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# **opción**

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Artista: Rodrigo Pirela

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**EDITORIAL**

*As a tenacious worm that corrodes the fruit of democracy.*

**On the value and usefulness of ethics and philosophy in times of political change and *emotionality of the action***

That we are going through difficult times is one of the most shockingly evident truths of the current era of political uncertainty, as the French philosopher Marc Crépon would say. These times we are experiencing seem to be wandering through our social interstices as if they were the air that bathes our corporeality, thus internalizing themselves in each of our thoughts as if they were pores of our vital organ of thought and action.

Certainly, the brain produces in us a great provocation about the signs of time by making us "transpire" and, consequently, accelerate our pace on our way to the coexistence we see as lost, to the point that it is also revealed that these "cerebral pores" transpire anguish, fears and anxieties, due to the exhausting rhythm caused by the accelerated changes of existence. Stumbling blocks are found along the way like stones that we bump into, bringing with them the risk of disconcerting falls in convivial environments. Hence, "going through life" has also become a survival risk.

This metaphorical walk through the ruts of life in society, produces the illusion that living is in a world in which our freedom is strengthened because it is both *self-care* and *heterocuous*, as CRÉPON (2021) would say, to ensure it at all costs; however, this illusion paradoxically raises the signs of political decadence, despite our experience of being free: freedom, the product of dazzling illusions otherwise passionate and rational of good life, fades at the same speed that we idealize it, beyond our own circumstances. In this way, freedom becomes the main victim of our own desires and wishes in the transit of *wanting to live* a shared life. And I say "wanting to live", because life is precisely the intention of perpetuating oneself as a living being, individual and singular, beyond the rationality that characterizes us, and beyond the plurality characteristic of the social sphere.

And it is this last feature that makes us sociable and existing beings around the meaning of life itself, because with the evanescence of

the sense of freedom, the sense of coexistence also fades away. All this is a consequence, logically, of the signs of the "difficult times" we are living, not only because of the post-pandemic effects, but also because of the effects of the same urgencies and needs that are arising as we try to perpetuate life on the face of this very deteriorated planet. It is not a whim to generalize the analysis of these circumstances, since the locality of life is no longer a common characteristic of all beings; of none. In the case of humans, we are "planetary citizens", as passionately expressed by MORIN (2005), that other French thinker who has bequeathed us so much for the understanding of our times of complexity. Therefore, by possessing the instrument of reason, it makes us responsible for the rest of beings, who only possess the spirit of survival, to think in the Aristotelian sense.

By virtue of this planetary generalization of our existence, it is increasingly vulnerable to the signs of decadence of political institutions, due to the ever-emerging intentions of power that characterizes any model of social coexistence that has been chosen, precisely. It seems that the political model par excellence that we have chosen in the West is failing precisely as a result of the emergence of passions that have been gaining ground in this world of shared life, which, as can be seen, is less rational than emotional. The emotionality of life has been replacing the way of life of being rational, as another philosopher of our time would say, who has devoted memorable pages to think democracy as a principle, in terms of discourse theory.

Indeed, Habermas is bequeathing us a valuable framework of reflections on this political coexistence that we have tried to perfect in the West; however, that same intentionality of action and rationality that is supposed to characterize it, has been diluted by the designs of our time: emotions have gone viral to the point of becoming the fifth pillar of democracy. They are what Crépon himself describes as harmful to political coexistence, since they transform institutions in such a way that when the emotionality of action permeates them, the democratic turn is blurred from the political map by means of "urgent" attention to the requests of citizens in need of assistance, thereby creating a welfare State, to such an extent that it is redefined as "procurer of existence", according to Habermas' contemporary thinker, Ernst Forsthoff (SPECTER, 2013); according to this conception, the value is not for the State directly or in itself, but for the one who comes timidly and crestfallen to extend his

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hand to receive benefits: this conception elevates emotionality to the level of political theory.

In the sense indicated, the emotionality of action is prolific in reproducing itself at the rhythm of urgent needs, which the political actors themselves, the agents of the emotionality of action, are capable of reconstructing it and making it regenerate at the speed that these agents need it, and so it is detected by the strategic sector of political-emotional action. Emotions, when they enter the political plane, transform the wholegeostrategic structure of politics, since it is easier to govern by hearing and heart than to govern by reason. Passions are then a breeding ground for government based on the emotionality of action, an issue that is increasingly spreading throughout the globe.

The above arguments give rise to the foundation of the so-called "populism", which becomes a predator of democratic institutions to the point of undermining them and endangering the very political regime that sustains it; or to put it in the words of the Frenchman paraphrased in the title of this commentary: political emotions and the populism that underlies them, are a *worm that devours the fruit that houses it*, that is, democracy is transformed into sweet and juicy ripe fruit ready to be gobbled up by the small caterpillar before being transformed into a beautiful butterfly. In other words, politics permeated by emotions is what makes the democratic regime, which is supposed to be the most viable for peaceful political coexistence (HABERMAS, 2010; DAHL, 2021)), given the intentions of protection that it contemplates, become a boomerang that then hits the very foundations that support democracy, until it collapses and lies motionless before the fierce predators of the inhospitable forest in which the worst of wild life is found. Emotionality in politics inaugurates a style of society that is harmful to itself.

In any case, the emotionality of action has been justified in the field of politics, which, in the context of the procuratorial theory of existence, has been advancing to such an extent that the most stable regimes from the democratic point of view have been shaken to their foundations, beyond the political interests supposedly held by the democratic leadership, with the well-known determined aims of attaining power at any cost, and most seriously, reconfiguring the legal foundations of democracy in order to leave the doors open to the procurer-of-existence interests; these always lurk behind the processes of

manipulation of emotions for political purposes. For all these reasons, the theory of the emotionality of action seen from the perspective of the justification of power encompasses ethical and philosophical aspects of the exercise of politics.

With reference to the ethical aspects, the theory of the emotionality of action that derives from the theory of the State as procurer of existence is nothing more than a discursive framework that attempts to capture the emotions of the citizen, who demands precisely what is contemplated in the political offers for the solution of problems. The theory of action from the emotions reconstitutes and gives life to a psychic structure conceived for the political domain, thus founding a political psychology based precisely on the urgent needs, which are used as support for the package of offers that is designed for the purpose of controlling emotions. Foucault has already given answers to this, especially with regard to the control of corporeality, but extended to the extremes of domination from all angles of the political system.

The core ethical issue is, then, the management of emotions for the control of power, taking advantage of the offer to find the offerer with a clientelism eager for promises and thirst for illusions, always welcome in order to feed hopes, which are the last to be lost; but they are lost. Poverty and ignorance are two essential elements for a good design of promises of political change "destined" to attack poverty and transform the citizen's discomfort into individual and social well-being and wealth, not only material but also spiritual: this is the dream of every citizen subjected to the punctilious exercise of power. The emotionality of action, from Crépon's perspective, is a destructive weapon of ethical values by slipping surreptitiously and assuming commitments that cannot be carried out, with the consequent disillusionment and loss of tranquility and social peace. However, it does not fulfill the objective of power control.

With respect to the political issue derived from this emotionality of action, the emotional agent knows perfectly well that his offers must be made in accordance with what the offered party wants to hear, and therefore, the mechanisms of design and control of the discourse are articulated in a coherent manner in order to capture the political favor of those who most need the support of a third party to get out of poverty and exclusion. The agent of the emotionality of action knows perfectly

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well the meaning to be given to the discourse, to sustain it, and if possible, to "risk his life" in favor of the poor and excluded. The representative of the procuring agency of existence specializes in designing speeches to be heard in the same terms as the needs of those to whom he addresses himself. The offered will then be in tune with whoever sounds the music to his ears.

There is no reason to think that from this political perspective, the agent of the emotionality of action will always keep open the political acoustic shell where he plays the music that keeps him in power. Hence the dangers involved in this sense of politics, because his job is not to use democracy to solve the problems of society as a whole, but to stay in power, logically at any cost. For this reason, where the rules of democracy are weak, a democratic sense of little strength is imposed. And this is the moment when the agents take advantage of the emotionality of the action. For this reason, the latter will always depend on the histrionic qualities of those who exercise politics, as actors who are tele-guided towards paths of domination, which, for the same reason, are always winding, steep and unreliable.

These are the reasons why ethics and philosophy will always be preordained in terms of providing tools of analysis that allow to clarify to the actors of politics, especially to the targets of the theory of the emotionality of action, the core issues from which it is intended to control their emotions for political purposes. Ethics and philosophy serve the purpose of establishing certain lines of demarcation of political action in terms of passions, especially when these are unbridled. The worm that is the emotionality of action gradually engulfs the fleshiness of democracy like ripe fruit until it devours and destroys it. Transformed into a State procurer of existence, populism is a weapon of democratic destruction. These are the signs of our times for which we must be prepared.

**Dr. José Vicente Villalobos-Antúnez / Editor-in-Chief**

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