PUBLIC SPACE AND ITS METAPHORS

Ugo Perone (Università del Piemonte Orientale)

The political does not exist. What exists is individual and collective life; there is nature, with its inexhaustible cycles; there is the world, the (blind and astute) interlacement of the actions, conflicts and visions that will become history. The political exists only as an invention: the invention of a specific space of the relation that intercepts life, modifies nature, and is a curvature of the world. I would like to dwell on this invention, not without warning that the political of which one speaks precedes and constitutes specific kinds of politics, since it is the condition of their possibility.

1. Beyond Political Philosophy

Contemporary philosophy is again consciously taking up the question of the political, but not from within the confines of the traditional discipline of political philosophy. Alain Badiou remarks: "One of the core demands of contemporary thought is to be done with 'political philosophy'. What is political philosophy? It is the program which, holding politics—or, better still, the political—as an objective, or even an invariant, datum of universal experience, accords philosophy the task of thinking it. Overall, philosophy's task would be to generate an analysis of the political and, *in fine*, quite obviously to submit this analysis to ethical norms. The philosopher would then have the triple advantage of being, first, the analyst and thinker of this brutal and confused objectivity which constitutes the empirical character of real instances of politics; second, the one who determines the principles of the good politics, of politics conforming to ethical demands; and, third, in order to meet these demands, of being the one who is exempt from militant involvement in any genuine political process. Whence the philosopher could keep the Real at arm's length indefinitely in the manner most dear to him: that of judgement."[1] Besides, the appearance of new "names" (following Badiou and others) such as

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[1] Alain Badiou, *Metapolitics*, (tr.) J. Barker (London: Verso, 2005), 10. Originally published as *Abrégé de Métapolitique* (Paris: Seuil, 1998).

metapolitics, biopolitics and impolitics[2] betrays, also by such termino-
logical weariness, the necessity not of stopping political philosophy, but,
at least, of going beyond it. In such proposals, new objects and new mo-
dalities of political reflection appear and, with the expansion of the ob-
ject in question, what is rejected, above all, is the simple intellectual and
philosophical judgement of the political matter.

   The theme of the political is an old topic for philosophy, though.
As one may recall, with the famous example of the nearsighted person,
Plato introduces the treatment of the political with the justification that,
within the larger domain of the city, it is easier to recognise that justice,
when questioned in the innermost region of the soul, becomes difficult to
decipher. In doing so, Plato assigns to the themes of politics the upper
limit of ethics, which Aristotle's judgement substantially confirms when,
precisely within the sphere of practical philosophy, he gives to politics an
architectonic function. The city structures the individual according to
rules that are called political on account of their extension, but these
rules are ethical in their essence. It will be with Machiavelli first, and
then later with Hobbes, that politics seems to reach an autonomous
status, whose object is ultimately power: the reasons of its rising, the
modalities of its exercise, and the limitations connected with it (and
Montesquieu himself follows this line).[3] As it has been suggested,[4] de-
spite all the variations of contract theory and the call for democracy, our
political science has not gone much further. We come just "after the Le-
viathan", but within the spell of this metaphorical and omnivorous mon-
ster that is called politics. In time, and exactly where it emancipated itself
from morals, politics developed as a horizon capable of immanently de-
scribing the world of human beings to the point of their own inclusion.

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[2] To illustrate my point, I refer, besides the book by Badiou already mentioned,
to R. Esposito, *Bios* (Torino: Einaudi, 2004) and to the anthology, edited by the
same author, with the title *Oltre la politica* (Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 1996).
[3] This does not exclude the possibility of reading Machiavelli otherwise, as is
the case in C. Lefort's essays; see B. Flynn, *The Philosophy of Claude Lefort:
Interpreting the Political* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2005), Part
1.
[4] I refer to G. Marramao, *Dopo il Leviatano* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2000),
as well as to some of his other books.

Now, it seems it is becoming important again to free ourselves from these coils, and to restitute the political to a more precise and narrow sphere. This confronts us again with an interest not in an analysis of the mechanisms of political practice, but in the identification and constitution of the political as a specific space of thinking, what Badiou, perhaps with a different curvature, would call a "truth procedure."[5] If it did not sound presumptuous, I would say that the identification of the political has failed until now, even if its mechanisms have been accurately and brilliantly described. Such an identification has failed because we live within the political, because it has increasingly become the space to which we are immediately assigned as soon as we exit the space of private existence, the latter being a space that we jealously try to preserve but has been irrevocably lost since our early childhood.

Actually, the political does not exist. What exists is individual and collective life; there is nature, with its inexhaustible cycles; there is the world, the (blind and astute) interlacement of the actions, conflicts and visions that will become history. The political, though, does not exist. It exists only as an invention: the invention of a specific space of the relation that intercepts life, modifies nature, and is a curvature of the world. I would like now to dwell on this invention, not without warning that the political of which one speaks precedes and constitutes specific kinds of politics, since it is the condition of their possibility.

2. The Public Space: A Category for Looking at the World

In order to make more precise the meaning of this invention of the political, I propose introducing the expression "public space." The public space is the cultural and projective elaboration of a human way of life in which human beings try to constitute their relations in a form other than pure exteriority. The public space, as a salient dimension of politics, does justice to the theories that define the political as an expansion of power and of ethically overdetermined ideologies, and to those that identify it with history and often also with the whole. The former theories, for example, those of Machiavellian derivation, describe mechanisms of political action, but without even broaching the question of its genesis, which is brought back naturally to a human impulse. The latter theories, found

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[5] Badiou, *Metapolitics*, 141.

in different versions of ideological totalitarianism, are indeed bearers of a "sense of the whole" that certainty inheres in the political; yet they understand it as the possession of a real whole, rather than as mere care for the whole. Following Pareyson, they are omnivorous forms of panpoliticism.[6]

The political, as I understand it, is neither the laws of common action nor the whole of human existence. It is the opening of a possible way of making a world: a way of living, interpreting and regulating collective actions by placing them within a common space and time. The public space opens the political. It opens in a transcendental form a new region: the structural condition of thinking politics as a specific modality of our being in the world.

Not inappropriately, commenting on Aristotle, Heidegger reminds us that categories are not "inventions or a group of logical schemata as such, frames; on the contrary, they are *alive in life itself* in an original way: alive in order to 'form' life on themselves."[7] Now, even if, in light of Kant, it seems more difficult to use exactly the same formula, it is nevertheless true that categories are not simply the arbitrary invention of a form; rather, they are the opening of a form that actually also forms life, of a form that discloses a space. The political as category gives rise to a specific object that is the place for the carrying out of political actions, that is, public space. This means that political action does not simply take place in history, contributing to modify it; rather, in its action it gives the world the form of a public space.

At the lower and upper borders of this modality are forms of action that intersect with politics without properly belonging to it. Simple administration is not politics insofar as it does not contribute to constituting and promoting public space; it simply presupposes its existence and it organises its regular life. Administration, or better, good administration, is a bureaucracy that emphasises, through the application of rules, the resistance to the much-too-free fluidity of the forms in which the political wants to inscribe what surrounds it. For this reason, the political

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[6] L. Pareyson, *Verità e interpretazione* (Milano: Mursia, 1971), 21.

[7] M. Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*, (tr.) R. Rojcewicz (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 66. Originally published as *Phänomenologische Interpretation zu Aristoteles* (Klostermann: Frankfurt am Main, 1985). See also Esposito, *Bios*, 165.

occupation of all administrative spaces (or, likewise, the politicisation of everything that pertains to administration) spreads out indefinitely in times of weak politics, because weak politics, precisely due to its incapacity to identify and serve its proper object, aims at gaining for the political, which is identified with the mere exercise of power, the greatest possible amount of objects.

At the upper extreme, instances of the ethical and values do not constitute the public space in its form and, therefore, they do not directly determine the modalities of its unfolding, even if they represent an inexhaustible source for the reorientation of the public space: they delimit it, they make instances emerge, which are then entrusted to rational inscription within the political categorial frame. Before becoming elements that compose the public space, [such instances] are pieces of world and history. It is for this reason that, analogously, in times of weak politics, we observe the diffuse tendency to substitute politics from the inside or to overwhelm it from the outside with options that have a high value intensity and an ethically sensitive character.

Because of its categorial, even more than its factual dimension, the public space is a dimension of cultural life. Because it has the value of a transcendental place, the public space exists only in actuality, namely, insofar as it is concretely applied, here and now, to the flow of history. For this reason, defining the political on the basis of an alleged object, which would be proper and specific to it, does not seem appropriate. The political object discloses itself only within the formal condition through which one observes reality within the scheme of the public space. Though formal, such a condition is not abstract, because once it is enunciated, it also becomes immediately real, thus constituting a grasping of reality one can no longer avoid. The damages coming from bad politics are so much deeper and irreversible because they do not exclusively concern the bad management of the public space; rather, they contextually obscure and pervert such a space. Bad politics damages not only our way of being in the world; it often contaminates and sometimes even causes the loss of a possible form of being in the world, such as the public dimension.

The transcendental form of the political, which exists only in the concrete exercise of a good politics, carves out the reality of a public space or, better still, it constitutes this public space itself. Moreover, this public space is never here, though it is here, because it owes its own sub-

sistence to an invention that, alone, made it possible. It is here and now, but it is neither here nor now, because it depends on the previous opening of the political as a condition of its possibility. This double characterisation justifies the interlacement of realism and idealism in politics. In fact, on the one hand, no concrete politics is capable of matching the form through which it opened up; but, on the other hand, every opening, subsequent to the form of the space of the political, produces empirically relevant effects, closing and opening concrete ways of being together within the space of history.

The thesis concerning the character of the invention of public space implicitly brings with it the question about its origin. Like all cultural constructs, the public space is *like* nature, namely, it spontaneously rises when the spontaneity of self-sufficiency is lost. It is a necessary invention, that is, it is the declining of the I in the forms of the "me," the "to me," the "with me." Moreover, in doing so, no organic hypothesis is followed, nor do the conflicts that may arise mean to be eluded. Rather, a field is individuated, within which all then unfolds within the vicissitudes of collective relations. One could say that such an invention, even if not originary, is at the origin of the history of human beings, at least ever since the moment when existence became coexistence and gave rise to a civilisation and a tradition. This does not mean that the specificity of this invention was immediately understood; rather, precisely the "natural" way in which culture works gave this invention the appearance of an objectivity, as if the public space were a reality for itself whose laws one could then discern.

Phenomenological attention, which reaches the idea of the political through its reduction to its own constitutive element, confronts us with something not yet seen, even if it was under our very eyes. This invention reveals a region—the political—that constitutes our being according to its own way (and then neither ethically, nor architectonically).

Although in an alternative form, the idea of public space corresponds to the contractualistic hypothesis because, like such a hypothesis, it does not occupy the political matter with determinate contents; rather, it grasps its originary given, describing its conditions of possibility. Both hypotheses have the merit of asking what the political is, of not limiting themselves to defining how it works; therefore, both pay attention to the rise of the political. Nonetheless, the idea of public place as the result of a specific transcendental form of looking at the world has considerable

advantages compared to the contractual hypothesis. In fact, it neither requires the presupposition of a contractual moment that is previous to the rise of society—as every contractualist theory has to do without being able to justify it—nor does it have to presuppose a dualism between public and private, with the consequent unbearable conflict of interests. Politics is possible only if one succeeds in showing that the public dimension is not the product of private interests, as it necessarily is in a contractualistic picture. But at the same time, neither can such a dimension be presupposed as the already existing horizon of the constitution of the subjects, because in this case, the interest of the individual would collide with a general interest that is already determined and well-identifiable by everyone (in such a way that the conflict is made to be unequal since the beginning). Then, one can assume that the public dimension is the transcendental invention of a way of looking at the world that has opened a new space of living together: the space in which the I, as has already been said, declares him or herself capable of self-declining in the forms of the "me," the "to me" and the "with me," where, in sum, the different I's, although they do not properly meet the alterity of the other, nevertheless experience the shared declining that brings all I's together. The public space, in this sense, is neither an alternative to the private nor its prolongation; rather, it is the opening of a declension of the I to which the I feels it belongs.

3. Life, World, Politics

In the political, life is urgent and the world is in question. But the political is neither the world nor life. In a certain sense, the ancients knew this and, therefore, they raised the political to an architectonic moral dimension, whereas the moderns forgot it, and as a result they turned the political into a place of conflict, a theatre, whether real or constructed, of the struggle for power. But if the first model, which remains sacral for the unity that links its parts, is no longer viable for a world in which there are non-fitting differentiations, a world in which there is no possibility of unequivocally defining a shared sense, the second is of no greater use. In fact, it remains too close and subaltern to that which it wants to describe, as if living-together were simply the interlacement of many ways of living, and as if politics were simply nature.

In light of what has been said before, we have to become aware that living-together itself is an invention. Living-together, like public space, is an invention and not a fact; it is the categorial opening of a horizon that did not exist earlier. It is a view on life that organises life itself as a living-together. The consequence is the structural imperfection of the political[8]; such is what biopolitics, as power over the *corpus* itself, wants to deny, not without aberrations, and what an affirmative biopolitics, deconstructing these aberrations, is not capable of appreciating other than in the form of exception and immunisation. The political can neither absorb into itself nor master the object to which it applies—an object that, in an ambiguous way and with obscure forms of immediacy, remains in a certain sense always insurmountable. Life does not let itself be grasped unless it is transformed into a living-together, yet this is no longer the same as life. Living-together, though, lets itself be lived only if it does not lose its relation with life. Therefore, the political as the transcendental opening of a public space programmatically and intentionally withdraws from being power over life, because it knows itself as the construction of a living-together. It necessarily applies to life, but in doing so it also finds in life an insuperable restriction. Therefore, it cannot substitute life, as happens in ideology, with a normative political model to which it sacrifices collective and individual life. The public space preserves, protects and promotes life. It cannot bring life into play unless life is already in danger, and the only way to get out of such danger is to deploy life itself, running the risk of losing it, but, indeed, in order to preserve it.

Control and governance devices are necessary in order to transform life into living-together, but these mechanisms, which have the form of culture and exercise themselves as power, although more powerful, are more fragile than life. They have been able to rise and they now threaten to spread, but they have not yet escaped the albeit generalised state of exception. Even if life is often that which destroys, nonetheless it is also that which preserves. Life remains attached to a mechanism of

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[8] In this regard I refer to the intelligent and repeatable remarks of F. Piro, «*… un animale nella cui politica è in* questione *la sua vita di essere vivente»*. *Quali problemi pone oggi la categoria di «biopolitica»?*, in «Filosofia e teologia», XXI, 1, gennaio-aprile 2007, 20–37.

survival that limits it. Only the ideal intervention, if we even speak in such terms, of the political can convince life to put itself in danger.

Living-together is the invention of a modality to live. In the end, it is life in a more complex society that asks for this suspension and for the invention of a sphere of living-together. Life is much, but it is not sufficient, not even to itself.[9] It needs more, and this more is the political. Yet, not even this more, which is much, is sufficient, because it cannot do without that from which it comes and to which it returns, namely, life. Life, in the impulses that constitute it as lifeworld, and in its not being masterable, always and again escapes living-together. It expresses more immediate needs, it confronts us again with the form of an immediacy that evades control. Thus, with an admirable and unexpected move, it institutes an absolute. Such an absolute can be formulated in the following manner: "Do not wound life." Yet, this absolute never coincides with any of the needs of life. It promises more than it can keep. It promises life, but it only satisfies its needs. Only living-together can give form to the command and protect life. But in doing so, it transforms life into living-together. And in extreme cases, but only in these, it replaces the needs of life with the laws of living-together.

To say "life" is like saying "nature," but freed from every fixed position. Life is already culture because it is nature transformed by history and in history. Therefore, life changes and it cannot be assumed as an absolute. Nevertheless, in life are a strength and tenacity of continuity, which one should not harm, but only transfer to a more complex level. The political transforms life into living-together; it lets itself be appealed to and challenged by life, and gives itself the form of a living-together.

The possibility of a world derives from the success of such a challenge. Transforming life into living-together, the political establishes the conditions for the possibility of a world. It neither generates nor builds nor, even less, fills a world; rather, it institutes the conditions for the circulation and the sharing of values, norms and customs. It exponentially multiplies the values and non-values of each, and makes them accessible in a universal form. In this sense, it remains true, freely following Plato, that one can be truly just only in a just world. In the world, his-

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[9] These considerations are due to the ideas that my reading of Guglielminetti's excellent work suggested: E. Guglielminetti, *"Due"di filosofia* (Milano: Jaca Book, 2007), see, in particular, § *Il molto che non basta*, 43ff.

tory assumes a form that is not only political but is also made possible by politics. When we use expressions such as "the Western world" or "the cultural world," we do not identify a politically homogeneous unity; rather, a culture, a mentality, a custom, and an approach, all become a world view and have become so, and this thanks to, *broadly speaking*, a shared political horizon.

The political is an intermediate sphere; it is something that is necessary, something that is not sufficient. Like life, although in a reverse way when compared to it, the political is a "much" that does not suffice. And because it does not suffice, it has to complete itself in a world—a world that the political institutes although it does not constitute it. We need to work on the precarious balance of these expressions; we should recognise that "much" that the political introduces, the surplus that is its most proper invention; but we should also point out the limits that distinguish it. At the lower border is life with its needs; at the upper border is the world and everything that does not let itself be included in the domain of immanence: the possible transcendence of that which purely pushes forth from alterity. The political cannot handle either of these borders; yet it must respect and defend them.

4. Metaphors of the Political: the Square and the Threshold

In the description of the political, metaphors have always held an important place. But we have to make them change from a rhetorical to a structural use. In conclusion, I would like to dwell on two such metaphors in order to show more closely the transformation they can effect.

Within political language, the metaphor of the square is employed frequently. It has been more than a metaphor, though, because it has meant the individuation of a place opposite to the place traditionally ascribed to power, namely, the palace. A traditional element of modern political categories, usually centred on oppositional binaries such as friend–enemy, has found its own representation in the oppositional pair "square–palace," with an additional connotation not found in other binaries: that is, the opposition of included and excluded, of inside and outside, integrated and revolutionaries. In this sense, the square has served the definition of usual political categories, but has inflected these categories in terms that are closer to the vocabulary of revolutions.

With a consciously untimely gesture, I wish to propose again the square as metaphor, but according to a more ancient variation. I am thinking of the city square at the time of the medieval city-republics; such a square is a retrieval and a renewal of the classical *agora*, namely, it is the square as the centre of the town, as shared public space, a place of convergence. But, it is also a place of conflict, and a showcase of the elements that constitute a civil community.

According to this meaning, the square, the excellent model of which may be seen in many beautiful Italian cities, escapes oppositional models in order to configure the nature of the political in unitary terms. This procedure does not limit itself to substituting the "two" of the opposition with the image of a unifying "one"[10]; rather, it identifies another object of inquiry: the reduction to the one escapes the superficially descriptive schema and lets the political thing appear at a level that can be seen only after the bracketing of the immediate forms of appearance. The conflicting binaries "friend–enemy," "one's own–the other's," "square–palace" and "native–foreign" certainly catch essential aspects of the political; nonetheless, they miss the ground on which they unfold, the field that constitutes the theatre of their unfolding. The square, in the way in which it is meant here, forces us to keep our attention precisely on this aspect and to question the existence of a political space even before describing the rules that are applied to it. In this sense, it refers to an object to which one makes continuous reference without, however, tarrying to think it.

As has been remarked, modern streets and highways, clogged with vehicles in which everyone celebrates the projection of their own private sphere onto the outside, do not constitute a public space; rather, they are its caricature: the functional keeping open that is collectively and competitively dedicated to private use. The public space of the square, on the contrary, is a category of being. This category neither registers a way of being nor does it only use it; rather, it invents a way of looking at life as a possible place of a being together that, however, continues to belong to me.

But the metaphor suggests a further and unexpected element. Reflecting on the constitution of the square, one is struck by the fact that already at the level of the town's layout, the square seems to be

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[10] I refer again to E. Guglielminetti.

endowed with a singular character (at least in its early forms, which are far from, if not opposite to, its subsequent developments).

The square is the place that the main civic buildings overlook; the church and the town hall, banks and shops, regularly give onto it; festivals and markets, debates and shows take place in it. The hypothesis I want to put forward and reflect upon is that in the municipal beginning, the square does not have a function, although it carries out many; it does not precede the buildings, but is designed by them. Radicalising my hypothesis, one could say that the square, which is the radiating centre of the city, is like an unfilled place, a sort of residue. At the city's centre, it is an empty space that is left as such. Unlike the streets that lead from one point to another, this empty space is not specifically useful for anything, and precisely for this reason it fulfils an essential function. *En philosophe*, we could say that the ground is a residue.

This is also the place that stays powers, the civil and the religious powers, and also the places of economic practice. Holding them off, it enables their representations and comparison, their convergence and their opposition. The square, understood in this way, namely, before it transforms itself into the representative theatre of power and parades, and before it becomes theatrical and monumental—the square in the act of its birth, when it constitutes itself before being planned—withholds a space of being and confrontation. Such is what we mean when we speak of public space: a place that is not only common but is also for everyone a "to me," within one's own self-situation within a collectivity.

Applied to the present discourse, the metaphor of the square allows us to say that the public space, drawn by the political, is an emptiness rather than a fullness, a ground that has the character of a residue. But now I want to attempt a further development, through the use of another metaphor.

American history has accustomed us to the theme of the frontier; more recently, "being at the borders"—being already at the border and in some way also beyond it, in an everlasting unbalancing—has seemed to be the way to speak of Europe and its essence. Frontiers and borders are at the same time here and beyond; they speak about the here, about a yet-possible beyond the frontier; they speak about the here, unbalancing it at its own border, which is what properly constitutes it. They try to make immanent the radical alterity of the transcendent that is of religious origin, but they fail to respect its inexhaustible alterity, or to escape the

pendular opposition between the here and beyond. When it is placed on the linear scale of these schemata, what is beyond cannot be truly here, but only at its borders, beyond the frontier and beyond the edge. No longer useful within this context are those schemata of theological, not to say biblical provenance, which, with a short circuit that is unacceptable on the level of the political dimension, abruptly introduce the absolutely other novelty of the poor and the stranger, ultimately understood as an hypostatised and non-relative beyond.

The threshold, instead, succeeds in keeping together without confusion the double determination of the here and the beyond. The threshold is here; it is the space in which we are. But if the space in which we are is the threshold, then it is also a place that does not have consistency except within the horizon of the transcendental opening that designs it. The public space opens itself up because it is not a piece of reality. The public space is not nature. Thus, it is an elsewhere. Yet, this elsewhere enables a world and a life as something that is "to me." And reciprocally, the "to me" of the world and of life, which disclose themselves in the public space, situates the I within a dimension that belongs to and defines him or her without this being a fact of natural life.

Through this second way, too, we have found confirmation of the perspective that we have proposed, namely, the intermediary, categorial and nevertheless decisive dimension of the political. It perhaps remains to be asked whether the use of metaphors in order to indicate the opening of these places is a sign of their structural weakness. I would answer in this way: In all these spheres of being we are confronted with the same problem, namely, finding the point of interlacement between the immediacy of the "to me" and the mediation of a potentially universal relation. Both the ego-logical way, which remains anchored to the "to me," and the rational procedure, which proceeds from the universal of sense, arrive through opposite paths at an indication of the necessity of the interlacement. But if they do not want to suppress the difference by absorbing it in the shared logic that guides them, they cannot say anything about its actual intervention. The metaphor that holds within itself the lack of balance of a disconnected articulation that is, that speaks the elsewhere by naming the here, is a possible pronouncement of the difference, that is, of the essence that we have at heart. It may be surprising that we suggest that the difference does not concern the event in its singularity, but in its *mise en espace*. But it is precisely in its *mise en espace*

that the event becomes meaningful, both for the "to me" to which it belongs, and for the common place in which it is located.

In conclusion, to return to the speculative framework to which we referred, I reaffirm that the insistence upon the categorial character of the political, and more specifically, of the political space, has the aim of accurately protecting it from its assimilation to a simple horizon or to something similar to a frame of reference. The political does not constitute, in fact, the frame within which actions that continue to have the character of privacy take place; rather, it is a sort of fourth dimension of things that have a consistency for themselves, a consistency that unfolds differently whether it is placed within the horizontality of the level of private dimensions, or within the tridimensionality of historical relations, or within the verticality of the religious. Each single event does not change with its being placed, even simultaneously, within these different dimensions. What changes is the space that the event discloses. I mean that, as private, the event gives rise to the intimacy of interpersonal relations; as historical, it gives rise to the complex concretion of a possible tradition; as religious, it inaugurates a discipline of the arcane (according to Bonhoeffer); as political, it discloses the place of the public space. In all these cases, places are not simple horizons of inscription, but real places, even if they are constituted through an inventive working of culture. But in all these cases, the inventiveness does not go beyond the transcendental constitution, that is, it works on material that it does not posit, but finds. In the case of politics, this material consists in the needs and desires of life, which become the materials of living-together.

(Translated by Susanna Proietti, revised by Silvia Benso)

ugo@yellowspace.net