

## **Editors' Introduction**

*Today we are witnessing an unprecedented crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Its unparalleled and unpredictable character, added to its expansion and the way it has affected contemporary society, also emphasizes the underlying question, who are we? Why and in what sense? In the current context, where, on the one hand, there is a loss of confidence in the ways in which we govern ourselves, as well as an uncertainty regarding the direction that this crisis may take and the threshold to which it can lead us, the question certainly arises as to whether what we are has a background on which to support ourselves; if anything, that "who" that we claim to be and to whom we bear witness in our work can withstand the test of the unpredictable and unexpected, of what has plunged us into a situation as unusual as it is incomprehensible. As tragic as this situation affects us worldwide, it affects us both collectively and personally. With all the momentum with which this even strikes us, do we not live it precisely as a challenge to the security whereby we usually respond to the question of our personal identity? Is it not at such an exceptional moment as this, when the question of personal identity worries us greatly as soon as our temporal condition takes on real importance, which, irreversible as such, offers us in turn the*

*opportunity to reverse the situation we are involved in? Is it not during this worldwide crisis, which we first experienced as a personal rupture, which in turn gives us the opportunity to appreciate the tension we live in, but which is present, however, most of the time, invisible to us, namely, that of being engaged in a habitual, inhabited space, consolidated by a sense that we inherit, at the same time that we believe we are called to innovate on that? Isn't this time the one that certainly makes history in our personal and social fabric? However, it seems that we also can, in an unprecedented way, experience this crisis as an identity crisis insofar as it enhances its problematic dimension.*

*The articles we present here have the quality of confronting this question from multiple perspectives that, irreducible between them, still manage to give certain lucidity to that which we comprehend around the question of "who am I?", which is especially necessary at this moment. In this sense, the texts put us, in one hand, on the phenomenological-eventual scope just like it has been elaborated by the French thinker, Claude Romano, who interrogates the human being in his capacity to embrace the events that shock the subject's existential unfolding. On the other hand, we have collected articles that revolve around the hermeneutic phenomenology of Paul Ricœur, focusing their attention both on the ontological condition of human beings, as well as on the perspective of his hermeneutics of action and narrative. We finally conclude with a text by Shaumann which questions the relationship between identity and alienation, interrogating the philosophies of Paul Ricœur and Martin Heidegger.*

*In the following paragraphs we recapitulate the contribution of the authors in the articles that make up this issue. The text by Ignacio Vieira, "Singularity and Power-to-Be-Another: Ipseity and Event in Claude Romano", is questioned, from the resources offered by the phenomenology of events by Claude Romano, about the*

*opportunities offered by ipseity to reinterpret the personal singularity that mourns the notion of the modern subject. Thus, the aim is to cross-examine the problem of personal identity, putting this way of being oneself - ipseity - at the center of the discussion regarding the events that reshape the possibilities of each new experience. The subject who experiences an event that transfigures him cannot be understood in a substantial way, as modern philosophy did, from Descartes to Fichte, and even Husserl. In what way does the event demand a new effort to understand the personal identity of the exposed person, who is also capable of undergoing the irruption of an event that can, upon occurrence, shock the totality of his self-being? This question is addressed by Ignacio Vieira, assuming, in turn, the task of explaining the Romanian approach, as well as to highlight it through the examination of the issue of forgiveness, as an event, in Victor Hugo's Les Misérables.*

*The text Ipseity: A confident Odyssey of 'I Can' and Thrown Courage of 'I Do', by Beatriz Contreras Tasso, addresses the question about ipseity considering as a hypothesis, that the ethic of Ricœur's request can be understood in all its depth insofar as the affective anchorage of Ricœur's early phenomenological inquiry is shown as the moment of inchoative gestation of this ethic. The Ricœurian thesis of the mixed human condition allows us to base the ethical sense of ipseity developed on the hermeneutical phenomenology of the self. The phenomenon inquired to show the affective complexity of the human condition is courage. According to the author, its relevance lies in the fact that courage exhibits that role of anthropological "hinge", which goes beyond the dualistic vision of the human condition, integrating into its existential structure the voluntary and involuntary components that form the capacities of the capable human being. The metaphor that runs through the analysis, quite recurring in Ricœur, is the odyssey that characterizes existence and*

*its finite condition. The odyssey brings together the ontological sense of the precariousness of existing and its constitutive noncompliance. This fragility is, however, the nucleus of the possibility of freedom: the questioning of the other tests the capacity of oneself to respond to himself and fulfill its promises. In this process of appropriation of oneself, the self discovers its resources of practical wisdom, in borderline situations where the conviction of its decision is inseparable from the courage to be oneself as another.*

*In the article Between Affectivity and Initiative: The Anthropological Bases of a Hermeneutical Ethics, Vinicio Busacchi presents an interesting articulation between affectivity and initiative, developing the complexity of Ricœur's hermeneutical vision to understand human freedom beyond a naturalistic, substantialist, or dualistic approach. The highly documented development of the issue of affectivity from a psychological perspective, making a review of the contributions of psychoanalysis and psychology in general, allows us to understand this irreplaceable basis of action and move towards the existential field, which will be the thrust of analysis. What is interesting is that the notion of initiative is integrated in the broad context of human capacity and in the global framework of action, in which the responsibility and consideration of the other in the social and institutional world are key to understanding the hermeneutical sense of its ethical-anthropological position. In other words, on the structural basis related to the psychic field of human identity, progress is made in terms of the anthropological reflection on the affective capacities that underpin action based on the interrelation between initiative and alterity.*

*On the other hand, the article by Francesca D'Alessandris, The Person, a 'Material' Story: The Construction of Ipseity and the Writing and Reading of the Shared Space, focuses on realizing the importance of place, shared space, in the construction of personal ipseity,*

*particularly in the dialectic between writing and reading. In this way, one can find, on the one hand, the rehabilitation of the lived space as a founding moment of identity; it does not arise as a problem from temporal experience and all its complexity, nor does it emphasize it. On the contrary, the identity question also concerns the experience of the lived space and, hence, of the corporality of the person. The interest of this article lies, particularly, in the way in which it emphasizes and makes explicit the deep relationships that exist between the act of reading, as a fundamental moment in the construction or formation of the subject's ipseity, and its bodily dimension, from which it takes place in the surrounding world. Thus, the Ricoeurian carnal hermeneutics - as it has been developed lately, for example, by Richard Kearney - and the hermeneutics of narrative that the French philosopher deploys in *Time and Narrative and Oneself as Another* are found in an original way.*

*In Paul Ricœur: Imaginative Variation and Narrative Identity, Angela Monica Recupero examines the issue of narrative identity, based on the distinction between the Idem and Ipse identity, a milestone in Ricœur's hermeneutics. Overcoming the Cartesian approach of the Cogito, the author remarks, allows showing the richness of ipseity in Ricoeurian terms, due to its linguistic performativity. Narrative identity is thus inserted in the broader discussion of the domain of writing versus orality. Here, Ricœur's hermeneutical thesis on the independence of the written text in relation to the author is recovered, the synchronic readers of the text and the context from which the text arises. With a careful analysis of writing and its repercussions on narrative identity, the positive hermeneutical implications of this step are emphasized in terms of the broadening of self-understanding. Then the inquiry focuses on the potential of imaginative variation, which Ricœur takes from Husserl, to determine new possibilities of understanding based on the*

*imaginary function of the narrative. In other words, the contribution of the author's analysis consists in carefully showing the unity that records Ricœur's narrative theory between narration and self-understanding, although the emphasis is on the linguistic issue itself and this last aspect of self-understanding is less developed in the text.*

*The text Identity and Alienation, by Shaumann, critically addresses the issue of personal identity, as it is thought by Paul Ricœur in Oneself as Another, in his double display of identity-idem and identity-ipse, the stress being on the problematic dimension of ipseity and promise as its paradigm. The issue, interestingly enough, in which the author is located, is to think about whether promise-keeping, as a paradigm of ipseity, no longer implies a certain alienation of oneself. To do this, this issue is approached in a critical way through Black's concept of Humbug, Heidegger's notion of On and Bourdieu's Habitus. Could keeping a promise, despite the vicissitudes of time, and rather than fidelity to oneself and to the other, be considered rather as a form of alienation from oneself? This type of considerations, approached by the author, certainly sheds a critical, and therefore clarifying, light on the scope of Ricoeur's hermeneutic of the self, and, arguably, its unthought-of.*

*As can be seen in this introductory presentation, the question of personal identity has a variety of scopes that can be considered and each one of them can shed light, not necessarily by giving an answer, but in giving a peek of the depth of these types of questions. Depth because matters like these are not raised to be resolved, but rather to be deepened. It seems to us that, as these different approaches show, it is not typical of a good philosophy to rush to answer a question that calls, first of all, to self-examination, to examine it with due attention and to accept being imbued with its problematic. This*

*issue of Critical Hermeneutics has sought to respond to this desire, the one that consists of holding the air, thus, pausing our habitual discourse, stopping at the extensive and detailed examination of the various edges that personal identity opens up for your questioning. The perspectives exposed are multiple, there are those that are mainly concerned with exposure to events, others that focus on affectivity and the power to act, and those that question the ability to build stories from the ones the subject is understood and recognized as the same. Similarly, there are critical perspectives that confront the matter of identity with that of alienation. All these ways of questioning the problem, which is ours here, come to enrich a discussion that today seems more essential than ever, but which is called to remain open, in times when the temptation of closure, at all levels, harasses us on both sides.*

*This closure, which is a distinctive phenomenon in this global catastrophe, affects discourse in the public and private spheres, as has been explicitly stated, and bodily grieves us, revealing the depth of our carnal vulnerability. We are exposed to the brutal event of the interruption of our voluntary relationship of human closeness and distance and our, now regulated, spatial mobility. The closure dramatizes our susceptibility and relativizes our priorities and projects, testing the human capacities of initiative to perform a responsible action. Although we cannot, for now, get out of this spatial closure, at least there remains the possibility of displaying our narrative identity, an always lucid way to recreate actions that illuminates our daily life and inspires our inventiveness against the difficulties and tragedies of life. Identity as Ipseity is not assured, its alienation is perhaps it's inevitable risk, but the alienation of oneself also threatens the care of the other, and affects their reception. Extreme moments like nowadays are also scenarios that challenge our courage to make the right and wise decision.*

*In short, each of the authors' proposals contribute, with these underlined keys, to the hermeneutical exercise of thinking about our finite human condition on a phenomenological basis, which is reinforced in this pandemic. Therefore, this issue becomes a situated reflection, which delves into the anthropological dynamism of existence, exemplary exposed to the event of loss and the appreciation of the essential. The physical confinement, the psychic closure or the times fatigue, paradoxically open a renewed reflection, although always provisional, in search of the uninterrupted understanding of that underlying question that asks, who are we?*

Beatriz Contreras Tasso

Patricio Mena Malet