

## MANIFESTO THE SPIRIT OF THE TREE

The first home, a tree; the first temple, the grove; the first city, a forest.

The Cosmic Tree, the Tree of Life or Knowledge, the mysterious ancestor that reaches us from the depths of the ages, that has its roots in Heaven and its fruits on Earth, perhaps it is Abraxas, the talisman of good and the evil that unites Creative Nature and the Humanized City. Democritus, the father of modern physics, who already united all species with his "Atomistic Theory", said that the tree "is comparable to a man turned upside down, with his head planted in the ground and his feet in the air".

Why is this primordial legend so ingrained in the hermetism of old civilizations, and why, even now, does it seem to postulate itself as so foreboding? Probably the fear of death before the immensity of the telluric forces of the cosmos, made primitive man seek help in a being superior to the one he supposed capable of identifying and encompassing his universe. And perhaps also today in the face of the climate crisis, the same awareness of survival is what moves us to combat this terror with the vital experience of our best leader: the tree.

In a differential fact lies the conclusive spirit of the tree, in the spirit of the colony as a system of life. In biology, a colony is a group of living things organized under collective cooperative forms. Perhaps the future for the human being and his habitat resides in him, precisely, in adapting to existence more as a colony than as an individual, motivated by the solidarity of a swarm intelligence. And it will turn out that in order to save ourselves from the destruction we ourselves wreak on this world, we must somehow transform ourselves into laurel groves, as Daphne, the dryad nymph, did when harassed by the dark gods!

Following these analogies, the Cosmic Tree in the city also seems to arise from the ethereal space of ideas to gather material goods on its ground. A way of seeing, a way of being Metropolis, the Mother City.

-We are of the same blood, you and me! – wrote Darwin in *The Origin of Species*, used this archetype in the concept of evolutionary context, even

as the basis for common descent! Along with his son Francis, he promulgated the revolutionary thesis *The Power of Movement in Plants*, where they show us that "Plants are intelligent beings." (2)

Even today, the conclusion of the 1965 Nobel Prize in Physics, Richard Feynman, who, in "the uncertainty of knowledge", resolves that the substance of the tree comes out of the air: *People look at a tree and think it comes out of the ground, but if you ask where its substance comes from ... trees come out of thin air! The substance of the tree is carbon, which comes from the air; carbon drives away oxygen and combines with the water that comes from the earth that has absorbed the rain ... Life has a mysterious force. The sun shines, and it is that light that hits the oxygen, separates it from the carbon and throws it back into the air; and by leaving the carbon with the water and so on, the substance of the tree is formed.*

Nothing new under the sun? In these bitter times, how conclusive the old conjecture of the tree! The largest and oldest living being that exists and that represents the totality; what is food, what is air, energy; who is an oracle and migrates generous and free with culture...

What would be the *Arete* of the forests in the landscape? What is its excellence, that lively and friendly place where you can recognize yourself? *"The tree is born from the soul of the World,"* said Pythagoras. Understand that the tree is at the origin. It is in us, because it is like us; it is in that poetic space where its shadow is the seed of a den, of a room; and beyond, on the roof of the house, on its staircase; on the bed or the table, even in the word, the word transmitted on paper, or in a book...; always the tree as a substance that assembles the same immemorial essence, as nature and as life.

The Era of the Anthropocene, our Era, that of the greatest transformation of the environment by human causes, is so in both a negative and positive sense. Hence the challenge. Hence our manifesto on the raw material, not only to preserve forests, not only to restore forests, not only by caring for trees and plants, but as a principle, as defence, as regeneration, as present and as future, symbol of authentic freedom in the human epic:

*plant, plant, plant!*

In a myth-poetic sense, the Universe is a Tree.

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