THE HISTORICAL EXPANSION OF PHILOSOPHY OF CULTURE

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Abstract

In this paper, I would like to point out the historical expansion of the philosophy of culture from ancient times (especially in Greece and Rome) to the modern era (Hegal). Since the birth of Western culture in the Greco-Roman world, culture has usually been studied in three orders. The first order is the technical one (in philosophical terminology, a charge of poiesis), which ranges from the construction of houses to the wider variety of tools of wood, stone, bone, metal, etc. The second order is organisation and the articulation of function, for example, or the one of law (in philosophical terminology, order of praxis), which covers various political organisations, customs and moral rules. The third order is one of words and ideas (in philosophical terminology, order of theory), encompassing multiple religious and philosophical stories about the origin of the cosmos, humanity, and the people themselves. Into this forum and in this dialogue come some key questions. Can one global worldview be constructed using science and a philosophy ? Can philosophy and science replace the worldview? Can the current reflective awareness of science and philosophy replace the system of unconscious habits, the design of the worldview? Can the text continually modify the software and the hardware? Can the message change the medium? Reflection and criticism have their place and their time, and the worldview as well. Suppose a man is in a conversation, as Gadamer insists ; Can the conversation, with its double participation of reflexive conscience and unconscious assumptions on the other, take the leadership of personal and collective human life? Can it do so in better conditions than at other moments when this double assistance offers more modest horizons?

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Since ancient times, culture has appeared in philosophy and the humanities, studied from approaches that would not describe themselves as "scientific" in the positivist key but as philosophical and humanistic in general, and which limit the cultural field by other keys. In the Western world, since theoretical reflection was born in Ancient Greece, culture has been conceived of as both a contrast to nature and a contrast between physis (nature) and nomos (law, rule) or as a contrast between logos of the physical heart and symbols of the social and political life[1]. Amongst the Ancient Greeks, attention to the physis or the nomos was contemplative knowledge, or theory, to which men who did not have to accomplish the necessary activities for material life, i.e. menial tasks or work, dedicated themselves. Theory, knowledge, and science were leisure (scholé) and not work and constituted an essential core in the citizen's education, what the Greeks called paideia. Since the birth of Western culture in the Greco-Roman world, culture has usually been studied in three orders. The first order is the technical one (in philosophical terminology, a charge of poiesis), which ranges from the construction of houses to the wider variety of tools of wood, stone, bone, metal, etc. The second order is organisation and the articulation of function, for example, or the one of law (in philosophical terminology, order of praxis), which covers the great variety of political organisation, customs and moral rules. The third order is one of words and ideas (in philosophical terminology, order of theory), encompassing various religious and philosophical stories about the origin of the cosmos, humanity, and the people themselves. The demands of the technical, law, words and ideas correspond to what the Marxist school called infrastructure, structure and superstructure, to what Durkheim called tools, institutions and categories and generally to the orders of having power and knowing[2]. The Marxist school conceived the relation between the three charges deterministically, arguing that modifications in the economic field produced the historical changes. The other theories have spoken instead of an interaction between the three orders. The Greek differentiation between theory and praxis on one side and poiesis on the other was maintained in the Roman world as the difference between leisure time (ostium) and work (nec-otium, labour).

Furthermore, in Rome, knowledge of nature (science) contrasted with knowledge of man (letters and humanities), and this was the

knowledge that constituted the core of the citizen's education, which after that ceased to be named paideia but was instead known as humanism, letters, humanities or humanistic formation[3]. This Greco-Roman difference between nature, work and science on the one hand, and society, freedom and notes on the other, correlates to the differentiation between two basic social levels. These two levels gave way, in the Medieval and the Renaissance ages, to the servile arts, belonging to the servants, and all the liberal arts, belonging to the lords, which constituted a system of fine arts and humanities. This differentiation between the servile, liberal and fine arts ultimately corresponds with the difference between high and low culture. The term culture is reserved to designate letters and fine arts. This feeling of 'culture' is maintained in ordinary modern language when we talk about 'an educated person'. On the other hand, during the Renaissance, whilst the fine arts migrated from the field of technical and servile activities to the area of theory and contemplation, the natural sciences, which were situated in much thinking in the Greek world, moved into the technical and engineering field; in other words, the area of the activities that dominated and transformed the environment[4]

While the Enlightenment developed a kind of philosophy as critical reflection, systematically searching for the foundation of science and morality, the philosophy of culture emerged in 1744 with the work of the Neapolitan Gianbattista Vico as a New Science[5]. In open opposition to the critical currents of modernity, Vico established the topic as the first moment of philosophy and of culture in general, believing that criticism is always reflective and secondary, whilst the primary thing is life, finding the places (the topoi), where one can meet others, come to an agreement with others, think, and live—along with them. Vico, Hobbes, Rousseau, and Montesquieu also carried out investigations into the origin and foundations of human society, which would give way to the birth of sociology in the nineteenth century and which would have an impact upon anthropology and philosophy of culture. The genesis and development of the social and human sciences began with the Enlightenment and reached maturity in Romanticism. At the core of German idealism, the philosophy of culture was developed as a philosophy of history, and in the studies of Hegel as a history of spirit which is interpreted as a history of freedom, i.e. as the history of law (the system of liberty). The highly speculative tone of the philosophy of German idealism in the second half of the nineteenth century caused a diffusion and acceptance of positivism. In this environment,

anthropology was born because of the "pre-historians" of law –
Bachofen, McLennon, Morgan and Tylor. With these same positivist
assumptions but within the field of philosophy, Dilthey produced
the formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences
at the beginning of the twentieth century[6]. Just like Vico in the
eighteenth century, Dilthey and Nietzsche also based their analysis
and reflections about culture on poetry and philology. They used the
term "culture" in the sense of "humanistic culture" or the German
expression "high culture". This German philosophy's production
also influenced Anglo-Saxon anthropology, which assumed some
of its principles and categories[7]. In this period, around the turn of
the century, while the Anglo-Saxon field was consolidated as the
discipline of scientific anthropology, beginning with Boas and his
followers, at the core of the neo-Kantian school, the philosophy of
culture was coined and institutionalised as an academic discipline,
in the work of Windelband, Rickert, Ortega y Gasset and especially
Cassirer, for whom the philosophy of culture and philosophical
anthropology are nearly indistinguishable[8]. The German philosophy
of culture developed the difference between natural sciences and
human sciences and coined the term Weltanschauung, which
Anglo-Saxon anthropology translated directly as a worldview in
which the technical and the arts were integrated once again with
religion and moral and legal wisdom. This German philosophy
of culture disappeared after the Second World War, whilst some
of its assumptions and ideas were conserved in the Anglo-Saxon
world through the concept of culture proposed in 1948 by T.S.
Eliot, who was widely embraced in the English-speaking world[9]. In
contemporaneity with the German philosophy of culture, the French
sociological school, in particular, Durkheim and Mauss, proposed the
term "civilisation" to designate a wider area than that of culture and
which included numerous cultures, as appeared in the expressions
"Oriental culture" and "European culture". The second half of the
twentieth century, with the widespread proliferation of scientific
anthropology and the eclipse of German philosophy of culture,
was when the impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of
Man was produced and in the whole area of philosophy in general[10],
which gave way to a convergence of cultural anthropology (or
scientific positivist anthropology) and philosophical anthropology,
or put in more general terms, anthropology and philosophy. Then
the subject of the relationship between philosophy and worldview
emerged once again, but the two no longer opposed each other,
instead acting as two complimentary levels of reflection. This entire

history of anthropology and the philosophy within the academic world is the backdrop and base upon which the new models of the cultural system and worldview, which held validity at the beginning of the twenty-first century, were shaped.

The synergistic relationship between culture and philosophy

With Hegel, philosophy, in its self-reflection, assumed its social and cultural context and became aware of it simultaneously as it did of itself as reflection. Not all thought afterwards continued this methodological practice. Still, following the impact of the sociology of knowledge and anthropology in the philosophical field, it has become increasingly reckless not to do it. Since the twentieth century, the reflection in which philosophy consists has taken charge of sociology and culture, which in a new way, is philosophy taking control of itself. Some years after writing *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, which contains an explanation of his understanding of man as a symbolic animal, Cassirer's editor proposed he does a new edition of his philosophy of culture. Then, in 1944, he found himself unable to finish such a task. Instead, he did a summary update of the earlier work, which he had given the title *Philosophical Anthropology: An Introduction to Philosophy of the Culture*[11]11. That is where, following the Kantian concept of imagination, and the development of the imagination of the philosophy of German romanticism, Cassirer developed the theory of human imagination and intellect as the generators of the spheres of the culture; in other words, the display of language and the communication which took place in the Mesolithic Age . And that is where the philosophy of culture was conceived as creating the cultural spheres (religion, art, science, language, etc.) and communication through these. Until the twentieth century, one could think that culture and language were not topics of philosophy or that they were dispensable topics, but beginning with the linguistic turn and the universalisation of hermeneutics, not only have language and culture occupied prominent places in this field, but they have also come to be key topics in philosophy[12]. Or, well, the philosophy of language and culture has become the first philosophy.

"Without the security that the grands récits of history offers, it is about trying to reach a new point of view from which you can reach the visual field of what happens. In the process of globalisation resides an overall need. The relevance of the concept of culture lies in the fact that the concept offers it. The weakness of the concept

lies precisely in the fact that it now covers all of the actual. In the actual discussion, the culture has become a medium necessary to the totality of thought and human acting"[13]

The objection to any proposal that states "it isn't like that in other cultures" obliges one to abandon claims of an extra-cultural or transcendental basis, which are typical of modernity, to accept that culture is more radical than reason[14], and to reach the point where culture and reason, originally united, began to pluralise. This leads one to look for a solution to problems and conflicts among speakers approaching the dialogue from diverse cultural and rational configurations. The last base of this agreement is sought, more than in a transcendental subject, in ordinary language, a transcendental factum in evolution, as Apel stated, and in the plausible will of factual agreement, avoiding the obstacles of controversies[15]. Twenty-first-century globalisation, the relationships between all cultures on a global scale, and the problems posed by multiculturalism have been brought to the foreground of philosophical and humanistic reflection upon culture to study its structure, its elements and the possibility from them of structures proportional to the human psyche. The West began its coming of age through adolescence, with both the potential breadth and the limitations of this spiritual state. It had its honeymoon with science, freedom, equality and fraternity. It faced its parents and reached maturity by recognising its excesses and reconciling with its past. From this maturity, it can now speak to other cultures, whatever route they may have taken to become conversers with Western culture. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Western human spirit (and that of any other location in the world) was for the first time able to take in the entire span of the human species, from its biological origins some 200,000 years ago and from its mental origins 50,000 years ago. It is a new situation and a position of unheard-of maturity. All historical epochs imply a new situation and an unheard-of position, so they require a full reissuing of the human self-conscience. The current novelty regarding previous epochs is, as should be emphasised, that it encompasses the specie in its entirety. Throughout modernity, the general visions of humanity and history have been realised from a modern view of the world and humanity. In the second half of the twentieth century, when the criticism of modernity took place, the general visions of humanity and history were also realised from a modern perspective. But by the beginning of the twenty-first century, this perspective had become outdated, small and rather partial. For that reason, it is necessary to develop one more view consistent with the resources and perspective

of the present moment, which will undoubtedly be unsatisfactory later. But to each age, in the evolution of the species and of the individual, belongs its self-awareness, and it must not stop expressing it. During the twenty-first century, some facts about the development of humankind will be confirmed, and others will be disposed of, and later, many more will be offered that we do not know yet. A complete and reliable timeframe of the human species, of its mental, social and communicative evolution, allows better self-knowledge of man. More differentiated, more mature. The academy's knowledge does and will continue to contribute in that sense. Between them, the philosophy of culture, also renovated, will contribute its drawn-up vision from a proper perspective, consider it alongside others, and illuminate these other perspectives. Into this forum and in this dialogue come some key questions. Can one global worldview be constructed using science and a philosophy ? Can philosophy and science replace the worldview? Can the current reflective awareness of science and philosophy replace the system of unconscious habits, the system of the worldview? Can the text continually modify the software and the hardware? Can the message modify the medium? Reflection and criticism have their place and their time, and the worldview as well. Suppose a man is in a conversation, as Gadamer insists. Can the conversation, with its double participation of reflexive conscience and unconscious assumptions on the other, take the leadership of personal and collective human life? Can it do so in better conditions than at other moments when this double assistance offers more modest horizons?

In response to these questions, one can put forth that in no case can theoretic reason override or replace practical reason, or as is analogous, that epistemology cannot cancel out hermeneutics, nor can hermeneutics cancel out epistemology. The system of unconscious prejudices will never substitute scientific and philosophic reflection, nor *vice versa*. For that reason, worldview and the arts, on the one hand, and science and philosophy, on the other, will always have their place. On the other hand, the end of the great stories and the criticism of foundationalism will not erase the demand for the totality and the infinity of the intellect either. Criticism of modernity is in no way a renouncement of this need. The opposite. It is the disillusion of Gadamer when facing a vision of totality, facing a theory of reality, which in the end was recognised as incomplete; that is to say, as particular and partial, which together with other partial visions and theories also has its legitimacy. The great tales were not absolute because they were only those belonging to Western culture

and did not encompass the thousands of lives of other peoples. But the story of human history as a theory of the realisation of liberty, the philosophy of history as a philosophy of rights, and history as the history of human rights achieved their universality precisely as the crisis of the great Western stories took place; the examination of these episodes is the philosophy of the culture in its exactitude. Therefore, the philosophy of culture now includes the totality of reality, which has become a kind of first philosophy. In any case, in the twentieth century philosophy of the culture could not satisfy the requirement of totality and infinity, which is the property of the first philosophy, without being in a permanent symbiosis with the natural and formal sciences and with the social and human sciences

Notes

1. Cf. Calvo, J., "The concept of culture in Greek thought", in Llinares, J.B., and Sánchez Durá, N., (eds.), Essays on the philosophy of culture. Madrid: New Library, 2002, pp. 59-80.
2. About the orders of the culture according to this triple division, cfr. Llobera, J. R., "The concept of culture in social and cultural anthropology", in Llinares, J. B. And Sánchez Durá, N., Essays on the philosophy of culture. Madrid: New Library, 2002, pp. 113-130.
3. For a careful exposure of this process, cfr., Marín, H., La invención de lo humano. The sociohistorical construction of the individual. Madrid: Meeting, 2007, and Choza, J., Cultural history of humanism. Seville-Madrid: Thémata-Plaza and Valdés, 2009.
4. Leonardo da Vinci was taken by himself as "engineer", an undervalued title in his time compared to the letters, and for which definition and recognition fought the Tuscan painter his whole life. Cfr. Da Vinci, L., Guadernos de notas. Barcelona: Planeta-De Agostini, 1995.
5. Vico, G., New Science. Madrid: Tecnos, 1995, cfr., Choza, J., <>, in The realization of man in culture. Madrid: Rialp, 1990.
6. Dilthey, W., Structuring the historical world by the sciences of the spirit. Mexico: F.C.E., 1944. For articulating Dilthey's work with philosophical anthropology and the philosophy of culture, cfr., Choza, J., "Habit and Objective Spirit. Study on historicity in Santo Tonás and Dilthey" in Choza, J., The realisation of man in culture. Madrid : Rialp , 1990 .
7. Especially in the disciple of Boaz, Ruth Benedict, whose division of the cultures into Apollonian and Dionysian are inspired by the work of Nietzsche. Cfr., Hut, J., Positive anthropologies and philosophical anthropology, cit.
8. For the history of the philosophy of culture, cfr. Perez Tapias, J. A., Philosophy and criticism of culture. Madrid: Trotta, 1995 and St. Martin, J., The Theory of Culture. Madrid: Synthesis Publishing House
9. Eliot, T.S., Notes on the definition of culture. Madrid: Ediciones Encuentro, 2003.
10. Gerrtz, C., "The impact of the concept of culture on the concept of man", in The interpretation of cultures. Barcelona: Gedisa, 1992, and Anthropological Reflections on Philosophical Themes. Barcelona: Paidos, 2000.

11. Cassirer, E., Philosophical Anthropology. Mexico: FCE, 1975.
12. Apel, K.O., The transformation of philosophy. Taurus: Madrid, 1985.
13. Schöder, G., (Ed), Theory of culture. A map of the question. Buenos Aires: F.C.E., 2005, p.8
14. Cf., Choza, J., "Cultura is more radical than reason", in Llinares, J. B. And Sánchez Durá, N., Essays on the philosophy of culture. Madrid: New Library, 2002; cf. Arregui, J. V., The plurality of reason. Madrid: Synthesis, 2002.
15. Cfr., Dascal, M., Negotiation and power in dialogic interaction (electronic resources), edited by Weigand, E., Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2001.