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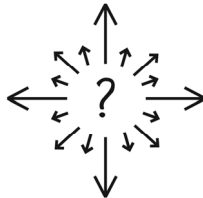


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Against Birth: a new Perspective on Antinatalism

Alberto Giovanni Biuso (University of Catania)

Abstract: Every living being, including humans, is destined to die. Throughout their existence they endure difficulties, illnesses, and tears. Starting from these premises, the paper aims to show how procreation may be considered a selfish practice carried out in obedience to the so-called will-to-live, the impulse that drives every living being to reproduce and ensure the survival of the species to which it belongs. To stop such an impulse requires a great deal of awareness and rationality. In the paper I shall demonstrate how, by assessing such truth, humans should escape what I define as the ‘demon of birth’ by abstaining from procreating so that other people will not suffer for their human predicament. In defending an antinatalist position I do not suppose any moral imperative but an ontological perspective which shows the perfection of the world where there is no organic birth but the painless power of Matter and Time.

Keywords: antinatalism, birth, life, matter, ontology

βίος

There are events that many human cultures, and even common sense, define as *sacred*. Among these are the birth and death of members of our species. Philosophical work and attitude do not submit to or obey any absolute values or meanings, instead they constitute an incessant critical questioning. Let us therefore analyze the sacred status of birth and verify whether it confirms or loses this nature. Philosophy consists also in seeing the world as it appears to what I name an ‘anthropo-decentric gaze’, namely the perspective of the whole, of which ζῶή, life as such, is an insignificant expression.

I start by considering biological sciences. The generation of a new living being in animals, and in mammals in particular – the vertebrate class to which *Homo sapiens* belongs, though they often tend to forget this – is the result of the fortuitous encounter between egg and sperm, two gametic cells (female and male) whose fusion produces the zygote, and from here the embryo, then the fetus, and finally the newborn. The

considerable risks that something might not work in this process, producing miscarriages or malformed entities, is in itself an indication that birth is not a serene event. In any case, even when everything works and comes to a good end, it remains true that «each of us is the outcome of time and chance – the key events in the lives of all our ancestors. On a still smaller, microscopic, scale we owe our genetic inheritance to the near-random fate of individual spermatozoa»²⁵.

The situation becomes objectively painful at the moment of birth, a moment that for millennia has caused numerous deaths in the female generators of our species. Even if deaths during childbirth have decreased, the pain of the parturient still remains constant, and sometimes it persists for hours – unless there is a cesarean section, that is, a surgical intervention – with effects that women who have experienced it define as indescribable. It might be questioned: if birth were a process entirely inscribed in the laws of nature, like the fall of a heavy object in a vacuum for example, would it be so painful, uncertain, and dangerous?

Once born, the human cub, unlike those of other mammals (not to mention reptiles or fish), depends absolutely on adult human beings, without whose constant and complete care it would die within hours. As shown by anthropology (including Gehlen's philosophical anthropology, for example) and human biology (of Lorenz and Eibl-Eibesfeldt), the neotenic period, that is, the one in which the human cub depends entirely on adult individuals, has a very long and abnormal duration, measured in years, if not decades.

Once they reach adulthood (but naturally even before), every specimen of *Homo sapiens* is subjected to difficulties of all kinds, to psychosomatic illnesses, to existential anxieties, to a constant *insecuritas* about their own survival and a constant discomfort in their daily life. This insecurity and this discomfort certainly depend also on the historical circumstances and social contexts in which one is born and lives, but they are universal, by varying the degree of suffering, not its inevitability. To formulate other examples of such *insecuritas*, suffering and discomfort would mean unnecessarily using the space of these pages. It is sufficient for the reader to focus their mind and memory on the years they have lived so far, their current condition, and what they know about their fellow humans, to find proof and practical verification

²⁵ M. Rees, *Our Cosmic Habitat*, Princeton University Press, 2017, p. 159.

of what they are reading here. If we generally accept or endure such an uncertain, painful, and fleeting condition, it is either because we try not to think about it – thus denying the best of human nature: reflection on what happens to us – or we practice strategies of defense, or we evaluate life as an abstract concept, avoiding dwelling on the details of daily existence, which is usually not particularly pleasant.

Strategies

The strategies to cope with such a condition, and to endure it, are numerous and diverse. We can synthetically indicate universal phenomena and structures that we define with the names of *morals*, *philosophies*, *arts*, *religions*, *techniques*, alongside which there are rather different attitudes such as violence in general and aggressiveness; the multiple forms of deception – towards oneself and others –; inflicting purposeless suffering; the craving for money and power as if from this accumulation some form of guarantee against the fury of dissolution could derive for the person; the contempt for the love one receives and which is often used against those who love; the practice of humiliating others for the pleasure of humiliating; the fury of many against one; taking pleasure in others' misfortunes if they bring the individual some minimal advantage or even if they bring nothing; the general ferocity of which our species is capable.

Faced with such practices, attitudes, and strategies, it is inevitable to agree with the words of one of the greatest playwrights and narrators of the twentieth century: «Das Leben ist eine Schindluderei der Natur sondergleichen, eine obszöne Verirrung des Kohlenstoffs, eine böartige Wucherung der Erdoberfläche, ein unheilbarer Schorf. Aus Totem zusammengesetzt, zerfallen wir zu Totem»²⁶. I would say that nothing needs to be added, and nothing needs to be taken away, from such an exact and true definition of life.

Animal life is indeed particularly harsh compared to, for example, the life of plants, which having no nervous system have no sensitivity. Plants possess impulses towards light and liquids, but they do not fall into despair and torment in case they do not obtain the results they tend towards.

²⁶ F. Dürrenmatt, *Der Meteor*, in *Der Meteor – Dichterdämmerung*, Diogenes, Zürich 1980, pp. 94-95.

An even greater difference marks animal life compared to the inanimate and inorganic since it seems plausible that life is «un soulèvement à l'intérieur de l'inorganique, un essor tragique de l'inerte, la vie, c'est de la matière animée et, il faut bien le dire, ruinée par la douleur. A tant d'agitation, à tant de dynamisme et d'affairement, on n'échappe qu'en aspirant au repos de l'inorganique, à la paix au sein des éléments»²⁷. Of this peace is convinced also Sāriputta, disciple of Buddha, who believed that Nirvāna is happiness, «et quand on lui objecte qu'il ne saurait y avoir de félicité là où il n'y a pas de sensations, Sariputta répond : 'La félicité, c'est justement qu'il n'y a là aucune sensation'»; Cioran deduces from this that «le Paradis, c'est l'absence de l'homme»²⁸ but I would say that we must go even beyond such a form of anthropocentrism and recognize that paradise is the absence of every animal, of every device capable of experiencing pain and being aware of it.

A Ridiculous Tragedy

We must therefore recognize that far from constituting a privilege, a primacy, or even a manifestation of the sacred, animal and human birth is an unfavorable event compared to the absence of sensitivity, pain, and anguish that instead characterizes the inorganic that is to say – and this is an absolutely fundamental element – the existence of the whole, of cosmic matter that generates, perishes, and transforms itself in the immensity of the cosmos. Compared to the whole, our tiny planet and the phenomena that occur in it are nothing, substantially nothing. And therefore it is already too much to state that «das Lebende ist nur eine Art des Todten, und eine sehr seltene Art»²⁹; the living is in reality an utterly insignificant fragment of matter. Thus, the conviction of our species to be and represent the dominator, the meaning and the apex of the cosmos (even believing that some god sacrificed himself for the human species) can only be qualified as pathetic, not to say grotesque. One must find the right measure is necessary in everything, even in the inevitable narcissism that makes every sensitive entity believe it is the most important of all. It is therefore true that:

²⁷ E. Cioran, *La Chute dans le temps*, Gallimard, Paris 1964, p. 124.

²⁸ Ivi, pp. 77 and 113-114.

²⁹ F.W. Nietzsche, *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, edited by G. Colli and M. Montinari, De Gruyter, Berlin 1988, Band 3, af. 109.

es müsste geistigere Geschöpfe geben, als die Menschen sind, blos um den Humor ganz auszukosten, der darin liegt, dass der Mensch sich für den Zweck des ganzen Weltendaseins ansieht, und die Menschheit sich ernstlich nur mit Aussicht auf eine Welt-Mission zufrieden giebt. [...] Unsere Einzigkeit in der Welt! ach, es ist eine gar zu unwahrscheinliche Sache! [...] der Tropfen *L e b e n* in der Welt für den gesammten Charakter des ungeheuren Ozeans von Werden und Vergehen ohne Bedeutung ist [...] [there are infinite stars] zu den unendlich vielen, welche den lebenden Ausschlag nie gehabt haben oder von ihm längst genesen sind; dass das Leben auf jedem dieser Gestirne, gemessen an der Zeitdauer seiner Existenz, ein Augenblick, ein Aufflackern gewesen ist, mit langen, langen Zeiträumen hinterdrein, — also keineswegs das Ziel und die letzte Absicht ihrer Existenz.³⁰

The attitude synthesized in these statements by Nietzsche is the gaze capable of seeing and learning reality without pretense, capable of preferring understanding over hoping, observing over believing, capable of implementing the light of rationality over the mists of ephemeral and failing consolations. Faced with this objectivity, some political, religious, or moral perspectives tend instead to convince of the sacredness of existence. These are, however, strategies of illusion, even if necessary for the established order. Such order is indeed always founded on some moral convictions. And almost always such moral has the necessity of procreation as its central element, in order to guarantee the spread of the species, and of the number of humans who might serve to produce, to obey, to fight and to die in the countless wars that make human history.

To realize all this and embrace non-generation as a remedy against evil, power, and death, one must not preach ‘sustainable’ hopes and anthropological optimisms, it is instead required to grasp in the human the universality of limit and pain that are intrinsic to their own existence.

All human beings come into the world without having wanted to and suffer daily their being in the world. The being-there of such species configures itself as a *fault* that is not ethical or moralistic, but ontological. An ontological fault for which many ancient Greeks understood clearly that «not being born is the best thing of all (ἄριστον πάντων)»³¹.

³⁰ Id., *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches II*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, cit., Band 2/2, *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten*, af. 14.

³¹ Aristotle, Εὐδημος ἡ Περί ψυχῆς, fr. 6.

Entropy and DNA

Finitude is intrinsic not only to the negligible biological component of the world. What for the living being – whether plant or animal – is called dying, is in reality the universal experience of passing into something else, of metabolism, of entropy, of metamorphosis, of becoming.

The biological structure attempts to contrast this universal natural law of disappearing by breeding a new living being, a copy similar to oneself which should defer their passing away. This attempt is one of the clearest, most dramatic and banal expressions of *schlechte Unendlichkeit*, of the bad infinity that never stops adding lives to lives and therefore death to death:

Dieser Prozeß der Fortpflanzung geht hiermit in die schlechte Unendlichkeit des Progresses aus. Die Gattung erhält sich nur durch den Untergang der Individuen, die im Prozesse der Begattung ihre Bestimmung erfüllt [haben] und, insofern sie keine höhere haben, damit dem Tode zugehen.³²

The foundation of this attempt to survive, both biological and metaphysical, is the negative. If *omnis determinatio est negatio*, it is also because the appearance of an entity makes impossible the appearance of every other entity in the same spacetime; because the event that is happening excludes an innumerable quantity of other events, because every process is always and only the actualization of a determined potentiality to the exclusion of many others that would have been possible. The nothingness intrinsic to the structures of being is the difference³³, it is «die Zauberkraft, die es in das Sein umkehrt», the magical force that turns the negative into being³⁴, a force of which birth is only manifestation, expression, and condemnation.

The living being is a very odd entity, which in some ways seems to defy the laws of physics. This oddity appears in the attempt to define it. It is not at all easy to circumscribe a living being and structurally distinguish it from the non-living, it is not easy to find a clear and sharp limit

³² G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, § 370.

³³ Cfr. A.G. Biuso: *The Concept of Time in Husserlian Phenomenology and Quantum Physics*, «Humana.Mente», vol. 16, No. 43, August 2023, pp. 277-296; *Temporalità e Differenza*, Olschki, Florence 2013.

³⁴ G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Meiner, vol. II, p. 29.

between these two modes of being. Jacques Monod identifies the three founding properties of the living being in teleonomy, autonomous morphogenesis, and reproductive invariance. Another fundamental characteristic is that the living being is never static, the structures that compose it are atoms and molecules, which it shares with the non-living, and cells which instead constitute its specificity. Cells represent a structure always in movement: its becoming is moved by the three central processes of evolution: replication, mutation, and selection.

Biological science has arrived at this ontology through what Monod defines as the postulate of Nature's objectivity, which consists in the rejection of any voluntaristic efficient cause and any providentialistic final cause. This is an enormous theoretical and methodological effort since the assumption that happening, particularly human happening, is moved by some conscious, powerful, and wise will that guides it in order to reach the destiny that such will has always established for it, is the same assumption on which human culture and its manifestations were born: myths, religions, ethics, political projects, philosophies, and sciences themselves. The awareness of this millennial dynamic does not hide, however, that the teleological and providentialistic foundation is characterized by some rationally unacceptable elements that are in fact unfounded.

This element is first of all anthropocentrism, which then branches out as vitalism and animism. But should be' evident, and sensible, that the universe certainly does not exist to generate life, nor does the biosphere exist to produce *Homo sapiens*.

A *vitalistic* perspective instead implies both the centrality of the human and, in general, a radical distinction between the being of the living and the being of inanimate entities. Immersed in a world where some entities constituted a danger, others a resource, and still others – mountains, rivers, clouds – appeared incomprehensible because indifferent and lacking will, our ancestors had the necessity to attribute consciousness and the ability to act towards ends to such entities as well.

This is one of the main reasons and roots of *animism*, an attitude by no means limited to prehistoric forms of approaching reality but which instead characterizes all great cultural and religious experiences, including some recent ones like Idealism (from the romantics to Giovanni Gentile), Teilhard de Chardin, Engels' dialectical materialism. In all these perspectives (and obviously in Judaism-Christianity), however different they may be, operates

the certainty that human becoming follows laws inscribed in a destiny and directed towards a future better than the past, whether it is a transcendent and spiritual future or an immanent and historical one.

Even the Darwinian evolutionary paradigm has run the same risks of falling into providentialistic animism, under the name of natural selection, a selection aimed at the 'improvement' of humanity. While in Darwin nothing of this sort exists, in many Darwinians it does. In reality, living beings, humans included, are chemical and autopoietic devices, which therefore develop not through external determinations but through biochemical programs inscribed in cells, programs that allow every living being to develop, replicate, leave offspring. Exactly this, *replication of the same form even in the infinite variability of individuals*, characterizes the living being, that is, species. This is a strongly and intrinsically teleonomic element, without being teleological however. The purpose indeed coincides with the entity and with its material structures, it does not lie outside of it, in any will of the entity itself or of other forces. This process is called *autopoiesis*, that is, the construction of self on the basis of chemical instructions. This is an element that, among other things, constitutes the unity of the biological since it is found in all living beings, from bacteria to *Homo sapiens*, which also from this perspective seems to have no particular privilege.

The central question then becomes how it is possible that based on the same constituents, synthesized in the same ways, the amazing variety of species and within species of their individual members then unfolds. What is the origin of the morphological and physiological diversity of living beings? The answer was found in DNA. The universal basis of living beings are indeed nucleotides and amino acids; on such biochemical basis there is no opposition between immutability and variety, between Plato and Heraclitus, since the modifications that occur within a system can happen because it exists and builds itself through some fundamental elements that never change, even if the structures that such elements build from time to time change.

The time of biological structures is made of mutations and perturbations that lead living beings inexorably to aging and death also due to the accumulation in time itself of accidental translation errors in DNA. It is through these processes and phenomena that the second law of thermodynamics operates in biology. 'Change' does not mean 'arbitrariness' but means the contingency of every particular entity and every specific

event – which could have existed or not existed, happened or not happened – within an ontological necessity given by some immutable rules in the sphere of the living.

Contingency is accepted without difficulty by humans when it concerns rocks, trees, or sparrows, but not when it extends to themselves. At that point the anthropocentric and animistic reflex kicks in that makes us believe we exist on a different plane compared to all other entities, whether inanimate or animate. «Nous nous voulons nécessaires, inévitables, ordonnés de tout temps. Toutes les religions, presque toutes les philosophies, une partie même de la science, témoignent de l'insassable, héroïque effort de l'humanité niant désespérément sa propre contingence»³⁵.

Necessity is inscribed in our genes as in those of every living being and is made of immutability, variations, entropy, descent, and dissolution.

Beyond life, the matter

Matter is both a concept and a plural, complex reality, which on the one hand is more than evident and on the other remains enigmatic. Its main characteristics are spatiality, sensitivity, and corporeality. Matter is an objective structure and not a construction of the mind or senses. These allow us to know matter but certainly not to produce it in any way. A specification that may seem (rightfully) obvious to common sense but that in the history of philosophy and sciences has found opponents who, from Berkeley to phenomenists and the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum physics, make the ontology of matter depend in different ways on the perceptual apparatus of some mind.

The most fruitful conceptions have instead always recognized, with different languages and modalities, that matter is the *matrix* of every entity. It is the ontological universal which «οὐ καθ' αὐτό, ἀλλ' ἀφθαρτον καὶ ἀγένητον ἀνάγκη αὐτὴν εἶναι, neither generates nor destroys itself, but is necessarily incorruptible and ungenerated»³⁶ not only and not so much in a static sense but especially in a dynamic one, because it is subject to continuous δύναμις, to the possibility of a change that does not annul its being but continuously opens it to becoming, to transformation, to μεταβολή. Matter

³⁵ J. Monod, *Le hasard et la nécessité. Essai sur la philosophie naturelle de la biologie moderne*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris 1970, p. 55.

³⁶ Aristotle, *Physics*, I,9, 192a, 28-29.

is therefore intrinsically temporal and probably coincides with time itself, precisely because of its possibility to always become in its macroscopic manifestations without ever annulling itself in its atomic and molecular structure³⁷. Also because of this power – in the multiple meanings of that word – matter is not separated from form but is form itself in its being capable of undergoing every modification while remaining always different from nothingness.

In its resistance to modifications and in not dissolving itself when it undergoes to such modification, matter becomes the inertial structure of classical mechanics. In the different degrees and forms ranging from fossil and mineral monads, which become without perception, to the monad-soul, which perceives becoming, matter becomes matter aware of existing in humans and other animals.

As an objective and unknown reality that opposes but also serves as a foundation for the subjective and animal beings, matter may be considered? the noumenon, which is actually the prerequisite of all thinking, including critical-Kantian thinking; it is so also for Hume, who never doubted the material existence of entities outside the mind, taking it instead for granted. Matter as energy is the foundation of relativistic ontology and cosmology, from which the so-called *dark matter* has been hypothesized and is increasingly being investigated in depth. Dark matter is indeed «the No. 1 problem in astronomy today, and it ranks high as a physics problem, too. [...] We're reconciled to the post-Copernican idea that we don't occupy a central place in our universe. But now our cosmic status must seemingly be demoted still further. Particle chauvinism has to go: we're not made of the dominant stuff in the universe»³⁸.

The progressive, inexorable, and fruitful journey towards bringing the living and the human back to their limits proceeds swiftly in this way. We must de-anthropize cosmology and this also and especially means de-biologizing it: observing and evaluating life for what it is, nothing relevant. The cosmos is made of something else, which has nothing to do with life. It is made precisely of atoms, it is made of radiation, it is made of omnipresent gravity/mass/energy, it is made of light and dark matter.

Two of the most fruitful hypotheses about the nature and power of matter come from seemingly opposite poles in European thought: Lenin

³⁷ Cfr. A.G. Biuso, *Tempo e materia. Una metafisica*, Olschki, Florence 2020.

³⁸ M. Rees, *Our Cosmic Habitat*, cit., p. 75.

and Anaximander. Lenin, like Engels, quite clearly affirms the ontological and logical primacy of matter over any form of consciousness, a matter that is always dynamic, 'dialectical', which coincides with the very transformation of entities of every nature and structure. Anaximander maintains the integral autonomy of universal matter/form and its coincidence with being itself as infinite spatiotemporal dynamics.

Ἄναξίμανδρος...ἀρχήν...εἶρηκε τῶν ὄντων τὸ ἄπειρον...ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσις ἐστι τοῖς οὕσι, καὶ τὴν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι κατὰ τὸ χρεῶν διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν.

The principle of beings is the infinite (energy/field and its becoming...) From where entities have their origin, there they also have their dissolution necessarily: all things are transient and suffer from one another the penalty of ending, at the rise of one the other must indeed set. And this happens due to the very structure of Time³⁹.

Matter is therefore the Being that depends on nothing else and which instead is the foundation of every entity and every consciousness. A being never generated and never destructible, of which each finite, determined and temporal entity is an expression: a transient figure of that which does not pass and which in this not passing is time itself as αἰών.

The World is Perfect

Matter as such is eternal, while living matter is ephemeral because it dies; this status has always been the subject of philosophical inquiry. In the *Apology*, Socrates seems not afraid of his own death which he accepts as a natural condition of his own being. From his perspective «ἀνὴρ τῷ ὄντι ἐνφιλοσοφία διατριψίας τὸν βίον θαρρεῖν μέλλων, a man who has truly spent his life engaged in philosophy faces death without fears» and that philosophy is, must, largely a μελέτη θανάτου, a preparation for dying⁴⁰.

³⁹ Anaximander in Theophrastus, fr. 226 A, in Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics*, 24, 13; DK, B 1.

⁴⁰ Plato, *Phaedo*, 63e and 81a.

This wisdom, and detachment, produce the singular impression that Phaedo refers to at the beginning of the dialogue: Socrates «εὐδαίμων γάρ μοι ἀνὴρ ἐφαίνετο, appeared happy to me»⁴¹. Before dying he reminds Crito of being: «ὦ Κρίτων, ἔφη, τῷ Ἀσκληπιῷ ὀφείλομεν ἀλεκτρυόνα: ἀλλὰ ἀπόδοτε καὶ μὴ ἀμελήσητε»⁴², meaning to thank the god of medicine for having recovered him from the *disease* of existence, from the illness he contracted at birth. If Socrates is so calm while he is dying, it is also because he hypothesizes that once dead, he

οὐκοῦν οὕτω μὲν ἔχουσα εἰς τὸ ὅμοιον αὐτῇ τὸ αἰδὲς ἀπέρχεται, τὸ θεῖον τ ε καὶ ἀθάνατον καὶ φρόνιμον, οἳ ἀφικομένη ὑπάρχει αὐτῇ εὐδαίμωνι εἶναι, πλάνης καὶ ἀνοίας καὶ φόβου καὶ ἀγρίων ἐρώτων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων κακῶν τ ὧν ἀνθρωπείων ἀπηλλαγμένη, ὥσπερ δέλεγεται κατὰ τῶν μεμνημένων, ὡς ἀληθῶς τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον μετὰ θεῶν διάγουσα, expects a state of happiness, since he frees himself from errors, foolishness, fears, erotic drives, and, as they say in the case of the initiated, spends the rest of time truly in the company of gods.⁴³

Socrates' philosophy aims to fight and defeat what I name the 'demon of birth'. The Greek philosophical tradition was aware of the human predicament and its misery in comparison to the perfection of the Whole. This should not be considered a passive Antinatalism, rather it is based on a cosmological and biological reflection; even from this perspective it can be highlighted the partiality of humans into Being.

In contemporary philosophy, this Greek comprehension of human being has been resumed by Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche. Schopenhauer believes that philosophy is not an anthropology but must constitute itself as geology and cosmology: «Dieserhalb muß sie Kosmologie bleiben und kann nicht Theologie werden»⁴⁴. A cosmology that has its synthesis in the initial words of a brief Nietzschean book:

In irgend einem abgelegenen Winkel des in zahllosen Sonnensystemen flimmernd ausgegossenen Weltalls gab es einmal ein Gestirn, auf dem kluge Thiere das Erkennen erfanden. Es war die hochmüthigste und verlogenste Minute der „Weltgeschichte“: aber doch nur eine Minute. Nach

⁴¹ Ivi, 58e

⁴² Ivi, 118a.

⁴³ Ivi, 81a.

⁴⁴ A. Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. Zweiter Band, 1844. *Ergänzungen*, in A. Schopenhauer, *Sämtliche Werke*, III Band, Brockhaus, Mannheim 1988, p. 702 (700, lines 25-26).

wenigen Athemzügen der Natur erstarrte das Gestirn, und die klugen Thiere mussten sterben.⁴⁵

Similar to Nietzschean words:

Im unendlichen Raum zahllose leuchtende Kugeln, um jede von welchen etwas ein Dutzend kleinerer, beleuchteter sich wälzt, die inwendig heiß, mit erstarrter, kalter Ringe überzogen find, auf der ein Schimmelüberzug lebende und erkennende Wesen erzeugt hat: - dies ist die empirische Wahrheit, das Reale, die Welt. [...] Dabei nichts Beharrliches, als allein die Materie und die Wiederkehr der selben, verschiedenen, organischen Formen, mittelst gewisser Wege und Kanäle, die nun ein Mal dafind.⁴⁶

This is the core of an Antinatalism perspective which is founded on ontology, cosmology and metaphysics, it starts recognizing that *Homo sapiens* constitutes an irrelevant fragment which as no meaning and no purpose as well. What indeed is the ultimate goal of life, and thus of being born?

Ephemere und geplagte Individuen eine kurze Spanne Zeit hindurch zu erhalten, im glücklichsten Fall mit erträglicher Noth und komparativer Schmerzlosigkeit, der aber auch sogleich die Langeweile aufpaßt; sodann die Fortpflanzung dieses Geschlechts und seines Treibens. [...] Der Wille zum Leben, objektiv genommen, als ein Thor, oder subjektiv, als ein Wahn, von welchem alles Lebende ergriffen, mit äußerster Anstrengung seiner Kräfte, auf etwas hinarbeitet, das keinen Werth hat. Allein bei genauerer Betrachtung werden wir auch hier finden, daß er vielmehr ein blinder Drang, ein völlig grundloser, unmotivirter Trieb is.⁴⁷

It is sexual desire that guides this restless and senseless process; it may be considered the supreme expression of the will to live; the root of every falling in love – however ethereal and ‘spiritual’ it may appear –; the instrument through which the species can guarantee itself, the preservation and perpetuation of which is the true purpose of matter/nature/will so that individuals acquire meaning only for this universal goal. Of this painful and substantially senseless purpose, birth is the fundamental episode. This is why it is *against birth* that every metaphysics that wants to be equal to its own constitution must think and act.

⁴⁵ F.W. Nietzsche, *Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne*, § 1.

⁴⁶ A. Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. Zweiter Band, 1844. *Ergänzungen*, cit., p. 3 (3, lines 3-7 and 13-16).

⁴⁷ Ivi, p. 407 (406, lines 23-28 and 407, lines 30-35).

The illusion that in various ways would like to root the immortality of the individual in the metaphysical principle of an eternal will is, precisely, a form of consolation with which humans face their *own* death trying the most varied strategies, certainly interesting but not therefore plausible, to convince the single living being that either it will never be destroyed once it has come into the world or, as in Schopenhauer's case, that it has always been and always will be as an inseparable conjunction of universal will and individual representation, or that death is only appearance, a passage towards the true world where one never dies.

Far from any humanistic consolation is the perspective of thermodynamics and its first two principles that combine the indestructibility of matter as such and the absolute finitude of every specific conformation of matter, that is of each of its individualized and temporal expressions, thus also of the organic, animal, and human beings.

As I have tried to show through the wisdom of the Greeks, a biological, ontological, and cosmological perspective on Antinatalism can constitute a valid position for truly understanding human life, for being more aware of its being into the world. Demonstrating that humans have no privilege in the cosmos, rather they are contingent beings destined to end, contributes to demonstrate the validity and fruitfulness of an antinatalist perspective. After all, Silenus's response to Midas, reported by Theognis, Aristotle, Nietzsche, is the most correct statement that can be given considering human life in its objectively painful nature: «Elendes Eintagesgeschlecht, des Zufalls Kinder und der Mühsal, was zwingst du mich dir zu sagen, was nicht zu hören für dich das Erspriesslichste ist? Das Allerbeste ist für dich gänzlich unerreichbar: nicht geboren zu sein, nicht zu sein, nichts zu sein. Das Zweitbeste aber ist für dich - bald zu sterben»⁴⁸. Also Schopenhauer facing the dying, observes that something is about to cease that should have never begun and that precisely for this reason is inevitably destined to end.

So far, I tried to highlight that our being has not any particular privilege in the world, and that their own presence into the world is something that should have never been or, otherwise, that has not any special reason to be continued by breeding. Now I claim more radically that also «daß sie [the world] etwas ist, das im Grunde nicht seyn

⁴⁸ F.W. Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, Fritsch, Leipzig 1878, *Versuch einer Selbstkritik* § 3.

sollte»⁴⁹ by limiting – of course the meaning of such statement to the tiny world of beings who live on the Earth or on other planets where the same deviation from the perfection of matter has appeared.

Such world in its ephemeral is in reality an insignificant expression of the true power of Being. Such power consists on *nothingness* that operates cancelling what exists through their becoming.

Wisdom is therefore blessing the nothingness from which we come as individual being and the nothingness to which we will return when we are dissolved. At that moment our atomic and molecular components will take other conformations, different from those that *now* and for a brief *duration* constitute our being.

The metaphysical foundation of the world seems to be destruction toward which all that exists tends to. This is a statement far from any ‘pessimism’ or ‘apocalyptic’ attitude, it simply means understanding the structure and dynamics of every material entity and the speed with which such dynamics presents itself and happens in organic entities. This is the power of matter and the entropy that weaves it, which may be formulated as such: *nothing is* and *everything becomes*. Within this ontology, humans and all living beings are little more than nothing, constitute the result of a mixture of cellular compounds. This, nothing more, means to be born. And this is «la malattia più perversa, un flagello più iniquo della peste, è quella che si trasmette col seme e, generando, riempie di ‘dannati’ la terra. Questo è il virus più nefando. The most perverse disease, a plague more iniquitous than pestilence, is that which is transmitted with seed and, by generating, fills the earth with ‘damned ones’. This is the most nefarious virus»⁵⁰ also for the reason, well known to all, that it is a virus with *always* lethal consequences.

Who generates a human generates one condemned to death who will not only die, but throughout the course of their existence will have to endure difficulties, anxieties, illnesses, tears. Such an action can only be defined as the fruit of supreme selfishness. Certainly, it is performed in obedience to a powerful order of βίος, the impulse that guides every living entity to reproduce itself and through itself makes survive the species to which it belongs. To escape such a force requires much awareness, much tenacity, much rationality. But precisely such is the ex-

⁴⁹ A. Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, cit., p. 661.

⁵⁰ M. Sgalambro, *Trattato dell’età. Una lezione di metafisica*, Adelphi, Milan 1999, pp. 41-42.

istence that philosophical practice gives, an existence made also and especially of awareness, tenacity, rationality. This is what *Homo sapiens* can do: escape the demon of birth, the imperative of the species, the order of death.

That even the Sun, like any other star, is destined to die and will die, that every exists is an infinite μεταβολή that shines everywhere and that only in sensible entities, particularly in those born of woman, becomes pain, is a revealing truth on which we should reflect more.

The world as such, beyond the living, is an energy and a destiny that happen without pain, as without pain exist and happen «la roccia o il mare, una cosa sorda e refrattaria, qualcosa che non può soffrire perché non conosce sofferenza: né quella che lui dà agli altri né quella che gli altri danno a lui; the rock or the sea, a deaf and refractory thing, something that cannot suffer because it does not know suffering: neither that which it gives to others nor that which others give to it»⁵¹. The world is perfect wherever there is no organic birth but rather the painless power of matter and time is given.

⁵¹ S. D'Arrigo, *Horcynus Orca*, Rizzoli, Milan 2003, p. 638.