The present study by Professor Pérez Álvarez is a paradigmatic example of the profound significance of the condition of psychology as a science that straddles the natural and social sciences, in which the object of study is also the subject, whether it is the individual, society, or culture, with its inevitable reciprocal influences and interactions in multiple directions, which have repercussions on the research itself and which are clearly manifest in this work. For the author of the book, in accordance with Jaspers, there is no escape from philosophy, and it would be naive blindness not to accept this. Thus, rigorous care is taken in dealing with this dimension, addressing the epistemological, anthropological, political, and ethical implications. This contributes to the excellence and rigor in the results of this intellectual, academic, scientific, and humanistic exercise.

The floating individual is a notion of Gustavo Bueno’s, used and updated here as an analytical and critical tool for the social conditions of our time, making it a prototypical figure for understanding a series of current disorders and problems that go back a long way, and which take on new life in relation to social networks, specifically including psychological problems and psychotherapy, although going beyond the biomedical model. (This is dealt with, above all, in the third and last part of the book). The author does not claim that this concept covers all individuals, nor does he intend to erect it as a simplifying label for any psychological problem, not even for people who would have most reason to be identified as floating individuals. On the other hand, he does defend its capacity to bring together a variety of psychosociological diagnoses by different authors (Cushman’s empty self; Gergen’s saturated self; Lifton’s protean self; Giddens’ reflexive self; Maffesoli’s nomadic and vagabond self; Bauman’s liquid self; López Mondéjar’s invertebrate self, etc.), which in turn can be seen in literary works (in the characters of Dostoevsky, Pessoa, Kafka, Camus, Wolf, Calvino, etc.). The floating individual is a reflection of a floating society to which he is trying to adapt, subject to a critical contemplation of social levity and his own individual levity, which can only be understood in close connection with the social and cultural history of individuality from the Renaissance to the present day.

The three parts in which the book is structured are interrelated and illuminate each other. The first part presents a journey through the history of the individual from its genesis and development through unavoidable and illustrative milestones. Growing discomforts and loneliness are evident that precede their contemporary versions, highlighting the fact that "society came before the individual" and the irreducible dialectic between individual and society, contrary to the conception of an "inner self" uncritically assumed as "natural", ignorant of its socio-historical makeup. In this sense, the following cannot be ignored: individualism associated with the humanist tradition; the Lutheran defense of the sentiment of faith and its religious subjectivism (not at all modern, inscribed in solitude before God, and isolated from reason); its secularization in Rousseau and Romanticism, in the alleged autonomous and self-originating natural source of an exalted individual expressiveness; new versions of individualism in the 19th and 20th centuries in contexts such as those linked to various versions of capitalism (classical: thrifty, ascetic, disciplined; or neoliberal: wasteful, consumerist, short-termist).

Marino Pérez urges psychology to fulfill its obligation by recognizing the "sociohistorical nature of the inner self" (shaped by social, material, linguistic, and cultural practices), disavowing its promotion "as something in itself to the detriment of the (outer) world" where people live (not in their inner world), being one "within a world or situation", instead of affirming "a world within one". The author offers a psychological and sociological characterization of the type of individuals that are portrayed as preponderant, heirs to the history that has been described and that led to our era of smartphones, social networks, and selfies, in which neither individualism, nor loneliness, nor the solitary crowd is anything new (Riesman).

Also, authors such as Erich Fromm, Ortega y Gasset, Karen Horney, Goffman, and Putnam sketch the coordinates in which individuals attempt to cope in a path of ever greater buoyancy. For example, Fromm illustrates the tightrope walk between freedom from traditional instances of authority and freedom for individual self-determination, paying the toll of insecurity and loneliness, and the risk of relapsing into interpersonal or social relations and authoritarian politics of replacement. Or the danger of remaining installed in resentment, destructiveness, or conformism and gregariousness (in a reified, commodified, superficial way, in a consumerist context where people are instrumentalized, weakened as ends in themselves and as others with whom to converse face to face and empathize).
Las circunstancias, uno no flota debido a la vacía, sino a estar asociado con comunidades terapéuticas que son “salvíficas” no en el sentido de “salvation” no siendo inédito en la psicoterapia. Es un hecho que está sufriendo un cambio online.

La clientela de los medios sociales está asociada con la teoría del comportamiento de Skinner. Si el individuo está expuesto a una terapia de recompensas en línea, se puede formar una adicción. Los medios sociales tienen una serie de mecanismos que incitan a las personas a quedarse conectadas, que se pueden presentar como publicaciones en redes sociales que promueven la “auto-promoción-odio” y la “noción de inferioridad”.

La adicción a las redes sociales se puede mejorar al menos de la manera de comenzar la reconversión de los medios sociales. El libro “The Floating Individual. The Solitary Crowd in the Times of Social Networks” se presenta como un excelente punto de partida para entender y actuar de manera significativa.

En el segundo capítulo, el autor incluye su propuesta en favor de una sociedad liberal, inspirada en su versión clásica, corregida y actualizada, promoviendo la comunidad, regenerando la política y el poder en el sistema político y en las instituciones, y evitando la perversiones del liberalismo, ambos por el neoliberalismo económico de la desregulación aumentada, y por el identitario que se manifiesta en las emociones. Sus temas centrales son la libertad de expresión, el derecho a la expresión, la democratización y la reivindicación de los derechos del presente, más que de la antigüedad, considera que los estudiantes son clientes que siempre están en lo correcto; el condenar y aceptar los errores y las dificultades de la vida y el futuro, y el cultivo de otras preocupaciones.

El autor, Álvarez, invita al lector a considerar que el actual ‘mental health crisis’ es una forma de sociedad que vivimos, en la que la felicidad a cualquier precio, a costa de aceptar la privación de la vida útil y la felicidad, podría mejorarse al menos mediante la reconversión del consumidor a un ciudadano.”

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