Why Those Who Disregard Foreigners Despise Themselves

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 *… E non sapeva più
vivere
nella tenda dei suoi
dove si ascolta la cantilena
del Corano
gustando un caffè*

*E non sapeva
sciogliere
il canto
del suo abbandono*
    G. Ungaretti, *In memoria*

[… And he had forgotten how/ to live/ in his people's tent/ where one listens to the chant/ of the Koran/ sipping a coffee// And he had forgotten/ how to release/ the song of his abandon].

Abstract

What we are experiencing today in different ways on social, national and international levels because of the flow of migrants and the populistic backlash is not separated from the sense and the task of our personal existence, from the way we can and must realise ourselves. Following Paul Ricoeur's three different discursive axes within which the dialectic tensional intersection of crisis and conflict reach a significant speculative level, a careful analysis deepens the intertwining of historical, cultural and anthropological factors, demonstrating that those who disregard foreigners despise themselves.

Keywords: foreigner, personal emancipation, dialectics, recognition

1. Introduction

With the Arab Spring, the generalised destabilisation in the Middle East and the devastating war in Syria, the flow of migrants has assumed colossal dimensions, transforming the blue Mediterranean Sea into a place of biblical, extreme and devastating facts, of miraculous and cursed events. Philosophical reflective and critical reasoning does not have speculative discourse as its sole *territorium*, above all when it intends to claim and cultivate sensitivity and values that are declared humanistic with regard to dramatic issues such as the issue of migrants and refugees. No humanistic bulwark is built up with words alone, especially if we are dealing with the question as middle-class Europeans who tend more and more to stay indifferent to the numerous defensive manifestations of an increasingly populist and xenophobic Europe[1]. The fact is not new; European history has been a history of darkness and division since ancient times, and extremism is always ready to rise again everywhere, even beyond the specific discourse concerning Europe. In this, the action of evil seems increasingly more acute and industrious compared with the good, which tends to doze off and not notice things until it 'has the blade pointed in his throat', so to speak.

However, numerous positive resources exist and more constructive forces can be brought into the field than negative and destructive ones. What we are experiencing today in different ways on a social, national and international levels is not separated from the sense and the task of our personal existence, from the way we

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[1] On the theme of migrants, one of the most dramatic memories of my youth goes back to 27 March 1997. That day, referring to the Albanese migrants coming in Italy, Irene Pivetti at that time member of the Lega Nord, parliamentarian of the Republic and former President of the Chamber of Deputies (from 1994 to 1996) declared in a scandalous public communication: 'Rebut them at sea!'. The following day (what an obscure coincidence of words and facts!), the military ship Sibilla rammed in the Adriatic Sea the Albanian ship Kater I Rades causing the death of 108 migrants.

can realise ourselves. The determination and willingness to face challenges and progress generates much more vitality and creativity. In this, I embrace a fairly Hegelian conception of human emancipation, that is, a conception of emancipation closely linked to the struggle for freedom and justice.

In this paper, I will try to show how anthropological philosophical models, such as that of contemporary French philosopher Paul Ricoeur, point out how one's challenge towards oneself is the first and most important field of emancipation. The struggle against the numerous forms of 'tyranny', servitude, negative power and destructiveness has a close connection with this personal inner-self challenge.

Democracy can be tyrannical and crushing. Democracy goes into crisis when it stops progressing, when it lacks control and corrective tension. This point has been significantly underlined by Jürgen Habermas. In a 2008 editorial (published in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*) he compares the potential and perhaps actual decline of capitalist democracies and markets to the decline and collapse of tyrannies and totalitarianism[2].

2. Around Crises and Conflicts

The matrix of the possible degeneration and collapse of democracy has been identified since the time of Plato. Plato describes with precision the structural mechanisms of the decay of democracy and of its sliding into anarchy. This degradation directly affects the decline of social customs and moral life. For Ricoeur, democracy is *an ideal in the making*. More than reality there is a social and moral

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[2] Closing an introductory presentation at the conference with the (former) minister of foreign affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier (Berlin, 23 November 2007), he explains that democracy and the market economy are not immune to self-destruction exactly as totalitarian systems. And if on the one side it is true that, unlike these, they have built-in brakes, then on the other side, the brakes also require continuous overhaul and maintenance (see Habermas, 2009).

condition requiring a perpetual battle that those who are living at the present time have the task of carrying on. When a crisis appears in democracy, it means that something is interfering or even stopping this search for perpetual progress. In fact, democracy is an idea in the making and in combat, and the crisis is a moment in history whose momentum must be regained (Ricoeur, 1947: 300). Democracy is not an ideology, first and foremost it is 'une *pratique*, c'est-à-dire une action, un combat, un 'drame' au sens propre du mot' (302). Individualistic, totalitarian, anarchic or reactionist crisis determines the destruction of the responsible and active citizen who is the foundation of democracy.

Today, individualism constitutes the predominant mentality; it is an individualism that can generate ruthless and inhuman indifference. Following the French philosopher, I say that the current decay of democracy which parallels the spread of populism, antiestablishmentarianism, xenophobia and the like is directly connected to a distorted dialectic conflict/crisis within oneself toward oneself, as well as between individuals and the social world. Ricoeur identifies three different discursive axes within which the dialectic tensional intersection of crisis and conflict reaches a significant speculative level. They are overlapping and intertwined axes, which are useful to reconsider in a re-actualising perspective.

Somehow, we are already pursuing the first axis, as it is placed between critical conscience, the 'logic' of civic conduct and the life of public institutions. The second axis is thematically placed between philosophy of history and critique of modernity, and it is essentially deepened by Ricoeur from the philosophical moral perspective, as revealed in the 1988 paper 'La crise: un phénomène spécifiquement moderne?'. In this work, a generalised use of the notion of crisis emerges. Ricoeur uses it to make reference to Marcel Mauss, which provides him with a way to recognise within the phenomenon of the

crisis the configuration of ideas and values through which a society understands itself (see Id., 1988: 10). However, every 'regional' use has, to a certain extent, generalisable aspects (which can be coordinated within the framework of the 'total social fact' [Mauss]). (1) The notion of crisis as a medical determination can be applied in a generalising manner to social reality, interpreting it as a kind of 'body' (social body). (2) The pedagogical sense of crisis has shown itself to be fertile in generalisation already through the example of Kant's criticism. (3) The political sense(s) of crisis connects on the one hand the crisis of the question of legitimisation, i.e. crisis of legitimacy, and on the other hand crosses the problematic of ethical nature ('insofar as the legitimisation of power refers to the axiological configuration by which society defines itself' [11; trans. V.B.]). Such a critical and practical register of discourse seems to me not only to characterise this analysis of the historical social decline into crisis and conflict but to offer a comprehensive view for developing useful consequences reflecting around our current times. A third axis is disposed between the pole of an anthropological philosophical research concerning human identity and the way in which we develop personal identity and the pole of a theory of (human, social and political) recognition. No civic conduct or institutions exist that are not linked to the emancipation of individuals and peoples, and without emancipation of individuals and peoples there cannot be civic and institutional progress.

Let us follow the question of democracy (first axis) for a further step. The crisis is part of the contemporary history of democracy as such, because democracy is a living historical fact and an idea in perpetual action and movement. This formula combines two different understandings of the notion of crisis and democracy: in fact, if on the one side it is by embracing the perspective of historical knowledge and political science that we may make a clear reference

to democracy as something of historical and living in progress, on the other side it is by embracing a specific practical philosophical perspective that we may say that it has to do with something in perpetual, civic and moral action. This point of view parallels Ricoeur's view that goes even beyond claiming for 'religious' explanations. The 1972 paper 'Le conflit: signe de contradiction ou d'unité?' problematises the reflective and experiential aporia of putting together the interpretation of conflict as a pivotal element of historical progress and the practical religious prescription of 'love each other'. Ricoeur develops two interesting criticisms around this question. The first attacks the illusory idea that conflict will be diminished by the extension of the prescience; quite the opposite, in fact, it is destined to increase as the consequence of the exercise of control and other 'staffs', such as planning and rationalisation, that are connected to the ideology of prescience. In addition, the nature of political decision in itself is to be a non-reducible source of conflict. In fact, 'the character of decision, which is attached to the political as such, with its procession of constraint, force and violence, seems (…) an unsurpassable trait of political action as such' (Id., 1972: 191; trans. V.B.). Hence, the inevitability of conflict and its fertility emerge as structural consequences together with their counterpart (which follows an identical 'logic') that is the reactionary effect, which proposes a pacified and freed new government for the people via (again) conflict (that is, via an anti-establishment populistic approach, for example by mobilisation of resentment). 'Hegel had already meditated on this abrupt reversal of the theoretical negation of the conflict to the destructive fury of the Terror' (*Ib*.); and similar consequences emerge analysing the Marxist theme of the class struggle. At the end, 'there is an irreducibility of the socio-political conflict to the situation of dialogue borrowed from our interpersonal experience' (192).

Reflecting around the theology of love, Ricoeur underlines how no room exists for ideological use of it in politics. In fact, it must be relocated within the original context of a global theological preaching from which it draws a variation more in the sense of the justice of living than of the politics of living, and with which it reveals its nature as a specific conflict generator. Obviously, the theology of love participates in social and political dialectics, but it must be rediscovered and replaced in a wider and more comprehensive manner together with the communitarian and cosmic dimension of living. Conversely, a common ideological translation of the theology of love is given in its unilateral reduction to a singular model, that of dialogue, behind which the attitude and strategy of the camouflage is often at work. If this first criticism attacks the ideology of (false) dialogue (that is dialogue without effective dialectics, but is formal and superficial, as it is still widespread today), then the second criticism aims to unmask the widespread of an ideological approach to conflict determined by a 'diffuse Hegelianisation of all our thoughts and all our behaviours' (193), that parallels the elevation of all conflicts to a cultural phenomenon. At the end, 'son souci lancinant est de vouloir le conflit pour le conflit, afin de provoquer par la polarisation une sorte de *catharsis* sociale' (*Ib*.). As the political discourse, public communication aims to investigate the logic of events from this perspective. It is a simplified way that mirrors a generalised limit in terms of understanding and emancipation. And because of that, the migrant becomes *a priori* a source of difficulty, an inevitably negative and problematic counterpart. The foreigner 'opposes us', he/she is 'against our order', 'our culture' and 'our values' etc. Why does a limitation exist in terms of personal and social emancipation behind similar statements? Because, as our discourse becomes more and more enlightening, the horizontal, interrelational plane of personal or

social relation with the foreigner(s) perpetually crosses the vertical plane of oneself with himself/herself, that is of oneself with the one's inner foreigner, with the alterity within us (*hic sunt leones*). The phenomenon of challenges, conflicts and changes touches the knot of individual responsibility, according to an idea of progress or emancipation, which somehow pushes back to Hegel. At the end, 'only the one who keeps in the deepest part of his conviction the demand for a synthesis of freedom and meaning, of arbitrariness and of institution can live sensibly the central conflict of modern society' (201).

On the one side, we have the fact of a perpetual sequence of conflict and crisis that parallels the many challenges of lives at a personal and social level and that has potential for progress and emancipation. On the other side, an improper, ideologised understanding exists of this dialectic between conflict and crisis that must be thematised and recognised. In some ways, it has even more distorting effects in Europe, because movements, encounters and clashes of peoples across its lands have been a European phenomenon since the beginning of its history. Actually, it is Europe's *ethos* (see Id., 1992). Somehow, crisis is always potentially a 'carrier' of something positive and productive, and not necessarily via violent conflicts and rivers of blood. Europe is a land of disastrous things, as well as a land of invention, beauties and values. It is a generous land, even, with about 40 million foreigners who are residents.

Following Ricoeur's line of reasoning as developed in the papers we are referring to, I underline how *crisis is modernity itself*.

Philosophical analysis is helping us to understand that to say 'crisis' is not the same as saying 'ruin' or 'destruction'. It is not the catastrophe and it is not the end, exactly as a crisis of migration does not constitute a problem or something negative *a priori*. History

clearly shows that the European *ethos* has been characterised since its rise for the movement of peoples through its lands[3]. Thus, in Europe (or elsewhere), there are neither pure races, nor pure ethnic groups, nor pure nationalities, if by 'pure' we mean something 'not contaminated' by the foreign presence, by the passage of the foreigner. Each one of us has foreign ancestors in his/her lineage and (then), historically genealogically speaking, is a foreigner in his/her proper homeland. The essence of Europe is not just cultural arrogance and colonialism. Europe is also flowering with new knowledge, new possibilities and new hopes. Today, Europe has the double face of Janus: on the one side, it has the look of wisdom, and on the other side, it has the look of deconstruction.

Europe is a cultural paradise populated by devils, festive lambs and silent, well-mannered persons. And a new unstoppable stream of migrants is entering it to shake things up.

3. The Crisis is the Possibility

As mentioned, Ricoeur identifies different uses of the notion of crisis. Among these, the gives us medical clinical use, in which 'crisis'

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[3] This is a universal and international fact, beyond the specific case of Europe. In 2015, the broadcast datum for international migrants was up from 247 million of people, with 65.3 million forced migrants. As the International Migration Report 2017 writes, 'The number of international migrants worldwide has continued to grow rapidly in recent years, reaching 258 million in 2017, up from 220 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000' (International Migration Report, 2017: 5). In addition, it underlines the following: 'The global level of forced displacement across international borders continues to rise. By the end of 2016, the total number of refugees and asylum seekers in the world was estimated at 25.9 million, representing 10.1 percent of all international migrants. The developing regions hosted 82.5 percent of the world's refugees and asylum seekers. In 2016, Turkey recorded the largest refugee population, hosting some approximately 3.1 million refugees and asylum seekers. The country experienced the most significant increase in the refugee population since 2000 when it hosted just over 3,000 refugees. In 2016, the second largest country of asylum was Jordan, hosting around 2.9 million refugees, followed by the State of Palestine (2.2 million), Lebanon (1.6 million) and Pakistan (1.4 million). Germany (1.3 million) and Uganda (1.2 million) also hosted more than one million refugees and asylum seekers in 2016' (7–8).

indicates a critical moment in the course of a certain disease, and the psycho-physiological and pedagogical use related to the evolutionary age, where the crisis is the growth that marks the transition from one age of life to another, emerging as particularly significant and fertile. By following the meaning mirrored through the second use, we may say in general that to live a moment of crisis is to leave a moment of change, and the acceptance of such a challenge is not accepting the crisis as such or suffering from it. Accepting the challenge of the crisis means, in fact, to live the change that creates a way of challenging the possibilities of change and contributing to its realisation. Thus, under this perspective, 'challenging the possibilities' becomes per se to change. 'To change' is 'to live'. In fact, the struggle against the present resistances, the commitment to overcome the limits of present circumstances and the effects of past actions give no other possibility than the opening of the doors of the future. Challenging moments of crisis generate and regenerate new strength and hope. As a Europeanist in a similar mould to Habermas, Ricoeur is aware of the many difficulties that Europe faces because of its strong nationalistic identities and specificities nourishing hope for the Europe of tomorrow. Habermas is a rationalist thinker and a philosopher of communication and institutions. I take the liberty of expressing my opinion by arguing that although I understand his conception and embrace a large number of his considerations and proposals, I do not share his basic approach, which seems to me to be both positively pragmatic and excessively formalising. The challenges of today and tomorrow's Europe are not only challenges for rationality. They would not be won by the rationalised order of bureaucratic systems nor via the rationalisation of the relationships.

4. Communicative Distortions About Migrants: A Factual Survey Around the Italian Case

Today, pessimism seems to be hailed as expressive of a 'more realistic' attitude compared with optimism. The disenchanted pessimist seems more realistic, where looking for the positive seems to be of no use. The negative act attracts and substantiates more breaking news. Even the media operate systematically in accordance with these sorts of criteria of obscure emotionality.

I do agree with what Habermas underlines in this regard, starting from the consideration of the role of the great media in the formation of public opinion and democratic will. An effective and professional public communication deploys an essential force of stimulus and orientation for the formation of public opinion and the will of the citizens, which at the same time forces the political system to transparency and correct alignment. Without the impulses of a press capable of making an opinion and providing reliable information and accurate analyses, the public sphere can no longer produce these energies (see Habermas, 2008).

Today, the issue of migrants is an emblematic case in this regard. On the one side, we have been listening for years to many authentic news items reporting on true cases of suffering and desperation, of tragedies, from Lampedusa and the like. On the other side, such news also features torrents of rhetoric filled with populism.

The Italian case is emblematic in many ways because of the populistic momentum we are living now, because the different sensitivity people experience is within the public debate at a general communicative level (new media included) as well as political and politico-religious levels. However, the Vatican and the many different humanitarian and social organisations directly or indirectly related to the Catholic Church played and are still playing a positive role.

National research by the Faculty of Communication Science, University of Rome 'La Sapienza' (2009) concerns immigration, refugees and the Italian media (*Ricerca nazionale su immigrazione e asilo nei media italiani*). Among other things, we learn that 'foreigners appear more frequently than Italians when they are responsible for, or victims of brutal events such as sexual violence (more than triple: 24.1% against 7.2%), personal injuries (more than double: 24.1% against 10.9%), assault (17.0% vs. 4.4%) or finally theft (11.3% vs. 8.7%)'. The portrait of foreigners immortalised by the media can then be subsumed as follows: It is often of a criminal, it is of a male (nearly 80%) and his personality is covered from the detail of his nationality or ethnic origin (which is often present in the titles of the news)' (Morcellini, 2009: 2–3; trans. V.B.). Out of a sample of 5,684 news reports examined during the survey, only 26 spoke of immigration without linking it to security (see Id.: 3). Former UNHCR regional representative for Southern Europe (1998-2012) and former president of the Chamber of Deputies (2013-2018) Laura Boldrini underlined that 'the study shows, in a scientific way, how Italian medias have been reproducing, for years, the same stereotype on immigration, without reflecting that it is a phenomenon in constant and rapid evolution. Italian medias have not updated their way of talking about it, neither the terms of language, which is poor, reductive and diminishing, least of all in the contents. One speaks of immigration almost always in relation to the facts of crime, judicial facts and landings' (quoted in Sciortino, 2011: 21; trans. V.B.). This research was undertaken about ten years ago, but I suspect that things are worsening. This rejection of foreigners must be a visceral response of the Italians, amplified by the media, because it is impossible to imagine that Italians have forgotten that just few decades ago they were a people of migrants (across the United States of America, Belgium, Germany,

Argentina and other countries). The waves of migration have always aroused fears and overreactive behaviours. All countries tend to 'defend' their lands and close the gates. However, experience shows that, if well managed, the arrival of migrants is not a danger. On the contrary, it enriches social, economic and cultural exchanges (see Id.: 15–16). Together with its 'security package' (Law 94 of 15 July 2009), Italy has a strong need of an 'integration package', which should come first (see Id.: 25). Behind this reasoning are multiple arguments of historical, cultural, humanistic and civic order. In addition, we may consider even pragmatic aspects, as the Fondazione Leone Moressa's annual reports concerning the economy of immigration. The reports show highly significant data. In the 2014 report, we read, for example, that 'despite the [2008's] economic crisis, foreigners continue to be an important component of our economic system. (...) During the five-year period 2008 2012, the importance of foreign presence increased both among workers and taxpayers. In 2008, foreigners made up the 7.5% of the total number of employed persons, while those born abroad represented 7.8 % of the total number of registrants. In 2012, the incidence of the immigrant presence rose to 10.2% among workers and to 8.5% among taxpayers' (Fondazione Leone Moressa, 2014: 74; trans. V.B.). In addition, 'Overall, the revenue from taxpayers born abroad is € 6.74 billion, that is 4.4% of the total revenue, a value higher than that recorded in 2011 (€ 6.56 billion)'. In the 2017 report, the Fondazione indicates that in 2015, the revenue is € 11.5 billion or 5,2% of the total revenue (see Id., 2017: 6). 'Despite the 2008 crisis, between 2009 and 2012 the percentage of immigrants on the total taxpayers who pay a positive net tax has grown steadily, albeit slowly, from 6.8% in 2009 to 7.2% in 2012' (Id., 2014: 86). Finally, 'In Italy, the 497,000 companies led by foreigners contribute, with 85 billion euros, to the creation of 6,1% of the national added value'

(141). The 2017 report shows that the national gross added value increased up to 8.9%, recording that in 2016, more than 571,000 companies were led by foreigners (with 94.2% of exclusive foreigner conduction) (see Id., 2017: 7).

I rehearse here some data on economic income so that the most markedly pragmatic minds can start pondering. The counter-argument that foreigners can earn and contribute because they 'steal work' from the Italians is an unfounded argument. A 2008 Banca d'Italia (Italy's Central Bank) report highlights that a considerable part of the work done by foreigners is not work that many would like to do at equal wages and environmental conditions. In addition, the work of many foreigners allows many Italians, especially women, to work outside their home (see Sciortino, 2011: 25–26). In addition, as Italians, we have become less flexible in relation to issues such as working hours, mobility and displacement.

I believe that the real knot of the current challenge 'launched' by the migratory movement is a challenge both to our democracy and to our civic, moral and personal emancipation. We have the right to correct and complete information, as much as we have the duty to conduct prompt action and an open, *argumentative* communication. It is not fair that through an ideologised concept of 'freedom of speech', we can make legitimate and acceptable any communicative distortion. Everyone has personal challenges to carry forward of him/her toward himself/herself, first, because everyone has the 'foreigner', the alterity inside.

5. The Foreigner inside

It is time to come back to the discursive axes of intertwining of crisis and conflict through which Ricoeur identifies a significant series of speculative aspects that we are applying to the current phenomenon of migration and the acceptance/refusal of foreigners across Europe.

Together with the previously considered historical and cultural arguments, we must move now towards the main discourse, which is placed between theory of recognition and anthropological philosophy. As a restarting point, we may consider Ricoeur's 1998 paper 'La crise de la conscience historique et l'Europe', which focuses on the theme of human consciousness, starting from a perspective that directly connects it between historical knowledge and future, and between experience and project. Ricoeur uses Koselleck's two poles of 'space of experience' and 'horizon of expectation' as the elements of a perpetual dialectics that determines historical consciousness. This is human consciousness, something connected to the historical dimension of the human being and to its creative openness towards the new. The specific characterisation of the European historical consciousness can emerge from the typical way in which Europeans experience their present and live their horizon of expectation. As Ricoeur explicitly asserts in this paper, 'The crisis is not a contingent accident, much less a modern disease. It is constitutive of the European consciousness' (Ricoeur, 1998: 30; trans. V.B.). This is determined from the significant and strong fragility generated by its jagged cultural and identitarian composition which makes up this consciousness, and fragility and pathology share a certain degree of proximity and interconnection. The crisis of the European consciousness is shown to be pathological in two aspects at least, according to Ricoeur: first from the aspect of memory, for the paradox of the abuses of memory and forgetting (see also Id., 2004: 443ff) and second from the aspect of the future or horizon of expectation, for the fact that Europe is experimenting with a poverty of substance. Such a double pathology is not without impact and consequences on our present time, because the present is the place of dynamic and dialectic conjugation between the space of experience and the horizon of action, i.e. between reflection and

creation. There is empty initiative when future perspective has no substance, and no fertile ideas are present if consciousness is lacking in historical sensitiveness, knowledge and awareness. 'This is the reason why we see here and there a privatisation of desires and projects, a cult of short-sighted consumerism. At the origin of this movement of retreat one discerns without difficulty a disengagement with respect to any civic responsibility. (...) Individualism, which is often regretted without analysing it, is probably only the effect of the withdrawal movement out of wanting to live together and out of the civic contract that ratifies the latter. Here again, the pathology of the social bond only makes visible the extreme fragility of such a bond' (Id., 1998: 31).

Somehow, Ricoeur's solution comes from the same pathological factors or aspects. First, the fragility of cultural variations and fragmentations suggests a productive reference to migration as a reunifying and creative movement of people across lands. Secondly, the present effect of rampant individualism suggests renewing the reference to communities of life (just making the effort to reexperience something similar to). And thirdly, the emptiness in projects and perspectives invites a deep critical reflection around the human condition and its meaning, overcoming the pathologies of memory via a collective narration and the exchange of testimonies. The solution of historical narration among migrants in the European space collects these elements in a first productive and significant solution.

Ricoeur also indicates a practical cure more specifically aimed at the sense of the future, which is the cure of innovation via renewing the dialectic of innovation and tradition, that is, to 'release the broken promises of the past' (34). This cure must go in parallel with the 'integration into the same horizon of waiting of heterogeneous modalities of anticipation' (*Ib*.), which means to accept and

recognise the other, the foreigner and the bearer of alternative values or vision and the foreigner. This is the most difficult challenge. It is not an impossible task, but a utopia at least. However,

> 'l'important est que nos utopies soient des utopies responsables, qui tiennent compte du faisable autant que du souhaitable, qui composent non seulement avec les résistances regrettables du réel, mais avec les voies praticables tenues ouvertes par l'expérience historique' (35).

As Weber explains, the morality of conviction must go hand in hand with the morality of responsibility. I stress the validity of this point of view by following a line of speculative reasoning and construction that puts in constrictive connection the question of migrants and foreigners with the process of personal emancipation. This discursive line finds corroboration in Ricoeur's anthropological philosophy as developed in his book *Oneself as Another* (1990) via a hermeneutical phenomenology of the self through which he not only incorporates his previous research on the unconscious and Cogito's internal alterities but also profiles *imputability* as one of the constitutive components of the *capable human being*. This represents a clear reference to the social sphere and a clear recognition of how the social and moral dimensions are within inner human life.

Multicultural humanism must nurture the life of our diversified communities, especially as the presence of foreigners tends to nourish the curiosity and beauty of the encounter, experience and exchange. Why? Because the struggle for personal emancipation is one with the struggle for the emancipation of public communication, community life, democracy and society. To overcome prejudice

against foreigners is to overcome prejudice against one's 'inner stranger', the 'extraneousness to oneself'. To consider a foreigner a 'stranger' with the same mixed sense of interrogation and rejection that predominantly parallels almost all uses of the word 'stranger', mirrors a generalised and short-sighted refusal to embrace strangeness, difference and alternativeness, to recognise its value, reality and dignity. Ricoeur grasps this point magnificently in his 2004 book, *The Course of Recognition*: 'We do not mistake ourselves without also being mistaken about others and our relations with them' (Id., 2005: 257). He is able to grasp and project this concept in a profound way thanks to a psychoanalytic lesson, which he studied and mediated extensively. The conquest and recognition of the inner human alterity is the first step in personal emancipation. This otherness is the regressive, instinctual or repressed alterity. The otherness is what we really are. The otherness is our uniqueness. To a certain extent, the search for personal (identity) emancipation is the search for the expression of our otherness uniqueness, and blind adherence to a due social form, to a due role, to a due national identity, to a due 'normality' (i.e. to follow the norm) and is exactly what denies the expression of our otherness and uniqueness. Those who do not wish to meet and welcome the stranger or foreigner do not wish to meet and welcome themselves. The thematic passage for mutual recognition is not the passage of secondary relevance, but rather is strictly linked, first, to the philosophy of the capable human being, secondly, to the idea of the dialectic of recognition as an emancipatory process and, thirdly, to emancipation as a process of recognition. It is thanks to *The Course of Recognition* that the dialectics between power and capacity, which constitutes the core of Ricoeur's philosophy of the capable human being, is connected with the emancipatory dialectics of recognition: that is, personal identity

comes from and depends on a process of emancipation through the dialectics of recognition.

The theme of recognition enters Ricoeur's philosophical discourse with the discovery of the 'conflict of interpretations' (in the 1960s). It emerges through the philosophical dialectics of Hegelianism and Freudianism as discussed in *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (1965). From the comparison between Hegel's phenomenology and Freud's psychoanalysis, Ricoeur derives the idea of subjectivity as a dialectical hermeneutic process that is continually stretched between the opposites of *archê* and *telos*, of the unconscious and the spirit, of necessity and freedom, and of destiny and history (Id., 1970: 459; see Busacchi, 2011 and 2015). In some way he tries to make a synthesis between Hegelianism and Freudianism, and this is how, for Ricoeur, the relationship between the Id and the ego becomes a sort of dialectic between domination and servitude. And it is precisely in it that the theme of recognition finds a way of speculative access, as revealed in book III, chapter III as well as in *The Conflict of Interpretations* (around the question of the subject). The grafting of the theme of recognition is favoured by the lesson of Alexander Kojève, with his interpretation of Hegel's struggle for recognition as expressed in his master-slave dialectical relationship, where Kojève focused on the element of desire. This is the essential field in which we find those theoretical and speculative elements that become central in Ricoeur's philosophy of the capable human being, that is, the relationship of oneself with his/her own otherness, the relationship of oneself with the other(s), the development of the self and the interpretation of personal identity as a dialectical process of recognition.

Conflict and crisis must be faced and challenged, in whatever form and whenever they arise. They are to be understood as

characteristic and progressive inevitable phenomena of both the human condition and the real world. Winning the challenge of conflict and crisis is the path of human emancipation in all senses: personal, cultural, civic, moral and social.

It is true that sometimes, this challenge has to do with a concrete menace of disharmony, evil and destruction which may come from the internal and the external life. But the logic of our discourse does not change. What changes is the sense that we are considering and experiencing each specific case, the object of fact that requires our emancipatory response and the emancipatory response of a society of principles, institutions and laws. Under a certain perspective even evil and violence are in part progressive forces in themselves. As Ricoeur underlines in his short essay on *Evil, a challenge to Philosophy and Theology* (1986), the problem of evil is not just a speculative problem; it demands convergence between thought, action (in a moral and political sense) and a spiritual transformation of feelings. On the level of thought, the problem of evil deserves to be defined as a challenge, and a challenge is always a check for always premature syntheses, and a provocation to think more and differently. Evil is first of all what should not be, but it must be fought and it is an integral part of each of us: if we reject evil as unrelated to our human condition, we reject an integral part of ourselves. By emphasising the practical and active struggle against evil, we are not losing the fact of suffering. In reverse, not only is every evil committed by someone badly suffered by another, but actively accepting all challenges connected to evil, as well as to conflict and crisis, means to suffer. Suffering is a quintessential part of the human condition[4].

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[4] As Ricoeur writes: 'The road to recognition is long, for the "acting and suffering" human being, that leads to the recognition that he or she is in truth a person "capable" of different accomplishments. What is more, this self-recognition

As a result of this combined reasoning, we can say that every personal or collective action which decreases the amount of conflict and violence exercised by persons against each other decreases the rate of suffering in the world and increases the level of personal and social emancipation.

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requires, at each step, the help of others, in the absence of that mutual, fully reciprocal recognition that will make each of those involved a "recognized being" (…)' (Ricoeur, 2005: 69).

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