

## Philopony in three pages

Capitalism is not intelligent, it is not beautiful, it is not fair, it is not virtuous and it does not keep its promises. In short, we don't like it and we are beginning to despise it. But when we ask ourselves what to put in its place, we are extremely perplexed.

**John Maynard Keynes**

A *utopia* is illustrated here, with the dual purpose of emphasising some basic drawbacks of the current economic order and the possibility - at the moment only a model - of the existence of an innovative order. Philopony, indeed, is a model, social and economic, coherent and implementing a new paradigm.

Like an archaeological campaign, Philopony has long been digging for the "layer" of the lowest common denominator underlying the two major problems of today, social inequality and the plundering of the environment; finally identifying it with accumulation: it is several millennia that mankind has lived and acted - and elaborated economic theories - in the paradigm of accumulation and has suffered its consequences, although in some cases opposed to it (socialism and degrowth, to give two very important examples). Accumulation could be defined as an anomalous behaviour of the first communities based on mutuality; with someone who, going beyond immediate and equal exchange, begins to accumulate; until accumulation, by increasing, turns into power: together they begin a path that reaches us. We can summarise the path of humankind through the succession of: the discovery of abundance (agriculture) - accumulation - debt - writing - money - accumulation capital. It is Aesop, with *The Grasshopper and the Ant*, who perfectly describes anomalous behaviour: accumulation in itself is positive if it is foresight towards an uncertain future; it becomes *anomalous behaviour of mutuality* when it binds itself to power, resulting in prevarication: *and now dance!* it is quintessence of the brutal, coarse, shameless arrogance of the accumulation paradigm. But it is also a denial of humanity; if the current interpretation, whose worst version becomes a justification for exploitation, is the incitement to work, it is possible, likewise, to give a different reading, a social reading. It seems clear that the ant is productive, while the cicada is unproductive; referring these connotations to the procuring of food, as a metaphor for subsistence. And yet, we know that productivity belongs to living beings in general: it is the unproductive activities, whether work or leisure, that characterise human beings; giving life quality, which becomes the true discriminator between societies, places, communities, jobs, leisure: in short, all containers of relationships. In this sense, Philopony offers the possibility of expanding the concept of useful work for individuals, groups and society at large, as well as leisure time, which also is central and amplified; and this allows for a fuller, more dignified and diversified life.

The two elements of detachment from today are **diffuse capital** and the **shifting of the limit**: compared to the current paradigm they constitute a turnaround so essential that it goes beyond the very idea of a different society to entail a new humanity. The proposal, in fact, is that of a philoponic and renewed *Earth's humanism*: placed on Earth and in close relationship with it; peaceful; linking social and economic choices to respect for the environment and people to each other through inclusive social relations; exalting collectivity and singularity. In short, a social project capable of contrasting and replacing, culturally as in reality, that of accumulation.

How can Philopony be an economic model in its own right, in general and in particular with respect to the dualism between private and collective capital? **There are three fundamental aspects** to be assessed, the **abolition of debt**, the **feasibility of the model** and the **possibility of anomalous behaviour**. The creation of money by private individuals has disconnected it from the real economy, making money virtual: extending this virtuality to the entire mankind one has available money, as if it were a Common Good within everyone's reach as is air; and the consequence of which is widespread capital, which differs from the two models existing today in that it does not come from accumulation - expropriation, according to Marx -. And here is the clear separation. The first and most important consequence is the **abolition of debt**, which in Philopony has no reason to exist, and from whose removal derives first and foremost the disappearance of the monetisation of credit, i.e. the artificial creation of money by finance. Without the debt system, there is also a redefinition *by subtraction* of money which, stripped of all other peculiarities and functions, becomes only a unit of measurement, and therefore a fixed value, and a fiduciary instrument in economic relations. Philopony, therefore, combines freedom, including economic freedom, and equality by achieving the *easy economy* which entails and supports the pillars of the new model: the State is more efficient than the market in the production of essential services, and the market is more efficient than the State in the production of goods. However, what has just been described is not enough: it is also necessary to dissolve the binomial money / power, an action that Philopony carries out through both micro and macroeconomic proposals. Finally, there is the attention paid to placing every single proposal in the context, both immediate and general, to evaluate its effects; therefore, the passage of Philopony from another economic model to a new and innovative social order takes place.

Philopony springs from observation and is in the form of an instruction manual; the method used is the deconstruction of the current company, whose elements are recomposed differently. The only element that is not part of the recomposition is the debt, with the consequences mentioned above. Philopony does not invent anything and each element has already been present for some time, and therefore tested; and diffuse capital also belongs to what we already know: diffuse capital is entirely similar to accumulation capital in the sense that it performs the same tasks; nevertheless, it is intrinsically different from it - and therein lies its innovation - because they have a genesis, hence a quiddity, that makes them so different as to be opposites. Nor is it possible to evaluate one of them on the basis of the other: their adoption leads to scenarios so distant that it is unlikely to judge one with the tools of the other. It is on the outcomes that the comparison can, and must, take place: defeat, plundering of the environment and social inequity with accumulation capital - especially private capital -, equality and freedom with widespread capital.

And **the economic referee** to which it was subjected **confirmed the coherence of the model**.

Hinting now very briefly to some proposals, let us return to widespread capital. To respect its definition in its essence, it is such both for people and for their organizations, whatever they may be and up to the States, who will use the widespread capital to sustain themselves economically *in the absence of taxation*. The first and most important consequence is a complete welfare, of which two aspects are mentioned; the self-determination income, which anyone receives from birth to death and allows a good life, that is a life that is economically peaceful, or with the coverage of primary and secondary needs as well as some discretionary needs: returning to the fable, the self-determination income erases the worry of an uncertain future. And, always for anyone, full schooling and, above all, complete mastery of the tools necessary to interpret reality.

Widespread capital also brings with it another very important consequence, private ownership even of the means of production, a condition that, combined with the dissolution of the binomial money / power, places it, eliminating the tools of power and blackmail, with equal dignity with personal property of the workforce, including that of the entrepreneur; and this replaces the free market with the *self-determined market*: one in which the limit is shifted from the economy to the environment.

The positive outcomes of being a model in its own right are not just social: the environmental ones are just as important. If, in fact, social disparity can be resolved through the class struggle, the environmental question requires the union of classes; but to unite while remaining within the current economy means to crystallize the situation and, therefore, to sanction the need for capitalism, which at the moment is the victorious model. If, on the other hand, the union took place in another social order, there would not be this crystallization and much more efficient and effective prospects and tools would open up to the struggle for the environment. Consider, then, the replacement of accumulation as a constitutive element of the economy: indeed, it is in intrinsic opposition, psychological and factual, to environmental protection. Consequently, in Philopony there is a single rule, absolutely insurmountable and valid for the whole of humanity and all its forms of organization, from the family to the State: *global environmental balance*. That is the impossibility of overcoming what Mother Earth makes available annually, both in terms of resources and in terms of resilience. And herein lies in the **shift of the limit**; today, and always, the limit is economic (all material goods and almost all immaterial goods are only accessible through money), whereas **in Philopony the limit becomes the environment**; in this way, the relationship between humanity and Nature is brought back to a direct relationship, no longer a relationship mediated by the economy and money: the current contrast between economy and environment, today to the detriment of the latter, thus disappears. Such an approach leads to sustainable anthropization.

The abolition of debt also contributes to sustainable anthropization. The plundering of the environment, in fact, has as its deep root the taking today of what cannot be taken, postponing its restitution to tomorrow: that is, the intrinsic thought underlying the debt, in whatever form it presents itself. And the constant anticipation in the Earth Overshoot calendar Day is a clear demonstration of this.

The social and environmental effects of debt elimination lead, then, to the realization that the new economy and debt are an oxymoron. And even that is not enough: excavating deeper we discover that there can be no new economy if it is once again based on accumulation.

Inserted in the philoponic model, the completed automation will lead to multiple, mutually equivalent scenarios situated between total non-employment and full employment. Philopony, being able to anticipate one scenario due to its prerogatives, proposes full employment, basing this choice on various elements; among these the participation all in the creation and maintenance and improvement of the new philoponic society; and in this sense, work passes from being a right (today mostly disregarded) to being a duty: human action for the benefit of the general and collective interest, characterized, therefore, by a high civic and moral sense.

It seems, therefore, that the philoponic society is founded on the exaltation of meritocracy; but it is the opposite: if meritocracy is the artificial construction of the umpteenth caste, Philopony has commitment as its basis, the only characteristic common to anyone and regardless of any other peculiarity; as well as from the sphere in which human action takes place. The noun Philopony itself means industriousness, and with an accent on *fatigue / ponos* which is here interpreted as commitment, thus broadening its meaning.

From all this, and from the many other proposals not examined here, it is no longer a company of redistribution but of distribution upstream and for anyone. On the other hand, redistribution is flawed at the base, effectively sanctioning the existence of subdivisions and classes.

While Philopony has fraternity as its supporting pillar, whose most beautiful and engaging definition is by Pope Francis: *In fact, while solidarity is the principle of social planning that allows unequal people to become equals, fraternity is what allows equals to be different people.* To remain in a more prosaic economic model, it is sufficient to replace *solidarity* with *redistribution*, and the effect persists.

With fraternity replacing the classes and the struggle between them, the real bet of Philopony, then, is that of the intrinsic positivity of humanity, hitherto misled by millennia of superstructure built on the assumed inherent selfishness of human beings and whose product is inequality, unhappiness and pillage of the environment. Philoponic bet which, on the other hand and based on research on the instinct to cooperate, takes the form of the continuous and active participation of people in decisions that affect individuals and the community: a participatory social democracy implemented through *Temporary Juries Drawn*.

It remains to be assessed whether and how Philopony can pass from model to reality.

The answer to the question is referred to an experimentation, possible *hic et nunc* and whose modalities are well addressed and resolved, with the aim also of **flushing out any anomalous behaviour** in the model. On the other hand, **Philopony is designed precisely to have the peculiarities necessary to be implemented.** Among these, of which the majority are technicalities, a social one stands out, conciliation. Which offers the current three contenders (capitalism, socialism and what is defined as 1%, i.e. financialisation) compensation to favor conciliation; to capitalism full and free access to doing business and the absence of taxes; to socialism the achievement of equality and equal dignity between the private ownership of the means of production and the personal property of the labor force; at 1% the sacredness of forgiveness and the maintenance of wealth.

Philopony, in fact, wants to bring its own thought to the social debate, not to provoke the bloody revolution; and what is described also defines *cui prodest*: humanity; which is asked for a social resolution that leads to the philoponic society.

Undoubtedly, there remains in today's world the need for current models to continue to confront each other and for people to choose for whom to commit themselves, each with their own militancy. But the need for a search for *what to put in its place* of which Keynes speaks is equally undoubted; a research that becomes frantic, more and more pressed by inequality and by the advance of science as it presents us with ever closer and ever more apocalyptic scenarios. In this regard, it is useful to mention three basic items.

Pope Francis and the *Economy of Francesco*, with an invitation to young people: *no one today doubts that the world economy needs renewal. Young people have a talent for enthusiasm, creativity, the future.* Hence the need to launch a pact to *change the current economy and give a soul to the economy of tomorrow.*

Greta Thunberg, in confronting ourselves with our responsibilities towards the universe, urges the search for an implementation proposal to the complaints of *Fridays For Future*.

And Degrowth itself, similarly to FFF, presents itself not as an economic model but as a Movement for Degrowth.

In response, Philopony offers to Pope Francis fraternity as a pillar of the new society, to *Fridays For Future* an economic model built to achieve sustainable anthropization and degrowth to become part of this new economic model.

In conclusion and quoting the opening and closing words of Philopony:

*Ultimately, widespread capital, debt abolition, a feasible and congruous model primarily for the environment and social equality, a viable operational proposal for sustainable anthropization make Philopony both a model in its own right, therefore out of the dualism between private and collective capital, is, therefore, a true, complete and real innovation.*

*I close in stentorian words: if modern economics was born two and a half centuries ago with the moral philosophy of The Wealth of Nations, I can affirm that Philopony, in part also a work of moral philosophy, closes that era. Diffuse capital and the shifting of the limit from the economy to the environment, in fact, take away the centrality of the economy in society; and while on the one hand bringing it back to its etymology, on the other hand freeing it from the yoke of the GDP rectangle in order to develop it fully.*

*That is, the intrinsic otherness of Philopony: society free from the economy and the economy free from debt.*

---

*Philopony* - born on November 2, 2017 - written between November 2017 and February 2018 / corrected between March 2018 and August 2018 and reviewed in progress from Andrea Surbone [andrea@surbone.it](mailto:andrea@surbone.it) +39 335 7226007 / final version closed in November 2024

Andrea Surbone, writer, editor and former winemaker. He wrote fiction with *Dusts* and since November 2007 he has drawn up the *have a nice week*, a small column of views on the world, sent every Monday by email. Publisher of *Nuvole* magazine (paper numbers from 16 to 23) and still a member of the editorial team ([www.nuvole.it](http://www.nuvole.it)). Member of *Core Team* of *The Jus Semper Global Alliance* ([www.jussemp.org](http://www.jussemp.org)), he has published articles on *GT Network* (<https://greattransition.org>). Spokesperson for a political economy proposal ([www.propo-staneokeynesiana.it](http://www.propo-staneokeynesiana.it)). Promoter of a political proposal ([www.surbone.it/per](http://www.surbone.it/per)).

go to <https://www.surbone.it/filoponia/>