of the State like a "robust fortress of casemates", resistant to the "catastrophic irruptions of the immediate economic element: crises, depressions, etc."

Neither "historical mysticism" (the revolution as miraculous fulguration), nor economic determinism (economic collapse leading to a revolutionary process), Gramsci proposes re-imagining revolution as a "war of position". The key feature of the war of position is the affirmation and development of a *new world view*. In each gesture of everyday life, there is an implicit world view. The revolutionary process consists of diffusing a new world view (and thereby other gestures) that empty out and displace the power of the old bit by bit. It is what Gramsci calls the "construction of hegemony": there is no power without hegemony, without control over the gestures of ordinary life. Without it, power would be without legitimacy, reduced to pure repression, to fear. The seizure of power must be preceded, concludes Gramsci, by a "seizure" of civil society.

To illustrate this other idea of revolution, Gramsci calls upon the example of the French Revolution. His view contrasts with that of Arendt: Gramsci does not fix on the execution of the king and the new calendar, but on *the previous movement of the Enlightenment*. For decades, by means of the salons, the clubs and the

encyclopedias, the Enlightenment disseminates the idea of the equal dignity of persons as beings endowed with reason. The new conception of the world displaces the older one, undermining the pillars of the *Ancien Régime* without anyone becoming aware of it. Finally, when the Revolution is carried out, Gramsci says, *it had already triumphed beforehand*. The domination lacked legitimacy, it is but an empty shell that collapses at the first blow.

It is true nevertheless that in Gramsci very classical ideas continue to operate: the Party as brain that leads the body, "proclaimer and organiser" of the new world view, a collective intellectual. The image though of the war of position can serve to inspire today: like an infiltration more than an attack, a slow tectonic displacement more than an accumulation of forces, a collective and anonymous movement more than a minoritarian and centralised operation, an indirect, daily and diffuse form of pressure more than a concentrated and simultaneous insurrection (even though Gramsci does not exclude recourse to insurrection, he subordinates it to the construction of hegemony).

The revolution is won *before* carrying out the revolution, in the process of elaboration and expansion of a new definition of reality: what counts and what does not count, what is of value and what is of no value. This is a definition not written in books, that is, it is not only nor principally a question of "ideas", but is *inscribed* in gestures, behaviours, the relations between beings, with things and the world.

The anarchist "social revolution"

The second source of possible inspiration is a philosophy in movement: anarchism. We are interested now with how it has

been re-read and translated into the present by Daniel Colson, libertarian philosopher and historian.

In his *Petit lexique philosophique de l'anarchisme*, Colson recalls how the anarchists very quickly moved away from the idea-image of Revolution, for them too associated with a coup d'état, with social transformation conceived of as a taking of power and a change in constitutional regime (constituent process, etc.). To political Revolution, the anarchists opposed their "*social* revolution". The adjective indicates a change of meaning, in at least three aspects.

First, the social revolution is born and develops *in the very interior* of society: "on the terrain of classes and differences, of property and justice, of the relations of power and the modalities of association, there where the order or equilibrium of society is played out, in a multitude of ways and through a total transformation of the social ensemble (multiform)". It is not a matter of bringing down or a taking of the State, nor of dispossessing the owners of capital by means of a dictatorship of the representatives of the proletariat: the social revolution is a change *from within* of the very same social relations and relations of power.

Secondly, the social revolution, in contrast to the political revolution, does not identify itself uniquely, exclusively or principally with exceptional episodes, in street mobilisations, insurrectional conjunctures, but also with silent and daily processes (the creation of alternative institutions, social relations and subjectivities) of those upon whom in the last instance depends the efficacy of the transformation. The "*Grand Soir*" (great night) of the anarchist imaginary does not refer to the break (brusque, immediate, instantaneous) between the old and the new. It is rather the expression or the final manifestation of a potentiality accumulated beforehand. It is like the fruit that matures on the

tree, and not a bolt of lightening in the empty sky or the voluntaristic assault of a minority on power.

Lastly, the social revolution does not depend on a classical strategy (the means-ends logic) that some draw up and others execute (the conscious vanguard and the masses). It is rather a horizontal process and not segmented hierarchically between the principal and the secondary, the tactical and the strategic; where each moment and each situation are of value for and in themselves, and not as parts of a whole or as moments in a time line, nor according to its position on a map designed from the outside. Each place and each instant has a "prefigurative" value (what we want is *already* what we do) and not "transitive" (what is happening *here* has no value other than taking me *there*). The anarchist strategy does not consist in ordering, segmenting and managing, but in amplifying and connecting the distinct situations until reaching a joint resonance.

Recapitulating, the anarchist image of revolution is 1) social and not political, occurs in the very heart of society as a field of forces (not uniquely or principally in political power or in the apparatuses of the State), 2) it is a process and not an event, the "grand soir" is the final precipitation of a condensation of potentiality (not the origin, the cause, the "moment of truth"); and 3) it is horizontal and prefigurative, without strategic hierarchy, referring to another rationality and another ethics. The great contribution of anarchist thought to strategy (that disrupts all strategies) is the radical indistinctness between ends and means.

The cultural revolution of women

The third source of possible inspiration are the women's movements of the 20th century (as movements and as thought:

feminism). Without a single or centralised organisation, without the taking of any Winter Palace, women's movements set off political-anthropological transformations of an unparalleled magnitude, radically redefining the relations between men and women, and with that, the masculine order of places, functions and bodies: the public and the private, the personal and the political, production and reproduction, etc.

What is of interest to us here and now is to highlight how, in their very ways of action and organisation, women's movements propose a "beyond" the classical revolutionary imaginary: the (heroic) subject opposed to the world and who pushes it in the right direction; freedom understood fundamentally as a radical uprooting of "organic life"; reality as clay or as a blank slate at our disposition, to be moulded or written upon without end; action as an outside intervention that "models" and gives form; revolutionary change as the "product" of a revolutionary technique, etc.

That is, the women's movements not only posed a radical renewal of the contents, but also of the *very paradigm of virile and masculine revolutionary political action*. How? I limit myself to five points.

Finding leverage in plurality. The diversity of currents, versions, groups, magazines of the feminist movement has been enormous. Always in tension and dispute, but without the desire to unify in a single Vision or Organization, but instead seeking a dynamic and conflictual equilibrium, an equilibrium of the heterogeneous.

Changing life from within life. Struggling in the very fabric of everyday life (without accepting it as it is, but without seeking an ideal world apart): disrupting domestic spaces, workplaces, love relationships, the body and motherhood, sexuality, care and the reproduction of life ...

Linking thought to experience. Feminism is a thought that elaborates lived experience. The effort to name, conceptualise and tell of common and everyday discomforts (in self-awareness groups, etc.). The hierarchical relationship between thought (as the projection of a model, an ideal, a must) and action (as execution, as accomplishment) is thereby deconstructed.

Staking the body. Feminism radically questions the primacy of consciousness of classical political theory. Change cannot be left only to an ideological change. It must include the alteration of daily behaviours. The body is not what has to be subdued (the "organicity" that is to submit to reason and the ideal), but the force (vulnerable) from which to begin.

Giving value to the invisible. The politics of transformation does not obey the Hollywood mandate "lights, camera and action". Resistance practices are often quotidian, invisible, silent: the "sexual anesthesia" practiced informally by many women as informal birth control, the sexual strike, the reproductive strike, etc. Feminism allows us also to see and value as "struggles" practices of abstention, of subtraction, of silence.

The women's movements have engendered, in fact, a true "cultural revolution", an authentic anthropological mutation that goes far beyond a mere political or ideological change, yet avoiding precisely everything that made the cultural revolutions of the past a normative, coercive and finally terrorist enterprise: the primacy of the ideal and the model to which reality must submit.

Rethinking conflict and enmity

Gramsci, anarchism and the women's movements: three sources that can contribute to elaborating another political rationality and

imaginary, more complex, richer and less linear, capable of accompanying a social change without a subject (as cause or author), without privileged spaces or times, without faith in any major historical break (even though there are discontinuities and these are decisive).

The three propose (in distinct ways) some important and forceful ideas to nourish a *post-revolutionary* conception of social transformation:

– *affirmation*: no other possible world arises from the negation of the old (liberating violence, the negation of negation as affirmation), but rather from a redefinition of reality (embodied in new ways of doing, seeing and living) that amplifies, expands and propagates everywhere.

– *the indirect*: epic and visible moments are "iceberg tips", "concentrated" and "composed" of other things, foam that crowns an underlying wave. Indirect results (involuntary, unintentional) of struggles and evolving, everyday changes.

– *multiplicity*: change occurs in a plurality of times and spaces, through a diversity of actors and scales, which is not about "unifying", but about "balancing". An always conflictual and dynamic equilibrium that does not seek to "resolve" the contradictions, but to elaborate them as productive tension.

In the three sources, there are also elements to rethink conflict, antagonism and the figure of the enemy (political problems of the first order). In the traditional logic, the existence of a world goes through the total destruction of the other: it is the polarisation of old/new, old regime/ideal city, bourgeoisie/proletariat. The conflict is imagined as a radical gesture of cutting and separation. For example, a contemporary author like Zizek, who works on the

recycling of old images of change, often thinks of it that way: an Act (in capital letters) of autonomy and disconnection.

In contrast, Gramsci proposes a "subordinate inclusion" of the adversary: it is no longer a question of eliminating her/him, but of putting her/his strength at the service of other ends (of another worldview). Anarchism, as explained by Colson, works according to a "situational" logic of enmity and conflict: there is no absolute enemy, but rather obstacles to what potentially appears in this or that situation. Friend and enemy (alliances and obstacles) depend on the situation and they can change, redistribute themselves in other ways. Finally, the women's movements do not point to man as their enemy, but rather to the (patriarchal) conditions and structures that determine and sustain inequality. Concrete men can be friends and allies.

It is another imaginary of change: it is no longer the war of two worlds between which there is an absolute antagonism, for there is "only one common world" in which those who are different have to live together in equality. The other is no longer an absolute Other that has to be excluded or eliminated, for we are tied to her/him by a certain relationship of interdependence and reciprocity.

Rebel images of change

Post-revolutionary images of change can also be researched in contemporary authors. I am thinking, for example, of "network logic", following Margarita Padilla, of the "strategy without strategy" of Foucault, of the "cracks" of John Holloway, of the "powers of variation" of Lazzarato, of the "recombinant processes" of Franco Berardi (*Bifo*) and a vast *et cetera* to be explored.

There are also movements. *Zapatismo*, for example, has made an enormous effort to name and speak about itself in its own words, to distill its experience in concepts, to elaborate and share new images of change. For example, the distinction between the "social rebel" and the "revolutionary": "A revolutionary fundamentally proposes to change things from above, not from below, contrary to the social rebel". The revolutionary sets out: "we are going to build a movement of rebellion, I will take power and from above transform things". And the social rebel, no. The social rebel goes on making demands and from below goes on changing things from below, without having to pose the problem of power. This is an anti-vanguardist, inclusive and collective conception of social transformation: "All methods have their place, all of the front lines of struggle are necessary and all degrees of participation are important. The problem of revolution (in the lower case) ceases to be a problem of organisation, method and of leadership (in the lower case) to become a problem that concerns everyone who sees this revolution as necessary and possible, and for whose realisation everyone is important".

I ask myself, now to finish, if the images that we need do not point to a radical displacement of perspective, including "civilisational"; a departure from a certain Western paradigm. The philosopher and French sinologist François Jullien, in his work, explores again and again the contrast between (what we could call) the "Greek image of the world" and the "Chinese image of the world" (in relation to time, thought, art, the body, strategy and efficacy, etc.).

The Occident, explains, Jullien, divides the world in two: what is and what should be. It is the Platonic gesture par excellence. The Western idea of efficacy has its origin here: it is a matter of projecting onto reality what should be (in the form of a Plan or Model) and endeavouring to materialise it (to put it into practice,

to bring it down to earth). Between being and what should be, it is for the human will to fill the gap and "straighten out reality" (to put it straight, that is, according to the Law, to what should be). The understanding abstracts and models, the will applies and executes. In the case of the military art of war, the military chiefs of staff propose the plan and the armies break the resistances that reality throws up. The battle field, where this is fought ought to completely annihilate the enemy, is the decisive moment in which all is staked: the "essence" of war.

Revolution has also been thought in this mould: the vanguard (that possesses the science of society and history) reveals and dictates what must be, the revolution is the "final struggle" in which we impose the plan on reality. In fact, in an article of the 1980s published in the magazine *aut aut*, the Italian Lapo Berti argues that the modern idea of revolution is a concept dependent on the scientific model specific to classical mechanics: society is a machine, with its unique laws, that one tries to know so as to plan an ensemble of (strategic) actions with goals of change.

The Chinese image of the world, according to François Jullien, offers a very different inspiration: it is not a matter of projecting a plan and executing it ("to imagine perfection and to then realise it", as was said during the French Revolution), but of activating all of the senses to capture the powers-potentialities that animate the real, and to accompany them, to unfold them with care, without any voluntarism.

If we think about social change with the Chinese image that Jullien proposes, the resulting constellation of images is very different: the militant would no longer be the force of will that fills, through an exhausting effort, the gap between being and what must be, but instead someone who is committed or involved in a particular

situation and with particular powers; the avant-garde is transformed into “rear guards” capable of detecting and accompanying processes that they neither direct nor create; strategy is a work of care, like that of a gardener; political organization is the series of apparatuses that effectively just “let power pass”, without working to subject it to a previous ideal; the temporality of change is the time of a process, the time appropriate to the maturation of a potential situation, without a “final battle”; the conflict is the unblocking of affirmative force, not the negation of the negation that brings about a new world, etc.

And sensitivity would be the main quality of the rebel, as willpower was that of the revolutionary, because it is no longer a matter of imposing a prior sense on the real, but of opening up to feel where power-potentiality circulates and being able to accompany it without force, with tact.

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Y, sobre todo, las conversaciones con Franco Ingrassia, Juan Gutiérrez, Leónidas Martín y las compañeras de la Escuela de Afuera.

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