

PHILOSOPHY AND PANDEMIC

Filosofía y pandemia

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Abstract

This work presents three critical aspects related to philosophy in these times of pandemic. The first has to do with the end of Minerva's Owl as a universal symbol of philosophy, that is, the end of the idea that philosophy only manages to explain the world once the events have occurred. The idea of a simultaneity of philosophy with the facts and a certain transforming power of thought is defended. The second makes a critical distinction, from a Latin American and Global South horizon (which is where Latin Americans must think if we want to philosophize with meaning), between 'Metaphysics / Ontology of the universal and abstract being' and 'Historical ontologies of the be-here'. The significance and value of historical ontologies as theoretical decolonization devices are defended against metaphysics. The 'historical onto-logies of being-here' ask themselves, not about being abstract, but about existence and daily life endangered by the pandemic. This allows in the third part to position life, not only as an ethical value capable of guiding human action, but also as a universal foundation and a critical category. As a conclusion, the idea that the pandemic has revealed the true end of Eurocentric modernity and has opened the challenge of thinking in diverse but equal societies in the right to existence and life is upheld.

Keywords

Philosophy, pandemic, metaphysics, ontology, historicity, decolonization.

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Resumen

Este trabajo presenta tres aspectos críticos relacionados con la filosofía en estos tiempos de pandemia. El primero tiene que ver con el fin de la Lechuza de Minerva como símbolo universal de la filosofía, es decir el fin de la idea de que la filosofía solo llega a explicar el mundo una vez que han acaecido los hechos. Se defiende la idea de una simultaneidad de la filosofía con los hechos y un cierto poder transformador del pensamiento. El segundo realiza una distinción crítica, desde un horizonte latinoamericano y del Sur Global (que es desde donde los latinoamericanos debemos pensar si queremos filosofar con sentido), entre 'Metafísica/Ontología del ser universal y abstracto' y 'Onto-logías históricas del ser-aquí'. Se defiende la significatividad y el valor de las onto-logías históricas como dispositivos teóricos de descolonización frente a las metafísicas. Las 'onto-logías históricas del ser-aquí' se preguntan, no por el ser abstracto, sino por la existencia y la vida cotidiana puestas en peligro por la pandemia. Ello permite en la tercera parte posicionar a la vida, no solo como un valor ético capaz de orientar la acción humana, sino como fundamento universal y categoría crítica. Como conclusión se sostiene la idea de que la pandemia ha revelado el verdadero fin de la modernidad eurocéntrica y ha abierto el desafío de pensar en sociedades diversas pero iguales en el derecho a la existencia y a la vida.

Palabras clave

Filosofía, pandemia, metafísica, ontología, historicidad, descolonización.

238



Introduction

Philosophy is identical to the spirit of the age in which it appears; philosophy is not above its time, it is only the consciousness of the substance of its time, or the thinking knowledge of what exists in time. In the same way, no individual can be above his time; the individual is the son of his time; the essential of the time is the very essence of it; the individual manifests itself only in a certain way. Nobody can get out of the substance of his time, as nobody can get out of his own skin. Therefore, on an essential consideration philosophy cannot skip its own time.
(Hegel, 1980).

The world has lived in these months a chess game of deadly circumstances against which philosophy has been forced to prove its power or its weakness, its actuality or its expiration. The drama is that it had to do so in the face of the merciless threat of death represented by an 'invisible enemy': the coronavirus.

There are some issues that require special debate in Latin America and the Global South. For example: Can philosophy say its word simultaneously to the events of the pandemic or should it keep quiet and wait for it to be overcome or solved by science to reflect on what has already happened? This question is the first to be discussed in this article.

The second question is a clarification of the real and true power of philosophy; power that according to the proposed thesis must be based, after the end of Eurocentric metaphysics, on a historical ontology of ourselves. The difference explains how between ‘metaphysics/ontology’ (which Europe used as a mechanism of domination) and onto-logy (alternative of thought that makes it possible to advance from ‘not-being’ to which colonialism reduced us to ‘being- here ‘or being-historical that we are).

The third question makes an assessment of life as a universal foundation and as a privileged manifestation of ‘being-here’ in times of pandemic. The double vulnerability of life in the region, in the face of coloniality and in the face of the coronavirus, provides the opportunity for onto-logical reflection.

It concludes with a hypothesis: the pandemic has become the true end of Eurocentric modernity. And, hopefully, in the true end of expansionist and colonialist imperialism. A new stage of humanity has opened that some call transmodernity and that, apparently, will not take place in terms of transhumanism (overcoming man and humanity by artificial intelligence), but in terms of an open and solitary neo-humanism between peoples and individuals who see, beyond the value of science and technology, which is not denied, the need to take care of themselves/others and their common home.



The virus of death (coronavirus) plays chess with the Owl of Minerva (symbol of philosophy)

The title of this first section evokes *The Seventh Seal*, the famous film by Ingmar Bergman in which a tormented knight who returns to his castle after ten years of futile struggles in the Crusades, challenges Death to a game of chess in search of answers to key questions in life. The expression ‘Minerva’s Owl’ refers to Hegel, on the one hand, and contemporary philosophers who have issued their reflections on the coronavirus pandemic, on the other hand.

Hegel, the apple of discord

Hegel wrote a memorable paragraph that became a canon for the philosophy of the last two centuries, in the Preface to the *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, and which says:

A further word on the subject of issuing instructions on how the world ought to be: philosophy, at any rate, always comes too late to perform this function. As the thought of the world, it appears only at a time when actuality has gone through its formative process and attained its completed state. This lesson of the concept is necessarily also apparent from history, namely that it is only when actuality has reached maturity that the ideal appears opposite the real and reconstructs this real world, which it has grasped in its substance, in the shape of an intellectual realm.³⁰ When philosophy paints its grey in grey, a shape of life has grown old, and it cannot be rejuvenated, but only recognized, by the grey in grey of philosophy; the owl of Minerva begins its flight only with the onset of dusk. (Hegel, 1975, p. 26).

240



This paragraph is going to be, for now, the reason for discord. Lately, it has been seen on social networks how various philosophers have expressed their ideas in writings (articles, essays, narratives) that are contemporary with the development of the pandemic. And this ‘contemporaneity’ of philosophy with the global emergency of Covid-19 has given some to think and has annoyed others, especially those who combine with the idea that philosophy takes flight, like Minerva’s Owl, late afternoon.

However, and given the multiplicity of reflections that philosophers have issued in these same days, you cannot close your eyes. It is possible then that this profusion of narratives is telling us something that we refuse to listen to: that the metaphor of Minerva’s Owl may not be adequate to judge, not the pandemic, but philosophy itself. And to help this hypothesis another memorable text can be mentioned, written by Hegel himself (1975) in the same *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*:

To comprehend what is, is the task of philosophy, for what is, is reason. As far as the individual is concerned, each individual is in any case a child of his time, thus philosophy, too, is its own time comprehended thoughts. It is just as foolish to imagine that any philosophy can transcend its contemporary world as that individual can overlap his own time or leap over Rhodes. If his theory does indeed transcend his own time, if it builds itself a world as it ought to be, then it certainly has an existence, but only within his opinions - a pliant medium in which the imagination can construct anything it pleases.

By contrasting these paragraphs, it can be seen that Minerva’s Owl metaphor conceives philosophy as ‘thought of the world’, that is, as an idea/reason/conscience/spirit that no longer thinks of the ‘external’ world but rather thinks of itself: a pure concept that obviously “appears in time after reality has completed its formation process and is already ready and

finished” (Hegel, 1975, p. 63). This argument can even be reinforced if it is mentioned that, for Hegel, the ‘long time’ or ‘long duration’ that has been required for philosophy to become spirit/reason that thinks itself refers to that Philosophy, the spirit of a people and culture at a certain time, is the result of the work of all past centuries, from primitive stages and cultures to the modern stage that Hegel lived (and the modernity that we live, we would say now)¹.

In this succession of stages of historical peoples (because there were other peoples ‘without history’, according to Hegel), philosophy appeared as innovative and powerful when the peoples entered into decline. Why? Because the spirit, disillusioned with the terrestrial world that had become confused, chaotic, and corrupt, took refuge in the world of thought. Then, the ideal appeared over the real and philosophy was nothing other than the thinking spirit that thinks itself. In these cases, the philosophy required the maturation of the history and the spirit of those peoples, and it was logical to equate philosophy with the Minerva Owl that takes off at dusk.

The question of discord then arises: is this absolute idealism the one advocated by the defenders of ‘philosophy as Minerva’s owl? If they do it in Hegel’s sense, that’s fine, it’s an option. However, it is presumed that what they really want to defend is only the idea that philosophy, being a reflection, requires slow, systematic, patient, rigorous meditation, which must appear when the vertigo of empirical facts has passed and when the physical and medical sciences have rendered their verdict on the pandemic.

But Hegel (1975) counterattacks: according to him, philosophy has the task of ‘conceiving what is’ and that turns the philosopher, as an individual, into a ‘child of his time’. Under this consideration, philosophy is ‘it’s time apprehended in thoughts’, and it is “foolish to believe that a philosophy can go beyond its present time as an individual can jump over its time, beyond Rhodes” (p 63). And, Hegel says, this philosophy that thinks the present time is ‘simultaneous’ with the configuration of the people in which it is presented and with everything that constitutes the configuration of that people: government, morality, social life, skills, customs, art., science, religion, military, and external relations (and pandemics, we would add). But above all, it is ‘simultaneous’ with “the decline of states... and with the origin and growth of something newer in which a higher principle finds its generation and development” (Hegel, 1980, pp. 261-262).

More clearly a rooster does not crow. However, one of the most discussed topics in these times is focused on knowing if philosophy can say something simultaneously to the evolution of the pandemic and its



circumstance or if it should wait for it to conclude its cycle by then, and only then, think about it and make judgments about it².

Covid-19 against Minerva's Owl

The matter began with an early criticism of the publication of the book *La Sopa de Wuhan* (2020)³, which collects articles on the pandemic from the pens of philosophers such as Giorgio Agamben, Jean-Luc Nancy, Slavoj Žižek, Byung-Chul Han, Judith Butler, Alan Badiou, María Galindo, Paul B. Preciado, and others⁴. The criticism, contained in a statement signed by pro-Chinese collectives based in Spain, is directed mainly at the cover and the title of the book that suggests that the coronavirus originated in Wuhan (China). The Collective understands that such a cover and such title, by pointing to China as the place of origin of the pandemic, shows hatred, racism, and xenophobia, since it would be blaming it for having originated the global pandemic: something that has not been proven. "If there is something that western colonial capitalism likes to do," says the statement, "it is to place the problem in an alterity that removes it from any responsibility" (Chinese Diaspora Network in Spain and Others, 2020, p. 1). The perverse thing about the cover would lie, then, in pretending all is "design and creativity".

But this is not what matters. The interest of this article is focused on the content of the book seen as a totality, that is, as an analytical, reflective, and critical group with the 'times of pandemic'. And here the discussion begins: these articles/essays/narratives have been written and issued, not when the pandemic has been controlled or solved by the physical and medical sciences, but when it is in uncontrollable expansion throughout the world. There is, therefore, a 'simultaneity' of philosophy with the pandemic. The controversy, according to Zarria (2020), arises because there are those who think that this 'simultaneity' is inappropriate for philosophy, that 'hastiness doesn't suit it'⁵, and that this haste in philosophy 'does not lead to the mountain, but to the ravine'.

More fuel for the fire

The publication of multiple articles/essays by world-renowned philosophers on the same days that the pandemic strikes mercilessly, brings to the fore something that deserves to be thought about: that philosophy, at this time, is not even the owl of Minerva nor the Messenger of the Dawn. These



philosophers are saying, in reality, that philosophy as ‘it’s time apprehended in thoughts’ has little or nothing to do with ‘dusk’ (for which it would now require to ‘shut up and think’, ‘stop the pen’, ‘open the window’), nor with the ‘dawn’ (which would suppose prophecy, prediction, with the corresponding haste). The intermediate position of González and Martínez (2020) does not even fit, willing to “make the effort to throw in unfinished and stammering thoughts, since philosophy has the responsibility of providing meanings and concepts, of naming things, of indicating paths” (p. 1).

Philosophy to be such must conceive (put into concepts) ‘what is’. ‘What is’ is reason, according to the idealist Hegel, but not for Marx (1973)—for example—for whom ‘what is’ is material reality. And it is this material reality (Covid-19 as a virus of death and the material circumstances of its appearance) that determines/conditions thought. In this regard, philosophy has been, is, and will be a matter of reason that thinks, abstracts, and conceptualizes, but not of reason that thinks itself (Hegel), but of reason as a determined/conditioned capacity for thought by material reality. When philosophy abides by these determinations, it cannot go beyond its time because “it is only the consciousness of the substance of its time, or the thinking knowledge of what exists in time” (Hegel, 1980, p. 108).

Then, if philosophy can only think the present time and the present of the world is the coronavirus pandemic that haunts and overwhelms us, to pretend that it must take its flight at nightfall (uncertain future) is to pretend ‘to go beyond its present time’, which is ‘foolish’ (that is, not adjusted to the determinations of reason that thinks the present time). These determinations of philosophy also affect the philosopher as an individual and Hegel (1980) has warned:

(...) No individual can jump over his time [...]; the individual is the child of his time; the essence of the time is the very essence of it [...]. Nobody can get out of the essentials of his time, as nobody can get out of his own skin (p. 108).

Consequently, neither philosophy nor the philosopher can, in an essential consideration, skip their present time and place themselves comfortably in the ‘dusk’ (refuge of idealists, where the ideal prevails over the real).

Only under one aspect, can philosophy be above its time

Only under one aspect, philosophy can be above its time, says Hegel: as Reason that identifies itself, ultimately, with spirit itself in the highest flowering of itself. Only in this formal aspect (which, by the way, for He-



gel is the real), philosophy 'is above, because it is the spirit that is known as content', because 'it is truly the reality of the spirit' (Hegel, 1975).

Thus, "the ideal is manifested against the real and takes charge of this world in its substance" (p. 63). This real-world, full of disorder and misery, of deceit and corruption, no longer satisfies, it breaks, declines, falls; Philosophy then appears as a reconciliation of this decadence, but "this reconciliation occurs in the ideal world - Hegel insists - in the world of the spirit, in which man takes refuge, when the earthly world no longer satisfies him" (Hegel, 1980, p. 111). This philosophy as reconciliation symbolizes Hegel (1980) with Minerva's Owl that takes off at nightfall:

If philosophy presents itself and — painting gray on gray — unfolds its abstractions, then the fresh color of youth, of life, has passed. Therefore, what it produces is reconciliation, but only in the world of thought, not in the terrestrial world (p.111).

244



It is logical that the philosophy-as-Owl-of-Minerva thinks of what has already happened, what cannot be 'rejuvenated' but only 'known'.

Those who defend this duskish vision of philosophy actually affirm that in the current context it is not yet time for philosophy, that the world in which we live has not yet entered into decline, that we must wait, be cautious, patient, prudent, serene, humble and let the empirical sciences do and say their part, as expressed by Zarria (2020). In the meantime, philosophy must be silent, at least for a while, stop the pen, open the window, wait patiently for the sunset, when the physical sciences have said everything about the pandemic. And then philosophize.

Beyond Hegel

There are those who think that the spirit of the age we are living in — this capitalist, colonial, patriarchal, individualistic Modernity— has been showing signs of decadence for decades and that now is the time of philosophy, not later. Multiple manifestations highlight this decline: knowledge as a power of domination/marginalization; the absolute predominance of the self; instrumental reason; savage capitalism, neoliberalism, and individualism; the irrational exploitation of nature, global warming, and the melting of the poles; the migration of millions of people fleeing poverty and abandonment; the concentration of wealth in few hands; the primacy of the market over human beings and the criminal exploitation of workers; the loss of value of work, of solidarity, of the community; the racism; xenophobia; the pandemics of the 21st century and, above all, the

Covid-19 pandemic that right now immerses the individual and society in general in fear and death, in confinement and loneliness.

What do those who defend the thesis of philosophy expect of Minerva's owl? when they argue that slow reflection is necessary, that we must wait until the pandemic has been consummated so that philosophy can think about what has already happened, that for philosophy "is imperative to be slow, to ruminate on concepts and arguments, to an attentive, detailed and parsimonious reading of reality" (Sicerone, 2020). Pause, slowness, parsimony, measure, prudence, patience; keep quiet, ruminate, wait: this is the language of those who are still waiting for dusk to think. Meanwhile, the essentials of our time, which is life threatened by the developments/pathologies of modernity itself and the current pandemic, slip through their fingers like water. Meanwhile, people suffer, die, and are not happy, as Camus would say.

If we are in one of the declines that Hegel revealed for the different stages of human history, this means that today is the time of philosophy, because today (and not when the pandemic has expired) thought is life, activity, necessity, determination. Of course, philosophy must be attentive to what the physical, medical, and social sciences say, but it has specific fields (ontological, epistemological, anthropological, ethical, political...) that demand to be thought in this moment. For when should thinking, for example, about who we are today and what is our relationship with logos (reason, conscience)? What is the meaning of living, dying, suffering, being alone? How do human beings understand ourselves in the face of the pandemic? What is good or bad in the context of the global pandemic, in the specific characteristics of the reality in which we find ourselves? What are the correct ethical attitudes towards others and towards myself? What is the true meaning of the State's decisions? What are the philosophical implications of selecting those who must die and those who must live?... It is now, in the face of the global and local emergency, when philosophy can start over, justify its existence and consider itself necessary to the thinking spirit.

But Hegel is Hegel and we must not forget that his idealism makes him look at philosophy as an aspect of the total configuration of the spirit, as the reconciliation of the spirit with itself, which occurs only in the formal sphere, that of pure concepts. With this vision, Hegel turned things "upside down" (spirit as the essence of reality). Fortunately, there was in the history of philosophy those who put things back 'on their feet' and philosophy, re-located in the realm of materiality, of threatened life, it has once again become the thought that meets an objective need: that of not only interpreting the world in different ways but of 'transforming it' (Marx, 1973, p. 11).



Other conditions inherent in philosophy

To avoid being considered prophets, futurologists, catastrophic or apocalyptic, professional philosophers have assumed their task of thinking 'what is' (their reality, their time, and the reason that thinks them), placing themselves in the time horizon that welcomes them and putting them certain orderly and systematic methodologies and categorical schemes are underway that have allowed them to advance from reality to concepts, from facts to foundations. This procedure that allows philosophers to understand the ultimate determinations of a specific or global reality is contemporary with the facts and its value must be measured by the possibility of problematizing and conceptualizing reality, history, facts, and reason itself that thinks about them, in an incessant search for the substance of this time, and should not be measured by psychological aspects such as prudence, patience, serenity, waiting.

Philosophy can conceptualize and must do so many times under the present demands of a reality that demands that the meaning of its occurrence be exposed (brought to light) through thinking reason in a global and sustained analysis. It would then be, if one wants to call it that, a philosophy of the present (Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Benjamin).

In other cases, the philosophy will certainly come to judge (make judgments) after the events have occurred and the reality has concluded its unfolding, but this is a formal possibility that is at the antipodes of the materiality of the events. And in those antipodes of formal thought, it is possible - Hegel himself has said it - 'to capture anything'.

The sensible thing is for philosophy to abide by the conditions of possibility that reality itself offers it, as the most fervent idealist who could not wait for the reality of his time to mature and who strove to finalize the writing of the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* as Napoleonic cannons roared around Jena. This shows that Hegel himself, at least on that occasion, was doing philosophy while the reality was in process, without waiting for the flight of Minerva's owl. Do these contradictions annul Hegel's thought? No, just as the thinking of today's philosophers is not annulled by the fact that they contradict or change their vision. The decisive thing is that the philosopher thinks systematically and rigorously the substance of his time, everything else enters the field of the normal vicissitudes of thinking, when one has the courage to think.

Finally, there will also be cases in which philosophy thinks the future that does not exist but that it is necessary to foresee it, anticipate it, design it with reason and analysis: let's think, for example, of Feuerbach,

anticipating a philosophy of the future⁶, or Nietzsche, writing for two centuries later⁷.

Checkmate to twilight and dawn philosophies?

In sum, philosophy does not depend on psychologizing attitudes such as haste or patience, serenity or humility. It is in its power to think about the emergency caused by Covid-19 with the depth, analysis, and criticism that are specific to it. The idea that philosophy could only say definitive words about Covid-19 when the pandemic has passed and Minerva's little owl has taken flight at dusk also seems unreal: a) because reality is always in motion and is never 'ready and finished', since what is considered 'done' is nothing but the image and dynamism of a new moment; and, b) because thought never rests either and new aspects, approaches, understandings, concepts will always emerge, which were not seen, considered or evaluated at dusk.

If philosophical thinking consists of apprehending concepts for a certain time, that depends on: a) on the level of self-awareness that is possible at this time in the different areas where reflection is carried out, b) on the resources/phases/methods inherent to the Philosophy as systematic thought: link with limit or extreme situations, rationality, the vision of totality, the process of abstraction, radicalism, generation of concepts, rigor, criticality, problematization, transcendentalism, etc...⁸

The philosophers who have written about the pandemic fully meet the essential requirements of philosophy as such, and it is they who give consistency to their essays, regardless of how debatable what each of their arguments may be. By depending on the inherent characteristics of thought itself, on the one hand, and the commitment to apprehend their time in concepts, on the other hand, their contributions show the contemporaneity that befits all philosophy as knowledge committed to the essential demands of its environment.

This has little or nothing to do with a conservative vision of the philosopher, which confines him to intellectual isolation, in addition to physical isolation, in which he could supposedly develop a 'measured' and 'ruminated' reflection. The philosophers anthologized in the book *La sopa de Wuhan* and many other philosophers and thinkers (Hürgen Habermas, Edgar Morin, Alain Touraine, Emilio Lledo, Roberto Espósito, Martha Nussbaum, Adela Cortina, Enzo Traverso, Fernando Savater, Enrique Dussel, Naomi Klein, Amelia Valcárcel...) who have made their publications



in different media have broken the prejudice that urges them to ‘be quiet’ when the pandemic is in full swing and to ‘think’ when it has expired.

The ‘contemporaneity’ of those who think ‘simultaneously’ with the occurring facts, if they do so with the parameters and methods proper to philosophy, does not make them morning pundits, or forecasters of an uncertain time, or opinionologists with a veneer of philosophy, or authors of a provisional thought. Their reflections, however brief, have shown that it is not necessary to wait for dusk or dawn but to have, at all times, reason ready, an attentive look, a clear framework of analysis, and a ‘toolbox’ (Wittgenstein) that allow them to reach the ultimate determinations of reality that prompts their reflection. The encouraging fact is that philosophers have responded promptly, from their respective horizons of understanding to the demand of their respective realities, without turning the ‘Minerva’s owl’ philosophy into a ‘messenger of the dawn’.

Neither evening nor morning, philosophy rather plants its foothold where and when societies or peoples need to have citizens committed to the task of thinking and bringing to light the concepts that express the meaning of what is happening. And that is more than enough for philosophy.

248



From the “metaphysics of universal being” to the “historical onto-logies of being-here”. The dialectic being/not-being

Thought from a Latin American and Global South horizon, that is, from a context of coloniality and pandemic (which is the one that corresponds to us and from where we must think in order to philosophize with meaning), it is seen that the question of ‘being’ has been confronted to new historical situations and new meanings that have made possible a new way of understanding the classic Parmenidean exclusion between ‘being’ and ‘not-being’, which is at the base of Eurocentric metaphysics.

The ‘not-being’, to which the American Indian was reduced by the ethical objectification/murder to which he was subjected by the conquest and colonization, became a negative variant of the same ‘being’ that made possible the degradation of the indigenous, black and mestizos to the condition of objects, instruments, quasi-human beings, barbarians without a soul, without reason, without spirituality, who had to be violently incorporated into civilization and Christianity. This metaphysical reason explains that the Latin American history of the last five centuries has been that of a ‘being’ diminished, preyed upon, underpowered, diminished, dehumanized by the gaze of the conqueror and the imposed imperial sys-

tem: that is, a 'non-being'. A 'non-being' that, despite the nihilizing vision that led to the indigenous peoples' genocide and the devastation of their cultures, persisted in not being left out of 'being'.

The American 'non-being' was not and is not outside of being, it was and is there as negativity inserted in the 'being' itself, which can be overcome using an ontological dialectic of a historical nature. Since the 'non-being' is not nothing, leaving the 'non-being' means that the negated entities re-know themselves as existence, as life, as 'being-here'. This re-constitutive vision of themselves (of ourselves) as 'being-here' that goes beyond the colonialist 'not-being' is what we call 'historical ontology of being-here'.

The consequence of all this is that philosophy in Latin America and the Global South cannot simply embrace the 'end of philosophy as metaphysics' proclaimed by a Eurocentric Heidegger, but has to redefine itself as a discipline that thinks conditions of possibility of our re-constitution as 'being-here', together with the re-habilitation of the Latin American logos (reason, rationality, knowledge, discourse). This re-constitution of the 'being-here' and the logos, as imperative of the present, leads to redefining ontology as onto-logy, that is, as a logos of historical-temporal entities, concrete and situated, open to the other (nature) and the others who live with us in a world that, broad and alien⁹, seeks to turn it into a common home.

This scheme makes it possible for Eurocentric metaphysics to appear as what it has been in our region: "science" that ideologically manipulated the Parmenidean conception of "being" and "not-being" in its wars of expansion and colonialism. By establishing itself as a system of categories that thinks about the re-constitution and deployment of the Latin American being-here- and its logos, historical onto-logy becomes a concrete possibility of ontological decolonization that deconstructs Eurocentric metaphysics from its very foundations.



The true power of philosophy

Philosophy demonstrates its maximum power when it is capable of reaching, with its methods and its reflective, rigorous, and systematic thought, the substance, the *arché*, the ultimate cause, the foundation of what exists. The philosophy that expresses or brings to light these ultimate determinants of the world-reality then becomes the thinking reason, the consciousness of its time or its time apprehended in concepts, as Hegel pointed out. These ultimate determinants can be and have been different at different times in the development of philosophical thought: the absolute

spirit (Hegel), the socio-economic alienation (Marx), the unraveling of universal and absolute values (Nietzsche), the being- there as temporality (Heidegger), existence preceding essence (Sartre)... It can also be mentioned in a retrospective vision: Nature (Spinoza), the Self (Descartes), God (Scholastica), the One (Plotinus), Being (Aristotle), the Good (Plato)... Each of these foundations has been thought of as the essence of what it is, and, consequently, as the ultimate determinant of reality.

The 'Being' as a theoretical foundation has been the traditional theme of Metaphysics/Ontology developed by Europe. Ultimately defining him as God (Aristotle, Christianity), such metaphysics was transformed into onto-theo-logy. Despite the distinctions of reason that Europe made between 'Metaphysics' and 'Ontology', they used them interchangeably (and ambiguously) to always refer to the same thing: 'Being/God' as a universal and absolute foundation. Based on this in-distinction, modern-expansionist Europe carried this philosophy and imposed it everywhere as the sole and absolute truth, eternal and necessary. In this way, Europe converted onto-theo-logical philosophy into a political ideology of expansion (thought or vision of the world used as justification or concealment of conquests and colonialisms) at the service of the imperial powers that conquered and dominated the planet.

Under this condition, philosophy as metaphysics arrived in America in the 16th century, it remained as such throughout the various colonialisms of the last five hundred years (Spanish, Portuguese, English, French, Dutch, North American); and it has managed to "liquefy" and establish itself in the minds and souls of the colonized as "Western and Christian culture," until today. In the academies, of course, the matter ran easier: the study of Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics was (and still is today in Catholic centers) compulsory.

To structure itself as systematic knowledge in Europe, philosophy organized its range of knowledge into 'disciplines': knowledge about being-god (metaphysics/ontology, theology), about knowledge and truth (logic, epistemology), about the world-cosmos (cosmology), about man (anthropology), about human acts (ethics), about beauty and art (aesthetics)... To 'liquefy' as culture (to make the meaning of abstract concepts digestible or assimilable for ordinary people) and to settle in the mind and soul of the colonized, religious preaching and fear, school and collegiate education, and the slow and sustained configuration of the world of values and customs was employed. The core that has supported and still supports 'that Greek-European philosophy' imposed as 'unique and universal philosophy', has been and is metaphysics/ontology.



This ‘metaphysical knowledge’ that configured an ideal world in Plato, became a *real politik* with Aristotle and has accompanied the Greco-Roman-European-North American expansionism ever since. The successive world empires theoretically based their wars of expansion, conquest, and colonization on the metaphysical distinction (and, therefore, universal and necessary) between being/not-being, and from it, they extracted the conceptual derivations of civilization-barbarism, faith-reason, Christians-infidels, progress-underdevelopment, freedom-nature, historical peoples-peoples without history, democracy-tyranny..., which served them and serves them to subdue and dominate.

In summary: the true power of the philosophy imposed in America was rooted in this onto-theo-logical vision used as a political ideology that defined and defines as ‘not-being’ the discovered and colonized realities, ordering them to barbarism, to irrationality, to inauthenticity, to underdevelopment, to a-historicity. Beyond the vision of totality and the logical rigor of its concepts, the metaphysics of universal being was used in the praxis of politics and of everyday life as an instrument to discriminate, separate, hide, deny, make invisible, devalue¹⁰.



Need for a critique of the metaphysical condition

How has this metaphysical condition of philosophy been criticized or overcome? Europe has purged itself through a gradual deconstruction of its onto-theo-logical horizon throughout modernity, culminating in Heidegger and Sartre, who made the later conceptualizations about the ‘end of philosophy as metaphysics’ and the ‘end of the philosophies of the essence’.

And what about Latin America and the Global South? How would the spheres where coloniality still prevails require orienting one’s thinking to overcome the Eurocentric and colonialist metaphysics of universal and absolute being? If this metaphysics is liquefied and installed in the deepest recesses of being, feeling, thinking, believing, how can we get out of it?¹¹

Getting out of it will take time and a laborious effort to philosophize from our realities. The category of ‘being’ as a foundation continues to operate in the background of current Latin American cultures, even if one does not want to see or understand it.

Getting out of it will take time and a laborious effort to philosophize from our realities. The category of ‘being’ as a foundation continues to operate in the background of current Latin American cultures, even if one does not want to see or understand it. The issue, therefore,

if we want to stay on the horizon of what is usually understood by philosophy, is to re-define or re-semanticize the question of 'being' from or from existential and historical conditions that allow us to open thought to question of 'being-here'. With what theoretical, critical, deconstructive resources could we achieve this? With these, for example:

- Discovering our real location in world history and in the geopolitics of our time, which overcomes the traditional Eurocentric division of world history into ancient, middle, and contemporary ages¹².
- Conquering a "beachhead in the field of the onto-logical and epistemic" as an initial space in/for the deployment of decolonial and liberation knowledge.
- Introducing a clear and sharp distinction between "metaphysics of universal being" and "historical onto-logies of being-here", which reveals or brings to light the imperial character of Eurocentric metaphysics and the new theoretical possibilities of onto-logies historical being-here¹³.
- Appealing to new 'philosophical *-loci-* places' and elaborating theory from the colonized and not from the colonizers, from those denied by the system as non-being, that is, as objects, things, work animals, reprehensible, expendable.
- Putting into crisis the Greek-European-North American logos (reason, word, science) imposed as a universal horizon of understanding, and showing a decolonial logos that enables an understanding, reading, and expression of our existence and historical realities.
- Appropriating, re-semanticizing or processing new categories of thought, valid in the field of philosophy, such as: 'historical ontology of ourselves', otherness', 'historicity', 'alienation', multiplicity', diversity', 'proximity', 'mediation', 'liberation', 'deconstruction', 'decolonization'.
- Defining and redefining the characteristics of a decolonial, transmodern, ecological, anti-imperialist, anti-patriarchal, anti-fetishist philosophy..., that thinks Latin America and the Global South as true 'philosophical places', and opens paths of thought that lead to inclusive, integrative worldviews, evaluations of ourselves and of our social, economic, political, cultural realities.
- Carrying out deconstruction/decolonization processes in the field of social sciences, particularly in philosophy (onto-theo-



logical, epistemological, anthropological, ethical-political deconstruction...), in sociology (bourgeoisies/elites/oligarchies vs lower-middle classes, classless, marginal), in politics (rulers and ruled), in the economy (owners of capital and the means of production vs those who only have their labor), in culture (among those who have logos and who 'borrow' it¹⁴).

- Generating patterns of thought and values that can be replicated or assimilated in other fields of living, knowing, doing, feeling, believing, being men, dying, transcending.
- Generating patterns of thought and values that can be replicated or assimilated in other fields of living, knowing, doing, feeling, believing, being men, dying, transcending.
- Making the gains circulate in the field of thought not only in academies but also in subordinate spaces.

253



An initial systematization of this 'historical ontology' that enables the re-constitution / re-habilitation / liberation of the 'being-here' is necessary. With this, we will have freed the same ontology from its Eurocentric metaphysical matrix and we will have re-formulated it as an ontology, as *logos* of historical entities and what it has to do with them: existence itself, life, time, the world, nature... Thus, opens the possibility of thinking from another horizon (or from an 'other' horizon) problems related to the historical entity such as that of life threatened by the pandemic and colonialism, truth, ethics, humanism, etc., which are problems that ultimately have to do with the 'being-here' that we are and with the *logos* that allow us to think and re-think ourselves.

Historical ontologies as mechanisms of philosophical decolonization

Beyond the political use (transformation of wisdom about being into a political ideology of expansion and conquest) that Europe made of philosophy, it reached an ontological rank in the Greek centuries that became a *sine qua non* condition for all philosophy¹⁵. The Greeks did not invent philosophy, but they did discover the question of 'being' as its fundamental determination. This is still in force in the West and obliges the philosophy that pretends to be so in the strict sense, to always reach that ontological rank.

It is the 'imperial turn' of the Eurocentric philosophy that defined the non-European as non-being what the colonial circles criticize and

reject. Latin America and the Global South need to seek the onto-logical-decolonizing angle that allows progress from being denied (depredated, underpowered, hidden, devalued) to the historical being that we are, to the 'being-here'¹⁶. Nor is it a question of imitating the overcoming of the ontological horizon that Europe carried out; the question lies in the radical critique of the 'being-imperial' that enables the re-positioning of the colonized spheres in the 'being' as 'being-here'.

Regardless of the uses and abuses that Europe has made of philosophy-as-metaphysics, those of us who pretend to do philosophy have to feel called by the question of being, consequently, by an ontology of ourselves. Philosophy must express this onto-logical determination and find the path that leads from 'not-being' to 'being-here'.

This orientation of thought enables the critique of the Eurocentric philosophy, postulated to this day in academies, in forums, and in alienated culture as unique, universal, and absolute. It is necessary to assume the criticality inherent in the philosophy itself and to release the possibility of thinking about our own philosophical decolonization. To the extent that an onto-logical range is reached (from not-being to being-here), philosophy will be true wisdom, a true search for the truth of being.

Some may be confused by the postulation of an onto-logy of being-here in the face of a Europe that has consistently discussed overcoming the ontological horizon in the last four centuries. The 'end of metaphysics' consists, according to Heidegger¹⁷, in overcoming the question of 'what is it to be' and to think from now on the 'sense of being'. This legitimately corresponds to the European reality. For us, the children of colonialism, the real onto-logical problem of our philosophizing is thinking about who we are today and how our being-here is possible. It is this onto-logical process that philosophy has to be put into concepts. In this way, philosophy will continue to be philosophy but thought in/from colonial spheres that fight for their liberation.

Life as a privileged manifestation of 'being-here' in times of pandemic

Historical ontologies in the face of the pandemic

The unhiding/emergence of 'being-here' constitutes the onto-logical foundation of a decolonizing/liberating project in the fields of thought. On that basis, we can speak of philosophy with legitimacy, since we will have re-



converted Eurocentric philosophy into knowledge of decolonization, subjectivation, and historical realization of ourselves. This project encompasses the colonized and colonizers and opens ways to understand and confront the multiple problems that historical time presents us, some more serious than others, such as the coronavirus pandemic that besets us.

Everyone, those who conceptualize and those who simply live the problem, have faced the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of direct, unprecedented, or re-signified experiences. Among them: the experience of one's existence, not in abstract terms but in its unique presence and uniqueness; the experience of life threatened; of self-care; of the Others as proximity or threat; of the imminent danger of dying; of loneliness; of the political use of human frailty; from the contempt of old age; of the polysemy of language and the manipulation of meanings by governments or dominant elites; of hope in science as a saving resource; of the fallen faith; etc. These and other experiences turned into the inescapable present of those who live, die, suffer, stay or go, bring to light the temporality and historicity of 'being-here'.

The fundamental experience has been that of life itself, of its value, of its power, of its vulnerability. No less intense has been the experience of death, illness, physical suffering, goodbyes without the presence or consolation from loved ones. The experience of confinement and loneliness has also marked the lives of many. The world of possibilities from which to choose has shrunk. Political power, military power, economic power have shown their oversizing and ineffectiveness when it comes to protecting or saving the lives of fellow citizens. The society of the spectacle has felt and feels unguarded. Social inequalities have been relativized—for those who believe in the equalizing power of death—or have been highlighted—for those who have moved away from contagion based on their economic power. The normality in which we lived suddenly appeared to us as insufficiency, as a crisis, as a biological risk. The 'new' normality, depending on the perspective of the one who looks at it, judges it, or suffers it, is an unknown or a challenge.

In addition to these, Latin America and the Global South have had other historical experiences that interest philosophy. First, the experience of universality. This has allowed that, beyond coloniality or despite it, these regions were identified, not as the 'backyard' of any power, but as an integral part of a universal whole challenged by the pandemic. It has become clear that one thing is the concept of the universal generated by metaphysics, and another—very different—is the experience of the universal as constituting ourselves from within. We, the colonized, who



because of colonialism had been relegated to the realm of particularity, undervaluation, and oblivion, emerged with the pandemic as an integral part of a totality that included us despite regional, political, racial, and cultural or technological differences. The colonial spheres had, in the XXI century, the experience of the universal that Europe had, for example, from the XVI century with the world-system generated by expansionism and colonialism. Along with these historical experiences, Latin America and the Global South have also had the intellectual-philosophical experience of the onto-logical, of 'being-here', of existence, of the world, of life, and of death as universal manifestations of what it is, here and now, in history, although it may stop being due to the coronavirus.

256



Responding to the challenges generated by the pandemic at the level of thought

These experiences of the fundamental and substantial, of the historical and circumstantial (*circum-stare*) and this need to think about our reality and to think about ourselves to reach the ultimate determinants of our existence, have been reflected in articles and studies published in the last months, which show a pre-occupation and an unusual desire to understand, not only the causes of the pandemic but the 'universal singularity' (Kant) of human existence and life.

You have to pay attention above all to life, human life challenged by a microscopic virus. Here, philosophy has endeavored to understand the problem from the realities that concern us. As an example of this, we can mention two Mexican philosophers who, without giving up thinking from the determinants of their region, achieve a critical universalism that deliberately avoids shipwreck in a 'compulsive repetition' of what has been said by 'European, North American and masculine'¹⁸.

According to González and Martínez (2020), there is here a philosophical attitude that must characterize the Latin American and Global South reflections:

It is not the same [they argue] to think in times of this coronavirus from European countries with their health systems, which have been overwhelmed and their economies anticipating a crisis, than, from Latin American countries, with health systems that were already saturated and underserved, with economies for which this crisis will be added to the others. [And they add:] It is short-sighted and Eurocentric to judge that the confinement that exists in Spain, Italy or France is only due to State coercion,

without even doing the exercise of imagination that, in other latitudes, for example, in Mexico, this has been the privilege of a few. [They reaffirm that] the interpretations that philosophy has to make must be more plural, more sensible, and more respectful of differences (p. 1).

Life as foundation and category

The Mexican philosophers María Antonia González Valerio and Rosaura Martínez Ruiz (2020) address the issue of life as a category, stating that it is for them:

(...) Particularly relevant is the understanding of the category of life on the margin or opposed to that of culture. Above all, because it corresponds to a certain paradigm and biological ideology of the twentieth century that has striven to separate the living, to study it, and determine it in mechanistic terms. [... And they emphasize] how to speak of biological life, of neutral life when human life always occurs in different social, cultural, economic, political, and family conditions? When does human life appear unaffected? Neither human life nor the pathogen that now threatens occurs indifferently. It is ontologically unsustainable to pretend that this pandemic puts us at the juncture of deciding between biological and social life (p. 2).

257


Life is in itself a biological, social, political, and cultural fact, therefore, aspiring to an ontological autonomy of the biological dimension is epistemically unsustainable. This is due to the fact that “marking clear cuts between the matter and the idea is impossible or perversely fanciful” (González & Martínez, 2020, p. 3). It is enough to open your eyes to see that the current health, ethical and economic crisis has made it clear that “life is never naked,” that is, that it never takes place outside the public sphere or outside the political sphere. And the authors add with full conviction that:

Many believe that what we are experiencing is exclusive to a period of abnormality, when rather, we are at a critical moment of our biological, political, ethical, and ontological interdependence. In these terms, this crisis is nothing more than a device that makes visible in a dramatic way how our life depends on and is sustained by others and by all other living beings and forms of non-living nature (such as water, air, and stones) (p. 3).

Linked to life is the issue of climate change. The world knows, even if the empires ignore it, that the depredation of nature generates imbalances in the climate and in the effects of the climate on living beings. Nature, which for Spinoza was divine (*Deus sive Natura*), has been desecra-

ted and manipulated by enlightened modernity. Modern man (with the exception of some indigenous cultures) does not understand the ways of being of nature, does not coexist with it, and exploits it, predates it. Given this, Mexican philosophers say: “the climate change that we are experiencing, whose consequences will be increasingly dramatic and violent, is also a consequence of an inequitable assessment of the different ways of being of nature” (González & Martínez, 2020, p. 3).

The defense of life involves not only rational concepts but also values, attitudes, and feelings. The aforementioned philosophers express two mixed feelings: one optimistic: “There is a great desire for hope and trust in science, technology and medicine” (González & Martínez, 2020, p. 4); and a pessimistic one:

258



This pandemic, with all that it destroys and all that it reveals and exposes, will not be a juncture to build another possible world or to end patriarchy, capitalism, or neoliberalism (González & Martínez, 2020, p. 4).

The experiences of centuries of colonialism, of thousands of lived crises, leave little room for confidence in a dignified future existence, so that:

(...) The questions about the meaning and goodness of existence that are made will be diluted as soon as the urgency passes. Such poverty of spirit if we think that this will make us better! Although this does not deny that the crisis clarifies a political agenda of struggles and resistance for which we will have to redouble our efforts” (González & Martínez, 2020, p. 4).

On this horizon, it is impossible to escape self-criticism: according to the authors, it is discouraging to think that the moment we decide to change something only comes when “we have fear up to our necks and when our inability to assume death makes us evade (us) running frantically in search of solutions” (González & Martínez, 2020, p. 4). In any case, reason has paths from which we cannot and must not escape, since:

(...) As the pandemic progresses and even when it, by its own course, reaches its end, new and incalculable horizons of thought and collective action will appear. For the moment, the greatest is to build and act from global solidarity, even though it is known that the countries with more economic resources are hoarding supplies, ventilators, and medicines; even when staying at home is a privilege of social classes throughout the world (González & Martínez, 2020, p. 5).

Finally, two epistemological notes by the cited authors. The one: “Criticism must be an intervention in the course of history that fractures

it so that, in that crack, the horizon of a better future opens, of a future to come” (González & Martínez, 2020, p. 5). And the other:

We must associate the effort to dismantle forms of knowledge, epistemological frameworks, linked with the reproduction of objectionable practices of power with projects of social transformation that seek to achieve substantial democratic goals such as freedom, equality, and justice (González & Martínez, 2020, pp. 4-5).

These quotes that allow other voices to be heard reveal one thing: the pandemic has once again brought to the fore the need to philosophize on the horizon of a common decolonization project in/for areas that are still living in situations of dependency and coloniality, like Latin America and the Global South. Such a project has to take place, not only in the socio-political-economic field but also in the sustained exercise of critical and irreverent thinking. It is not a question of a prior preparation of thought for a subsequent transforming action: thought itself exercised and exposed with critical criteria and methods is already a form of transformation, at least on the theoretical level. There is no other way of understanding philosophy other than as a method of analysis for the knowledge, understanding, and transformation of the world. These concepts are not new; put them into practice, that’s what’s new.

259



Conclusions

Controversial issues that directly relate philosophy to the coronavirus pandemic have been reviewed, among them: the decline of dusk philosophies, the end of the ‘metaphysics of universal and abstract being’, the affirmation of the ‘historical onto-logies of being-here’, and the emergence of decolonial-critical thinking that heralds, as a legitimate exercise of utopia, the advent of a new world age.

All this seems to signify, now more than in the last century, a true end of Eurocentric modernity. However, and opening the doors to controversy: Eurocentric modernity did not end when postmodernists decreed in the second half of the 20th century the end of man, the end of reason, the end of history, the end of great stories, the end of ideologies, the end of utopias, etc...¹⁹ Nor did it end with the fall of the socialisms of Eastern Europe (1989) that promoted the so-called globalization. These events were not the end of one era and the beginning of another, although this has been affirmed, since the postmodern unfolding was a properly European event, and globalization, particularly, involved the

powers of advanced capitalism. Neither of the two historical events was truly universal in scope.

The Covid-19 pandemic, which started in an emerging power like China and later spread globally, has involved the entire planet. Its fundamental reference was not modernity subjected to criticism or financial capital dividing the world into developed and underdeveloped countries, but the simple existence and the struggle for life in the face of an invisible and mortal enemy. Euro-centered modernity and globalization found an unsuspected limit in the biological nature of the pandemic, which has not distinguished between hegemonies, ideologies, capital, or the market.

Europe, of course, will continue to be a benchmark given its level of economic, scientific, and cultural development, but it is no longer the 'center' of the world. Neither is the United States, despite its technological and military development, as other emerging powers such as China and Russia are successfully challenging its hegemony. The world is no longer concentrated in certain continents, regions, or countries that considered their expansionist and colonialist efforts as a form of universalization of their particularity. Faced with this reality imposed by the pandemic, the metaphysical category of the universal has lost its absolute value and, by not adequately adjusting to existing realities, has yielded its theoretical field to another truly planetary category: the pluriversal.

The planetarization of the pluriversal is putting a true end to the modernity that has determined and still determines the dependent and colonial history of the last five centuries. In the consciousness of people exposed to the possibility of dying, the paradigms of capital that values itself and of the market, of freedom and democracy seem to give way in favor of the paradigms of caring for human existence and for the threatened life, a harmonious relationship with nature, and an openness to multiple forms of development and culture. Science and technology put at the service of empires must turn their gaze to health care, food, housing, education, and other rights postponed in large sectors of the population.

These phenomena, generated or driven by the pandemic, should not go unnoticed by philosophy. As never before, a Latin American and Global South reason feels the need to rethink and criticize the inherited alienations of modernity and globalization in order to overcome them. A true epistemological decolonization is underway. The resources or mechanisms indicated in the second part of this work can help this process.

The coronavirus pandemic forces us to land in our realities and in our respective historical contexts. Philosophy, as it cannot be otherwise—the other way would be permanent alienation—has been under this



requirement and this urgency, as revealed by the contributions of many thinkers and philosophers who in these same days and at the same time as the pandemic, have offered their reflections and points of view. The power of philosophy as a critical and analytical expression of the meaning of what happens is in our hands. Let's not waste it on decontextualized, pessimistic, or insubstantial theoretical ramblings.

Notes

- 1 The so-called postmodernity, as many - among them, Habermas (1985) - have pointed out, is but the last stage of modernity.
- 2 Santiago Zarria (2020). The author harshly criticizes the philosophers, labeling their reflections as "opinology with a certain philosophical veneer."
- 3 On the cover "Sopa de Wuhan": Statement for ASPO (editorial) and Pablo Amadeo (editor), April 1, 2020. Signed: Chinese Diaspora Network in Spain; Catàrsia, Asian descendants collective (Barcelona); Liwai, intercultural action (Madrid); Oryza, Asian anti-racist collective (Madrid); Tusanaje (Valencia); Cangrejo Pro Company (Madrid); TIC Tac. - Workshop on combative anti-racist transfeminist critical interventions (Barcelona).
- 4 2020, Book published on the internet by ASPO / Preventive and Mandatory Social Isolation/, under the editorial work of Pablo Amadeo, March 2020.
- 5 María Antonia González Valerio and Rosaura Martínez Ruiz (2020). Carlos Vargas (2020) agrees with the approach of these two teachers.
- 6 See Feuerbach (1984).
- 7 See Nietzsche (1956; 2004).
- 8 See Guerra Bravo (2019a).
- 9 The expression alludes to *Broad and alien is the world*, the famous novel by the Peruvian Ciro Alegría (1941).
- 10 This political vision does not pretend to deny certain 'benefits' that the students of the colonies drew from metaphysics, for example, the ability to think in order, to use concepts rigorously, to debate with arguments, to rank, distinguish, sub-distinguish, etc.
- 11 Not even indigenous cultures that originally had different worldviews have been able to escape the violent contamination of the Western and Christian. In fact, all cultures (indigenous, black, mestizo) are infected (contaminated) with knowledge and beliefs imposed by the processes of conquest and colonization.
- 12 Dussel has criticized the European version of world history, which is still found in all study manuals. The Argentine author makes another reading of world-historical processes: Cf. (2007a; 2007b; 1994).
- 13 The separation between "being" and "entity" was never clear in Europe: these concepts were used interchangeably to deal with questions that had to do with 'what is'. Nor was the separation between "metaphysics" and "ontology" clear. Metaphysics was defined as the 'science of being in general' or 'science of being'. Even when the term 'Ontology' came into circulation with Christian Wolf (1679-1754), the two 'sciences' continued to be understood as equivalent. Heidegger (1978) introduced in the 20th century the so-called 'ontological difference' to distinguish between 'being' and 'being', a distinction that made it possible to understand man as 'being-there', as a privileged manifestation



of 'being'. The history of philosophy then appeared as a history of Metaphysics that reached its culmination (final) when the experimental sciences separated and became independent from their philosophical matrix (19th / 20th centuries). After the "end of philosophy as metaphysics" (p. 134), Heidegger postulated an 'other beginning' that he called 'Thinking': an activity of reason that is neither metaphysics nor science and that thinks' essence or meaning of being. The 'being' had been 'forgotten' as Plato and later philosophy dealt with 'being' and not with 'being as being'. Heidegger's phenomenological ontology again approached the 'question of being' and opened its way to the question of 'being' through an analytic of 'being-there' or of existence, and of its events (historical manifestations, events of 'to be'). Cf. Guerra (2019b).

- 14 See Guerra (2019a).
- 15 See Gadamer (1992).
- 16 Hence, limiting ourselves to repeating the European ontology in the academic courses of the universities is a way of consolidating coloniality from ourselves.
- 17 See Heidegger (2002), *Contributions to philosophy. About the Event*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos.
- 18 They are María Antonia González Valerio and Rosaura Martínez Ruiz, whom we have criticized in the first part for their attachment to the idea of philosophy such as Minerva's Owl, and from whom we value overcoming this attachment when they make critical remarks regarding the European origin of the articles related to the pandemic and postulate, at the same time, the need for philosophical reflection to land in our region. See González and Martínez (2020).
- 19 Habermas had already warned at the time that postmodernity was but the last stage of modernity.

262



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