

Raymond Petridis *Kondylis and the Problem of Nihilism* (ProQuest, UMI 2013)

Philosophical summary:

In its rare climaxes the human spirit attains a certain autonomy of theoretical Reason from its begetter, practical Reason. In Kondylis's case one would apply this ascertainment as follows: Kondylean theoretical Reason conveys the impression of an *imitation of an exit* from the practice of exercising power founded on the 'ideological' *invocation of the concept of common good* with which the necessarily presupposed "fact of society" and "the" Political (in its unadulterated form) are associated. That is to say: by refusing from a logical viewpoint to ascribe ontological substance or empirical actuality to the (more or less imaginary, if measured by its initial proclamations) concept of the 'common good' – that, nevertheless, forms the condition of possibility for the "fact of society" and "the" Political [i.e. those amorphous supra-empirical facticities, the 'merocratic'/partial interpretation of which constitutes "politics"] – the said theoretical Reason stirs the elemental terms for the genesis and usual operation of thought in general and, therefore, also its own typical functioning as such. The performative philosophical gesture of the 'imitation of an exit from the originally invoked amorphousness of the 'fact of society' and "the" Political' functions in two ways and ambivalently: on the one hand, *as if* an ideological-polemical stance is received from the viewpoint of a broader and more comprehensive theoretical standpoint while, on the other, it discloses to its own sublimated paradigm on the 'frontline of the spirit' the impossibility of an absolutely neutral (from a polemical view) standpoint.

Comprehending the effects of the vast majority's psychological inability to accept the inevitability of the *structural* repetition – and non-progressive logic – of human acts at some point facilitates the retrospective possibility of a radical *work of mourning* on the theoretical meta-level in which the structural invariability of human nature becomes fully and irrevocably accepted, indeed precisely at those moments when the desire for a qualitative break has been activated. Thus viewed, the domain of a purely morphological theorizing is appreciated in singular fashion, no longer as the domain of an emancipatory post-ideological (and, as such, lofty) activity, but as unfamiliar territory whose exploration no longer seems to be entirely devoid of meaning, even though it cannot fit within the outline of any norm or 'canonicity' on

the basis of the handed down value criteria. And going one step further: the comprehension of the structural repetitive movement assumed and reconstituted by such a theoretical perspective is taken as a necessary prerequisite for understanding the functional significance of the notion of 'qualitative break' and of the 'dream' itself for future human acts and, at the same time, the practical powerlessness of 'conventionalism' that seems to be working in the long run for its adversaries, the champions of 'metaphysics'.