

To Say what cannot be Said: Adorno and the expression as formative attitude

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ABSTRACT – *To Say what cannot be Said: Adorno and the expression as formative attitude.* We propose to discuss in this article the concept of expression present in Theodor Adorno's philosophy. The goal is to think of it as a formative praxis attitude. By transforming theory into a truly finished *corpus*, practice is thought-provoking, and therefore instrumentalizes formation. In order to break the logic of the language of effectiveness, characteristic of practice, we find in the idea of expression a possible space for the revitalization or critical reconfiguration of this formative logic, i.e. we find in it a theory as a residue of hope.

Keywords: Expression. Practice. Theory. Education. Theodor Adorno.

RESUMO – *Dizer o que Não se Deixa Dizer: Adorno e a expressão como atitude formativa.* Propomos discutir neste artigo o conceito de expressão presente na filosofia de Theodor Adorno. O objetivo é pensá-lo como atitude prática formativa. Ao transformar a teoria num *corpus* acabado de verdade, a prática coisifica o pensamento e, por consequência, instrumentaliza a formação. No intuito de romper a lógica da linguagem da eficácia, própria da prática, encontramos na ideia de expressão um espaço possível para a revitalização ou reconfiguração crítica desta lógica formativa, isto é, encontramos nele uma teoria como resíduo de esperança.

Palavras-chave: Expressão. Prática. Teoria. Educação. Theodor Adorno.

Introduction

'Thinking is a doing, theory a form of praxis'.
Marginalia to Theory and Praxis (Adorno, 2005b, p. 261).

If we are allowed at first to make use of a taxonomy in an attempt to bring to light a possible characterization of what appears to be the present formative spirit, nothing more reasonable than the pragmatics of the magic cube. The skills required by this type of experimentalism are logical, that is, it is up to the subject to decipher the symmetry of colors from a tangle of switching movements previously defined by a significant amount of formulas. In this experience, we are conditioned to the effectiveness of the operation and think only in practical terms. Theory is thought merely as a complete *corpus* of truths. From this, the old wittgensteinian sentence "to say nothing except what can be said"¹ (Wittgenstein, 2002, 6.53, p. 89), never before has it been so touted as in those who follow. It grasps or seizes a specific kind of knowledge (in these cases, the logical one) to solve problems that are concretely posed, and not otherwise than in the manner of the magic cube's pragmatics. The distrust of what is outside this logical-formal problem-solving structure is great. The concept in this endeavor is given the task of behaving like a straitjacket, not allowing what exceeds it, what is not identical with itself. Spaces for expression are obstructed. Education has become a prime target for such logic. She and many of us her faithful associates have yielded to the selective process of the all-classifying robust logic.

Are we thus subject to a magical cube formation, promoter of competent and skilled subjects to meet demands imposed by market requirements? If the answer is positive, how can we promote an education that can be a place for process, expression and criticism in this hegemonic context of the so-called knowledge society? Or is it possible to think of formation without the straitjacket of industry, or rather without seeing it merely as an indispensable, though not always sufficient, gear for strengthening this logic of utility? These and other questions we will henceforth seek to discuss in this short text.

Having exposed the initial premises, in order to accomplish the main objective of the text, namely, to think in the educational field the relevance of the theory as a possibility of freedom and escape from the straitjacket of this dominant pragmatic structure, we divide our argument into three distinctly interconnected movements. All of them, however, parts of a whole. In the first one, we bring some difficulties to think about the promotion of an education (*Erziehung*) for emancipation (*Mündigkeit*) within the current formative context, having as reading key the complex relationship between theory and practice and the empowerment of the latter by the market economy. Consequently, we go on to justify that these difficulties, that is, the hardness of thinking about an education for autonomy, are the result of the formally programmed hypostasization of a certain idea of practice, namely that of

immediate utility. The result of such hypostasization is the obliteration of theory and, underlying it, process, expression and criticism.

In the second movement, starting from an immanent critique of this certain image of practice – in an attempt to identify a possible performative contradiction to which it itself is conditioned by its hypostasy – we present the adornian concept of “expression” (Adorno, 1997) as *iter* to rethink the limits of the formation within this Procrustes² bed, that is, of the adjustment (or not) to the market. If it is in the logic of the language of efficacy underlying practice that theory, process, and criticism are subsumed, then the concept of expression emerges as a possible space for the critical revitalization or reconfiguration of this formative logic. The thesis of this moment is the urgency of thinking or approving a formative telos by means of a critical theory – *strictu sensu* – that is, a theory as a residue of hope.

Finally, we conclude the article by making some critics about the passivity with which our higher education institutions have been dealing with the instrumentalization of training promoted by the market, especially the public educational institutions. And, last but not least, if we can assume and/or defend any thesis here, we propose a return and/or redemption of some points of the so-called ideal models of formation (*Paidéia*, *Humanitas* and *Bildung*), confronting these models with what we consider to be the current hegemonic model: tacitly directed training in the labor market. This confrontation can help us give voice to what for purely economic purposes the current model makes a point of not behaving or problematizing, that is, the integral-critical formation. To say what can't be said is the task, *par excellence*, of this theoretical movement, therefore critical, in time of full empire of “cunning reason” (Souza, 2016).

About the Relationship between Theory and Practice

The hostility to theory in the spirit of the times, the by no means coincidental withering away of theory, its banishment by an impatience that wants to change the world without having to interpret [...] such hostility becomes praxis's weakness (Adorno, 2005b, p. 265)³.

There are two possible hypotheses that may justify the hardness of thinking formation outside the current logical-pragmatic context. The first is supported by proposals for curriculum reform and, from this, in the establishment of a static, hard and purely technical structure for them, whose purpose – it seems obvious to us – is to meet the demands imposed by the market. Such a structure is designed not to allow any manifestation of what it itself cannot bear. The Enlightenment imperative *sapere aude* gives way, in late capitalism, to you, that is, to the administered normativity that upholds the *status quo* of the ruling class. This is, say *en passant*, the function of the conceptual pyramid ‘skills, abilities and attitudes’ (SAA) within the current formative conjuncture.

Fruits of administrative science, these jargons were inserted into higher education without the slightest critical reflection. Based on these efficiency models, training has become a mechanism for preparing forces for work, i.e., the composition of technical individuals; the university loses its nature as a training institution, and acquires an operational status of fragmentary skills development for immediate application. It replaces something that should be a process for autonomy, heteronomy, because “the main objectives of higher education moving from integral human formation to the qualification of competences and skills required for the development of companies. From social value they are influenced by commercial interest” (Dias Sobrinho, 2015, p. 587).

In other words, for formation is given the task of modeling subjects not only for their insertion in the labor market (which in itself would be positive), but mainly for the maintenance and development of companies that hold the capital monopoly. The cleverness of the market is to mimic in the subject a formally sketched prototype, *One-Dimensional Man* (Marcuse, 1964), which satisfactorily meets the demands of the managed society. In seeking to meet these criteria, the subject believes *bona fide* that freedom will be granted to him. This is precisely the trick of cunning reason:

[...] its violence is sweet; it justifies the unjustifiable, legitimizes what can't be legitimate from the argumentative sap that distills from the depth of its strategic interests; In organizing the means available for the goal of achieving certain ends, instrumental violence is exerted in an extremely organized manner, for it enunciates the perfect alibi for dispensing morality in the name of technique (Souza, 2016, p. 59).

From this, the timeliness and, consequently, the urgency of thinking about this theme are justified by the serious crisis that we are going through, both nationally and internationally, and that impels us to some kind of action. Nevertheless, according to the concern that permeates the completeness of Adorno's work, taking action without adequate understanding of the complexity of the historical-social context inevitably tends to fail; or even worse, the aggravation of the crisis process. To break with a cycle of actions confined to prevailing logic, Adorno defends the autonomy of theory, because “[...] it is precisely under the practical constraints of a functionally pragmatized world that we must maintain the theory” (Adorno, 2003, p. 136). This is, therefore, the second justification that tends to make the escape from this existing formative structure, namely, the hypostasization of practice to the detriment of theory, harder and harder. Henceforth, the idea is to think about how this tension between theory and practice is approached in the Adornian texts.

We need to point out, as Pucci (2007) reminds, that Theodor W. Adorno wrote, among others, three significant and very specific texts on theory: i) *Marginalien zu Theorie und Praxis*, ii) *Ästhetische Theorie* and iii) *Theorie der Halbbildung*. In the first of these, *Marginalien zu*

Theorie und Praxis, Adorno questions the marxian thesis of unity in the relationship between theory and practice, “its solidification, its later freezing, permanently practiced by Marxist theorists” (Franco, 2000, p. 91). For him, like the work of art, theory has a twofold character: i) belonging to the general context of society and being at the same time ii) autonomous. In the second, *Ästhetische Theorie*, the author presents, in a fragmentary and paratactic way, a set of negative theses about the aporetic relations between the work of art and contemporary society⁴. Already in the third text, *Theorie der Halbbildung*, Adorno presents a series of theoretical principles that enables the critical reflection on the semiformation (*Halbbildung*), i.e., to what the formation now has been transformed. Although, during the essay, we use the last two texts as a resource, it is from the first that our reflections will be anchored.

If we take historically the relation theory and praxis, from Ancient Greece, in which the theory (*θεωρία*) was taken in a strictly speculative sense, thus opposing any activity that did not have as *telos* contemplation; until Modernity, finding in René Descartes (1596-1650), more specifically in his doctrine of the two substances (*res cogitans* - *res extensa*), the ratification par excellence of the subject-object dichotomy, if not an identity between the two terms, the absolute predominance of one of them. In this sense, the adornian objective is not to nullify both positions, but to demonstrate, on the one hand, the purely speculative and hypothetical dimension of the theory and, on the other, its *praxic* fecundity. The thesis of the marxian unity between theory and praxis, which he views as dogma, is called into question. Adorno wants to demonstrate that such a relationship is much more contradictory and discontinuous than unity. For to him:

[the] theory is part of the nexus of society and at the same time is autonomous. Nevertheless praxis does not proceed independently of theory, nor theory independently of praxis. Were praxis the criterion of theory, then for the sake of the *thema probandum* it would become the swindle denounced by Marx and therefore would not be able to attain what it wants; were praxis simply to follow the instructions of theory, then it would become rigidly doctrinaire and furthermore would falsify theory (Adorno, 2005b, p. 276)⁵.

According with what was said earlier, it is no exaggeration to remember that by postulating the contradiction rather than the unity between theory and praxis, Adorno remains faithful to the initial project of critical theory proposed by Max Horkheimer in *Traditionelle und kritische Theorie* (1937). For while the first merely describes reality as something external to the observer and rigidly separates thought and action (subject-object), it “expels from its field of reflection the historical conditioning factors of its own method” (Nobre, 2013, p. 44). The second, although it considers that theory and praxis are distinct (and even necessary) processes, adds the idea that it is urgent to conceive such dimensions in an indispensable correlation since social reality is the

product of men's action. This leads us to believe that the current educational praxis is still a traditional theory.

In this sense, agreeing with Noble (2013), if the theory is made to show how things should be, we forget to show how things really are. If we make the theory a corpus of truth, that is, if we say that things are as they should be, we eliminate the possibility that things are different from what they are. Anyway, this is a fundamental point of critical theory. i.e. it is impossible to show how things really are, if not from the perspective of how they should be. There is no immediate unity between theory and praxis as the current educational praxis preaches.

According to Pucci (2007), by taking the hypothesis as an immanent constituent of the theory, the adornian reflection clashes head-on against the conception of theory as a closed system, a closed *corpus* of truths. As a complete corpus of truth, it loses its socio-historical dimension and becomes an unruly activism, devouring everything that tends to escape its control; As an immanent constituent of theory, it seeks to recover, in the process of systematization, the ability to reflect reality negatively. How then to articulate theory and education in today's managed society? Two antithetical realities are presented: a) the theory, *strictu sensu*, which is based on the critical and immanent reflection of historical processes and b) education deeply concerned with "doing". In Pucci's words, "[...] a disastrous educational situation and the uncontrollable impulse to come up with palliative solutions make every thought immediately turn to action. The theory is positivized" (Pucci, 2007, p. 142).

Alluded to at the beginning of the text, the curriculum reforms seem to us to be an evident datum of the hypostasization of the practice in the current conjuncture of the formative process. It has become a frenzied activism, continually demanding an end in itself, becoming trivial to both theory and the emergent specificities of each particular case to which it imposes itself. For Franco (2000, p. 93), "[...] conceived in this way, she also take the risk of becoming victimized by, or, as it happens, the result of blind activism coordinated by the managed world". This is because the too much trust it confers tends to erroneously postulate a static and formal structure of thought whose purpose is to understand reality in its historical dynamism. Faced with failure, due to the impossibility of understanding the dialectical process of the realization of reality by requiring an end in itself (therefore absolute synthesis), the practice captures only the moments through which it addresses itself, subsuming the emerging idiosyncrasies.

[*The Practical*] actionism is regressive. Under the spell of the positivity that long ago became part of the armature of ego-weakness, it refuses to reflect upon its own impotence. Those who incessantly cry 'too abstract!' strenuously cultivate concretism, an immediacy that is inferior to the available theoretical means. The pseudo-praxis profits from this. [...] What imposes itself straight away is the bourgeois supremacy of means over ends, that spirit

actionists are, at least programmatically, opposed to. The university's technocratic reforms they, perhaps even *bona fide*, want to avert, are not even the retaliation to the protest. The protest promotes the reforms all on its own. Academic freedom is degraded into customer service and must submit to inspections (Adorno, 2005b, p. 273-274, *emphasis added*)⁶.

The adornian critique is thus anchored in the immediacy by which apparent praxis is founded, by thingifying thought and itself. In this sense, all educational theory with its formal models of thought that, unaware of the historicity of processes, aims at adjustment is, for our author, an apparent praxis. For Adorno (2005b, p. 265)⁷,

[the] hostility to theory in the spirit of the times, the by no means coincidental withering away of theory, its banishment by an impatience that wants to change the world without having to interpret [...] such hostility becomes praxis's weakness.

It is not without reason that formation, due to the demands of economic forces or even multilateral organizations (World Bank, OECD, IMF, etc.), has been increasingly attacked. *Telos* is, it seems, an instrumental, pragmatic formation for the development of the economy. The university is downgraded to the function of enterprise: selling products, serving customers, forming "an additional system guard" (*Garde fürs System*) (Adorno; Horkheimer, 2002, p. 30)⁸. Everything that escapes the dynamics of managed society is obliterated. The practice is fetishized because,

[the] predominance of instrumental reason, demanded by such a situation, no longer allows anyone to reflect on the solution of the problems raised by this kind of social logic: the modernizing rationalization of all aspects of society does not tolerate criticism or the thought that insists on being guided by the respect to its intrinsic ends (Franco, 2000, p. 93).

This dominant praxis, prototype of the "*bürgerliche Kälte*" (Gruschka, 1994), is another reproducer of semiformation (*Halbbildung*), since it is precisely the immaturity of the dominated, promoted by the programmed absence of reflection, which is nourished, as Gilles Deleuze has rightly said, the "society of control" (Deleuze, 1992). By teaching only atomized knowledge, semiformation strategically leads participants of the process to the collective incorporation of the logic of the cultural industry and, consequently, to mimic the principle of capitalist competition: "nothing is allowed to remain outside, since the mere idea of the "outside" is the real source of fear" (Adorno; Horkheimer, 2002, p. 11)⁹. The task of (critical) theory is to promote a reflection that makes it possible to overcome the coldness of the instrumental institutions of the bureaucratic world and to establish a reflective relationship between their objectifying action and their human interaction, because "thinking is a doing, theory a form of praxis" (Adorno, 2005b, p. 261).

Expression as Praxic Attitude

[...] thought is being turned inescapably into a commodity and language into celebration of the commodity (Adorno; Horkheimer, 2002, p. XIV)¹⁰.

The main denouncement made by Adorno and Horkheimer in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, especially in the first chapter entitled *The concept of enlightenment*, is that myth becomes enlightenment, whereas are already incorporated into it the initial germs “of that discipline and power which Bacon exalt as the goal to be achieve” (Adorno; Horkheimer, 2002, p. 5)¹¹; and that enlightenment prefigures a new kind of mythology, because, clinging to science and its promises of emancipation of the subject through knowledge, it has come to its opposite, namely, in the most urgent alienation - of itself and the nature that surrounds it. In the interim of this process, reason, which they see as “merely an aid to the all-encompassing economic apparatus” (Adorno; Horkheimer, 2002, p. 23)¹², takes over language and transforms it in one of its eminent instruments of domination.

In this sense, identifying the co-optation of language and experience by the logic of the mathematization of the world, the criticism of language in Horkheimer and, mainly, in Adorno, is characterized as a place of conceptual expression, but, “itself [language] falls short of what is expressed” (Teixeira Filho, 2017, p. 134). The idea of expression is, in this sense, a material critique of language’s own insufficiency in restoring the ethical clamour to suffering. Philosophy in Adorno is, therefore, a philosophy like *Darstellung* (presentation) and wishes to counteract philosophy as *Vorstellung* (representation). The challenge we have now set ourselves is to think of the idea of expression as critical of the plastered and operational language touted by current educational praxis.

According to Duarte (2008), the concept of expression is very important not only for the adornian aesthetic theory, but also for its philosophy in general. In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, however, this idea comes up, as a philosophical attitude, as an artistically ordered manifestation of human suffering, which symbolizes, among other things, a being out of the logic of the cultural industry, a typical feature of authentic works of art. It is not without reason that in *Aesthetic Theory* the same concept is taken up as a form of objectification of the inobjective (*Vergegenständlichung des Ungegenständlichen*), that is, its function is to expressively find a way to give vent to suffering. It therefore means “[...] a process whose aim is to expose human suffering and that polarizes artistic creation in a world where joy becomes at least problematic – if not impossible – since happiness would be inexpressible” (Duarte, 2008, p. 120).

Adorno’s critique does not characterize nihilism in the face of the possibilities for the existence of a happy life, but the possibility of expressing it conceptually. This hypothesis is referred to the subject-object relationship insofar as it manifests the inability to present it asymmet-

rically by language, since it is already co-opted by instrumental rationality. However, as an expression, “[...] the subject [...] must be the one who presents, by language, what is expressive, but not linguistic, in the object. In this sense, the subject must present the object; must, through its own exposition, bring the object to language” (Teixeira Filho, 2017, p. 139). It is precisely the conjecture of language as expression and expression as presentation of object to language that Habermas seems to have marginalized in his critique of the authors of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Detecting instrumental reason as the principle of universalization of domination, the authors do not fall into an *aporia*, or rather a performative contradiction, but seek to find, from the internal perspective of itself, the survival of the particular as a dialectic expression of the subsumed nonidentical in the process of synthesis in identity. In other words, they seek to find that which escapes the domain of wholeness. In this sense, the centrality of thought as an expression is precisely this: to expose the object without dominate it.

Aesthetic expression is the objectification of the non-objective, and in fact in such a fashion that through its objectification it becomes a second-order nonobjectivity: It becomes what speaks out of the artifact not as an imitation of the subject. Yet precisely the objectification of expression, which coincides with art, requires the subject who makes it and -in bourgeois terms- makes use of his own mimetic impulses. Art is expressive when what is objective, subjectively mediated, speaks, whether this be sadness, energy, or longing. Expression is the suffering countenance of artworks (Adorno, 1997, p. 111)¹³.

If the concept of expression, as a philosophical attitude, is preliminarily presented in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, it is in the *Negative Dialectic* that it takes shape. It is in this latter work that Adorno seeks to “incorporate mimeses into conceptual discourse - not only as its object but also as part of it” (Duarte, 2008, p. 34). To understand the importance of the concept of mimeses in this process, a few brief comments are needed.

For Adorno and Horkheimer (2002), mimesis designates, especially in the context of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, an archaic behavior, expression of the struggle for survival in the face of the oppressive superiority of nature; it is linked to the self-preservation process of the subject. In this sense, it does not constitute itself just as the other forgotten by reason, but as a way of resembling nature for the purposes of domination, that is, it “mathematics made thought into a thing, a tool” (Adorno; Horkheimer, 2002, p. 19)¹⁴. For the authors, the repression of the somatic-mimetic dimension of knowledge that accompanies the construction of conceptual and identity thinking leads to the undermining of its impulses. From this “[...] the expression gives philosophy the ability to penetrate the deepest layers of a reality that underlies the reality of the appearance of universal reconciliation, to give “voice to its lack of freedom”, something that science certainly cannot do” (Duarte,

2008, p. 35). For Adorno, incorporating mimesis into conceptual discourse means the possibility of rescuing it from conceptual repression through self-reflection. And it is in art as a “refuge for mimetic comportment” (Adorno, 1997, p. 53)¹⁵, that is, redeemed mimesis that we find the possibility of escaping both from magic and regression, for

[...] the aesthetic comportment, however, is neither immediately mimesis nor its repression but rather the process that mimesis sets in motion and in which, modified, mimesis is preserved [...] Ultimately, aesthetic comportment is to be defined as the capacity to shudder, as if goose bumps were the first aesthetic image [...] life in the subject is nothing but what shudders, the reaction to the total spell that transcends the spell. Consciousness without shudder is reified consciousness (Adorno, 1997, p. 331)¹⁶.

It is, therefore, the critique of the mathematization of the world that, as a horizon, emerges as a task for the theory. By thingfying itself and others, practice conditions us to inertia, the pragmatized objectivity typical of managed society. Thinking is rebellion because it is a critical movement of false reality. Theory is movement. It is discontent with bad conscience. To provoke shudders, to promote seismic disturbances, in Adorno’s words, to remove the primacy of the subject, to bring into thought the object as expression of the oppressed is essential to the theory. Thus, the expression becomes an extremely important thinking model for the current educational context, governed by the praxis of the language of efficacy.

The co-optation of language is not by accident. It is the result of a programmed manipulation whose purpose is, as we have tried to demonstrate, to maintain the managed society. For this, it is necessary to liquidate with the theory, because it is in it that a refuge of freedom is found. In liquidating theory, process, expression, and critique are exhausted with it, for “mathematical procedure became a kind of ritual of thought” (Adorno; Horkheimer, 2002, p. 19)¹⁷. Operation, the logic of utility, the pragmatics of the magic cube, have become the structural model of formative praxis. It is up to theory to maintain intransigence, because in it is where revolutionary praxis is found. The expression is the renunciation of false thought, that is, the thought turned to the immediate, to factual positivism. Renouncing this false thinking has become increasingly urgent for education.

The expression becomes, *in fine*, a praxic attitude as it presents or enables the experience from the internal logic of the formative process. If the logic of utility gains strength in curriculum plastering, the expression gains strength as it opens up to the bare and raw experience of each subject’s concrete reality. It is the possibility of presenting the subsumed in the plaster’s identity in the curriculum. It is attitude and not a structural model of thought.

But expression is not hallucination. It is appearance, measured by the reality principle that it wishes to circumvent [...] Expression negates reality by holding up to it what is

unlike it, but it never denies reality; it looks straight in the eye the conflict that results blindly in the symptom. What expression has in common with repression is that its movement is blocked by reality. That movement, and the whole complex of experience of which it is a part, is denied direct communication with its object. As expression it achieves unfalsified manifestation of itself and so of the resistance to it, in sensuous imitation. It is so strong that it suffers modification to a mere image, the price of survival, without mutilation on its outward path. In place of the goal, and of subjective, censorial 'elaboration', it sets an objective, polemical self-revelation (Adorno, 2005a, p. 213)¹⁸.

Concluding Remarks

The search for a (ideal) model of formation that would make it possible for man to escape from his minority, making use of the words of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), guided human thought from Greek antiquity until the following times. For clear reasons, these models have been adapted to time in an attempt to get as close as possible to the real and its emerging needs. This is what happens when we refer to the Greek *Paideia*, the Roman *Humanitas* and the German *Bildung*. These formative ideals, considering the historical period of each one of them, sought to think of education as a way of empowering the subject, i.e., they proposed to structure a formation model that could embrace from the conception of a correct life (ethics), through political action, until to the development of specific knowledge for working life.

The analogous characteristic in each model was, therefore, the search for an integral formation, or better, the construction of a humanization process that, besides the teaching of specific subjects and disciplines, was also based on the development of the ethical, social and aesthetics dimensions of the subject. Among the three, *Bildung*, being the closest formative project of our time, is detached from the holistic ideal of *Paideia* and, similarly, from the theological ideal of *Humanitas*, founding a process of self-formation based on the autonomy of the subject. In this sense, at *Bildung*, "educated man seeks himself, participating in an ideal of humanity, which configures a program of social transformation (a teleology or purpose) through individual formation" (Hermann, 2009, p. 152).

The path taken so far, particularly with regard to the hypostasization of practice within the present formative context, leads us to the frontal shock with these models of thought. If, on the one hand, it is characteristic of each model to search for a formation that could prioritize the integrality of the subject, on the other, what we are witnessing is a visceral attack on what would be the basis for a critical formation, namely, the thought as a negative critique of apparent reality. Most disastrous is the passivity with which our higher education institutions are dealing with these issues. The sovereignty of market pragmatism

against the demands of the University is visibly perceived. As Dias Sobrinho well remembers:

Social utopia today has given prominence to the economic function. Nowadays, the main demand made by educational institutions is that they are at the service of industries, markets, labor needs [...] Important became pragmatic training, useful knowledge, the ability to offer immediate answers, the needs of the moment, to the satisfaction of the individual and the companies became important (Dias Sobrinho, 2005, p. 68-69).

In other words, the logic of utility has seduced, with its apparent promises, the whole formative ethos. “[A]nything which does not conform to the standard of calculability and utility must be viewed with suspicion” (Adorno; Horkheimer, 2002, p. 3)¹⁹, that is the watchword of current praxis and its ruse reason. But as much as language tries, through its elementary mechanisms, to describe the world, there will always be something beyond itself, or rather something who it does not support. In this sense, expressionlessness by language still allows the path of hope to remain open. Therefore, the power of expression as a critical thinking model, formative attitude, is resistance to the robotization/technicization of the subjects, that is, to their transformation into gears for the maintenance of the industry. The theory, source and residue of expression is intransigence, revolutionary praxis. The task of critical thinking is to be expression of the oppressed in the middle of this overwhelming wholeness.

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Notes

- 1 *Nichts zu sagen, als was sich sagen läßt* (Wittgenstein, 1969, p. 114)
- 2 Procrustes (or Procastus), son of Poseidon, had a house on Mount Korydallos by the sacred road that connected Athens to Eleusis. There was a very special bed there. The passing travelers were invited to a well-deserved rest, but as soon as they hardly fell asleep in this bed, if Procrustes did not fit in it, their legs, if they were shorter they would be stretched by a system of pulleys until they were exactly the same size. No one ever fit into the bed exactly, because Procrustes secretly chose one of two beds.
- 3 Adorno (1977, p. 766).
- 4 Correia and Perius (2017).
- 5 Adorno (1977, p. 788).
- 6 Adorno (1977, p. 776-777).
- 7 Adorno (1977, p. 766).
- 8 Adorno and Horkheimer (1981, p. 56).
- 9 Adorno and Horkheimer (1981, p. 32).

- 10 Adorno and Horkheimer (1981, p. 12).
- 11 Adorno and Horkheimer (1981, p. 24).
- 12 Adorno and Horkheimer (1981, p. 45).
- 13 Adorno (1970, p. 170).
- 14 Adorno and Horkheimer (1981, p. 42).
- 15 Adorno (1970, p. 86).
- 16 Adorno (1970, p. 489-490).
- 17 Adorno and Horkheimer (1981, p. 42).
- 18 Adorno (1980, p. 241-242).
- 19 Adorno and Horkheimer (1981, p. 22).

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