

From Pseudo-Concrecy to Praxis

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WORK REVIEW

KOSIK, Karel. *Dialética do Concreto*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 2017.

Karel Kosik's work, entitled "Dialectics of Concrete", undoubtedly presents numerous points, questions, questions, which call into question concepts and ideas that, at times, we think are fixed, absolute truths, reality.

With a strong influence on critical theory, based on a critique of political economy, inaugurated with Marx, and later deepened by other authors, especially those we relate to the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Benjmin), Kosik comes closer, we observe, by Guy Débord, and his "The Society of the Spectacle", a work considered fundamental to the demonstrations of May 1968 in France.

Karel Kosik, it is worth adding, was born in 1926 in Prague, was an activist in the Czech Communist Party (opponent of the Soviet Communist Party) and studied Philosophy. His training, is evidenced in the analyzed work, is Marxist.

In his first chapter, "The world of pseudo-concrecity and its destruction", the author seeks to explain the duality between phenomenon and essence, or rather, between appearance and the thing in itself. The thing in itself, puts Kosik, would be the relational component between phenomenon and essence. For him, men, for example, carry out commercial transactions, without knowing what money really is, that is, the basis of their commercial exchanges. This is why the philosopher states that we live in pseudo-concrecity: which is nothing more than a social construction in which the essence is overshadowed by appearance, characterized by the manipulation of meanings, by fetishized praxis and by naturalization (making immanent what is contingent) .

For Kosik, the dismemberment of pseudo-concrecity is only possible through revolutionary critique, awareness, dialectical thinking and ontogenesis. The thing itself is only understood by isolating the representation from the concept of the thing. Pseudo-concrecity is nothing more than the subject tied to appearance, or rather, the alienated subject, as Marx explained in his critique.

In chapter 4, entitled "Metaphysics of everyday life", Kosik resumes this same analysis, based on a closer assessment of everyday life, similarly to Freud, in "Psychopathology of everyday life", in which the famous father of psychoanalysis analyses, mainly, the wrongdoings. In this chapter, the philosopher emphasizes the importance of analyzing everyday life for its essence (not appearance), investigating the thing itself. Kosik then elaborates a concept: for him, when praxis becomes alienated, it is "Concern". Worry, Pre-Occupation, happens because man, frustrated, cannot automate everything: the subject naturalizes the system, because he is inserted in it, alienated he is. Man is concerned because he is not aware of the whole, he is not aware of his uniqueness, of himself.

It is in this sense that Kosik elaborates a differential parallel between everyday life and history, similarly to Marx, and historical and dialectical materialism. For Kosik, history breaks with everyday life, leads to another everyday, which in turn provides another break, a new everyday, and so on. Man is, above all, for him, what the world is. Daily life, routine, prevents the individual from being unconcerned with the system. The everyday falsifies the real, and, therefore, it is the paradoxical opposite of History.

In another chapter of "Dialectics of the Concrete", entitled "The problematic of 'Marx's Capital'", Kosik points out the importance of interpreting the Marxist text and the specificity of its structure. Ignoring the philosophical or economic part of "Capital" is often the great problem of theoretical interpretations carried out regarding the work of the German philosopher. For Kosik, reading "Capital" is an odyssey: the odyssey of self-awareness of social alienation. According to the philosopher, the liquidation of philosophy would be precisely the self-awareness of society. However, to eliminate philosophy, to liquidate it, is an ideologism, it is to create an even more alienated irrationality, since it is through dialectics that alienation is broken.

Kosik expands on this idea in “Man and the thing or the nature of the thing”. In this chapter, the author states that economic categories are seen only at the level of appearance if not analyzed from a philosophy that supports them. He understands man as the builder of the social, man contributes to the articulation of the social, although he disagrees that man is just another gear for the accumulation of capital, as Marx thought. It is from work, for Kosik, that man stops being an animal and becomes a man, and dominates his desires, his instincts. “Freedom comes from work”, says the author.

Work, not alienated, is praxis. In “The Praxis”, another chapter of “Dialectics of the Concrete”, Kosik analyzes this concept, so expensive and so fundamental, central, in Marxist theory. Praxis is nothing more than the unity between theory and practice, and it is present in man's being, it is what essentially constitutes him. Praxis takes into account both objective aspects (the labor moment, the work itself) and subjective aspects (reflection on work, lack of concern, disalienation). It is through praxis that man frees himself. Freedom happens when theory and practice, associated, are coherently expressed in man's speech and action.

Praxis, for Kosik, arises from questions: what is man?, what is the social?, how is the social created?. Therefore, when analyzing praxis, Kosik recalls the Master and Slave Dialectic, first explained by Hegel, later brought to light by Jacques Lacan – with a view to explaining the subject/Other relationship. According to Kosik, slavery is the only path to freedom and awareness of this is the possibility of revolution. It is worth mentioning Hegel's excellent formulation: the master depends on the slave to be master, therefore he is more of a slave than the slave, enslaved to the slave is in his essence.

Thus, the awareness of such a mechanism, that slavery is the path to freedom, since being a slave, being a servant, a worker, is what constitutes man, institutes the subject (it is work, action, which it makes man human, as Hanna Arendt also explained in “The Human Condition”), is the true praxis. It is only through praxis that the world of pseudo-concrecity is broken, it is through it that the revolution happens, man, in short, he finds himself, he alienates himself, and the change, Real, happens!

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