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Provocations

It Has Gone and No One Knows if It Will return: The Progressive Disappearance of the Original Theory

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Foi e Não se Sabe se Volta: O Sumiço Progressivo da Teoria Original

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ABSTRACT

Objective: the objective of this text is to question the academic production that focuses on either the descriptions about the researched subject, with reflections in which the immediate form of the object predominates, or the use of pre-existing theoretical models and conceptions, which end up directing the investigation to the presupposition contents. **Provocation:** 'productivist logic' has thrown theory away from the academic spotlight, giving more value to pragmatic objectivism and the undeniable evidence provided by empiricism. The so-called 'scientific productivism' is based either on the immediate determination of the object in the constitution of knowledge or on a direct result of the thought assumption about reality: in both cases, knowledge would emerge from the absence of the permanent interaction between the object and the consciousness, dialectically mediated by thought. Elaborating original theory requires from the 'Epistemological Act' a permanent and critical investment in the reality and in the theories available. In the absence of this investment, descriptive analyses and those that reproduce early theoretical assumptions, as if the existing theory were immediately a condition of representation of the reality, fulfill a formalistic ritual and do not reveal the multideterminations of the objects in its concrete constitution. **Conclusion:** it is urgent to reaffirm the place of theory as the objectively elaborated form of the representation of reality, as a requirement of the scientific condition beyond description, phenomenal mentions, notes, narratives, forms, assumptions, and ideological mysticism. The theory is not the dogmatic guarantee of definitive true knowledge, but of the in-depth, methodologically oriented elaboration of the onto-practical and epistemic condition.

Keywords: epistemological act; theory; academic production; productivism.

RESUMO

Objetivo: o objetivo desta pensata é questionar a produção acadêmica que se concentra ou nas descrições sobre a matéria pesquisada, com reflexões em que predomina a forma imediata do objeto, ou na utilização de modelos e concepções teóricas pré-existentes, que acabam por direcionar a investigação aos conteúdos pressupostos. **Provocação:** a lógica produtivista tem jogado a teoria para longe dos holofotes acadêmicos, dando mais valor ao objetivismo pragmático e às provas incontestáveis fornecidas pelo empirismo. A produção científica produtivista passa a se basear ou na determinação imediata da matéria na constituição do conhecimento, ou é resultado direto do pensamento pressuposto sobre a realidade: em ambos os casos, o conhecimento emergiria da ausência da permanente interação entre a matéria e a consciência, dialeticamente mediada pelo pensamento. Elaborar teoria original exige do Ato Epistemológico um investimento permanente e crítico sobre a realidade e as teorias disponíveis. Na ausência desse investimento, as análises descritivas e aquelas que reproduzem suposições teóricas antecipadas, como se a teoria existente fosse imediatamente uma condição de representação da matéria, cumprem um ritual formalístico e não revelam as multideterminações da matéria em sua constituição concreta. **Conclusão:** é urgente reafirmar o lugar da teoria como a forma objetivamente elaborada da representação da realidade, como exigência da condição científica para além da descrição, das menções fenomênicas, dos apontamentos, das narrativas, das formas, dos pressupostos e do misticismo ideológico. A teoria não é a garantia dogmática do conhecimento verdadeiro definitivo, mas da elaboração em profundidade, metodologicamente orientada, da condição ontoprática e epistêmica.

Palavras-chave: ato epistemológico; teoria; produção acadêmica; produtivismo.

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A first glance at publications in leading journals in the field of applied social sciences suggests that, in many places, the original theory has 'gone on vacation' (or it is 'hibernating'), and no one knows if it will 'return to work' in academia. The original theory is not the one that exists as an assumption. It is not the theory reported in literature reviews that enshrine the 'idea of the matter' before the 'matter of the idea.' The original theory is constituted as a form of expressing the representation of the researched reality. It innovates and expands the representation of reality in its multiple determinations. The original theory disappeared and was replaced by descriptive analyses and the Aristotelian formal logic – not as brilliant – and sometimes filled with statistics that are the supreme confirmation that reality is definitively scrutinized and there is no way it can be reflected or elaborated. The theory was also replaced by some theoretical skeletons, mystical ghosts, and unburied conceptual corpses – formulations consolidated without criticism and working as a comfortable parameter for conceptual musings.

The model following the formula adopted to publish studies in health, chemistry, physics, and others (problem→ method → case description → discussion → conclusion), is based on the supremacy of numbers, discursive findings, descriptions, assumptions, and standardized observation, i.e., it is based on a technicist methodology (or the supremacy of technique over the object). This model also became the fairy godmother of academic studies in social and applied sciences. Where did the reflections, the critical analyses, and the tensioning of reality go? Where did the original theoretical elaboration go? Where did philosophical surveillance, ontology, and epistemology go? Certainly, they must not be gone due to some recent pandemic since they disappeared for some time from academic meetings, journals, dissertations, and theses. Would there be another practice for the same theory?

The idea that 'in practice, the theory is different' is a common belief that is not questioned and is sometimes repeated like a mantra to separate ideas from reality. Conceptions such as (a) the theory is different from practice or is so distant that theory and practice refer to different problems or different approaches to reality; (b) the theory is an assumption (or hypothesis) about something; (c) the theory takes place in the human imagination, while practice takes place in reality; (d) the theory is a logical-abstract proposition that must be proven against the reality, became widespread. In any of these conceptions, the theory is the objectified form of research.

If the reality the theory intends to translate is not properly addressed, then, in practice, the theory must give way to another theory. Thus, a theory is a representation of reality considering certain conditions. The theory does not represent a practice when (a) the original theory was designed in a purely idealist formal dimension (logic); (b) the theory is a hypothesis about the structure and movement of what is concrete (which is a standard procedure in classical, quantum, modern, and nuclear physics, for example); (c) the dynamic and contradictory movement of theory and practice and theory required a re-elaboration of the theoretical knowledge initially created; (d) the knowledge production conditions (theoretical, methodological, technological, and instrumental) evolved to overcome the knowledge that was possible in the original conditions, leading to other elaborations.

When creating an original theory, the epistemological act (Faria, in press) has to permanently and critically invest in the reality and available theories. Without this investment, descriptive analyses and studies that reproduce theoretical assumptions acritically – as if the existing theory was an immediate representation of reality – appeared as the standard of science and lay down the norms reflected in the evaluation criteria of theses, dissertations, and articles submitted to journals and academic events. With their linear and technical characteristics, research methodology disciplines assumed a productivist approach, offering models that treat research as building blocks: it is enough to know how to assemble them according to a specific logic that fits them together. Extra courses on 'how to produce an article to be published in a top journal' are widespread. Websites offering translation for the "academic Esperanto" (i.e., English as an imperialist language), counting on financial support from organizations such as research support agencies, have flooded service delivery networks. Language – and the relevant social issues that research should address (even when considering the neo-Kantian conception of Habermas, 2016) – was placed on a quaternary dimension. The place and form are more relevant than the content.

Does this mean that all existing theories or available descriptive data should be rejected? No way. Available theories and data descriptions of empirical reality can be (and often are) important parts of knowledge production, but they will never be in-depth knowledge per se. Without conceptual and theoretical production, research is descriptive and conventional. When observed through a less rigorous conception, the theory has often been confused with elucubration, ideology, assumption, mysticism, or, in the best definitions, with hypotheses. These conceptions about what theory is and the questions around its validity and practice have put the theory on the limits of speculation as a normative assumption. It is a complete ideal or 'pure science' (which is astonishing from the epistemological point of view).

However, when referring to the structure of the body of science, a theory is nothing but:

> "a coherent and systematized set of concepts and conceptions, based on scientifically accepted methodological rules (validation, hypothesis, data collection and treatment, scope, etc.) forming propositions to objectify the representation of the researched reality. The theory can build an understanding of the investigated phenomena to offer means of representing the reality through thoughts and contribute or create reflective conditions to discover, unveil, reveal or hypothesize about the knowable reality" (Faria, in press, p. 146, our translation).

In this sense, a theory is an abstract representation of reality; therefore, it is also materiality. Thus, for knowledge production – i.e., for the epistemological act – the theory can be both (a) a reference (when it is called upon to support the analysis) and (b) an object (when it is the product of the representation or a matter to be submitted for analysis). However, if the theory is taken as an assumption of the representation of reality, it ends up exhausted in ideology, in the preconceived idea of matter.

Simply put, a theory is a set of concepts produced from the interaction of the subject with reality to address scientific theoretical and/or practical/technological problems and/or clarify – when possible – phenomena and facts of interest to humanity. Formulating and developing theories is obviously more demanding than describing reality data or starting from ready-made (theoretical) models. A theory needs creativity, originality, depth, and rigorous coherent elaboration, whereas description requires an accurate record of things that can be seen. It does not focus on problems of hermeneutics or problems related to a consistent representation, and the model only requires testability. The theory is controversial, while description and reproduction are operational records supported by the technique, i.e., once the technique can be reproduced, the description is accepted as adequate; once the assumed model is tested, the result is the total or partial confirmation or refutation: nothing more convenient than this contractual agreement.

When considering the theory as an assumption, is it true that its confirmation or refutation based on a single case became its escape zone? Is it possible for a singularity to be fully compatible with universality or for universality to be overthrown by a singularity? These questions led to the Popperian 'swan problem,' and, as a result, the singular case studies gained a breadth beyond their consistency. According to Popper (1975; 2012) a dogma, metaphysical elaboration, or a false proposition is a theory that cannot be contested, overcome, or refuted. Therefore, testing a theory using case studies gained an air of scientificity. In this case, the theory to be tested is conceived in a perspective of universality, that is, according to a given capacity for generalization. However, the Popperian problem is not that of testing but that of differentiating between theory and dogma. In this way, even in the perspective of rationalism – that of Popper's logical and methodological falsifiability, the theory is not confused with the description of a fact; it is not exhausted in the primitive conception of pure empiricism or pure reason in knowledge production.

Every epistemological act is always an interaction between subject and object, thought and matter expressed theoretically. While theory requires abstract elaboration, the description of a fact and testing requires nothing more than verification. So, why the preference for the liquidity of descriptions and tests in the face of consistent theoretical elaborations? The coercion of facts is one of Durkheim (1978) arguments, but even he did not bother with descriptive and testing work. Descriptive and reproduction texts have become a safe harbor for publications, a guarantee of the absence of controversy based on the speculative argument that data are given, so that data, per se, are not under discussion, but the techniques of their production and formal analysis.

The emergence of productivist, instrumental, and utilitarian data drove the theory away from the academic spotlight in the name of pragmatic objectivism and the indisputable evidence offered by empiricism. All philosophy was thrown into the 'swan lake' on behalf of the fantastic realism of subjectivity. Productivist research is then based on the immediate determination of the matter in knowledge constitution, disregarding the subject's reflection. Thus, knowledge is a direct result of thinking reality based on assumptions, or it stems from the imposition of the real on consciousness: in both cases, knowledge would emerge from the absence of permanent interaction between matter and consciousness, dialectically mediated by thought.

Reality is not constituted based on a statement. A statement does not suggest the content of a phenomenon and does not represent something per se. However, the dominance of reality in knowledge production is not the supremacy of matter or its imposing determination. It is not the suppression of thought (which would be a mere receptacle or a mirror of reality), the subordination of the thought to reality, or a place of origin of the thought. It is, instead, the origin of thought and knowledge about reality. The consciousness of matter – as far as one can reach such consciousness – is impossible without critical theoretical elaboration, even though the thought creates the origin of the matter's abstract representation in reality. It is necessary

to overcome the old problems of empiricism, which subtracts thought from the knowledge production process, and idealism (which insists on building the abstract substance of something and then taking this substance as the explanation for the element's origin). The primacy of the reality offers bases to affirm that starting research on a phenomenon from the idea that one has of it (theories, models, conceptions) can only result in the description of reality or in the formulation of logical assumptions and abstractions, formulas to be tested, metaphysical propositions, nominal references, classifications, and typologies. But this cannot be called elaborate concrete scientific knowledge, even though it may be part of the epistemological process (Faria, 2015).

Sooner or later, every researcher realizes that reality is chaotic in its immediate form. Idealistic procedures, analysis schemes, and data collection and treatment techniques, which consist of previously establishing the conditions in which reality must manifest (pre-epistemological censorship of the object) contribute to avoiding facing reality and disregarding the complexity of concreteness. When scholars adopt research models that consist of the first structure of the reference theory, the definition of research techniques and forms of analysis, the elaboration of hypotheses, variables, indicators, research questions and problems, implementation schedule and all sorts of framing reality to a project developed in research offices and rooms, the ideal way of accessing and exposing the reality is more important than the reality per se than the meaning of the concrete content. In the assumed models, the reality is an accessory, and the scholars offer only one opportunity for reality to manifest, according to a previously proposed scheme, independent of its own constitution as a material reality. The available theory is no longer a dialogic condition of representation of the real to become a mere parameter. In this conception, theory, as a form of representation of the real, as the production of original knowledge, is expelled from the epistemological field.

The centrality of research, in this productivist conception of tests and descriptions, is not in the dominance of what is concrete, in tensioning reality, in discovering what is not immediately exposed, in the contradictions, in the complex movements of reality, but in the models, systems, schemes, maps, pre-categorical constitutive and operational definitions, with their coercive laws, presupposed functions, predefined relationships imposed on reality to organize in advance how to establish the epistemological process between the scholar and the chaotic reality. In this idealist conception, researcher and reality are separated by bureaucratic rules, models of formal procedures imposed, evaluation processes, functional schemes, fossilized conceptions, and processes that reduce original research to the mere fulfillment of normative practices[1]. Thus, the reality is previously framed to reduce surprises and uncertainties so that the researcher can access it when already domesticated and passive. 'The domesticated reality' has nothing to say other than what has been predetermined, and the researcher has nothing to know about the reality beyond what they have confirmed.[2] Any contrary manifestation reaches the possibility of a hypothesis for a future investigation or of a dysfunctionality said to be pretentiously constitutive. This is how to prevent the concrete manifestation of reality and reduce research to an act of confirming assumptions.

Thus, once the interpretation model is widely and generically defined, all specific and singular facts that can be explained will be confirmations or denials of such model. As the model has some explanatory flexibility – a vast terrain of interpretive possibilities – the researcher can make random incursions into events and introduce them into the body of the explanation. What the model cannot assimilate or explain is considered an exception that confirms the rule or a prank/disobedience of reality. This procedure is mistakenly conceived as a search for meaning, in which meaning does not make any sense.

Such an idealist procedure, as already stated by Engels (1979, p. 81, our translation), consists of "analyzing a certain group of objects of knowledge, in their simple intended elements, applying to these elements a number of no less simple axioms the author considers evident, to then operate with the results obtained". This epistemological procedure, applied as a current model for the production of scientific knowledge, is nothing more than the new form of the "old and favorite ideological method, also called 'a priori,' which consists of establishing and proving the properties of an object, not starting from the object, but deriving from its concept." The first thing to do, continues Engels (1979, p. 81, our translation), is "to convert the object into a concept of that object; secondly, it is only necessary to invert the order of things and measure the object by its image, the concept." Thus, the production of scientific knowledge about reality becomes a reality deduced from the idea, not of its multiple determinations but its descriptive form.

At this point, there is a practical and normative problem, which is the content of the disciplines addressing 'research methodology.' A glance at course outlines addressing this topic, especially in graduate academic programs, suggests that the research procedures follow a relatively standardized model. This model is also adopted as a dogmatic guideline in assessing academic articles in scientific journals and congresses and meetings in the field. Every reviewer must follow the idealized model, which indicates what to look at and how much each item

represents in the final grade. According to this proposal, the scientific methodology must follow a script in which the following stand out: (a) a mandatory theoretical starting point (capturing the reality implies the existence of a previous theory); (b) describing the methodology (strictly speaking, the techniques to be used according to the repetitive available bibliography); (c) presentation of data from the empirical field (case study description); (d) data analysis in the light of theory (a confrontation between what was idealized and the manifestation of what was previously conditioned); (e) and the conclusion (not far from obvious). Everything can be suppressed if the author of the text chooses to classify their research as a theoretical essay, i.e., if they admit that theory does not need reality or techniques or methodologies.

Observing carefully, this model is not just a proposition of procedures; it is not just a form of exposition, fulfilling a protocol. It is a process of knowledge production, an epistemological and methodological scheme already given. It is epistemological because it indicates how scientific knowledge should be produced, from the assumed theory to the empirical field and, from there, back to the theory, confirming or invalidating it, totally or partially. It is methodological because it indicates that the investigation method starts from a theoretical framework that, submitted to certain research techniques, points to results that are contained both in theory and in the techniques used. Thus, the results exist even before the investigation (as they are assumptions), and the researcher only exposes the specific details of what they eventually found in some empirical field (describe the 'findings'). There are no possibilities of different epistemological and methodological dimensions that do not follow this pattern. This research model is what Hegel (2014; 2016-2018) calls sensible certainty, i.e., it is exhausted in the precarious approximation of the research subject to the object, in the immediate capture of the reality.

The idealist model disregards that immediate reality acts as a confusing datum for the subject, as a provisional and conventional phenomenological appropriation, which needs to be inventoried and classified according to Bachelard (2006), as reality is necessarily expressed in the formula guaranteed by the model's characteristics. The whole appearance is a confirmation that runs out immediately. In this conception, the initial phase (problematization) is confused with the phase of investigating the empirical field and the presentation phase – since the investigation counts on theoretical assumptions exposed before the empirical research. There is no theoretical production. There is reproduction. The presentation follows formal, propaedeutic, and didactic criteria, but these criteria cannot be knowledge production methods.

According to this scheme, the idealistic practice of investigation ends. The next procedure is to reproduce the 'standard model of exposure.' Thus, once the idealized investigation model is adopted (bringing together the preceding/problematic and the investigation phases), the presentation model (presentation phase) comes next, taught in specific courses on 'how to write an academic paper.' Presentation models follow assessment criteria that do not always consider the research quality and social impact, as they value recent citations by peers on private platforms. An academic study is assessed considering the criterion of the percentage of citations of other studies published in more recent years on specific conventional bases.

For example, the ISI[3] produces a database from selected journals that makes up the quantitative analysis of references and citations to calculate the impact factor, using article citations to qualify journals. Over time, other indexers emerged, forming the Web of Science collection. The journals in the Web of Science are used to calculate the Journal Citation Ranking (JCR) statistics, such as the impact factor[4]. The metric evaluation model quickly became a factor of scientific evaluation, guiding processes of accreditation and disaccreditation of professors and evaluation of programs by official agencies, carried out precisely by researchers who consider the standardized form of research the only or most important scientific reference. Historically, this procedure is a denial of science itself and a denial of its condition of overcoming 'epistemological obstacles.' The presentation forms and places will prevail over the research content. Research is becoming increasingly descriptive and reproductive to ensure peer approval without further controversy.

The adoption of a standard research model as a carrier of truly scientific practices, considering all the others false and/or 'subjective,' is accompanied by the evaluation model of publications that follows the same procedures. The reviewer uses the same script of analysis imposed on the researchers. This production and evaluation process occurs in an assembly line or production chain, creating the 'epistemological monopoly,' in which a single conception of knowledge production controls the 'epistemic market' of a given academic product, influencing the value of execution and evaluation of the epistemological act due to coercive regulation and the habit (remembering the Vienna Circle) of maintaining and expanding the interests of academic groups that reproduce themselves in peer reviews. The epistemological monopoly is the imposition of a knowledge production practice that denies the very act of knowledge production (or the epistemological act). The separation among previous knowledge (problematization), investigation, and presentation reaches its prominence in the regular evaluation processes of thepublic agency[5].

It is necessary to question the idealist standard research model, whose results are limited to descriptive analyses, lacking theoretical formulations and in-depth criticism. If the immediate reality is chaotic for the researcher, what is the justification for imposing epistemological censorship on reality? For what grounded reason should reality be analyzed according to an a priori scheme based on adopting the rules of the epistemological monopoly? What theoretical depth is obtained with descriptions of facts according to prescriptive rituals and protocol schemes? What guarantees that the existing theory is considered a truth per se or a truth to be tested (in the neo-Popperian version)? For Engels (1979, p. 73, our translation), if humanity arrived, at some point,

> "to such a degree of progress that it only acted with eternal truths, with products of the exercise of thought that could claim sovereign validity and unconditional titles of truth, it would have reached a point where the infinity of the intellectual world would have been exhausted, both in relation to reality as in relation to possibilities, thus effecting the famous miracle of counting the innumerable".

Even to the original Popperians, it seems evident that the contestation of a theory can only be carried out based on empirical evidence. So why should the contestation of theories be exhausted in descriptions that do not confront them with other theories resulting from the investigation? Why should we subject critical theoretical construction to a self-centered method and an a priori model of theory reproduction?

The deficiencies the researcher finds at each stage of the study refer to the objective of the investigation, the research question, and the theoretical, technical, and empirical field limitations, among other reasons that must be rigorously and permanently evaluated. However, when the researcher defines a priori, in their office, the theoretical framework and the data collection instruments – regardless of the object they want to investigate, the researcher is subjected to a type of prior epistemological censorship (to the object, the theoretical construction, and the researcher), that becomes part of the research throughout all its phases. When confronting the idea based on a previous theory, method, and techniques with the examined reality, the idealist researcher will inevitably find what they intended to find, positively or negatively, confirming or denying the 'hypothesis.' In this way, the object (the matter) will hardly resist the scheme, technique, method, and thought since it is censored from the beginning by the previous idea that the researcher had about it. Therefore, the researcher will never be able to apprehend reality differently and more profoundly than what was previously delimited. What we have, in this relationship, is the restriction of the object and the researcher, i.e., little can come out of this script beyond what was previously rehearsed.

Suppose the researcher perceives that the reality has more to say than the ideally conceived apprehension scheme, or that the format they have to show is different from that predicted in the rationalized theoretical pattern elaborated in the office. In that case, the research procedure will lead them to seek or 'cut' reality to make it fit into the previously created scheme or 'manipulate the format of the scheme,' not to enlarge it but to adjust to the reality observed. This is because, from the beginning, the representation of reality was in the idea rather than in the relationship between idea and reality, matter and consciousness, object and subject.

That is why Adorno (2001) argues that empirical methods, whose force of attraction comes from the claim to objectivity, privilege subjectivity, attitudes, and forms of behavior, whose abstraction is transformed into quantifiable data. It is only in this reduced scope that its specificity is preserved. The objectivity of empirical investigation is the objectivity of the method and not the object or fact explored. Empirical data do not refer only to those obtained by quantitative techniques. Qualitative techniques also make use of empiricist artifices. Does this mean that empirical references should be abandoned? No way. This means that the data itself, exposed as a description of facts, phenomena, or objects, only add treated information to knowledge. Data constitute a vital part of all research. However, it is not the reality but its abstract form at a certain level. Without theoretical elaboration, data has nothing to add epistemologically to the research.

However, without critical theoretical elaboration, empiricist techniques end up fetishizing the object, degenerating it into an object with supernatural power to represent the researched reality. The data become more important than the theoretical reflections they can promote. The security of the analysis' obviousness (descriptive or anchored in idealistic assumptions) takes the place of criticism, having objectivity and neutrality as justification. In this sense, the data obtained empirically can transform what they intend to expose into a fetish of what is concrete, making real historical subjects disappear and reducing them to metrics (measures, probabilities, margin, average, median, repetitions, incidence) purely abstract. There are procedures in the research process that cannot be defined a priori and are only concretely identified during the epistemological act. This does not mean that statistical techniques, empirical content, or discourse analysis are useless or inadequate. Nor does it mean a lack of rigor in defining its procedures. It means the refusal to impose a priori procedures on the investigation

processes of descriptive analysis and, therefore, the search to guarantee the observance of the fundamental condition of not making such procedures an obstacle to the creative, critical epistemological act capable of breaking theories, concepts, and existing conceptions.

Science works, necessarily, with what represents the knowable range of reality since it is highly complex (if not impossible) to represent reality in its absolut totality[6]. The factual impossibility of representing absolute reality and all its singularities imposes the definition of constitutive elements and categories of analysis, which are necessary abstractions of reality representation. In the conditions of its absolutization, the search for unattainable certainty requires a reflection on the possibilities of the epistemological act.

In this sense, it is necessary to overcome pre-epistemological practices (knowledge is deduced immediately, without elaboration) that consist of taking the data of the empirical field as truth (the truth is the matter itself to which the subject has direct and immediate access), or in attributing the actual existence of the object to thought about it, so that matter is creative thought. It is also necessary to invest both (a) against the habit of taking the explanatory model, the mental map, or even the hypotheses as being, immediately, the reality, and (b) against the habit of taking statistical data, narratives, documents, observations, in short, statements about the reality as being the reality. When taken as the foundations of the investigation, these pre-epistemological procedures resemble attempts to fit the conceptual pieces with the statements (and vice versa) in search of some meaning that allows, even if apparently, to confirm what the author previously defined by the theoretical scheme presupposed.

All so-called true knowledge, from common to scientific, is produced by the complex, dynamic, and dialectical interaction between matter and thought, in which the former is represented by the latter. The elaborate representation of reality by thought is appropriated by consciousness as matter (concrete). This is why matter forms are distinguished by substance and not by being matter. Unlike the conception that gives epistemological protagonism to mystification, in which 'ideas about things' replace 'things of ideas,' and the conception that gives the object the feat of being the immediate origin of its concept, the 'consciousness of matter is a matter of consciousness.' In this way, the thought can only take ownership over matter if it recognizes the primacy of the reality while establishing its interaction with it, i.e., recognizing that matter is exterior and prior to thought but cannot be represented by consciousness without the in-depth elaboration of thought.

It is necessary to reaffirm the place of theory as the objectively elaborated form of the representation of reality, as a requirement of the scientific condition beyond description, phenomenologic mentions, notes, narratives, forms, assumptions, and ideological mysticism. The theory is not the dogmatic guarantee of definitive true knowledge but the in-depth, methodologically oriented elaboration of the onto-practical and epistemic condition.

Therefore, whenever a subject asserts knowledge about a phenomenon without having to demonstrate it concretely, they can only do so in two ways: as an ideology, because for mysticism, thought moves autonomously in its claim to inform the object; or as immediacy, because for pure empiricism the appearance of the thing is already the thing itself (the statue of the god is the god). Both processes feed on conventional conceptions that are either merely metaphysical (when knowledge abstracts concrete references from the real object) or immediately physical (when knowledge about the object is nothing more than a nominal elaboration of thought).

Resuming what was exposed at the beginning of this reflection, the challenge of qualified research is to produce original theory, which means not letting investigative thoughts, critical analyses, the tensioning of reality, philosophical surveillance, and onto-practical and epistemological coherence escape through the labyrinths of productivism, formal conventionalism, and the coercion imposed by evaluation and publication criteria.

NOTES

1. This bureaucratic and coercive process is reproduced with minute refinements in academic institutions (standards, resolutions, decrees, measures, normative instructions, so-called transversal disciplines, etc.) and serves as a dogmatic parameter for institutional managers and researchers. There seems to be a certain libidinal, egoic and orgasmic pleasure in the pronouncement of rules and in their enforcement, as well as in the achievement of goals.
2. One of the most common phenomena in carrying out research is finding a researcher looking for an object that can fit into his analysis model. The entire research process elaborated in the cabinet is ready, just missing a reasonably accessible and minimally available and compatible object. Availability and compatibility, in turn, are only confirmed after a few attempts to access the 'empirical field'. When the researcher finally finds some empirical case available and reasonably close to his project, the magic of transformation occurs in which, finally, he can mark the ceremony of voluntary union

between his project and empirical reality, under the conditions admitted and sanctioned by the religious apparatus of evaluation, so that a legitimate academic family is established.

3. Eugene Garfield proposed the Science Citation Index (SCI) and founded the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), which has been owned by Thomson Reuters since 1992. The impact factor model was first proposed to evaluate publications of scientific articles in the areas of physical and natural sciences, and was later extended to studies in the human and social sciences as a kind of universal ruler. The Web of Science is a website that is based on several databases that provide academic citation data. This website was originally produced by ISI and is currently maintained by Clarivate Analytics.
4. The impact factors, at first, were just a statistical correlation study. Later, they became religious commandments, followed by institutions and researchers without any critical evaluation. From there to becoming police rules was only a small step. The institute became a business in the academic market and the model became its product aimed at serving consumers of avid indicators for some sacred book of academic productivism with its imperative divine commandments.
5. In general, these evaluation processes are bureaucratic, technocratic, filled with nominal records, and do not focus on the academic and social quality of what they evaluate, but on the production of indicators without content, official "statistics", descriptive reports, classification indications. In short, the valorization of empiricism exactly where the realm of science should be. This process mobilizes managers and researchers who, in the end, manage to produce only a formal report.
6. Statistical techniques seek to overcome this limitation by defining not only the sample of the universe (the population), but also its representativeness (by categories, classes, etc.), the procedures for obtaining it, the limits of representativeness (margin of error, degree of confidence, etc.) and the conditions of the results obtained and their meanings. Evidently, no matter how precise the techniques and procedures are, all representation is an abstraction.

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