

Editor's Introduction

The twentieth century was deeply influenced by theoretical-practical and reflective developments in philosophical hermeneutics. It introduced a large range of problems, content and perspectives, on a vast referential and implicational (inter-)disciplinary scale, to enter into the real orbit of a philosophical koinè, not for a decennary or few decennaries (Vattimo), but for a century and more. It expressed the productivity, significance and heuristic strength of research and thought that hit different scientific domains, particularly (but not exclusively) the human and social sciences: from psychology to sociology, from psychoanalysis to literature, from semiotic to biblical exegesis, from anthropology to linguistics, from rhetoric to narratology, from history to law and from political theory to religion.

This is an itinerary as vast and fecund as non-linear and problematic and even conflictual.

For a long time, hermeneutics has been recognised as a technical and philosophical discipline of reference in the interpretation of signs, symbols and propositional content; in biblical exegesis and in the interpretation of texts in general; in research and in reflection around methodological and epistemological aspects of science; in the study of phenomenological and ontological nature related to the phenomenon of understanding and to the content of knowledge and in the critical approach to ideological construction and so on.

Contemporary philosophical hermeneutics has significantly contributed to determining a truthfully complex modality to approach the knowledge of reality, of human beings and of cultural products

and values. From this comes the necessity for a redefinition of discursive levels and registers, for a statutory re-qualification, for refining procedures, methods and interpretative possibilities. In addition, there is a widespread practical ethical tension, both in reference to methodology and to content as well as in the form of a dialectical-dialogue and problematising and conflictual tension. This is philosophical hermeneutics as mediation-normalisation, alternative-alteration and as a discipline of conciliating synthesis and a practical-theoretical critique.

In an opened-up range of investigation and research, this issue of Critical Hermeneutics thematises the question of the relationship between understanding and interpretation within the thematic perspective of philosophical hermeneutics of yesterday, today and tomorrow. The question of whether interpretation and explanation could open productive dynamics and practices of knowledge and understanding within different or potentially connected knowledge, cultures and ideas, remains unanswered.

Papers from the following authors are included in this issue: Silvana Borutti, Vereno Brugiattelli, Vinicio Busacchi, Marco Casucci, Beatriz Contreras Tasso, Pier Luigi Lecis, Giuseppe Martini, Gaspare Mura and Luís António Umbelino.

In her epistemological paper, 'An Epistemological Look at Comparison', Borutti develops an analysis around a specific type of comparison, which is differential and contrastive. Wittgenstein's approach, that comparing is not simply seeing but rather 'seeing as', constitutes the main reference here. Starting from this point, a problematisation is articulated that on the one hand focuses a somehow formalising criteriology of comparison and on the other hand parallels Peirce's approach on hypothetical and indirect

inference. Brugiattelli's paper, 'Ontological or Nominal Hermeneutics? The Problem of the Relationship between Hermeneutics and Being in Gadamer, Rorty, Vattimo and Ricoeur', proposes an interesting parallel among some key figures in contemporary philosophical hermeneutics about the ontological-anthropological relationship between language and Being. To this, Brugiattelli connects an itinerary internal to Ricoeur's hermeneutical thought, oriented to determine both its specific ontological basis and its particular explanation concerning language possibility to express the extralinguistic. In 'Hermeneutics Reloaded: From Science/Philosophy Dichotomy to Critical Hermeneutics', Busacchi proposes a general reconsideration of the nature and function(s) of today and tomorrow philosophical hermeneutics, both under a technical-procedural and speculative plane, and introduces a specific idea of 'critical hermeneutics'. In 'Between Explanation and Understanding: On Ricoeur's Hermeneutics of the Parallel Discourse', Casucci thematises the classical, methodological and epistemological problems implicated in correlating explicative and comprehensive procedures. He realises it, trying to redefine Ricoeur's dialectical-discursive perspective in terms of 'parallel discourse', as formulated from Furia Valori around Heidegger and Gadamer. In Contreras Tasso's paper, 'Original Affirmation, Self-Appropriation and Attestation: Three Main Concepts for a Hermeneutics of Reception in Paul Ricoeur' with a notable phenomenological sensitivity she explores the connection of Ricoeur's philosophy of the capable human being with three key-terms of reflective thought (that are disposed between the anthropological and ontological dimensions): original affirmation, appropriation and attestation. Lecis and Busacchi, in their theoretical approach text, 'Imagination controlled: Representation and Factuality in Historical Knowledge', thematise the question of the relationship between

imagination and representation in historical knowledge. A perspective emerges that underlines the irreducible connection of hermeneutical and non-hermeneutical contents in historical and historiographical research, particularly by putting 'under tension' the theme of reality of the past with the functioning of memory and the question of the rigour of the procedure of knowing with the subjective dimension of testimony. Martini's contribution, 'Hermeneutical Perspective in Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis: An Overall View and Its Development Lines', is a work of psychiatric and psychoanalytic theory of a philosophical-hermeneutic nature focused on the relation between the representational and the unrepresentational. Martini's assumption is that 'as psychiatry and psychoanalysis tend to reduce psychic suffering, they always relate to understanding and the search of meaning'. Mura proposes with acuteness and erudition, in his article 'Hermeneutics in Late Antiquity: Theological Perspectives', a general historical-speculative reconsideration of the relationship between theological reflection and philosophical hermeneutics. Beginning from Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur's suggestions referring to the narrow connection of hermeneutics and theology, Mura examines some boundary-themes, as the pre-understanding, the relationship between revelation and interpretation, etc. Finally, Umbelino, in 'On Paul Ricoeur's Unwritten Project of an Ontology of Place', develops an interesting proposal of a Ricoeurian 'ontology of place' considered in the same sense and value of Ricoeur's ontology of historicity defined in Memory, History, Forgetting (2000).