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Education and modernity in Colombia: a reflection  
based on the postulates of Fernando Cruz Kronfly

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## Abstract

This article reflects on the concept of education as a crisis of animist thought and the essay as a manifestation of modernity from the volume of essays *La sombrilla planetaria* by Fernando Cruz Kronfly. Methodologically, the main essays of the text in which the concept of crisis is stated will be taken, to later analyze the Enlightenment and the rupture of thought that is presented through some essayist and literary postulates. An approach to the formal emergence of philosophy in Colombia is generated, taking as a reference the social, political and clerical context. It is concluded with a reflection on the incidence of the illustrated thought in the consolidation of an idea of modernity, and through the understanding of the work, in human terms and with a perception of its multidimensionality.

**Keywords:** cultural crisis, education, literary essay, humanism, modernity

## Introduction

This reflection is part of a research project<sup>1</sup> that is being developed at the Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, from the PhD in Language and Culture, called *Fernando Cruz Kronfly: La modernidad y posmodernidad; crisis in Colombia*, in the context of Latin America. His intention is to expose, reflect and question the concepts of modernity and crisis as current cultural meanings in Colombia, which are part of the tradition of thought in Latin America, and from which it is possible to identify some fractures in culture, according to the context in which they develop.

The exercise is elaborated through the exposition of a series of reflective postulates exposed by the author through his essays, and from which it is possible to understand the construction of the concept of modernity within the Colombian culture, the development of the crisis as a mechanism of rupture, generator of new possibilities of reflection and reconstruction that serve as a base to analyze some fragments of the Colombian realities. For this purpose, the concept of crisis developed by Cruz Kronfly is used, which is closely related to the Kantian minority, to which the essayist constantly refers in his proposal, as a trigger of the crisis, and as a possibility of questioning and understanding Latin American societies.

To think what is understood by modernity in Latin America, seen from the perspective of tradition, is a complex situation, a disruption. From the reflections presented by the Colombian writer Fernando Cruz Kronfly, it is possible to approach both concepts in the light of the social dynamics of Colombia and Latin America, since they are meanings that break down into practices projected from the social, economic and political structures with a long and winding process of transformation that is evidenced through conflicts and transformations in the subcontinent, which can be traced through the different countries through the anthropological, sociological and essayist work of thinkers and writers.

1. Contribution of the essayist work of Fernando Cruz Kronfly to the reflection on Modernity and its crisis in Colombia. Doctoral project in development, Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia. Tunja Section.

Circumstances such as the modernization manifested in an accelerated process of construction of cities and commercial exchange of products and objects imported from highly industrialized countries, are facts that are understood by the majority of the population as modernity. Architectural transformations that become the scenario of other social metamorphoses, but that do not manage to reach the essence of their value system and their thinking. Such is the problem that Fernando Cruz Kronfly enunciates from a poetics committed to reflection, with social alterations and with the Colombian and Latin American reflexive atmosphere.

In Cruz's words, in his essay *From Dostoyevsky to Pessoa: The Adventure of Modern Polyphony*, contained in *La sombrilla planetaria*, he exposes:

As difficult as it is to specify the scope of what is understood by modernity, it is possible to conclude that it is a process initiated - taken up by humanity from the Renaissance onwards in a geographical and cultural space, known as the European West. This process is related to the development and deepening of capitalism through its various stages (mercantile, manufacturing, industrial, etc.) understood not only as an economic and technical process, but as a social phenomenon with its corresponding spiritual and cultural implications [our translation] (2016:77).

That is to say, thinking that modernity has multiple edges that in no case are exhausted in circumstantial events of technical order manifested in industrial developments and economic outbursts; which is the process that is lived in different social spheres, from the budget that modernization, is synonymous of modernity.

### Education in the humanities as a manifestation of enlightened thought

Referring to Fernando Cruz Kronfly's essay implies rethinking a highly clerical and political culture that is even preserved to this day, from which resistance to enlightened thought is offered. It is an anti-modern mental conception that in no way can be overcome mechanically. It requires references that frame the reflection and that contribute other gazes and imaginaries, whose references help to question the own context, to rethink the culture and to take the

necessary distance, because it is not simply a matter of establishing comparisons between European modernity and Latin American modernity, ignoring the contextual particularities that surround each one of the geographical, technological, political, economic, social, and industrial phenomena that surround them. These in turn gave rise to the structures on which -among other elements- the economic and democratic organizations on which the ideas of State were consolidated during the 19th and 20th centuries, which were later recreated in Latin America, without being alien -mostly- to the approaches developed in Europe by Juan Jacobo Rousseau, Karl Marx or Max Weber. Therefore, Latin America became an important field of experimentation for European theories.

The essay is the result of reflection, hence speaking of an essay is also to trace the formal or informal foundations that generated the basis for establishing this tradition of thought. One of these lines is education, and specifically refers to the formal emergence of philosophy in Colombia. Hoyos (1999) proposes, following a historical sequence, that it is on March 20, 1946 when the Institute of Philosophy and Letters is created at the National University of Colombia. An event that is pointed out within the national academic history, as the beginning of modern philosophy in Colombia. Hoyos (1999), relates the expression of Rafael Carrillo (1907-1996), its founder, in a sort of historical synchrony. In the same way Rubén Sierra Mejía through Hoyos (1999) proposes:

I agree with those who consider "that something new arises from the 1940s with the appearance in our environment of the university cultivation of philosophy and of certain philosophical production", which allows us to speak of a kind of "rupture", which should not be understood "only as a change of doctrine, as a renewal in the topics of philosophical interest, but fundamentally as a change of attitude" [our translation] (Hoyos,1999:1).

With these antecedents, it is possible to trace the beginnings of modern philosophy in Colombia, which in turn allows us to propose the 1940s as a moment of crisis, a rupture that is taken as an axis, so that from these events we can recognize a historicity of philosophy in Colombia, and with it the generations of philosophers that constituted the philosophical tradition of the 20th century. This accentuates the

perspective of the modern nation in the measure that cultural relations are expanded and another configuration on the understanding of social processes is generated.

This progress in institutional matters is marked by a deep imprint of resistance to thought. This explains why, although Latin America is becoming an important field of experimentation for European theories, these do not manage to transform the essence of the animist, magical and clerical thought of the population. Fernando Cruz, in his essay "*El intelectual en la nueva Babel colombiana*" contained in the volume of essays *La sombrilla planetaria* exposes it like this:

We are therefore in a minefield, watching the pyrotechnics explode from all the hands that sowed in these five hundred years of life under the tutelage of the sacred heart, Montesquieu, Marx, Changó, the Elf, the witches, the Rock, the great Babel that we have built [our translation] (2016:64).

Synthesizing in this way the winding path of resignification and translation of mental representations in which a collective disillusionment is drawn, closely related to the fall of the great stories and despair, in times in which, as expressed by Cruz (2016), ideologies have been replaced by imagology, according to Milan Kundera's expression, which he takes up again in his analysis.

In Argentina, Ileana Beade, in her article on the idea of education: "*Una mirada desde la reflexión pedagógica kantiana*" refers to a series of observations developed within the framework of this philosopher's pedagogy, in order to show the fundamental character that the idea of education must assume in any pedagogical project. It problematizes this author's conception of a perfectible human nature and reflects on the idea of progress, which constitutes for Kant a fundamental principle of pedagogical work. In synthesis, the author points out that this philosopher conceives education as a process of formation essentially oriented to the construction of a critical subjectivity that develops the capacity to assume a rational and autonomous position in the debate about modernity.

Jorge Polo (2018) interprets the idea of education as a tool of combat, he goes through this concept in different historical contexts, emphasizing its link

with the "voice of reason", which is nothing other than the critical capacity that empowers human beings to autonomously construct their own judgments against the inertial weight of tradition and against the force of social consensus, that is, once again, he refers to education as a mechanism of enlightenment that allows self-regulation in relation to alienation.

Paulo Freire radicalizes in the twentieth century, this conception of education as an emancipatory tool. In his work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1978), Freire pointed out that the liberating commitment requires the active participation of the oppressed, through a consequent exercise that makes them lose their fear of freedom and autonomy, in order to gain the right to deploy their own "voice", which is the ultimate goal of liberating education, a way of creating free consciences; minds capable of not assimilating in a naive and uncritical manner the entire axiological framework of the educational system, when it is limited to mechanically repeating inherited knowledge without questioning it.

Maya (2014) in her analysis of Karl Polanyi, exposes how through her historical studies she denounced the traumatic arrival of industrial modernity, which, among other things, brought with it the alienation of human subjectivity, the subjugation of reason and self-regulation from the construction itself. In the same line, the Uruguayan thinker José Enrique Rodó (1900) in *Ariel*, a work that contains an exhaustive and critical analysis of some of the effects of the utilitarian conception of life which, seen from the field of formation, cannot fail to produce certain effects:

When certain very false and vulgarized concept of education, which imagines it exclusively subordinated to the utilitarian end, insists on mutilating, by means of this utilitarianism and a premature specialization, the natural integrity of the spirits, and longs to ban from the teaching every disinterested and ideal element, does not sufficiently see the danger of preparing for the future narrow spirits who, unable to consider more than the one aspect of reality with which they are immediately in contact, will live separated by icy deserts from the spirits who, within the same society, have adhered to other manifestations of life [our translation] (Rodó, 1900:72).

This intensely utilitarian development will generate as a result narrow spirits and a one-sided culture,

unilateral, incapable of contributing to society, because its only concern is to subordinate knowledge to productive logics. Santiago Castro - Colombian philosopher- in this same line and from his contemporary perspective, points out the present time as the niche of a cultural regime in which the capitalist system drinks the university that loses its north, to finish, folding to the imperatives of the global market; that is to say, the university stops being the nucleus of the knowledge that the illustrated thinkers projected, to become one more gear, to the service of the market.

Another situation that allows us to understand part of the scenario that is presented in Latin American countries, is related to the Hispanic tradition of which these peoples are heirs, because it cannot be lost sight that for the time of the Conquest, Spain was a colonial nation that conquered a colonial continent, he says it in a burlesque way, but not for that reason less valid and in force Gracián in *El criticón*: "Spain is the Indians of France" with what Latin America and Central America became the colony of a colony that pretended to be an imperial country. This brief discussion allows us to understand that the theme of modernity in Latin America is populated with historical paradoxes, since having been discovered and colonized precisely in the prelude to European modernity, South and Central America ended up becoming another in which some of the glimpses of political transformation were refracted, as a mirror, but in the midst of the same dynamic, these territories were deliberately kept at the margin of the main political processes, in the paradox of the sustenance of colonial power.

In sum, one of the most remarkable achievements of the Enlightenment was to have considered education one of the fundamental rights of the human condition, and linked to this, the idea that defines enlightened pedagogy as a route to individual and social progress is relevant. This position, which in the current era ended up being adapted to the functional instruction of economic societies, whose conception of education is linked to a practical and utilitarian sense, which overlooks criticism, an essential component for the enlightened, which meant a time and a new order in which education had to be one of the fundamental instruments of national construction, which in turn would guarantee a public education, without exclusions, universal, that would

face from the reason, the spirit of an epoch, its historical context, without folding blindly to the consensus.

## Modernity

This stage of thought in the history of the West is unfailingly linked to the concept of enlightenment, in such a way that Habermas:

When in 1802 Hegel addresses the systems of Kant, Jacobi, Fichte under the aspect of opposition between faith and knowledge in order to break the philosophy of subjectivity from within, he does not proceed, however, in a strictly immanent way. For this he surreptitiously relies on a diagnosis from the time of the Enlightenment [our translation] (Habermas 2008:35).

It is possible to identify that for Habermas the Enlightenment is the heart of Modernity, an epoch that through the multiple industrial and scientific developments, the subjectivity of thought is also gestated in it, and with it the possibility of becoming aware of its time and the need to understand the environment.

Habermas takes Hegel as a reference for his dissertations, he sees in him a philosopher who understands the complexity of his time and who problematizes diverse themes, allowing him to generate the construction of the concept of Modernity from the rationalization of society and culture, whose transformations are evident as time goes by. Not exactly a chronological time, but a transit of events and "traditional" or linear views of life, as opposed to new conceptions that necessarily differentiated the ways of thinking and conceiving the world, which gave rise to the modern world. Such modernization is necessary to understand it from the modifications in the thought, that does not close only around the structures of the rationality, but the values that reconfigure a way to be and to think the world, to reflect it, thus Habermas expresses such position through Hegel: "The aspiration of an identity not forced, the necessity of a unification different from the merely positive one, taken care of relations of force, comes guaranteed for Hegel by clear experiences of crisis". (Habermas, 2008:45).

The crisis can be understood as a series of ruptures and reorganizations in the light of the features of

Modernity, however, from Habermas's point of view, this becomes more acute in the attempt to outline the concept seems to be the cultural rupture that is generated after the failed attempt to oppose philosophy and religion or faith and knowledge from an enlightened reason. The balance developed by Habermas taking Hegel as a reference is desolate, because: "The positive has not been left standing against what reason undertook its fight, that is to say, religion, nor has reason been left standing". (Habermas 2008:35).

As expressed by Habermas (2008) the radical critique of reason pays a high price in a scheme of thought in which discourses neither want nor can give the reason for the motives and circumstances that move them. It is not possible to think of Modernity outside of some features of religious thought, whether heretical or dogmatic, and the incongruities they socially represent within a framework of truthful validity.

Another intention of approaching the concept of Modernity is enunciated by Habermas, relying on Max Weber, when he expresses the idea of this epoch as "Western rationalism", understanding the rational as a process of disenchantment that led Europe to the collapse of religious images that resulted in a profane culture.

Finally, it could be argued, taking Habermas as a reference, that Modernity is a system of thought of European origin, whose basis is Western rationalism that seeks to historically objectify rational structures, since this period does not refer to the dynamics of social modernization, but to a moment of historical lucidity in which each of the variants of the epoch is assumed in relation to its social, political, contextual circumstances; with its reality.

## The Crisis

The essayist work of Latin American thinkers contains, in an essential way, elements of escape from the crisis of the time in which Colombian and Latin American society has known during the second half of the XIX century, XX century and the present time of the XXI century. Transformations that have generated a bridge, so that such societies go from being strongly traditional to becoming "Modernizing

Paradises" where large segments of the population consume with the voracity of developed countries, trying to be equated with societies for which modernization is a consequence of their historical experiences and reflections, while in Colombia and the Latin American subcontinent, social imbalances and sharp economic contrasts refer to a Modernity that can be described more as epidermal than substantial, since it is a constant finding under its skin, behaviors that express habits of low civilizational content, detached from tradition, which lack sufficient cognitive and ethical-political bases do not manage to generate a framework as a cultural reference for the present. Fernando Cruz in his essay "Doce interrogantes sobre la modernidad y posmodernidad", contained in *La sombrilla planetaria*, in the question five poses: Is modernity then a failed project? Manifest:

(...) What has entered into crisis are perhaps the myths or meta-narratives that were built around them, blind faith in their virtues and possibilities. What has become evident is the lie that all this hid: history as a supra-subject or objective reason outside the world, granting all sense and as a great tribunal that replaced the court of God; progress as a myth of an ever greater material and moral perfection of humanity; Reason as an instrument of elimination and control of barbarism and inhumanity [Our translation] (2016:33).

Then, in the crisis, an attempt is made to move through an anomic world, at the margin of the values proper to Modernity: individualization, autonomous subjectivity, rationalism, democracy and secularization, among other values and historical developments that contain the very essence of this movement, ignoring that Modernity is above all a system of thought in which the spirit of an epoch is collected and manifested, in the process of symbolizing reality through different manifestations; the essay and the novel, for example, generate their own interpretative disposition, propitiating a degree of transcendence in which the word and the concept are recovered as tools with which thinkers and writers manifest and sustain the otherness, from contemporary positions and implications, which become successes in the task of understanding cultural identity.

This panorama is marked by a deep mark of resistance to thought, manifested in two centuries of clerical and political struggles that are safeguarded to this day. It is an archaic mentality, which is gradually being overcome mechanically, since it prevails, strongly rooted in the traditions of the time.

A second rupture that is worth studying is related to the concept of Modernity that was handled and is understood until our days, in different fields, particularly the academic ones. In speaking of this, there is a cultural imperative that immediately establishes a comparison between the concept and the experience of European, Latin American and Colombian modernity. It ignores the political, cultural, religious and ideological contexts that surround each geographic region. For example, on an instrumental level, creations such as the compass meant a change of paradigm in maritime exploration, and with time, colonial expansion and unusual growth of its economy.

At the level of thought, the printing press meant for Europe the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, which brought about changes in the economic structures and the conquest of democracy, gestated by the bloody wars of the 19th century, which arrived in America as a rumor that, although it was devastating for its political foundations, its social conformations and its population, it only began to be understood in Latin America until the second half of the 20th century, but completely decontextualized from the ideological base that marks its origin; In other words, they were alien to the approaches proposed in Europe by Jean Jacobo Rousseau, Karl Marx or Max Weber. This explains that, although Latin America becomes an important field of experimentation for the theories developed in Europe, these have no possibility of transforming the root of the animist, magical and clerical thought of the population, since its entry into forced, violent and cruel, paradoxically without a real mediation of reason.

On the other hand, Herbert Marcuse (1971) together with thinkers like Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, express an approach to culture from the consciousness of language and its practice from the intersubjectivity, manifested through the pedagogical action. The approach states that critical pedagogy does not extract its ideas directly from the theorists, but that its foundation is a proposal of

ractical analysis, whose main objective is precisely to critically theorize the educational phenomenon. It is worth taking up again the question five posed by Fernando Cruz, so is modernity a failed project? To the one who exposes:

It is not easy to conclude whether modernity has failed or not, and perhaps it is better to say that the best expression should not be that of failure or success, but simply of validity. It is rather plausible to put the issue in this way: to ask ourselves whether the great modern stories have the same capacity to unite around them the men of our time, and whether this loss of credibility and legitimacy has occurred equally in all countries. That is, if they are already worn out and discredited stories in which people no longer feel represented, modern stories and beliefs that are no longer part of their dominant representations or capable of giving meaning to existence [our translation] (2016:32).

This quotation put in the context of the discussion, allows us to understand that the issue of modernity in Latin America is populated with historical paradoxes, since having been discovered and colonized precisely in the prelude of European Modernity, South and Central America, ended up becoming deeply violent territories as a result of a dynamic of the use of force and systematic abuse where the strongest is imposed. A situation that would definitively mark the path to exercise power and a way to understand Latin American culture, of course the Colombian one.

### **The crisis of the traditional idea of man**

From the essayist work of Fernando Cruz Kronfly, in human terms, Modernity alludes to the multidimensionality of a being that lives in the midst of the crisis of civilization that contains social ruptures, individualism and a series of substantial contradictions, since science and technology, mobilizing and determining elements for the transformations developed during the last three centuries, triggered the development of the capitalist economic system, which in turn promoted the development of science at levels that man could not have imagined, that is, a modernizing process, which is often confused with modernity.

The power of the human species multiplied to unprecedented levels. However, such developments have served both to build and to destroy, for it cannot be forgotten that the world wars were the laboratories where science showed its most sophisticated devices, paradoxically to eliminate human beings, so it is necessary to question the concept of rationality and the transformation of the idea of man. Although it is true that, from the 18th century onwards, Western culture began to undergo important transformations that would have a direct impact on the way the individual positions himself in society, these events are distanced geographically, and moreover, closely linked to political environments.

Since the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, important transformations can be seen in Colombia, which are manifested through the export of agricultural products or the first electrical lighting installations. However, the development and expansion of such projects is still precarious, it is until the third decade of the 20th century that it manages to take consistency, when the strengthening of the national finances allows it, driven by the income derived from the export of coffee, and from a political phenomenon that was an economic milestone for the time; the United States compensation for the loss of Panama, with which foreign investment also appeared.

The latest events described show the entry of the United States into the Colombian economy, as a result of the process of capitalist expansion, but also manifests a modernizing process, which is extremely useful for the country in terms of economic development, and dignifying the quality of life of some populations, but in essence with respect to modernity, it says nothing. For there is no real ideological mobilization around these paradigmatic changes in terms of understanding or awareness.

The statements and other similar events in the economic and political sphere that are recreated in a highly religious environment are the reason why some philosophers of the time argue that it is not possible to speak of modernity in Colombia. One of the most recurrent thinkers on this subject is Rubén Jaramillo Vélez, who, since his structured essay *La modernidad posterada* (1998), has generated disturbing criticisms of the agro-industrial sphere,

-which basically boils down to the coffee trade- and which, without being the country's only export product, is the one that pays the most fruitful dividends, a situation that effectively drives the country's economic development, more than any other. This, without ignoring the importance that had in some regions of Colombia the extraction and commercialization of products such as rubber, bananas or oil.

Here, it is possible to associate another outstanding point for discussion, not only from the XVIII century, but it is still valid today, the demand of coffee from abroad was supplied by small lands that used to be family owned, a fact that directly affected the well being of the peasant, and strengthened the growing coffee industry, which in turn forced the development of better conditions in the transportation routes that allowed the mobilization of the great masses of production, but, is this modernity, how can a crisis of thought be generated from these events?

Obviously not. The material transformation of the spaces was extremely opportune for the industrial development of the country, but while in Colombia some railroads were being developed, making rubber exploitation on a scale, the United Fruit Company was taking possession of some zones of the country with the approval of the government of the moment, Europe was witnessing the death of God, the philosophical and juridical conformation of the civil society, and the mentioned secularization of the spirit. It is there where the reflection of Fernando Cruz Kronfly is installed. In the midst of a slow process full of contradictions and paradoxical results, where the discussion is centered on the division and fragmentation of man, he manifests in literature through *El Fausto*, in his essay "Cultura de la modernidad y crisis social" what could mean in Cruz's terms a transformation that illustrates when expressing that society was: "With one foot in the previous universe and the other in the modern mud" (2016:15).

In the face of modernization, Colombia was left to generate a financial platform to strengthen the national industry, which was growing significantly. This indisputably led to the improvement of the national infrastructure clearly manifested in the construction of railroads. But in that same panorama a series of difficulties appear that mobilize a growing

mass of peasants to the most important cities, who arrive with the hope of improving their work conditions, with this a new society is constituted, that seeks to be employed in the construction of railroads, highways, textile factories, breweries, food and in the growing demand of the coffee market, from each one of its possibilities of exploitation.

Among other alternatives, this development of the industry was responsible for massive settlements in small cities, unable to absorb this excessive increase in population, which generated a growing panorama of misery, overcrowding, prostitution, insecurity, begging and criminality, which is reflected in the Colombian literature of the time, as a record of the human crisis to which the population, in search of progress and proclaimed development, joins the peasant diaspora to small population centers that lack the capacity to host them, on the contrary, devours them. Fernando Cruz expresses it in the following way:

Intellectuals, businessmen and businessmen assumed in our country the spirit and progressive action of capitalist modernity, while the rest of the population of landowners and laborers managed to hang from the tail of the car, with their faces covered with charcoal and their eyes blinded by the thick smoke, without understanding almost anything of that journey. In our country, let's use the metaphor, the car in front went almost empty. For not even the bourgeoisie as a whole was organically incorporated into spiritual modernity in the full and true sense [our translation] (Cruz Kronfly, 2016:15).

The face of modernity as a system of secular thought that was gaining strength in Europe does not exist in these growing cities; on the contrary, numerous testimonies of a literary and historical character, expose how the masses of the population in Colombia blindly obey in the name of religion, incapable of investigating reflectively, this with the approval of the small groups of the newly formed bourgeoisie, who had already established a population segmentation, and who are not interested in the masses being ideologically formed, since that would imply having the ability to access understanding, therefore, the tools to transform their lives and future which obviously demands, also in Kant's terms, coming of age.

In these terms, Cruz's acerbic sentence is understandable: "We have the right to enjoy the benefits of development and to have a designated place in society, the kind of dependent development, read "backwardness" or "underdevelopment" (2016:21). This is a crisis that expresses, in the midst of the process of modernity, the inability of Colombians to question and propose new structures of thought governed by reason. Men charmingly accept the products of progress, which are also limited openness in the general population, but this is a puerile fascination that is reduced to the utility and enjoyment of the moment. Ironically, it is a childish fascination by which businessmen, and city dwellers, will be equated with a group of children having unnoticed fun, without understanding the magnitude of the political and historical events they attend.

This indifferent behavior is characteristic of Colombian society that is transfigured, a look that is alien to the changes and functioning of the world that is generally adapted from ignorance, with the fascination exercised by the growing possibility of access to the objects provided by modernization, but exhausted there, that is, Totally insensitive to the implications of the appearance of these elements in their lives, and with no interest in understanding the political phenomenon, a situation that explains why modernity is not incorporated, or enters passively into the mentality of the citizens, who in the absence of education, and therefore of questioning, are incapable of transforming their cosmovision to the rhythm of the cities. This with the approval of the State and the Church, who, through ignorance and guilt respectively, strove to train minds for obedience, denying them the possibility of constituting themselves as citizens, by denying them the possibility of exercising autonomous and free thought. Growing up, coming of age.

### **Characterization of the crisis of the Modern man**

Modern man in the times of late modernity takes his reference, not in the assumptions of the death of God, but in the crisis of man, of the human. As the driving force of modernity, it is important to think about education, and it is not possible to think of it outside of the crisis of modernity, of its modern

decline. Joan-Carles Mélich (2001), makes an approach to George Trakl, and exposes that the truly characteristic of late modernity, is not so much the death of God but the crisis of the human, of the man. From this postulate, he also maintains that it is not possible to think of education without some idea of the subject, but neither can one think of it outside of the crisis of modernity, of its modern decline. Ideas through which a meeting point is generated that can be called a crisis, a task that in itself involves a great difficulty, to the extent that a permanent crisis is experienced, manifested in doubt, skepticism and suspicion.

Robert Musil, in his novel *El hombre sin atributos* (1930), states that one should not pay tribute to the name of the city that is subject to risk, lethargy, collisions and imbalances, it is evident that the poetic subject does not conceive of language from an ethical point of view, he creates his own language from which he is capable of naming otherness from the point of view of aesthetics, narrative and poetry, in synthesis, Musil states, the ethical subject is a poetic subject that sees the crisis in which philosophers, artists and literati are created and recreated.

*La caravana de Gardel*, by Fernando Cruz Kronfly (1998), is a work that allows a deep reflection on the contemporary dimensions of modernity, manifested in the spaces, thought, and in general, the life of the characters. This constitutes the essential spatial and temporal basis for the understanding of the crisis of the new subjects, already city dwellers, who must face the new challenges that burst into daily life in an untimely manner. Multiple novels of national literature show in a masterful way the x-ray of the city and the early appearance of humanized piltrafas that face the vicissitudes of the excesses from certain noisy identity generated by bars, tango and cafés, in opposition to the silent rural life. In the novel *La caravana de Gardel* (1998), a magnificent example is presented that can be evidenced through the following quote:

Without knowing the causes and in spite of his acceptable general state, Arturo Rendón already felt very depressed by the weight of the world. He suspected he had fallen in the power of a strange unbalance of the soul, caused by a sadness with no return that gradually he considered

insurmountable because of his character, so fond of the essential in spite of the rustic origin of his spirit. He felt in his own way that he had been touched by the hopelessness of the times and felt covered with fog from head to feet [our translation] (Cruz Kronfly,1998:8).

This fragment of the novel *La Caravana de Gardel* is a window to the understanding of the distress experienced by a foreign muleteer in the city, who represents the peasants voluntarily or involuntarily displaced from their territories, without social, academic or economic conditions to survive in them. With those who wander with the purpose of finding peace and a new life. Here the novel opens a new variant of this phenomenon, which has a special nuance for some Colombian societies, the music, particularly the tango, as a manifestation of singularity, as a reflection of an almost incomprehensible inner search, but which the character feels deeply, as Cruz Kronfly affirms: "The tango says so much about me, that he and I have been converted into the same thing (...) By the mere fact of going down into the waters of the brothel everyone was converted equally into a herd of poor sons of bitches (Cruz,1998:9).

In this particular case it is evident in the first place, the openness to the city manifested in the bars, music, and brothels; that is, the marginal manifestations of the agglomerations in the big cities, which little by little takes shape, that seeks a way to manifest itself and to calm an urban population that has been constituted by an immense mass of peasants who have migrated to the populated centers, in the decade of the twenties, masses of peasants who have been disturbed by the bustle of an excluding progress that allows them to inhabit: "grumbling before the modern transformation of values and sensibilities, to come and take refuge in the agony that arose from the tango" (Cruz,1998:11), which could well be any other manifestation of the internal search, of man's restlessness in the city, that without theorizing without understanding anything about modern theories, is known as a dissonant mass, stunned by the society in which it lives, lacking dreams, obsessed and anxious to find something that gives meaning to its life, that shapes the world.

In theoretical terms, the project of successful modernity has no place, because there was no place for the population group represented by Arturo Rendón - the protagonist of *La Caravana de Gardel*-

to integrate it into society, or into understanding. On the contrary, it is a process of transformation of the spaces, of the countryside, of the city, that throws him into the fatality of the bars, the streets, the lack of love, the restlessness, the nonsense, and therefore, to the anxious search of a space in an entrenched city that swallows him.

In this sense, and transcending the physical spaces of the city, Cruz Kronfly opens a new perspective of understanding modernity, the sounds of the city are silenced to give way to interior life, to a series of questions of such magnitude, that they seem to reduce the context to a decorative element, but that at the same time operates questioning very fragile elements of the subjectivity of their relationship in society:

At the beginning of the 20th century, a process that dates back to the end of the 19th century, a very significant and disturbing crisis arose with respect to the dichotomous idea of man [...] the Western tradition, essentially the Judaeo-Christian one, brought to its maximum expression the Greek principle according to which man was the bearer of two principles: the superior one related to reason; and the inferior one, related to the body, the sensory appetites and the so-called irrational processes [our translation] (Cruz Kronfly, 2016:115).

The noisy sound of the cities moves towards the interior of the man generating the rupture, the crisis, the articulation of the music with the isolated bodies where the agitation and the movement are extinguished. The inner turmoil appears, the confrontation between the religious conceptions of guilt and the sensory appetites that are on the fringe of religious approval, but which flap their wings inside man, to the agitated by the bustle of modernization, illustrating the process of the irruption of modernity in the country.

A sleepy subject that is forced to attend and signify the events he attends and to question his nature in a traditional environment, as a manifestation of modernity and as a possible implication of its emergence in a rural country where peasants and the poor attend a process of modernization, obsessed but in a condition of exclusion. In such a way, modernization does not guarantee freedom of thought, but, above all, in Colombia, it does not support the enlightenment of the less favored classes, thus increasing the social abyss and preventing them from leaving the "minority" referred to by Kant.

## Conclusions

The concept of crisis is broad, of rupture, which appears implicitly and explicitly referenced in the work of Fernando Cruz Kronfly, both in his essays and in his novels. The concept of crisis that the author develops, questions in great measure the incapacity of the citizens to move away from the common doctrine of the time and to critically establish their own construction that does not passively accept the products of modernization and progress.

To understand the crisis of Colombian society, Cruz Kronfly operates as a critic, in the strictest Kantian sense, making use of his "coming of age" therefore, questioning the relevance of political frameworks and religion as coercive elements. He fully assumes the role that Kant assigns to the modern intellectual, outlining the fundamental problems of the established order, and warning of the dangers of the crisis that modernization represents.

In general terms, the work of Cruz Kronfly portrays the modern crisis, manifested not in the nascent city as opposed to rural life, but in human questioning, in the inner rupture that is generated in individuals, in mental modernity, regardless of their social-intellectual condition. For it is a reflective possibility that becomes abysmal when confronted with the vacuum of understanding, but also with the uneasiness and senselessness of the one who does not understand, but must face a rarefied environment in which he feels; which is the case of considerable groups of peasants and provincials who arrive in the central, more industrialized, more important cities in search of work opportunities, but the city has gradually become an organism incapable of absorbing the immense population expelled from the countryside to the periphery by the social constants.

Fernando Cruz questions and establishes reflective thinking through his works. He warns of the inconvenience of modernization empty of understanding that subsumes even more certain sectors of the population in their lethargy, passively adapting them to contemplation and the desire for progress, without transcending material existence to the order of new ideas. In this sense, modernity further deepens the gaps between different social groups, since to the extent that a small group understands the dynamics of legislation at its

convenience and incorporates modifications in the organization and legislation, for example, common citizens with a minimum of critical development are incorporated into the transformations through social dynamics, but they hardly take notice of the changes in objective, rational, critical and conscious terms.

To that extent, the role of academia in the humanities should include the promotion of readers who turn their gaze to critical environments, who are interested in enriching interpretations of the cultural production of their thinkers, who problematize the spectrum of interpretation of context, and who recognize the relevance of research development in an academic and reflective environment.

From the essayist work of Cruz Kronfly, and in human terms, Modernity alludes to a multidimensional human being who gestates and lives a crisis of civilization and gathers around him a series of individualistic social ruptures, a fact that sums him up in substantial contradictions, since science and technology; mobilizing and determining elements for the transformations developed during the last three centuries, triggered the development of the capitalist economic system, which in turn promoted the development of science at levels that man could not have imagined.

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