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Cita:

Ortiz-Delgado, F. M. (2023). *The Philosophy of Trans-Historic-History Followed by President López Obrador*. *Revista de Filosofía de la Universidad de Costa Rica*, 62 (163), 75-85.

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Francisco Miguel Ortiz Delgado

# The Philosophy of Trans-Historic-History Followed by President López Obrador

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**Resumen:** *Los escritos y discursos del presidente mexicano Andrés Manuel López Obrador (2018-2024) se han caracterizado por una referencia constante a una historia teleológica. Empleando las propuestas de Karl Löwith, analizamos la idea liberal-progresiva sobre la historia que el presidente plantea, proponiendo que al respecto éste ha seguido una cierta filosofía especulativa de la historia, a la cual denomino filosofía de la Trans-Hito-Historia.*

**Palabras clave:** *Política mexicana, Cuarta Transformación, López Obrador, Löwith, Filosofía de la historia.*

**Abstract:** *The writings and speeches of the Mexican president Andrés Manuel López Obrador (2018-2024) have been characterized by a constant reference to a teleological history. Using Karl Löwith's proposals, I analyse the president's liberal-progressive idea of history and I propose that in this respect he has followed a certain speculative philosophy of history, which I call philosophy of Trans-Historic-History.*

**Keywords:** *Mexican Politics, Fourth Transformation, López Obrador, Löwith, Philosophy of history.*

## Introduction

I propose that President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's idea of history follows a particular "speculative philosophy of history" because he assigns to history a transcendental *trans-historical telos*, namely, the attainment of a "Human Benefit", that is, López Obrador's idea of history assigns an intrinsic and a priori moral quality to some past human events. To argue this, I mainly analyse two books written by López Obrador (2018 *la salida* and *Neoporfirismo*) and two speeches delivered by the politician (in 2020 and 2021); I also employ some journalistic articles that have described the president's utterances and politics.

More precisely, I call "philosophy of the Trans-Historic-History" to the "speculative philosophy of history" that López Obrador follows.

- i) I understand "historic-history" as a set of historical events that are interpreted as the (most) important and the (most) transformative events from all the human past, or from a particular period of the human past<sup>1</sup>.
- ii) I understand "Trans-Historic-History" as the historic events interpreted as a totality that has an inherent a priori specific (ontological) sense and logic, where this sense and this logic encompass more than the



past as both are projected to the present and the future.

I deduce that the sense-logic of López Obrador's Trans-Historic-History has a clear *telos*: the "Benefit to the People". Where "Benefit" must be understood as the improvement and advantage in social, political, economic, and cultural conditions<sup>2</sup>. And where "People" refers to *the majority of the population* of Mexico (the so called humble, poor, and morally benign citizens). López Obrador's ideology follows the Mexican intellectual Alfonso Reyes in the idea that the "People" are the (only) real sustentation for the laws and the Constitution in any democracy; the People is the promoter and sole legitimate architect of all the modifications and reforms of the laws (Reyes 2018, 18)<sup>3</sup>. We must also consider that the president ordered in 2018 to re-print Reyes's "Moral Primer" (first published in 1952), a text described as a secular sermon that has, without doubt, Christian roots (Vargas 2019, 112).

## Chronologies

In this section I will make explicit how López Obrador's use of a certain chronology of Mexican history means following a particular philosophy of Trans-Historic-History. The president considers that the Contemporary history of Mexico (whose starting point has been, by political and historiographical tradition, September 16, 1810) has been marked by Three great Transformations, all of them *beneficial* to the People; where this last characteristic of the transformations could and can be interpreted as transcendental and trans-historical, as I already mentioned.

The first of the so-called Transformations is the Mexican Independence War, started in 1810 and ended in 1821. The second beneficial Transformation is the Reform War or Three Years War which began in 1858 and ended in 1861. The third benign Transformation is the Mexican Revolution which began in 1910 and ended, according to some historians, in 1917. This periodization of "important" events and processes in Mexico

is a fundamental part of the philosophy of the Trans-Historic-History that the politician follows because it reflects a vision that considers three specific processes as evidence that there is a *telos* in (Mexican) history. Such periodization is fundamental to *prove* that there is a historical and transhistorical Benefit to the People. The three processes are estimated by the president as developments that were intrinsically and transcendently beneficial to the people in the economic, social, political, and cultural spheres.

López Obrador provides an interpretation of three well-known politico-military processes of Mexican history in which all of them acquire inherently moral outcomes. In this interpretation such outcomes are the evidence that "proves" that his country is advancing, infallibly, towards an increasingly better historical period for the People. That is, we have a trans-historical conception of history because it is assigned to history a *telos* that goes beyond the human past by projecting itself to the present and to the future; it is sure that such *telos* will recurrently appear in the future. Based on these ideas, the politician declared (before 2018) that his socio-political movement and his (then future) victory in the elections of the first of July 2018, would generate a Fourth Transformation, a transformation that would comply with the mentioned *telos* assigned to history, namely, the Benefit to the People.

One of the first explicit mentions that I found about the teleological idea of a Fourth Transformation for Mexico was in June 2016, when López Obrador said: "We have to push the idea about locating our current movement among the great transformations of Mexico. Independence, Reformation, Revolution", "If we are in this struggle it is because we want to change the regime, to substitute this corrupt regime of injustices and privileges", "What we want is to establish a true democracy, with social dimension, with justice. This is the ultimate objective and, I repeat, we need to know what our ancestors have accomplished in other epochs" (as quoted in Zavala 2016)<sup>4</sup>.

Let us provide an analogy. The history of the United States of America would follow a philosophy of Trans-History or Trans-Historic-History if it is interpreted as having three (or

more) great Transformations that are estimated as the drivers *par excellence* of a transcendental and trans-historical *telos*. If such *telos* is the sociopolitical Benefit to the People, then all the Transformations must had been beneficial to the People. We could imagine that a philosophy of the Trans-History of the United States can argue some beneficial transformations for this nation, let's say for instance, The War of Independence of the Thirteen Colonies or American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), the Civil War (1861-1865) and the Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to 1968. To conceive a philosophy of the Trans-Historic-History these three processes would be considered as the (deterministically) *necessary* beneficial transformations of the United States, which *necessarily* helped the American population to improve its economic, political, social, and cultural situation.

Doing a contrafactual exercise, suppose that a popular politician appears in the United States and promotes a sociopolitical movement that, following the philosophy of the Trans-History of the United States described in the previous paragraph, considers that he will achieve a (ontologically necessary) Fourth Transformation beneficial for his country and its entire population. This movement, which implies the aprioristic assignment of a progressive goal for history, would be progressive and moral in nature. It would be a very different political movement (and, for some, morally superior) to the Make America Great Again movement, insofar as the latter *mostly* refers to a recovery of the glorious American past without pursuing an advancement, progress and/or benefit for all the people (but seeking benefits for only one kind of people, specifically the “whites”)<sup>5</sup>.

In López Obrador's vision, the history of Mexico has also periods of socio-economic, cultural, and moral decline. After the War of Independence (that is, after 1821), the retrograde Mexican Empire of Agustín de Iturbide and the authoritarian dictatorship of Antonio López de Santa Anna appeared. López also considers that after the liberal-republican restoration of the nineteenth century (that is, after 1876) it came the anti-democratic and dictatorial regime of Porfirio Díaz. In his book *Neoporfirismo*

(2014) López Obrador says in this respect the following: “In general, the ideas of the epoch [the “Porfirian” epoch from 1876 to 1910] gave little importance to democracy” and gave no attention to “the necessary [power] balances so that a person or a minority do not take power indeterminately”. For the politician there is another period of decadence at the beginning of the 1980's, a period where the kleptocracy of the neoliberal or neo-Porfirian prospered (roughly: 1982-2018). Thus, López Obrador's vision of history is progressive but accepts the appearance of multiple setbacks.

For a better understanding of the Mexican “transformations” I quote part of Virginia Aspe Armella's (2020, 399) analysis:

[There are] two topics in the [history of] independent Mexico that are key to the fourth transformation of the country: first, the lost opportunity of the liberalism of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to mature in democratic values and republican institutionalization, when it became a positivist philosophy imposed by the [Díaz's] regime (...)

Second, to point that the postrevolutionary thought of Mexico did not completely implemented de social rights sought by the [revolutionary] movement. Philosophically speaking, socialism went from a revolutionary anarchism to a Marxism of school foundations and university chair (...) the social rights of the third transformation were proclaimed [only] to the letter and in the subsequent priista [adjective to refer the political party PRI (Revolutionary Institutional Party)] rhetoric, but they were postponed for the deep Mexico by a political corporativism that maintained the old protectionism through the subordination of the most necessitous social groups.

I furthermore suggest, following the proposals of the “philosopher of history” Karl Löwith, that the president's idea of progress is one that has a metaphysical nature insofar as it belongs to the modern idea of progress which is “as Christian by derivation as it is anti-Christian by implication”, and “is an eschatological anticipation of

a future salvation and consequently a vision of the present state of mankind as one of depravity” (Löwith 1949, 87). For López Obrador, when a beneficial process-transformation ends there will be a new damaging-decadent period containing events and individuals harmful to the People, and then a new benign transformation is needed. For example, the political situation in Mexico during the neoliberal period, from 1988 to 2018, has been described by the politician as one full of moral depravity, so in need for a new benign transformation. The history is not conceived by the president as progress without setbacks, it is like that upward spiral described by the famous philosopher of history Giambattista Vico: the sense of history is circular, but at the same time progressive. López Obrador’s perspective of Mexican (and world) history is constantly optimistic because the politician estimates that, in the end, the will and desires of the People will triumph.

It must be outlined that in López Obrador’s vision there seems to have been few, or none, beneficial transformations before 1810 inside the territory of what is now Mexico (or at least, to my knowledge, he has not mentioned them explicitly). The politician has not spoken of trans-historical transformations during the Colony or during the Pre-Hispanic Era; ontologically, it seems that the Mexican Nation appeared until Mexico became independent from Spain. The Three Great Mexican Transformations imply an exclusive benefit to the Mexican People, then it is understandable that there are no analogous processes before the appearance of “Mexico” and the “modern” Mexicans. Therefore, there are no clear beneficial Transformations during (or before) the three hundred years of Spanish colonial subjection (1521-1810). For example, for the president the Tepanec War (1428-1430), the Aztec-Purépecha wars (circa 1470-1480), the Spanish “Conquest” of the Aztec Empire (1519-1521), the Mixtón Insurrection (1540-1542), The Chichimeca War (1550-1590), etc., (even though they implied sociopolitical changes) do not seem to be Beneficial Transformations, they did not bring benefits to any “People”.

## Politics and morals in López Obrador’s Trans-Historic-History

It is notable that the three historical processes considered by López Obrador as Three Beneficial Transformations for Mexico are processes predominantly political and war related. These characteristics of the Transformations evidence an interpretation of history as a transcendental and moral group of political events that are considered “milestones”. Such interpretation follows the historiographical tradition that considers that politics is the area *par excellence* for implementing any benefit to the nation.

The study of politics and war to explain the changes of a State is a trend that comes from Greco-Roman antiquity, practiced by historians and philosophers like Polybius, Xenophon, Titus Livy, or Cicero. These scholars understood politics as the only medium to improve the conditions of the dispossessed, the most oppressed classes, etc. Congruent with this, the Mexican politician frequently repeats an idea in his speeches: the fight against corruption in the country must begin in the “upstairs” of power. “(...) we are going to clean up the government, from top to bottom, like we do sweep the stairs” López said in September 2017 (as quoted in Brooks 2017), in a forum at the Woodrow Wilson Center.

It should be observed that for the president each one of the Three Transformations, the Independence, the Reform, and the Revolution, seem to be beneficial in the same measure; the results of the three have contributed equally to the advancement of the nation. In addition, the three processes have been described as co-starred by the People. Thus, López Obrador’s unconditional trust towards an intrinsic benignity of the People is evident: “the People are always right” because, in the long run, they always triumph. The obradorist<sup>6</sup> Trans-Historic-History demonstrates this last argument. Then, the achievement of democracy and People’s wellbeing is the ontological sense-meaning or logic that the *Trans-Historic-History* follows. If some members of the People are wrong (like those members of the lower classes who supported the conservatives during the Reformation), it is because they have



been manipulated. López has an unshakable and pure faith in the People and in their morality. Ergo, he trusts that the People, most of the time, will follow the metaphysical and aprioristic sense (the progressive, beneficial, and always morally correct sense) of the Trans-Historic-History. This interpretation of history is theological-metaphysical as, following Löwith (1949, 99), “The leading idea of a temporal progression toward a final goal in the future” implies a “theological interpretation of history as a history of fulfilment and salvation”.

The People need leaders to update and promote the achievement of the goals of the Trans-Historic-History. Therefore, López Obrador considers past figures, or symbols, such as Miguel Hidalgo (1753-1811), Benito Juárez (1806-1872) and Francisco I. Madero (1873-1913), as the main leaders who have helped the Mexican People in actualizing-materializing their own wishes, that is, the wishes of the Trans-Historic-History. The three figures were, in different determined moments, the instrument of the People and the Trans-Historic-History. Hidalgo is considered the designer of the progressive objectives of the Revolution of Independence, Juárez the designer of the benign objectives of the Reformation, and Madero the designer of the democratic objectives of the Revolution.<sup>7</sup>

López Obrador also finds in Mexico’s past various “leaders” who were characterized by their anti-democratic measures and their actions against the interests and benefit of the People. Those politicians, enemies of the People, have been Antonio López de Santa Anna during most of the first half of the 19th century, Porfirio Díaz from 1884 to 1911, and Carlos Salinas de Gortari, from 1988 to 1994 (or still until today). The former president Salinas is particularly and harshly criticized by the current president (considering Salinas almost as his nemesis): López Obrador declared in his book *2018 la salida* (2018, 23) that in Mexico “inequality ascended during the Salinas administration, when the transfer of public goods to particulars was more intense and blatant (...). With Salinas, the imbalance between rich and poor deepened as never before. Salinas is the father of modern inequality. It is clear, then,

that privatization is not the panacea” to solve the Mexican problems.

It is evident that Santa Anna, Díaz, and Salinas, have been the three mains, symbolic, instigating leaders(-villains) of the obstruction of the Mexican trans-historic-historical *telos*: their policies prevented the correct arrival of the Benefit of the People and, in fact, contributed to the Evil or Damage of the People. We have here an argument that complements López Obrador’s meta-narrative of history, one that also is essentially modernist. Such meta-narrative or modernist interpretation of history is clearly “rooted in the original Christian experience of time” through “its tacit assimilation of the idea of an orientation in the lines of continuity between different historical epochs. This assimilation becomes manifest through the profound affinity in the interpretation of historical time as development toward a goal that persists among all the changes” (Barash 1998, 71). In López Obrador’s meta-narration it is clear who are the benefactors and who the opposers of the advancement of history’s metaphysical *telos*/sense.

According to the liberal politician, one of the most outstanding obstacles to Mexican Trans-History’s goal were the nineteenth-century conservatives, that is, the members of the faction who, due to their refusal to accept the Reform Laws, would provoke the War of the Three Years (1858-61) and the Second French Intervention (1862-67). Once the liberals defeated in 1867 the conservatives and the interventionists, the country experienced a period of pacification; there were pardons and appeasement that allowed Mexico to continue advance. Analogously, López Obrador assured (2020) that he would not carry out political persecution, that he would implement his Fourth Transformation peacefully. “Our main legacy will be to purify the public life of Mexico. And we are moving forward: we have not undertaken factious persecutions or political revenge”. Politics and democracy, not authoritarianism, are the new means to achieve a Fourth Transformation in Mexico.

In this respect, in September 2020 the president gave the following speech:

Since Francisco I. Madero, never has a president been so attacked as now; Conservatives are angry that there is no more corruption and that [therefore] they lost [their] privileges. However, they enjoy absolute freedom of expression, and this is proof that freedoms and the right to dissent are guaranteed today. Political repression is in the past.

We are bringing the Fourth Transformation of the public life of Mexico and it is pertinent to remember that the first three transformations, the Independence, the Reform, and the Revolution, had to be achieved by the way of the arms. Now we are doing it peacefully. There is opposition to the government, as it should exist in any true democracy, but the majority of the inhabitants of Mexico approve our [political] administration. (López Obrador 2020)

Morality is then essential to the proper development of a nation according to López Obrador; the pursuit of correct morals by the government and leaders is what leads (to) the Progress of the country. But what moral is correct for the president? I suggest that it is not possible to give a conclusive answer to this question because the politician has not given a precise assessment of what he understands by “moral” or “correct”. However, it is possible to describe his morality; he professes an amalgamation of an enlightened-liberal moral, a Christian moral, and a humanistic moral. It can be sustained that he follows a moral that comes from the Enlightenment, if we pay attention to his multiple references to human Progress as the Good, as a moral act, where Progress “had to assume the function of providence, that is, to foresee and to provide for the [best] future” (Löwith 1949, 86). It can be sustained that he has a liberal moral, if we consider that he estimates the fight for the progress as a moral act. We understand that he follows the Christian moral because he constantly talks of justice, charity, or love, known Christian virtues, as objectives and means to achieve a better country. And from the multiple references to equality and dignity as goods for all humans, we have in the president the possession of a humanistic

moral that appreciates the struggle for equality and/or dignity as a morally correct action (and where ethics are intrinsically linked to politics, because politics without ethics would not allow “to have a presentable society. That is, [a] democratic [society]. Otherwise, there will be politics, but not ethics” (Beuchot 2019, 81)).

### **Is there a messianism in López derived from his idea of Tran-Historic-History?**

If we estimate that for López Obrador history is transhistorical and teleological, that it has a transcendental *moralistic telos*, therefore is possible to ascertain that such politician possesses messianic qualities for, among others, the following reason: the politician has been himself the author of discernments of what has been “correct” and “incorrect” in the Mexican history, but his transcendental idea of history automatically extrapolates his moral assumptions and pushes him to make the “messianic” discernment (ultimately achieved through the study of history) of what will be “correct” and “incorrect” in the future of Mexico.

But López is not a real messiah, nor he considers himself as one; he only fulfills the objectives of a social scientist who, through the study of a society, pursues a prognosis of such society. To understand this we must solidly take into account that “Modern social theory pretended to be scientific, in the sense of explaining rather than evaluating social patterns (...) Each of the theories has embedded in it a definite orientation towards an *end* [a telos]”, “whether they like it or not, social theories are also political theologies and the geopolitical analyses they motivate are geopolitical theologies” (Mansueto 2010, 21-22). The political and deliberative predictive activities of the Mexican president are not achieved by divine illumination as in a real religious prophet, but by a secular rational reflection based on various historical research (and personal experiences): thus, he is not a real messiah. At most, we could identify López Obrador’s vision of history with Löwith’s “projection of Christian

eschatology into history” (Barash 2019, 38), in other words, López Obrador’s (cosmo)vision is another (failed?) secularization of the eschatological-teleological Christian interpretation of world history.

Another quasi-religious characteristic of López Obrador’s politics is found in his non-acceptance of other truths-interpretations of the future and/or the “good” for Mexico; he does not accept versions of the past/present that opposes his modernist-liberal interpretation of history. That is, as in some religions, he *seems* not accepting other definitions-descriptions of happiness, salvation and/or illumination (for the whole country, for some of the autonomous communities of the country, or for the whole humanity). He *seems* to accept only one way to achieve the *telos* of the Mexican Trans-Historic-History: a moralizing anti-corruption policy, that is also *liberal*, and loving-peaceful-reconciling in nature<sup>8</sup>, and a anti-neoliberal anti-conservative policy. An example of this ideas is the president’s declaration of not accepting a strategy of a strong-direct fight against the organized crime<sup>9</sup>. For the president there is only *one way for the Benefit of the Mexican People*. This is a quasi-religious characteristic that, nevertheless, does not allow to consider him a messiah in pure politico-religious terms: as far as I know, there is no political and/or social group in Mexico that seriously considers López as a Savior, Prophet, or Messiah, not even among his most fervent supporters in his political party (MORENA).

In short, I propose that the president has no messianic politics even though he has 1) a particular interpretation of history, which allowed him 2) the establishment of what is (universally) moral and immoral for the People and, therefore, allowed him 3) to acquire the knowledge of what (supposedly) is the best, or most beneficial, future of Mexico; all of which led him to develop a 4) certain intolerance for the political methods (and for his advocates) that oppose his anti-corruption/liberal/loving-nonauthoritarian/reconciliatory way to achieve the *telos* of the Trans-Historic-History in Mexico.

With what has been said so far, it is possible to criticize the shallow, simplistic and biased analysis of some commentators such as,

among others, Enrique Krauze, who affirmed that the liberal politician was a “tropical messiah” (2006). Krauze’s “arguments” to sustain his declaration are the following: López Obrador A) implemented “populist” measures such as the institutionalization of financial aid to older adults, the rapid creation of multiple high schools in Mexico City, and the creation of a “low quality” university (the Autonomous University of Mexico City), B) resorted to “social polarization”; C) he proposed more humane and egalitarian politics, D) proposed a “republican austerity”, E) declared that the “Law that is not just is not useful”, or that “A law that does not impart justice does not make sense”, F) was photographed with a book about the life of Thomas Aquinas (and, for this, supposedly having anti-democratic attitudes, and ideas against the division of powers), G) used religious metaphors occasionally, H) had been an altar boy and professed publicly some religiosity; I) possessed a passionate character typical of the inhabitants of the tropics, such as Tabasco; J) convened a “movement of conscience, a spiritual movement.”

Except perhaps for the points G and J, what does all of the above have to do directly with messianism? Practically nothing. Although *some* of the points mentioned may be considered reprehensible for a politician who considers himself a democrat, none are directly and explicitly linked by Krauze with any specific teleology and, as we know, without a teleology there can be no messianism at all. Thus, Krauze’s comparison of López with a messiah is unfounded, unsupported, and devoid of all academic credit (and full of mere controversial purposes). Populism (point A of Krauze) is not an intrinsic characteristic of messianism, in fact, pro-democracy and anti-fundamentalist presidents have considered themselves (and have implemented actions that are) populist, as in the case of former American president Barack Obama. The deliberate polarization of the population (point B) is not another characteristic necessary for messianism, in fact, many times the rulers-messiahs have dedicated themselves to unify and heal the wounds between different internal factions. Proposing more humane and egalitarian policies (point C), likewise, does not belong to messianic practices; this has been done



by rulers committed to democracy (and enemies of personalism) and plurality, for example by American president Joe Biden<sup>10</sup> or former Uruguayan president José Mujica.<sup>11</sup>

We could continue refuting the other points made by Krauze, but it is better just to underline that López Obrador's political-theological-teleological use of history is not a form of messianism. Just as Christianity's theological-teleological interpretation of history has sporadically caused that a messianism emerge from within it, so López's interpretation of history forces his politics (that are molded and straightened by such interpretation) to have apparent messianic qualities. In short, López's speeches and declarations should not be interpreted "in the mythic-prophetic context of the visionary", as Carlos Abreu Mendoza (2017, 293) correctly interprets Simón Bolívar's writing "My Delirium". López's declarations about Juárez or Madero cannot be compared either with the theological use of historic figures like Bolívar by Hugo Chávez (Abreu Mendoza 2017, 302-303), or more recently by Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro.

### History is the teacher and guide about life; some conclusions

López Obrador, then, maybe inadvertently, conceives history as possessing a *telos*, namely, the achievement of Profit-Progress-Cleansing (this last word in its moral sense: to clean the corruption) to the People. But to arrive at this conclusion López had to have studied history and had to have arrived at the idea that this study is nothing but, as Marcus Tullius Cicero would say, a guide to human (moral) life. "(...) a good leader cannot be forged without knowing the history..." has said the president (as cited in Beltrán Durán 2018).

That is to say, López Obrador recuperates, as many politicians have done in different times and places, the Ciceronian notion that establishes that history "sheds light upon reality, gives life to recollection and guidance to human existence" (Cicero 1967)<sup>12</sup>. Consistently, López Obrador applies his knowledge of history<sup>13</sup> to

his politics and declares (2014): "My love for history helps me a lot in my work as a political leader. In the knowledge of the past are the secrets to understand and transform the complex and brutal reality of Mexico". For the president, only after having understood the processes of Independence, Reform, and Revolution (and many others), and giving them a meaning and sense, it is possible to acquire knowledge and enlightenment about the reality of Mexico. Ergo, he arrived at the conclusion that Mexico needed another process analogous to the three mentioned, namely, one that should be hyper-transformative, beneficial, progressive, and edifying (a Fourth Transformation).

The daily and massive use of history by the politician not only makes him, according to Cicero, a good ruler, and a good orator<sup>14</sup>, but, I argue, makes him a politician who follows a philosophy of political Trans-Historic-History. In short:

- A) López Obrador's interpretation of history is metaphysical and teleological. He gives history, consciously or unconsciously, a *telos* that is resolved beyond reality, in the ethical-metaphysical field.
- B) Metaphysics (or theology) is a knowledge that goes beyond historical physical reality, a trans-historical knowledge.
- C) López Obrador's interpretation of history goes beyond historical physical reality, is trans-historical.
- D) López Obrador is a ruler who uses a trans-historical metaphysical knowledge to know which strategy will be better for the future of a country (Mexico).
- E) The trans-historical metaphysical knowledge that allows to know which policy will be best for the future of a country is a knowledge proper of a prestidigitator, or proper to elaborate a social prognosis.

Thus, we have that these features of the current president of Mexico come *exclusively from his metaphysical interpretation of history*. Furthermore, his political ideas are also

based in the fact that he considers history as a transcendental historic-history aprioristically and inherently possessing a final-teleological meaning which consists in the achievement of the Benefit-Progress-Improvement of the People. For him, history, in its entirety, is trans-historical because possesses an intrinsic *telos* that goes beyond the past and is projected into the future. The president estimates that the People will reach such *telos* in the present or in a certain point of the future (a *telos* that, we could say, is transcendently analogous to the one developed in Marx's "speculative philosophy of history": "a Kingdom of God, without God and on earth, (...) is the ultimate goal and ideal of Marx's historical messianism" (Löwith 1949, 63)). Furthermore, his interpretation of history is intrinsically moral insofar as he assigns to its transcendental sense an always morally correct way that benefits the People.

Mexico, currently, is not a country with a "one-man rule" as journalist O'Grady (2020) declared. And nobody, nor political faction nor religious group, *truly* considers López Obrador's political views as infallible; Mexico is not a country that, for the most part, idolizes or considers him a perfect visionary. There is a political opposition that has been allowed to develop a broad, continuous, and persistent criticism against him. The character of López Obrador's ideology and politics does not come mainly from his pro-Christian comments, nor from his occasional comparisons with Jesus Christ (as a historical character who helped the People, who was "humanist" and altruistic), it comes from his transcendentalist interpretation of history (and ethics). Therefore, to call the president messiah is simplistic and confounds the international public opinion, as also happened with *The Economist's* article equivocally titled "Mexico's False Messiah" (2021); in such article the concept of "messiah" is more a (wrongfully made) synonym of "authoritarian" than anything else.

Messianism is not at all a gross equivalence to Christianity (it is just a characteristic of this religion) (nor an equivalence to any "speculative philosophy of history"), therefore, the political use of Christianity, in particular the use of Catholicism values or the use of the figure of

Christ, by a democratic ruler or candidate, is not equivalent of professing messianism, it is only a practice that offers excellent political dividends in a country who is predominantly Christian/Catholic. Even more, sometimes to mention Christ during an electoral campaign or in a speech is not to politically profit from religion, it is only a reflection of a particular education and/or ideology from the candidate.

## Notes

1. For this interpretation see *La metafísica de los liberales* (Ortiz Delgado 2020, 15).
2. And where that improvement can be understood as one that "it is an ideal of justice and virtue that impose on us the elimination of our desires, and even of our happiness or of our life. As it is something like a broader happiness that encompasses the entire human species, before which the personal happiness of each one of us is worth less. (...) [or the] good is known by the way of feeling and, like charity, is an impulse of the good heart, compatible even with ignorance." (Reyes 2018, 8)
3. For a complementary illustration of López Obrador's notion of "People" see "AMLO y el pueblo" (Fernández Santillán 2020).
4. *I am the author of all translations from Spanish to English in this text.*
5. "Research has also found that support for Trump was heavily driven by racial factors (Jones & Kiley, 2016; Major, Blodorn, & Blascovich, 2018). Trump voters were likely to believe in «'white vulnerability' – the perception that whites, through no fault of their own, are losing ground to other groups» (Fowler, Medenica, & Cohen, 2017)" (Restad 2020, 21-36).
6. It is now common the use of the word "obradorist" (obradorista) to refer the sociopolitical movement, the actions, the ideas, etc., related or made by the president López. The word comes from "the second last name" of the president: "Obrador".
7. In particular, Madero is considered the promoter of a great benefit for the Mexican people, democracy. "Without a doubt, Madero's greatest contribution was his actions in favour of democracy. In this regard there is no precedent in our history. No one like him has believed so devoutly in democracy or cared so much about making

- real that ideal that was the deepest of his convictions.” (free translation of mine of: “Sin duda, el mayor aporte de Madero fue su proceder en favor de la democracia. En este aspecto no hay precedente en nuestra historia. Nadie como él ha creído con tanta devoción en la democracia ni se ha preocupado tanto por hacer realidad ese ideal que era la más profunda de sus convicciones”) (López Obrador 2018, 111-112).
8. To defend the lack of frontal combat to crime, in concrete against the wave of feminicides in Mexico in recent times, López Obrador (*El Universal* 2020) polemically declared that it was necessary to first rebuild the “social fabric” of the country: “it has not been measured the degree of social decomposition produced by the neoliberal politics, there is a profound crisis of loss of values” that increased violence and crime according to the president.
  9. The president pushed an amnesty law that pardons people who have committed various crimes, among which are: drug possession, abortion and robbery (under certain conditions), which was approved in April 2020 (*Infobae* 2020).
  10. For example: White House (statements releases) (2021).
  11. The former president of Uruguay distanced himself from any presidentialism and defended the democratic transition (Pardo 2019).
  12. “[...] lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae” (*De Oratore* 2, 36).
  13. The Mexican president has explicitly paraphrased Cicero to defend the idea that history is always “politized” and that it serves to improve the life and the politics (López Obrador 2021).
  14. We must remember that for Cicero, “the orator can persuade the Senate, people, and jurors, he can control tribunician disturbances, guide the people, resist bribery, and even enable those who are not of noble birth to reach the consulship because oratory creates (...) enthusiastic support” (Steel 2001, 171).
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Recibido: 18 de enero, 2023.

Aprobado: 2 de febrero, 2023.

