II

THE TOTALITY AND UP-TO-DATEDNESS CATEGORY AND THE HISTORICAL-SOCIAL ACTUALITY OF THE CRITIQUE OF POST-STRUCTURALIST AND POST-MODERN THOUGHTS

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Introduction

The category of totality[1] has long experienced, in the humanities and social sciences, a widespread[2] disuse, motivated by ideological, philosophical, sociological and historical approaches. To a certain extent, the explanation for this depravity is primarily linked to the reduction of social life to the spheres of singularity and of superficiality

This reductionism is the mark of the process of ideological decay, in the Lukacsian terms (1968), of the bourgeoisie since 1848. Under penalty of denying itself as a class that controls the means of production and, therefore, that establishes the form of social reproduction in its image and likeness, it began to deny the apprehension of contradictory processes in motion in society. Hobsbawm is clear about this when formulates that:

> [...] the great revolution of 1789–1848 was the trump not of "industry" as such, but of capitalist industry; not of freedom and equality in general, but of the middle class or of liberal "bourgeois" society; not of the "modern economy" or of the "modern state", but of the economies and states in a particular geographical region of the world (Hobsbawm, 1982, pages 17–18).

In other words, to maintain its condition as a ruling class, in the bourgeois world human possibilities for the realization of history are limited to the horizon of the phenomenal, where only this level is subject to changes. This process begins to express itself in elaborations and theories about social life limited to the appearance of social phenomena.

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[1] In historical terms, the totality category was foreshadowed in modern philosophy for the first time by Espinosa, had its elaboration in classical German philosophy, being taken to establish the distinction between dialectics and metaphysics (Kosik, 1976). It is up to Lukacs in "History and Class Consciousness", from 1923, the detailed presentation of totality as a perspective of analysis of Marx's philosophy.

[2] It suffices to mention the fascist philosopher and sociologist Othmar Spann, who gave the category of totality an extreme meaning, when he defended society as a totality that was itself the absolute supremacy of order and hierarchy. The totality here is taken as an organic whole that, as such, deprived of the dimension of causality and evolution, was also immutable. The result of this conception is the presentation of fascist society as an eternal society (Lukács, 1968, 1978).

It is therefore not interesting in this understanding an approach from the perspective of totality.

What it means to say that, on the one hand, the development of the social being has a growing internal differentiation of societies, with that of the involvement of new contradictions that are being introduced into the social dynamics as its complexity increases; on the other hand, it is noted that the greater the development of social complexity, the more conceptions and theories are reproduced that depart from the capacity to grasp the social dynamics in its entirety.

However, there is more. There is the same condition as the present time, or even better, the weight of the political-cultural ambience, which was imposed in Western Europe and North America, in the last quarter of the twentieth century and expanded to the peripheries. This ambience has marked the present time with a strong presence, which is based on a counter-revolutionary sense that cuts and reconfigures the humanist cultural broth that fermented society. In the words of Hobsbawm (1995), it is a "destruction of the past", and the social mechanisms that link our personal experience to that of past generations and appear in theoretical elaborations in a brutal anti-ontologism[3] and that, therefore, deny the category of totality as a perspective for analysis and understanding of social life.

It is precisely in Marx's thought,[4] and, particularly, in some authors of the Marxist tradition,[5] like Lukacs, who, in our view, have due consideration of the category totality as an onto-gnoseological dimension.

In other words, the Marxian ontology captures the essence of what is proper to the structure of the social being: its character of totality. A social reality consisting of complexes, which cannot be thought of as an "organism" that is composed of parts that complement each other, but as a historical-concrete system of relations among the totalities that are structured second degree of complexity. This historicity that appears in the Marx's thought "is always the historicity of a complex" (Netto, 1994, p. 38) that moves through negativity[6] that crosses the complexes that build it.

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[3] Of course, we do not disregard the presence of this anti-ontologism in the positivist and neopositivist, structuralist tendencies. However, here, by the time frame, it is up to us to launch clues in post-structuralist and post-modern trends.

[4] It Is in this sense that Korsch stated that "[...] for today's bourgeois scholars, Marxism represents not only a serious theoretical and practical difficulty of first order, but also beyond this, a theoretical difficulty of second order, an 'epistemological' difficulty. It is not possible to organize it in any of the traditional drawers of the bourgeois sciences system and, even if it wanted to open especially for it and its closest compares a new drawer called sociology, it would not even be quiet inside, would constantly walk for all the others. 'Economy', 'philosophy', 'history', 'theory of law and state', none of these lines can contain it, but none would be safe from it if it wanted to put it in another" (Korsch, 2008, p. 123).

[5] It is not possible for us within the limits of this chapter, nor is it our objective, to present the approaches present in the Marxist tradition about the totality category. It is up to us to record that we do not disregard this spectrum that is composed of names such as H. Lefebvre (1970, 1968); Korsch (2008); Lukacs (1968); Leandro Konder (2004, 1984).

[6] This movement is summarized by Netto in the following assertion: "The concrete totality is only dynamic as a carrier of an imminent negativity that proceduralizes it – a totality without negativity is a dead totality. But historicity does not conform to a unilinear line: in each constitutive totality of the concrete social totality, the negativity that stimulates is refracted according to its particularities – negativity takes place within the framework of a system of mediations that responds, in the movement of concrete social totality, by the uneven development of its constitutive totalities. Thus, the concrete totality (as its components) is stimulated through mediations – an immediate totality is an amorphous, unstructured totality" (Netto, 1994, p. 38).

The relations established among the various spheres of social being are of reciprocal determination, of relative autonomy, not configuring any mechanical dependence or absolute autonomy of any sphere of being. Understanding the relative autonomy of the spheres of human activity within the social totality means that, within the social being, each complex plays a specific role. The partiality of each sphere is explained not by laws internal to each sphere, but by the function that each particular sphere plays in the social totality. It is in this sense that,

> The category of totality means, therefore, on the one hand that objective reality is a coherent whole in which each element is, in one way or another, in relation to each element and, on the other hand, that these relations form, in the objective reality itself, concrete correlations, sets, units, connected with each other in completely different ways, but always determined (Lukács, 1979, p. 240).

In these terms, we understand that the determination of the specificity, of each sphere of the social being, the laws that govern them and determine their developments, is necessary, if we do not want, on the one hand, to fall into the misconception of overdeveloping a complex of reality and assign to it functions that it is not capable of fulfilling and, on the other hand, to autonomize absolutely such with a markedly idealistic posture or to superimpose them conferring a mechanical determinism of the spheres. These misconceptions – so proper to contemporary analyzes – end up limiting rationality to the rational-cognitive procedures that deny the consequent and radical materialistic dialectic that is proper to Marxian thought and that implies a position of the subject that researches far beyond the mere institution of a set of rules, but the conformation of a relationship that allows the subject to catch the dynamics of the object itself. For Marx, the dialectical method is a way of overcoming the appearance of the phenomenon, reaching its essence, that is, its fundamental determination.

Thus, even realizing that bourgeois philosophy "[...] is stuck in the pseudo-dilemma composed of a rigid totality and objective chaos" (Lukács, 1979, p. 240), these pseudo dilemmas are updated in the formulations that there is no place for "great narratives"; in the emphasis on the fragmentary, provisional and changing character of all theoretical elaboration; in the appreciation of subjectivities and the imaginary in the construction of knowledge. In other words, when we seek to find epistemological paradigms in philosophies of irrationalistic matrices, the path opens up to the refusal of any inheritance of dialectical reason and concrete humanism.

In this sense, the present essay intends, albeit briefly, to systematize some limits of post-modern and post-structuralist thinking in light of the category of totality.

Before the (post) a historical determination

To enter into the analysis of post-modern and post-structuralist thinking, it is necessary to return to today distant 1960, and to events related particularly to May 68, which create, in terms of Ferry and Renaut "[...] A thought 68" (Ferry; Renaut, 1988, p.11). We understand that this period is the historical ground under which post-structuralism and post-

modern thought arise. In other words, the number of the many (posts) needs and undeniably has roots in the significant socio-political, economic and cultural changes arising from the 1960. As a new time, of many innovations, in our view this milestone must be thought of as the historical-dialectical unity of capitalism itself in its crisis processes and its consequences in social relationships. In other words, we want to explain here the *quantum* of historical continuity, with previously existing and not novel tendencies, are present here.

Summarily, there are several phenomena that explained the probability of the pattern of dependent and associated development that became involved in the beginning of the decade. These phenomena were brought together, in this historical block, in a wide process, of a world character, of contestation of the form of monopolist capitalism that was in sharp worsening of its social contradictions and inequalities, thus intensifying, intersocial struggles in the central capitalist countries and their relationship with the periphery, mainly in Latin America.

It is a belief in the possibility of a revolutionary transformation of society – against the consequences of the development of capitalism in advanced countries – focused mainly on criticism of consumerism and individualism, at the same time, a series of criticisms of the methods of the so-called "traditional left-wing", whose most open expression is the explosion of May 68.[7] These actions begin to characterize themselves, thus, as bearers of an ideary of counterculture that placed itself as an antagonism to the oppressive qualities of the technical-bureaucratic rationality of scientific basis manifested in the monolithic corporate and state forms and in ther forms of institutionalized power (including that of political parties and trade unions regarded as bureaucratized). In David Harvey's words, in a clear anti-modernist movement markedly cosmopolitan, transnational and, above all, contrary to the so-called "modern high culture":

> [...] counterculture explores the domains of self-realization by means of a distinctive "neo-left wing" policy of the incorporation of anti-authoritarian gestures and iconoclastic habits (in music, clothing, language, lifestyle), criticism of everyday life and the arts (Harvey, 1992, p. 44).

The theoretical dominance of post-1960 will thus be marked by Foucauldian-inspired post-structuralism.[8] In this thought it is symptomatic that a relationship between

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[7] In a broad way, it is enough to mention that a popular movement that began with the students ended up leading to the stoppage of 15 million workers in France. In Eastern Europe, the attempt to "democratic renewal" of socialism in Czechoslovakia with the movement inside the Communist Party led by Prime Minister Alexander Dubcek had as its slogan socialism with a human face.

[8] We are clear that it was F. Nietzsche, in the second half of the 19th century, who first makes a radical critique of modernity, questioning modern reason itself. With this, we want to explain that both Foucault's and post-modern thinking are not a novelty, since they show clear traces of the 19th century's anti-modern criticism. At the same time, prison, asylum, hospital, university, the school, are understood devoid of the resource of a comprehensive general theory. As Harvey explains, Foucault "[...] it interprets soviet repression as the inevitable outcome of an utopian revolutionary theory (Marxism) that resorted to the same techniques and knowledge systems present in the capitalist mode it sought to replace. The only way to 'eliminate fascism that is in our head' is to explore the open qualities of human discourse, taking them as a foundation, and thus intervene in the way knowledge is produced and constituted in particular places where a discourse of localized power prevails" (Harvey, 1992, p. 50). In these terms, we want to emphasize that Foucault did not intend to produce reforms in state practices, but was focused only on improving localized resistance to institutions, techniques and discourses of organized repression.

power and knowledge is established – starting a notion of power that is not only situated within the State, but in a range of micropower that appear in all relationships in different localities, contexts and situations. In this sense, a close relationship is established among the knowledge systems (discourse) that codify techniques and practices for the exercise of social control and domain in particular localized contexts. Hence his studies on the mental hospitals and prisons blend as a dispersed and non-integrated organization built independent of any systematic strategy of class domination.

Thus, a differentiation is built with Althusser's thought, since it is no longer a notion of the semi autonomy of the several levels or instances, especially the political instance and the dynamics of state power or its use to justify a semi-autonomy in the sphere of culture. What emerges from Foucault post-structuralism is not merely a heterogeneity of levels,

> [...] from now on, semi autonomy will be extended into *tout court* autonomy, and it will be conceivable that in the dicentric and schizophrenic world of advanced capitalism, the various instances may really have no organic relationship with each other (Jameson, 2002, p.102 – emphasis added).

And what is more important, the idea will arise that the struggles pertinent to each of these levels (purely political, purely economic, pure cultural, purely theoretical struggles) may also have no necessary relationships with each other. Thus, the various social movements, the "dead subjects", and the disillusioned with the practices of socialism really existing for a multifaceted and pluralistic attack on the localized practices of repression, but devoid of any frontal and radical attack on the capitalist system.

Thus, the culture that emerged from the late 1960 is based on a political practice that values daily life, the everyday life, here and now. Thus, it affects the hypertrophy of the subjective dimension as recognition of the autonomy of the various interests present in civil society and its respective social groups, thus triggering a conception of politics focused on the daily practice of each subject, in which each one makes the "revolution" in his or her daily life.

To put it another way, at the same time that the experience of the really existing society has become the subject of criticism, being taken as the necessity of socialism itself, from the criticisms that were directed to capitalism the ones that gained more and more the scene were those that were increasingly focused on its effects ("consumerism", "individualism"), than in its central core: the expanded reproduction of exploitation and oppressions. Thus, in our view, a romantic anti-capitalist critique is established, "[...] that behind the pompous façade of grand phrases of deep resonance, including 'revolutionary', is always revealed again and again [...] the viscosity, at the same time cowardly and brutal, of the capitalist petty-bourgeois" (Lukács, 1981, p. 119).

Therefore, a fragmented vision begins to build on the periphery of the capitalism, that in the 1960 all kinds of ties of classical imperialism were being broken in a sweeping wave of "wars of national liberation" and the idea that in these years capital and power in the central capitalist countries were in retreat everywhere.

It is true that, after the World War II, "new social settings" have begun to emerge (a variable and mistaken society described as post-industrial society, multinational capitalism, consumer society, media society, etc.) new types of consumption; planned obsolescence; an

increasingly rapid pace of life of changes in fashion and style, the penetration of propaganda, television and the media, in general to a degree hitherto unprecedented in society; the replacement - the old tension between city and country, center and province, the suburbs and the universal standardization; the growth of large motorway networks and the emergence of car culture. But, from the apparent radical break with the old pre-war society, in fact, the 1960 really represent a period of transformation and systemic restructuring of capitalism on a global scale: the late capitalism.[9]

In this dialectical process of "liberation" and "domination", the illusions of freedom and unbound possibilities must now be reconfigured, "[...] the unifying force is the new vocation of a global capitalism from which one can also expect it to unite unequal, fragmented or local resistance to the process" (Lukács, 1981, p. 119).

Thus, from the progressive agendas in the late 1960, a conservative re-action of the bourgeois order emerges naturalizing the idea of the historical infeasibility of communism and the inapplicability of the Marxian analyzes of these new social realities established – given the crisis ofthe really existing socialism. It is also believed at the end of the modern era, thus becoming extremely functional for the new and expanded scale assumed by capital. In this sense, considering the elements briefly discussed so far, we understand that it is only in the light of these determinations that we can grasp the disruptive elements with the whole category present in post-structuralist and post-modern thought.

Notes on post-structuralist thought

As it has already been pointed out, the post-structuralism emerges from the 1968, gains prominence from the 1980's, and expresses an ideology of cultural counterrevolution that is essentially contrary to the class struggle. It is also possible to point out that this is a non-uniform cluster of ideas and concepts postulated by authors such as Michel Foucault,[10] Antonio Negri, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, among others, they have a common denial of totality and the production of the depoliticization of social relationships.

In this chapter, for the analysis of post-structuralism, we dialogue with some ideas present in the elaborations of Deleuze and Guattari. In these authors, reality is a subjective and social construction and the historical context is based on the experience of each one, not as social determination. In general terms, and briefly, the joint production[11] by Deleuze and

[9] Analysis by E. Mandel (1985).

[10] As previously flagged.

[11] Deleuze and Guattari were production partners, published books and articles together. Among the books we highlight: "Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia" (published in 1972) and "A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia" (published in 1980). Although we do not intend to talk about the production of Deleuze and Guattari, it is necessary to make a very brief point on central issues in these two publications. Anti-Oedipus presents the idea or perspective of schizophrenic analysis as an ethical and aesthetic proposal. It would be the analysis of the desire that, according to the logic of the authors, is the basis of social production. The perspective of schizophrenanalysis is contrary to any analysis of the totality or structures. In this book Deleuze and Guattari presented two understandings for life or existence: one that they called pulsatile, which would be a sensory perception and full of affections; and the other called machinic, where the bodies, according to them, lost any power of expression. The book "A Thousand Platos*"* presents many concepts and perceptions of the authors about the place of "thought" and "truth". It centrally counteracts the logic of transcendence – Western Platonic heritage – and immanence – a concept that for the authors surpasses transcendence, because it admits that everything exists in itself or in reality, everything has value in itself, without, according to the authors'

Guattari has its own characteristics, among them: they use different resources and knowledge to make their ideas (arts, literature, culture, botany, etc.); they are opposed to every form of exploitation of man by man, as well as contrary to all totalizing and universalist explanation of social reality; as well as deny the contributions of Marxian criticism to political economy as an element for understanding social relationships.

In Deleuze and Guattari (1972) everything is "production". As expressed by the authors,

> [...] in fact – amazing and black truth that arises in delirium – there are no relatively independent spheres or circuits: production is immediately consumption and registration, consumption and registration directly determine the production, but determine it within the production itself. In such a way that everything is production: production of productions, actions and re-actions, production of records, distributions and reference points; production of consumption, volume, anguish and pain (Deleuze; Guattari, 1972, p. 9).

We understand that the analyses of Deleuze and Guattari point out as their non-existent social relationship with the totality.

Using Netto and Braz we point out that production and production relations are central to the analysis of the whole economic process. However, we emphasize that the production process is involved and is affected by the distribution and consumption processes, demonstrating that "[...] production is the determining moment of that totality" (Netto; Braz, 2006, p. 64–65). Thus, giving centrality to the sphere of production does not mean the denial of the other spheres.

In the text "Introduction to the contribution to the criticism of political economy",[12] Marx already offered us clarification on this issue. Marx deals with material production, understood in it the way individuals produce in society, also pointing out that certain production is characteristic of a certain degree of social development. However, at any time production holds common traits.

> Production in general is an abstraction, but a reasonable abstraction, because it really puts in relief and fixes the common character, sparing us, therefore, from the repetitions. This general character, however, or this common person, discriminated by comparison, is organized in a complex way and diverges into various determinations. [...] The determinations which are used for production in general must be precisely separated, so that the essential difference per unit is not lost sight, which already stems from the fact that the subject – humanity – and the object – nature – are the same (Marx, 2008, p. 240).

In short, Marx states:

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interpretation, the hierarchy of western philosophical thought.

[12] We refer to "Introduction to the contribution to the critique of political economy", which is part of the book "Contribution to the critique of political economy", published by the Popular Expression Publishing House (2008).

> The result we have reached is not that production, distribution, exchange, consumption, are identical, but that they are all members of a totality, differences of a unity. Production exceeds itself, in the antithetical determination of production, which exceeds the moments. [...] Production, without doubt, in its unilateral form, is also determined by other moments [...]. Finally, the need for consumption determines production. A reciprocal action occurs among different moments (Marx, 2008, p. 257).

Deleuze and Guattari (1972) present their observations on social production, and defend the idea that social production has as its sole basis the desire of individuals.

> In fact, social production is simply the desired production under certain conditions. We affirm that the social field is immediately followed by desire, that it is its product historically determined and that libido does not need any mediation or sublimation, no psychic operation, no transformation, to invest the productive forces and the relationships of production (Deleuze; Guattari, 1972, p. 33).

According to them, production refers to the production of desire, and in it would be contained, according to the authors' terms, production of production, production of reproduction, production of anti-production (or non-production) and production of consumption. From the perspective of the authors the meanings presented to production would be an affirmation of the creative and creative potential of human beings, the so-called power of affections. In Deleuze and Guattari, affections are not feelings, but sensations, and power is the ability of the living being to affect and be affected, and thought would be the way to decipher these affections. In the authors this thought that deciphers affections would be a contradiction to the thinking guided by the modern reason, of totality; this thought which, according to the authors, would be reductionist, lapsed, only positive of models to be followed (Deleuze; Guattari, 1995).

Deleuze and Guattari claim that: "[...] the existence of a social repression that affects the desired production does not affect our principle at all: desire produces the real, or desired production is nothing more than the social production" (Deleuze; Guattari, 1972, p. 35). The authors, from the discussion on control, carry out a multifaceted critique: capitalism, psychoanalysis and universal forms of explanation of social reality. For the authors everything can be produced or invented because the world is production. And to this conclusion they call "revolutionary."

Although these authors criticize the capitalist mode of production, their elaborations conceive that individuals have freedom of choice in this social order and that this freedom exists in the measure of the development of individual "desires".

In our understanding, the fragility of this argument does not support concrete analysis in the light of the totality category elaborated by Marx, which explains the set of determinations of social relationships in the capitalist mode of production.

> In the social production of their lives, men constrast certain relationships necessary and independent of their will, relations of production that

> correspond to a certain stage in the development of their material productive forces. The set of these relations of production is the economic structure of society, the real basis on which the legal and political superstructure is carried and to which it corresponds determines the forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the process of social, political and spiritual life in general. It is not the consciousness of man that determines his or her being; on the contrary, it is the social being that determines his or her consciousness (Marx, 2008, p. 47).

However, there is also, in Marx, the indication of overcoming the antagonisms by the way of overcoming the capitalist system, that is, a concrete alternative to the private appropriation of collective labor. In Marx, freedom of choices is not only given on the mental level, but on concrete conditions and for all. In a system where capital produces inequalities, exploitation, subjugation and fear, where the majority of the world population does not have access to the minimum conditions of satisfaction of basic human needs, is it possible for individuals to revolutionize their lives and the relationship with work using the individual desire dimension? We do not think so.

Hobsbawm (1995), in his work entitled "Era of Extremes: the brief twentieth century – 1914–1991", demonstrated that the youth of May 1968 – where the youth Deleuze and Guattari meet – operated a subversion of the politics notion as it brought to the public sphere the statement of private and personal desires. For Hobsbawm, this combination of "personal liberation" and "social liberation" did not have a progressive result in class struggles, on the contrary, denied the historical development of social relationships. In this sense, the flags of the May 1968 Movement are manifestations of this interpretation that suggests a supremacy of private "desire": "It is forbidden to prohibit"; "I take my desires for reality, for I believe in the reality of my desires"; "When I think of revolution I want to make love"; "The people are political" etc. (Hobsbawm, 1995, p. 325–326). Thus, it is possible to affirm that, in the elaborations of the mature phase of Deleuze and Guattari, we find unfolding of the interpretations of the youth.

That being said, in general terms, post-structuralism is based on the abandon of metanarratives, derived from modern thought, which give centrality to the category of totality. This rejection of the category of totality produces interpretations that advance in the sense of denial in historical procedurality, also present in the daily lives of men and women who are social beings before being classified as individuals. Some practical effects are the depoliticization of debates, the hypertrophy of the subjective dimension[13] and the denial of the class struggle and, therefore, the impossibility of overcoming the capitalist mode of production. In this way, we locate post-structuralism as an element of bourgeois counterrevolution inscribed in the recent crises of capital and its strategies of action. The denial of the category of totality assumes in this perspective the denial of the worker (of the proletarian) as a revolutionary subject.

[13] It is not a matter of denying the dimension of subjectivity present in relation to objectification, but of refuting the hypertrophy of the subjective dimension in the reading of social relationships.

Post-modern thought

For the postmodern people,[14] in recent decades, several signs checked n the arts, architecture, literature and social dynamics as a whole show the exhaustion of the modern design of civilization and the rise of a new societal order, the post-modernity. On the contrary, as we pointed out earlier, we understand as Mandel (1985) that this is a new phase, late capitalism, and, therefore, of modern bourgeois society marked by a process in which the last vestiges of traditional space or not transacted into commodity within and outside the advanced world are now finally eliminated (Mandel, 1985, p. 124).

It was up to Lyotard in his book "The Post-Modern Condition", published in 1979, to postulate for the first time the discussion under the motto of post-modernity. In this work, the idea that knowledge changes status at the same time as societies enter the so-called post-industrial age and cultures at the so-called post-modern age (Lyotard, 2002, p. 15).

These modifications, whose origin, for the author, dates back to a crisis of science (and truth) that occurred at the end of the 19th century, are so substantive, that for Lyotard there is a real delegitimization of the mechanisms of explanation of science, caused by the impact of technological transformations on knowledge.

It is, however, in the work of Boaventura de Sousa Santos that we find a vast systematization of what would be the supposed post-modern condition and, also, given the scope of themes mentioned by the author, that we can explain the negative of the category of totality in these elaborations. Thus, this author's criticism of the paradigm of modernity is established outside the concepts and canons established by this model of rationality, as well as its understanding of science, the idea of paradigm, the understanding of reason, democracy and capitalism. *The paradigmatic transition is defined by the paradigmatic struggles, that is, struggles that seek to deepen the crisis of the dominant paradigm and accelerate the transition to the emerging post-modern paradigm.*

Upon explaining this transitional process, Santos (2000) states that contemporary societies and cultures go through a period of paradigmatic transition in which two dimensions become fundamental axes, the epistemological and the societal. The epistemological transition takes place between the paradigm of "modern science", whose bankruptcy process makes, according to the author, evident, and the emerging paradigm difficult to identify, but named by him as "post-modern science".

According to Santos (2003) what is new for this century is the recognition of alternative rival knowledge to modern science and, from this, possibilities are opened for constructions of multi-cultural sciences. For him, modern science has enabled us to have an

[14] According to Sousa (2005) "[...] there is not what we could consider as a post-modern theoretical position, as well as we cannot affirm that there is a theoretician, there are post-modern theorists." However, according to Boaventura de Souza Santos (2003), in the socio-political field there would be a clear gap among these authors. There would therefore be a post-modernity of opposition in which the author claims to settle and a post-modernity of celebration. The author is based on the understanding that there are two axes that try to explain the present time: one, that points out that the promises of modernity were false and therefore unrealizable, another, formulates that the set of values and beliefs of modernity were exhausted and here it is not a question of saying that they were false, but that they became unrealizable. By this differentiation, post–Modern people such as Jean-François Lytotard and Michel Maffesoli would end up situating themselves in the first case that they consider the promises of modernity fallacious and consequently propose the replacement of modern reason. And post-modern ones, like Santos himself, would be more progressive in that they consider that the values proposed by modernity are valid, but that modern means are unable to realize them.

arrogant knowledge base,[15] being a corporate and autonomous activity, and that its autonomy suits both to detach from the processes of social struggles and exercise of citizenship, as well as to establish large mercenary contracts.

In the book "The critique of indolent reason, against the waste of excitement" (2000), Santos explains what he understands by paradigmatic transition in contemporaneity. With the publication of this book Santos reaffirms a post-modern knowledge of opposition, a term that he himself coined, to justify an emancipatory knowledge, being built from the marginalized epistemological traditions of Western modernity; he also argues that the critical theory built from this horizon must, necessarily, break with the existing dualism between scientific knowledge and knowledge originating from common sense.

> Knowledge-emancipation must become an emancipatory common sense: imposing itself on conservative prejudice and prodigious and impenetrable knowledge, it must be prudent knowledge for a decent life. The reinvention of common sense is unavoidable given the potential of this form of knowledge to enrich our relationship with the world. Although knowledge of common sense is usually a mystified and mystifying knowledge, and despite being conservative, it has an utopian and liberating dimension that can be valued through dialog with post-modern knowledge (Santos, 2000, p. 107–108).

According to the conceptions of this author, the reason constituted by the modern paradigm is configured as an indolent reason, that is, a model of lazy rationality. This model is established from four forms of reason,[16] being the powerless reason (determinism and realism), the arrogant (free will, constructivism), metonymical (the part taken by the whole) and proleptic (the domain of the future over the form of the planning of history and the domain of nature). In this sense, a possible alternative to replace this indolent reason model is a cosmopolitan reason that is justified from three foundations: sociology of absences, sociology of emergencies and translation work (Santos, 2002, p. 240). As for the development of indolent reason, the author states:

> The indolent reason, in its various forms, underlies the hegemonic knowledge, both philosophical and scientific, produced in the West in the last two hundred years. The consolidation of the Liberal state in

[15] In the book "A Discourse on the Sciences", Santos (1995) sets out the initial ideas about the debate on post-modernity. In this material, the author develops arguments regarding the conception of science, highlighting three fundamental perspectives of understanding in this theme: *dominant paradigm of modern science; the crisis of the current paradigm and transition to a new paradigm and the emerging "post-modern" paradigm.* Such ideas will be further deepened in the books: "Introduction to a Post-Modern Science" (1989); in the work published in Brazil in 1995, "By the hand of Alice: the Social and the Political in Postmodernity" (2003) and in the publication of the book "The Criticism of indolent reason: Against the Waste of Experience" (2000).

[16] Santos states that the indolence of reason criticized in this chapter takes place in four different ways: the impotent reason, the one that is not exercised because he thinks that nothing can be done against a need conceived as outside of itself; the arrogant reason, which does not feel the need to exercise because one imagines unconditionally free and, therefore, free from the need to demonstrate his own freedom; the metonymic reason, which is claimed to be the only form of rationality, therefore, does not apply to discovering other types of rationality or, if done, does it only to make them raw material; and proleptic reason does not apply to think about the future, because it believes that it knows everything about it and conceives it as a linear, automatic and infinite overcoming of the present (Santos, 2000, p. 240).

> Europe and North America, industrial revolutions and capital development, colonialism and imperialism, constituted the socio-political context in which the indolent reason developed. Partial exceptions, romanticism and Marxism, were neither strong enough nor sufficient to be an alternative to indolent reason. That is why the indolent reason created the framework for the great philosophic and epistemological debates of the last centuries and, in fact, presided over them (Santos, ibid.).

Santos (2002) states that there was no restructuring of the knowledge about any of the four forms of indolence of reason. Among the four forms of indolent reason we highlight two, the metonymy reason and the proleptic reason, due to the intensification of the debates in relation to them from the sixties of the twentieth century. For this author, the metonymy reason is not able to understand the world outside the Western understanding of the world, that is, she believes that none of the parties should be thought out outside the totality of the relationships.

For him, this model of rationality has a limited understanding of the world and of itself and, hence, it must be overcome. Its overcoming in this phase of transition must begin from what this author calls the sociology of absences.[17]

Regarding the proleptic reason, this author states that the planning of history formulated by it dominated the debates about idealism and historical materialism, about historicism and pragmatism, being challenged from the decade of 1980 by the theories of complexities and theories of chaos. Its idea of progress was challenged with the ideas of failure, and there was no alternative.

Santos (2000) states that modern critical theory presented weaknesses throughout its development, its mistake was not to have recognized that the reason he criticizes cannot be the same as he thinks. For him, in the design of modernization there are two forms of knowledge: the knowledge regulation/emanation, both inscribed in the modern matrix. However, in European modernity regulation knowledge dominated emancipation knowledge, from the hegemony and institutionalization of knowledge. Thus, the promises of modernity turned into unavoidable problems without solution (Santos, 2000, p. 29).

For Santos (2000), the sociocultural paradigm of modernity was established before industrial capitalism became dominant in central countries, that is, the author understands Western modernity and capitalism as two historical and autonomous processes. For him, modernity will disappear before capitalism loses its dominant position, because it presents a process of overcoming and another of obsolescence.

What is missing in the construction of this author are the fragmentary and reifying aspects of the social division of labor and political economy under the capitalism. This widely understanding elaborated by Lukacs, in "History and Class Consciousness," from 1923, in which the Hungarian philosopher states:

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[17] It is an investigation that aims to demonstrate that what does not exist is actually actively produced as such, that is, as a non-credible alternative to what exists. Its empirical object is considered impossible in the light of conventional social sciences, so its simple formulation already represents a rupture with them. The objective of the sociologies of absences is to transform impossible objects into possible and based on them to transform absences into presences (Santos, 2002).

> It is not the predominance of economic motives in the explanation of history that decisively distinguishes Marxism from bourgeois science, but rather the point of view of the whole. The category of totality, the domain of the universal and determinant of the whole, on the parts constitute the essence of the method Marx received from Hegel and transformed in an original way into the foundation of an entirely new science. […] Proletarian science is revolutionary not only because it counteracts revolutionary content to the bourgeois society, but, first of all, because of the revolutionary essence of its method. The domain of the category of totality is the bearer of the revolutionary principle of science (Lukács, 2003, p. 105–106).

In this sense, we identified in post-modern authors, in general, and Santos, in particular, an embodiment of modern reason, taken away from the objective conditions in which it is carried out in modern bourgeois society. Sousa (2004) outlines the limits of this understanding when he states:

> In these terms, it is possible for these authors to propose the overcoming of modernity without establishing any rupture with the bourgeois social order and, at the same time, post-modern thought appears as extremely "radical", since it seems to effect "such incisive criticisms" about contemporary setbacks. What these authors have only forgotten to undertake was a blunt criticism of the globalized validity of capital; on the contrary, we realize that post-modern thought is, in the contemporary moment, the expression in the plan of the ideas of the decadent existence of this system (Sousa, 2004, p. 23).

Thus, in making such a movement, we understand that this is where the rupture with totality is clearly placed as a perspective of analysis of reality.

Final Considerations

The elements dealt with so far allow us to affirm that post-modern and post-structuralist thinking, by expressing bourgeois ideological decadence, constitute explanatory bases for capitalist efforts to defeat the worker (the proletarian) as a revolutionary subject. The denial of the category of totality produces practical effects that can be seen today, for example, while experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic. Especially in Brazil, we observe daily denial of science, depoliticization of debates and the affirmation of capital profitability interests over the bodies of workers, increasingly substitutable.

In this sense, it is evident that the denial of the whole category is not a debate held only in academic circles. The idea, for example, that the new coronavirus affects everyone equally is false and obscures the important inequalities in access to health care, as well as work itself. It is an epidemiological issue, but it is also the expression of social inequalities arising from the Brazilian social formation – peripheral, subordinate and dependent.

In the light of post-structuralist and post-modern thoughts, irrationalist and relativistic statements are gravitated to promote a distortion of social reality as a way of sustaining the denial of reason and totality. The conservative and stabilizing function fulfill

these thoughts of order in a wake that unifies them and their rhetorical derivations to the counter-revolutionary logic that fragments social struggles by treating men and women as islands, as autonomous individuals disconnected from the social determination to which they are so immersed. It is a ruse of reality that fulfills the function of fragmentation of social struggles.

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