

The crisis of the human reason and selfconscience at the end of the XXth century (Levinas, Ricoeur, Polo)

Balance on the philosophy in the XXth century

When a new century begins it seems to be the opportune occasion to make a balance of last century and to see in what moment it is the philosophy. We would want to point out the following notes:

- in the twentieth century there has been a high development of that part of the philosophy that is the logic. From the logical neopositivism of the circle of Vienna, until the predominant analytic philosophy in the Anglo-Saxon context, the logic of last century has been developed and specialized very much, even until reaching a certain autonomy regarding the own philosophy. It is also necessary to keep in mind that in that century it has been developed the computer science and the high technology, and that has forced to devise systems of prosecution of information with some very complex logical structures.
- in second place, in the last century it has also been developed the practical philosophy. The School of Frankfurt in Germany, the theory of the action in the Saxon environment, the Marxisms, and others, they have developed the reflection on the moral, social and political topics highly. The declaration of the human rights, the extension and recognition of the democracy, and new social phenomenons has provided certain solidity and new problems in turn to the thematic of the political philosophy that is also constituting in an autonomous point of the theoretical philosophy.
- the rationalism and idealism that it characterized the modern philosophy, in those that the thought was devoted to be thought itself, they have had some sequels of certain importance, mainly: phenomenology and hermeneutics. The most grateful thinkers in this field are Husserl and Heidegger. The first one is surely the most influential author in the century; and the second is possibly the most grateful metaphysician in the contemporary philosophy. But their positions, especially in the last fifty years, have seemed insufficient, or needful of some new flexion.
- this way, the century has been for the philosophy an unstable period, of crisis, of searching new ways of thinking, and, in particular, of critic of the modern rationality, which is too much theoretical or idealistic: far away of the real and concrete life of the men. Nietzsche has been frequent in this context. And in this line movements, like the French postphenomenology, the philosophy of the difference, the Italian weak thought, etc., have appeared.

In fact in this environment we want to speak of three very heterogeneous thinkers, but they share the accusation of that abuse of theoretical thinking exercised in the modern philosophy. And we will mention to them because they

are distinguished of the rest of the critics of the reason that have appeared in the last fifty years, in their positive position: because they offer a hope alternative for the philosophy, instead of speaking of their decline or the end of the theory.

Paul Ricoeur:

Ricoeur (1913 -) revises the modern ideal of the human selfconscience, limiting it in the sense of locating it in the plexus of the practical action and the lived time. The human selfcomprehension is, after all, hermeneutics.

Ricoeur seeks to revise the Cartesian cogito for its solipsist and intellectualist character. In front of him, Ricoeur will finish proposing a selfcomprehension of the human subjectivity of hermeneutic character that, aware of its finity, admit the dialogue and the exchange of interpretations; and the necessary mediation of the other ones. In front of the selfconscience of the myself, the attestation of the itself.

To carry out their project, Ricoeur begins studying the human will. The phenomenology of the will is captured in his Philosophy of the will I: the voluntary thing and the involuntary thing. But in that book Ricoeur left aside the problem of the wrong and, consequently, the transcendency of human desire. And to Ricoeur this omission that initially he took like a methodological reduction, it finished him to seem insufficient; because the finity of the human subjectivity is not only explained by the binomial activity-passivity of the will, but, indeed, for the existence of the culpability and the evil.

For that reason he writes, years later, Philosophy of the will II: finity and guiltiness. This book is divided in two parts. The first one, The fallible man, examines, the human weakness as explanation of the evil. But what happens with culpability? For this reason, in the second part, The symbolic of the evil, Ricoeur studies the wrong of the will, the blame; or also, the evil in his valourative, interpretative sense, that is to say, in the breast of the axiological hierarchies of the cultures that inform our consciences and are captured in the cultural symbols.

But Ricoeur was not satisfied with its philosophy of the will. So: The interpretation. Essay on Freud. Ricoeur examines the psychoanalytical interpretation of the blame comparing it with its phenomenology of the symbolic of evil. The psychoanalytical interpretation ratifies Ricoeur in his impression about the failure of the immediate autoconscience, and he opens him the doors of the long road of the hermeneutics. But, exactly as hermeneutic, the Freudian explanation of the evil is antiethical versus Hegel sketches in his Phenomenology of the spirit and in his Philosophy of the history: an explanation in which the evil has a final sense.

Of this contrast the following work of Ricoeur, The conflict of the interpretations. Essays on hermeneutics I, emerges and he formulates the celebrated dichotomy among the archaeological hermeneutics of the suspicion (Marx, Freud, Nietzsche) and the teleological hermeneutics of listening (Hegel, and maybe Ricoeur).

The second essays of hermeneutics of Ricoeur appear formally in the work From the text to the action. Essays of hermeneutics II, although they are forged in several previous writings. Ricoeur develops different topics of his hermeneutic;

but, mainly these second essays already suppose his great contribution to the contemporary hermeneutics: the three volumes of their great work *Time and narration*. Ricoeur speculates on interpretation, three mimesis, to locate especially in the last one, the act of reading, the importance of the configuration of the time, the problem of the time that all narration outlines. The historical story and fiction demand the reconfiguration of the time; and all reconfiguration of the time is fake, a poetic creation, and at last an interpretation.

In fact this fictional and hermeneutic character of the time it is the one that induces Ricoeur to understand the human auto-comprehension in narrative terms: because the man's auto-consciousness demands to include and to organize the lived time. Here it is the project of the last work of Ricoeur: *Itself as another*. In this work it is exposed that the human being narrative auto-comprehension forces to distinguish the Cartesian cogito or the momentous ego of the modernity, regarding the narrative identity of the itself.

Leonardo Polo:

Leonardo Polo is a philosopher (Madrid 1926) that has developed his educational activity mainly in the University of Navarra and in different Iberoamerican universities. In 1964 he presented to the national philosophical community (*The access to the being*) his central filosofema: the mental limit. The human mind has a constituent limitation that the exercise of the thought doesn't make but consecrating. On the other hand, if it is detected appropriately, it fits a consistent philosophical methodology in abandoning the mental limit. This abandonment is feasible in four ways that meet to a better understanding of the philosophical radical thematic, that is: the essence and the being of the universe, and the essence and the being of human people.

Starting from that first intuition, Polo has consecrated his long career of philosophical investigation to specify the reach of his new methodology and to the development of the philosophy that is achieved beyond the mental limit. His work has supposed, in summary, the following achievements:

- a recovery of the human knowledge in their habitual form. It is not the theory, neither the science, the maximum pattern of the human wisdom, but the experience. And this way, like it happens to the practical knowledge that are handmade, also happens with the theoretical knowledge: it is susceptible of an intellectual experience, so we reach more and better knowledge than with the objectivism of the scientific theory and its exclusively analytic methodology.
- the metaphysics reinstatement, strictly as knowledge of principles, of the first principles, and of causes. Their defense don't enter in collision with the freedom and the man's autonomy, because of the metaphysics and the anthropology. They are different and heterogeneous, although compatible knowledge
- and, mainly, a new formulation, momentous, of the anthropology that considers to the freedom as a radical of the human existence, open to knowing and loving. So appropriate bed is given to the modern pretence of independence

and autonomy, to the personal being's elevation, but without separating the man of the reality: of the world that we inhabits and the other ones with we cohabits (and of God).

Emmanuel Levinas:

Levinas (1906-1995) is a Russian-French and Jewish thinker that suffered the rigors of the Soviet revolution and of the world wars, five years of captivity passing in the fields of concentration of the Nazi Germany. And in his philosophy he denounced also something forgotten by the theoretical excess of the western philosophical tradition, centered in itself: the other one, the other ones and the other thing. The modern subjectivism, and all philosophy, is, for Levinas, egocentric. For that reason he sought to answer to the contemporary thought, of Husserl and Heidegger mainly, with an anthropology that considered to the man like constituted from it was: for the other ones, and for them; not autonomous and independent, but open passively to the external influence: of the other ones, and of all the other one that is not the me. It is the proposal of *Totality and infinite* (1961), his first great philosophical work. So we reach a different point: as mortal, sexual and genealogical being.

Levinas dedicated his second great philosophical work, *Otherwise that to be or beyond the essence* (1974), to sustain the primate of the ethics in the philosophy. An ethics of the responsibility and the testimony, based on the good that the man is capable more than in his way of being; and that aspires to give glory to God, a transcendent God for the man. The immanentism of the theory should leave step to the prevalence of the practice, and to the generous delivery to the other ones. The official philosophers, Heidegger in short, had forgotten Levinas when prisoner fell, and of all the Jews; but they should remember that the other ones are more important than the own thoughts and theories.

The philosophy of Levinas is a little extreme, because it claims the complete forgetfulness of ourselves and the entirely altruistic generosity. It is this way the previous ethics and beyond the primate of the reason. The polian transcendental anthropology, also reached beyond the limit of the thought, is maybe adjusted to the nature of the human spirit, a spirit able to have and not only of giving. On the other hand, the Ricoeurian hermeneutic also lowers us the smoke on the dot within reach of the ideal autoconscience, and it locates us in the plexus of the concrete practical action and the real time in that we live. But all they are proposed for the man of the twenty-first century, to which urges him to be understood, and it is maybe already tired of a to think too tangled in itself or limited to question the reach of their achievements.

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