

THE PHILOSOPHY AND THE MARKET: BETWEEN HOMO FABER AND HOMO SAPIENS

A ONTOLOGIA DA SERVIDÃO VOLUNTÁRIA: ENTRE O HOMO FABER E O HOMO SAPIENS

LA ONTOLOGÍA DE LA SERVIDUMBRE VOLUNTARIA: ENTRE EL HOMO FABER Y EL HOMO SAPIENS

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ABSTRACT

Since Antiquity, social life has established a hierarchy between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*. This hierarchy gave rise to the concepts of *homo faber* and *homo sapiens*. Beginning in modernity, with the scientific revolution, *homo faber* rose to the top of the hierarchy, assuming various characteristics as the centuries progressed. However, it is in contemporaneity that this split becomes radical, and the market poses the question: What is Philosophy for? Thus, the culture industry promotes a new mode of *Dasein*: an ontology of voluntary servitude. In light of this, the present article intends to serve as a response to those who seek to instrumentalize the human condition.

Keywords: Phenomenology. Alienation. Technique. Instrumental Rationality. Ontology.

RESUMO

Desde a Antiguidade, a vida social estabeleceu uma hierarquia entre *vita activa* e *vita contemplativa*. A hierarquia promoveu e fundou os conceitos de *homo faber* e *homo sapiens*. A partir da modernidade, com a revolução científica, o *homo faber* assumiu o topo da hierarquia, assumindo diversos aspectos conforme os séculos. Contudo, na contemporaneidade é que esta cisão se torna radical e o mercado questiona: para quê serve a Filosofia? Assim, a indústria cultural promove um novo modo do *Dasein*: uma ontologia da servidão voluntária. Diante disso, o presente artigo pretende-se uma resposta àqueles que pretendem instrumentalizar a condição humana.

Palavras-chave: Fenomenologia. Alienação. Técnica. Racionalidade Instrumental. Ontologia.

RESUMEN

Desde la antigüedad, la vida social ha establecido una jerarquía entre la vida activa y la vida contemplativa. Esta jerarquía fomentó y fundó los conceptos de *homo faber* y *homo sapiens*. A partir de la modernidad, con la revolución científica, el *homo faber* asumió la cúspide de la jerarquía, adoptando diversas facetas a lo largo de los siglos. Sin embargo, es en la época contemporánea que esta división se radicaliza, y el mercado se pregunta: ¿cuál es el propósito de la filosofía? Así, la industria cultural promueve una nueva forma de *Dasein*: una

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ontología de la servidumbre voluntaria. Ante esto, este artículo pretende dar respuesta a quienes buscan instrumentalizar la condición humana.

Palabras clave: Fenomenología. Alienación. Tecnología. Racionalidad Instrumental. Ontología.



1 INTRODUCTION

The tradition of Western thought developed from the establishment of a dichotomy between *homo faber* and *homo sapiens*. Work and contemplation, work and philosophical activity were seen as antagonistic activities, where there was a primacy of the contemplative life. This posture disintegrated man into his human condition. It divided nobles from slaves.

To work meant to be enslaved by necessity, and this enslavement was inherent in the conditions of human life. Because men were dominated by the necessities of life, they could only gain freedom by dominating others whom they forcibly subjected to necessity. The degradation of the slave was a stroke of fate and a fate worse than death, as it implied the metamorphosis of man into something similar to a domestic animal (ARENDDT, 2011, p. 103).

In Greco-Roman Antiquity, the enslavement of man was justified by the alienation of the necessities of his life (eating, maintaining the home, maintaining his family and a certain level of comfort). With the rise of Christianity, slavery took on new contours. If before the slave was a slave because his needs were alienated, now the slave is a slave because his condition of birth requires it. Being a slave, being the "last among men", the slave attains the Kingdom of Heaven:

And since the text is so clear and literal that it admits of no doubt, let us listen to the comment of St. Thomas, Archbishop of Valencia: *Aethiopes non abiicit virgo decora, sed amplectitur ut parvulos, diligit ut filios. Sciant ergo ipsam matrem etenim quia Altissimi mater est, Aethiopsis matrem nominari non dedignatur*. The Prophet put the Ethiopians and the Blacks in the last place; for this is the place which the world gives them, and the low esteem in which they are treated of other men, children of Adam like themselves. But the Virgin Lady, being Mother of the Most High, does not despise them, nor does she despise herself to have them as her children; rather, because she is the Mother of the Most High, for this very reason she is also proud to be his Mother: *Etenim quia Altissimi mater est, Aethiopsis matrem nominari non dedignatur*. Let the Blacks know, then, and do not doubt that the same Mother of God is their Mother: *Sciunt ergo ipsam matrem*: and know that being such a sovereign Lady, she is such a loving Mother, that as small as they are, she loves them and has them as children: *Amplectitur ut parvulos, diligit ut filios* (VIEIRA, 2013).

The rhetoric used by Father Antônio Vieira in Sermon XIV of the Rosary is a very clear example of the way consciences were domesticated through the use of religion. There is no real theology behind the speech, but pure and simple rhetoric. Although the centuries have passed, the domination of consciences is still present. But now the contemplative way of life is no longer privileged, but now mechanical work, specialization and focus on the delivery of



value are privileged. The fetishization of the commodity, already detected by Marx's sociological analysis, caused a shift in the "hierarchy" of human activities. With promises of quick profits, enrichment and economic stability, post-contemporary man lives as in the Myth of Sisyphus: an existence whose life or death implies no difference.

2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this study was based on the researcher's practical market experience, on the observation of social (administrative) phenomena and on the exploratory search for bibliographic references that could explain the collaborator's way of being subservient. This new way of being, in which existence coincides with utility, raised the hypothesis of an ontology of voluntary servitude. However, the will here, not endowed with freedom of thought, but founded on an unovercome Oedipus complex, causing a dependence on a tutor to think, judge and act. The complex network that is formed around this new ontology requires an observation that goes beyond the limits of a merely descriptive phenomenology, and must be explained from a philosophical, historical and psychoanalytic multidisciplinary.

Therefore, the methodology starts not only from mere description and reflection, but from the real experience of this ontology and its most serious consequences, especially from the birth of a possible totalitarianism, the dissemination of prejudices and the trivialization of a social evil seen as beneficial. The methodology is also based on a practical activity, originating from the phenomenology workshops, part of the curricular component of the Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy at the Claretian University Center (Curricular Extension Project). All participants had their identities and data preserved, according to the Free and Informed Consent Forms, submitted to the University Center and the Ethics Committee. Thus, the methodology adopted does not aim to test theories, but to understand the ontological meaning of the phenomenon of voluntary subservience as it manifests itself in lived experience and in the contemporary social structure.

3 RESULTS

In a phenomenology workshop conducted on October 25, 2025, an experiment was carried out with the workshop participants. The activities of the workshops aim to unveil the being in its existentiality, that is, in time. From Husserl and Heidegger he proposed the understanding of authentic existence and inauthentic existence. In "Being and Time",



Heidegger describes how the individual judges, acts and thinks in the impersonal. These questions, further refined by Nietzsche's nihilism, may have generated some discomfort. Although it seems like a supposed failure, the workshop has achieved its success, which is to awaken critical consciences, subjects with the ability to carry out a *social epoché* and understand the world, the other and oneself as an existential possibility.

The reflection focused on the validity of aesthetic assumptions and how the cultural industry is a mechanism of social scale of the impersonal. The subject is emptied of himself, forced and educated to "like" certain aesthetic standards since childhood, creating a cycle of exclusion and social marginalization. The dynamics made was with a thought experiment in which we asked each person to describe a person's standard of beauty without judgment. The descriptions, although divergent on certain points, most were coincidental, such as body structure: body type, height and expected behavior. This fact led the participants to realize that the aesthetic standard is not a real value, but heteronymic and that, by force of society, it was judged as true.

The thought experiment carried out with the participants demonstrated, therefore, that truths are historically constructed and deconstructed, representing a crucial turning point in the understanding of phenomenology: phenomenological praxis is the attitude of placing oneself in front of reality, not as a skeptic, but as one who questions the validity of the judgments constructed about a phenomenon. Notwithstanding this, from an existential point of view, he demonstrated that the inauthenticity of existence is the tool that feeds the cultural industry, as non-thinking beings are needed to be domesticated.

In summary, the hypothesis raised at the beginning of the research was not only validated through exploratory bibliographic research, but was demonstrated in its reality. The ontology of voluntary servitude is a reality, not only daily, but psychic: it comes from child development, when the child is taught to value productivity and to despise contemplation. There, the expropriation of man of his capacity to think and of his ethical and political freedom is born. However, it is worth noting that the discussions about the workshops, both from a methodological point of view and in the discussions, will remain confidential. The experiences described were treated in a phenomenological way, fully preserving the privacy of the participants according to ethical and legal requirements.

4 THE QUARREL BETWEEN THE HUMAN SCIENCES AND THE NATURAL SCIENCES

The scientific advance of modernity has brought an enchantment with scientific principles. All human knowledge, to be valid, had to pass through the sieve of scientific methods. The development of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* was an attempt to save the sciences from Hume's bitter skeptical doubt. In fact, Humean skepticism would not allow the development of valid scientific knowledge. For such an enterprise, Kant shifted the foundation of science from the object to the subject, operating the so-called Copernican Revolution.

However, the dispute was not resolved there. It was in the nineteenth century that positivism tried to apply the same method to the human sciences as the natural sciences. However, this reduction is problematic, because, according to Habermas, the human sciences cannot be objectified and subsumed in general laws, without losing the humanity that is proper to each science and must be apprehended through its own hermeneutics:

They do not arise, as positivism supposes, from flawed or obscure methodological presuppositions; nor can the most complex approaches be reduced without prejudice to the platform of a general science of behavior. It is only at first glance that it is a confusion that could be resolved by means of finer distinctions. The competing approaches, formed in the social sciences, are much more found in a context that is negatively produced through the fact that the apparatus of general theories of society does not adapt as easily as the objectified natural processes (HABERMAS, 2011, p.10).

In short, a "science of culture cannot exhaust its interest in the research of empirical regularity" (HABERMAS, 2011, p. 23). Human phenomena are therefore endowed with meaning, that is, actions are intentional. Intentionality, already explored in Husserl, allows us to understand that each movement of a subject is not just a coldly calculated movement, as the followers of the positivist stance claim. But it has a meaning that must be understood. This meaning occurs absolutely, in what the Phenomenology has called the "world of life":

The world is for me in no way anything other than the world apprehended by consciousness, existing and valid for me in such a cogito. The world has all its universal and special meaning and its validity-of-being exclusively from my *cogitationes*. [...] I cannot live, experience, think, value and act within any other world than the one that has meaning and validity in me and from myself. [...] The fundamental phenomenological method, that of the transcendental *Epoche*, insofar as it directs back to it, is therefore called transcendental-phenomenological reduction (HUSSERL, 2019, p. 49).



In other words, the valuation of the world and the meaning that is given to each object of experience takes place from the subject itself. Not of the Kantian subject, but of the intentional subject, who opens up to the object and builds an "*I-thou*" relationship with it. We are, therefore, faced with a reality that cannot be measured, but which must be apprehended from a hermeneutic methodology.

5 THE TURNING POINT OF THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Following in the footsteps of the old quarrel, contemporaneity has accentuated the dichotomy between contemplation and human praxis, but now in a different way: pragmatism is privileged in such a way that it can be said that the current world lives under a dictatorship of utilitarianism. In 2024, on the Meu Valor Digital website, an article was published entitled "The 10 colleges that are least worth it and should be avoided". Among the courses listed are Philosophy, Sociology, Archaeology, History, Music, Anthropology, among others. Thus, the author writes about Philosophy:

Philosophy, while rich in critical thinking, faces challenges in translating directly into job opportunities. In an era where science dominates many fields, directing studies to more practical areas can be advantageous. Those interested in philosophy may consider supplementing their studies with other disciplines or opt for alternative careers that value analytical thinking ability (FREITAS, 2024).

At first glance, the statement seems pragmatic; however, it reveals a deep and mistaken dichotomy: the separation between *homo sapiens* and *homo faber*, as if thought and action were antagonistic realities. Now, all scientific activity is born from an act of questioning and questioning is the first gesture of Philosophy. The scientist's way of proceeding is, first of all, the philosopher's way of proceeding. All human praxis presupposes a rationality:

If we had to rely only on the so-called practical instincts of men, there would never have been any technology worthy of note; and, although the technical inventions that exist today bring with them a certain impetus that will probably generate improvements to a certain extent, it is unlikely that our world conditioned to technique could survive, let alone continue to develop, if we could convince ourselves that man is, above all, a practical being (ARENDDT, 2020, p. 359).

In suggesting this division, Freitas fell into an old error: the ancient hierarchy between the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa*. However, modernity inverted this hierarchy,



privileging action to the detriment of contemplative (philosophical-rational) activity, but at the cost of reducing active life to mere production and consumption. As Hannah Arendt observes:

The modern inversion of the traditional hierarchy between the *vita activa* and the contemplative does not restore the lost dignity of action, but transforms the entire *vita activa* into a mere activity of production and consumption (ARENDR, 2011, p. 348).

Also according to the philosopher, the inversion that began at the beginning of modernity (seventeenth century) and deepened in our days has altered, from the epistemological and ontological point of view, the human questioning:

The shift from "why" and "what" to "how" implies that the true objects of knowledge cannot be eternal things or motions, but processes, and that, therefore, the object of science is no longer nature or the universe, but history—the story of how nature came to be. life or the universe (ARENDR, 2011, p. 367).

The introduction of the concept of process did not only represent a hierarchical inversion, but a radical and complete break with the contemplative life. The *vita activa* now occupies the place that previously belonged to political, intellectual and creative activity (ARENDR, 2011, p. 373). Thus, this radical rupture reaches all dimensions of human life, reifying the individual to the point that he identifies with his profession, that is, the person is no longer his being, but his profession (doctor, nurse, programmer, teacher). The individual loses his identity and becomes standardized within an organization.

Arendt's critique is very current: education and thought are constantly subordinated to the logic of utility, to the imperative of productivity. In this context, philosophical thought becomes suspect, disposable, "unproductive". However, the author is wrong to deny human beings something inherent to their condition: the ability to think. The problem we highlight here is not whether we should first think and then act or act without thinking, whether we should turn to a praxis or an existential reflection, but it is the established hierarchy itself. The contemplative life without action is a phantom that eliminates all possibility of human experience. On the other hand, a pragmatic life without contemplation is like a corpse, it dissolves human existence into an impersonality, that is, an inauthentic existence, a totally manipulable mass.



Finally, we can raise the question: what is the purpose of such alienation? When we follow child development, we commonly see children entertaining themselves with toys that simulate instruments, machines and others related to the producer market.

Let us return to this: have you ever seen a child play, you have seen how he already populates the technical social machines with his desiring machines, O sexuality! – and which father and mother, from whom the child draws, if necessary, parts and gears, are in the background, as emitting, receiving or intercepting agents, benevolent agents of production or suspicious agents of anti-production? (DELEUZE; GUATTARI, 2024, p. 393).

The proposal here of Deleuze and Guattari is that the fetishization and mechanization of life comes from a *social pathos* that is already found within the family. "The identity of desire and work is not a myth, but above all an active utopia par excellence that designates the limit to be crossed by capitalism in desiring production" (DELEUZE; GUATTARI, 2024, p. 399). In short, the thought presented by Freitas in the magazine "Meu Valor Digital" is nothing but a split of the self itself, a division at the psychoanalytic and ontological level of the subject itself; Ultimately, it consists in the annihilation of an important aspect of the human condition nourished by the capitalist utopia.

6 CONSEQUENCES

Given the above considerations, we can draw some very serious consequences in various aspects of human life. Freitas' thought is only the externalization of the contemporary pragmatic spirit. From it, we can establish the effects of the culture industry, which provides "bread and circuses" in exchange for human domestication. Secondly, it promotes a silent totalitarianism: once the individual abdicates his ability to think, he loses political freedom and freedom of expression. As a consequence of this, we have an ontological crisis where human existence dissolves into the impersonal: one thinks as the impersonal, one acts as the impersonal. Its characteristics and possibilities of existence are voluntarily reaped. Finally, an ethical crisis. Once this thinking is normalized in a heteronymic way, without critical capacity, space is opened for the banality of evil. Violence, prejudice and the death of so-called "useless" people are no longer a problem. It even becomes a social "benefit".

In short, the ethics of the disposable treats what it considers useless with a *social pathos* and marginalizes it. In the history of psychiatry, it is common to perceive this behavior: the madman, in fact, is the one who does not bring benefit to society, who does not fit into

the pre-established "standard" and the "truths" produced. In short, the serious consequences drawn from the divorce between the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa* can become ways for the spread of evil, like Auschwitz.

6.1 THE CULTURAL INDUSTRY

Once the rupture with the *contemplative vita is made*, the subject becomes the target of the cultural industry. Aesthetic taste and production are no longer guided by Kantian schematism, but by what is defined as an aesthetic standard, even if it is empty of meaning. The focus of production, of course, is no longer the improvement of human conditions, but the accumulation of capital.

In their leisure, people must orient themselves by this unity that characterizes production. The function that Kantian schematism still attributed to the subject, namely, to refer in advance to the sensible multiplicity of fundamental concepts, is taken from the subject by industry. Schematism is the first service provided by it to the client (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 2006, p. 103).

Applying the concept of Adorno and Horkheimer to the criticism raised by Freitas of the courses of Human Sciences, it is perceived that the *author's pathos* is nothing more than the elite of the cultural industry that validates what is useful or useless and decides, from early childhood, what the subject should or should not study. It is noted that, in a veiled and silent way, the concept of slavery is still fed by the cultural industry that promotes the domestication of consciences. Now, not through violence, but through the promise of professional success. From this we can see the second consequence: the fertile ground for totalitarian policies

6.2 TOTALITARIANISM

Now I would like to understand how it is possible that so many men, so many towns, so many cities, so many nations sometimes support a single tyrant, who only has the power that is granted to him; that he has no power to offend them, but that they have the power to bear it; that he would not know how to do them any harm, but that they prefer to contradict him (LA BOÉTIE, 2009, p. 34).

La Boétie in the fourteenth century deftly noted that the tyrant exists only to the extent that there are people who serve him. To the extent that man, deprived of his rational capacity,

reified and alienated from the world, becomes fertile ground for totalitarian ideas. As much as, at first, they do not carry an obvious evil, abdicating critical consciousness means abdicating freedom and political consciousness, allowing oneself to be used as an object. In the corporate world, it can be said that the famous cliché "is to become a number". An employee is a mere enrollment and their satisfaction and well-being are measured in climate surveys; their intellectual capacity is reduced to mere "doing". In fact, "barbarism begins when thought submits itself to calculation" (BENJAMIN, 2012, p. 98). Benjamin does not propose a war on the analytical aspects that promoted the advancement of the sciences, but, like Arendt, he denounces that the elimination of one of the aspects of human life leads to the enslavement of man and to barbarism.

However, the question may be raised: "why not get rid of this dominant power? Why are people, like Freitas, accepted as "cases" of success?" The answer is quite simple: we can take up again with Foucault, in the work *Discipline and Punish: birth of the prison* the concept of "docile bodies". Power has its greatest merit when it is not traceable, its origin and its end are not known. Only a network of tensions with the objective of training bodies is enough for ideas like these to be internalized. And this process begins in childhood: the school-age child undergoes "exams". According to the French author:

The examination combines the techniques of the hierarchy that monitors and those of the sanction that normalizes. It is a normalizing control, a surveillance that allows qualifying, classifying and punishing. It establishes a visibility over individuals through which they are differentiated and sanctioned. That is why, in all discipline devices, the exam is highly ritualized (FOUCAULT, 2014, p. 181).

Through these discipline devices, with a view to the "docility of bodies", society classifies who should dominate, who should be dominated, who should work, who cannot have a job, who should be marginalized and forgotten and who are the enemies of society. Failure to accept this training leads to serious consequences: the individual can be treated as a criminal or as a "madman". Here come other methods of combat and punishment: prison systems or medicalization. Thus, through these means:

The human body enters a machinery of power that scrutinizes it, disarticulates it, and recomposes it. A political anatomy, which is also also a mechanic of power, is being born; it defines how one can have dominion over the bodies of others, not simply so that they do what one wants, but so that they operate as one wants, with techniques, according to the speed and effectiveness that one determines. Discipline thus

manufactures submissive and exercised bodies, docile bodies (FOUCAULT, 2014, p. 135).

In this sense, "isolation is the essence of totalitarianism, the impotence to act is its most common condition" (ARENDR, 2012, p. 478). Kant, in his pamphlet "Answer to the question what is enlightenment" writes in a very different way that man in this stage of minority needs to be tutored by another (KANT, 1985, p. 100-101). This inability to think for itself comes from the aforementioned training since childhood pointed out by Deleuze and Guattari.

Submissive behavior in need of a tutor clearly reveals castration in the period of child development. The Oedipus complex not overcome by sexual intimidation (threat of castration) provides dependent personalities: on the one hand, a submissive subject, in need of a tutor. On the other hand, a totalitarian personality, willing to dominate consciences at all costs (FREUD, 2024, p. 254).

Here arises the greatest danger of this ideological propaganda for the domination of consciences: once power is no longer external, it does not use violence and torture for punishment, propaganda becomes its most powerful vehicle of indoctrination. Under discourses of "cleaning up a city" one can simply "eliminate" people in street conditions to the applause of the masses. When writing about totalitarian movements (Nazism), Arendt wrote:

They did not need to resort to terror to support their propaganda, nor did they do so. When they liquidated most Polish intellectuals, they did not do so because of their opposition, but because, according to Nazi doctrine, Poles had no intellect; and, when they planned to take the blue-eyed, blond-haired children to Germany, they did not intend to terrorize the population, but only to save "the Germanic blood" (ARENDR, 2012, p. 475).

Obviously, Freitas' proposal, as well as that of the entire ideology of which he is a part, is not to dominate through terror. But, through propaganda, the classification that occurs from childhood, thus defining who should have access to education, comfort, employment and quality of life and who should not. Therefore, it is important to emphasize and reinforce that it is not just a "council", but a totalitarian ideology that develops over the centuries, sometimes manifesting itself through terror, sometimes through the seduction of power.

6.3 EXISTENTIAL AND ONTOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS: THE ONTOLOGY OF VOLUNTARY SERVITUDE

Men also segregate inhumanity. In certain moments of lucidity, the mechanical aspect of their gestures, their pantomime devoid of meaning, makes everything around them stupid. A man talks on the phone through a glass partition; You don't hear what he says, but we see the meaningless mime: we wonder why he lives. This uneasiness in the face of man's own inhumanity, this incalculable fall in the face of the image of what we are, this "nausea", as an author of our days says, is also the absurd (CAMUS, 2025, p.29).

The Myth of Sisyphus is not just a story printed in works of mythology. It is an allegory of contemporary existence: man, massified, indoctrinated and dominated by the culture industry, reduces his mundane existence to a mere repeater of actions. It is the process that replaces life, the meaningless aesthetic standard that replaces individuality. Under the aegis of a supposed inclusion, large corporations standardize behaviors and determine what should or should not be consumed. It is a true abdication of the capacity of judgment. In fact, only a refined spirit and a free mind is capable of grasping the uniqueness of human existence:

The more our feelings are refined, the more apt they become to distinguish individuals. The highest sense would be the highest receptivity to peculiar nature. To it would correspond the talent for affixing the individual, whose dexterity and energy are relative. When the will is expressed in reference to this sense, then passions for or against individuality are born: love and hate. The mastery in the performance of one's own role is due to the orientation of this sense towards oneself under the domination of reason (NOVALIS, 2021, p. 62).

When we carry out a deep analysis of the way of being, presence (*Da-sein*) manifests itself in temporality. This same temporality is the being of historicity:

The being of presence has its meaning in temporality. This, in turn, is also the condition of the possibility of historicity as a temporal mode of being of presence itself, even abstracting from the question of whether and how presence is an "entity" in time. The determination of historicity is offered before what is called history (an event belonging to universal history). [...] In its factual being, presence is always as and "what" it once was. Explicitly or not, presence is always its past and not only in the sense of the past that always drags itself "behind" itself and, in this way, has as simply given properties, the past experiences that sometimes act and influence the way of its being, which means, roughly speaking, that it always "happens" from its future (HEIDEGGER, 2024, pp. 57 - 58).

This Heideggerian proposal is profoundly important for understanding a fundamental error presented by Freitas: by promoting an eidetic rupture between thinking and acting, Freitas intends to reduce existence to an ahistorical dimension, that is, the *Da-sein* loses its essential sense of being as constructed in temporality. Consequently, by manifesting itself as ahistorical (alienated from history), the *Da-sein* loses the ability to question itself. Autonomous questioning is the principle of freedom of thought and political freedom. In fact, for Heidegger (2024, p. 58):

Presence is assumed in the way of being of questioning and researching historiographical facts. Factual history (Historie) or, more precisely, historiographical factuality (Historizität) is only possible as a mode of being of the presence that questions because, at the foundation of its being, presence is determined and constituted by historicity. If historicity is hidden from presence and as long as it remains so, it is also denied the possibility of questioning and factually discovering history. The lack of factual history (Historie) is not a proof against the historicity of presence, but a proof in its favor, as a deficient mode of this constitution of being. An era can only be devoid of historical facts because it is historical (HEIDEGGER, 2024, p. 58).

In this sense, *Da-sein* can only be understood in history, insofar as it exists in time. And from this temporality, he "is" "being", that is, he is always projecting himself into the future; it is about the past of your future. This gives us an important key to reading Freitas' proposal in his article: to the extent that *the Da-sein* is deprived of the understanding of itself as being in history, its existence, which was previously open to possibilities, is now regulated by the market and by the imposition of the cultural industry. As demonstrated in the phenomenology workshops, discussed in the results of this article, the participants demonstrated that they were totally dominated by aesthetic and pragmatic ideals arising from the very alienation of their existence. What the article by the CEO of the magazine "Meu Valor Digital" represents is not only advice with a view to quick success, but it is a reflection of an inauthentic existence, where life, which should be lived to its fullest potential, becomes a market product, a stock on the shelf of Human Resources.

The fact that *Da-sein* fails to question its elementary historicity also brings a profound problem to the selection processes. If human existence is determined by the future (we are the past of the future), under what argument are the current selection processes that require heavy years of experience sustained? In fact, it is undeniable that the lived experiences of a human being influence his way of thinking and acting, but he does not delimit his possibility of being. In other words, as historical beings, we project ourselves into the future, having the

creative possibility of learning, creating values and building ourselves. The mistake of selection processes is to remain in a medieval essentialist posture, in which they seek an essential that delimits the entity that is being interviewed.

Now, contemporary social structures (corporations, the cultural industry, Human Resources processes and even religion) constitute in the ultimate sense the Heideggerian *Gestell*, that is, the servile and functional way in which the world reveals itself. *Gestell* is not a machine, but the metaphysical essence of the technique that frames the being and transforms it into a means to achieve ends (most of the time profit). *Gestell's* idea spreads through all human structures: from the family, school, companies and even the State. Ultimately, *Gestell* is the reification of being, its framing in a decadent essentialism. In this way, *Gestell* can be defined as a way of being in the technical era. This mode of being is no longer *Da-sein* (existence as possibilities), but existence as a stock (*Bestand*). Voluntary servitude emerges as a form of subjectivation corresponding to this unveiling. Now, voluntary servitude moves from the political field, as La Boétie proposed, to be reinterpreted as an affective need, whether from the sociological point of view or from the psychoanalytic point of view. The subject who, before being a possibility, commits suicide philosophically in the name of his social admission to the impersonal, becoming a disguised and dangerous theatrical game.

Nietzsche, in his work *On Truth and Lies in the Extramoral Sense*, had already denounced the errors of essentialism, proposing a pedagogy of "becoming what you are". Truth and lies are allegories, metaphors and illusions created to try to equate the non-equal in an arbitrary way:

What is truth, then? A mobile battalion of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms, in short, a sum of human relations, which have been poetically and rhetorically emphasized, transposed, embellished, and which, after long use, seems to a people solid, canonical and obligatory: truths are illusions, which have forgotten what they are, metaphors that have become worn out and without sensible force, coins that have lost their effigy and now only come into consideration as metal, no longer as coins (NIETZSCHE, 1974, p. 56).

Freitas' market study is nothing more than a "truth", a utilitarian and technicist morality that was learned since childhood. This same morality, admitted as a convention, constitutes the morality of the herd. The ontology of voluntary servitude unfolds here in a slave-owning and antiquated morality, founded on metaphysical illusions.

The phenomenological analysis of contemporary alienation, anchored in the critique of the reification of the human being and the domination of instrumental reason, inevitably leads us to a reflection on man's way of being in the world. The problem that is evident is not only social or economic, but ontological. Modern man finds himself removed from the original experience of being-in-the-world, reduced to the condition of a functional entity within the technical machinery that he himself created. The result of this split is the forgetfulness of being, as diagnosed by Heidegger. In this sense, one can understand the essential point of convergence between the culture industry, criticized by Adorno and Horkheimer, and the inauthenticity of existence, dealt with by Heidegger in "Being and Time": the culture industry is the means by which inauthenticity is consolidated and reproduced on a social scale. Therefore, the article published by Freitas is only an expression of this same inauthenticity of existence that produces a cycle of domination of consciousness: first, the individual is emptied of his existence as a possibility and all his critical capacity is taken from him. Then, this process is reinforced through promises of satisfaction of basic needs, of immediate wealth. These ideals are "validated" by the great influencers, which affect from aesthetic and behavioral aspects. So, heteronomic laws are assumed by the subject as his *ethos* that are transmitted within the family. The children, then, grow up in an environment of productivist fetishism, learning to despise their critical conscience. Thus, what we can call the "cycle of manipulation of consciences" takes place.

The alienation that manifests itself in the realm of productive life, and that begins already in the early stages of human formation — as pointed out by Deleuze and Guattari — is the expression of the forgetfulness of the existential dimension of Dasein, the being that is understood from its opening to the world. Heidegger (2015, p. 86) states:

The oblivion of being is the very destiny of the West. For modern man, fascinated by beings, objectivity and technical mastery, forgets to ask about being. In this way, he not only ignores the fundamental question of philosophy, but loses the possibility of understanding himself in his most proper existence.

The reduction of man to a functional piece, whether in the productive system or in the bureaucratic structures of organizations, translates into an inauthentic form of existence (*Uneigentlichkeit*). It is the loss of the ability to assume one's own being, replaced by obedience to the patterns of behavior dictated by the "if" (das Man). In the corporate context, the "if" manifests itself in the form of the homogenizing organizational culture, in the

standardization of desires and in the domestication of subjectivity. The subject no longer acts from an authentic project, but according to the expectations of performance, goals and metrics that imprison him to the horizon of the useful. One can dare to say that his project of existence is no longer constructed by him, but is imposed on him as a social obligation. Failure to adhere to this project implies its exclusion from social circles and its pathologization. Let's take as an example the male aesthetic standard adopted in 2025. Men who do not conform to this standard are less valued, whether in the labor market or in social relationships. In the same way as the way of dressing, speaking, thinking, society imposes on the individual the production of truths:

Basically, we have to produce the truth as we have to produce wealth. On the other hand, we are also subject to truth in the sense that it is law and produces the true discourse that decides, transmits and reproduces, at least in part, effects of power. After all, we are judged, condemned, classified, forced to perform tasks, and destined to a certain way of living or dying according to the true discourses that bring with them effects of power (FOUCAULT, 2021, p. 279).

What Foucault intends to demonstrate is that, in the cycle of manipulation of consciousnesses, the production of "truths" and "true discourses" bring power at their origin. Every human relationship, in fact, is guided by power. However, when this relationship becomes neurotic, the way is opened for discourses of the emptying of the subject, for his limitation. Returning to the aesthetic example: the body that would previously have countless possibilities, the main one being man's way of being in the world, becomes only an object of immediate delight. The dissolution of existence in the "impersonal" is pointed out as one of the most worrying issues for Heidegger in "Being and Time":

This coexistence entirely dissolves one's own presence [Da-sein] in the way of being of the "others", and this in such a way that the others disappear even more in their possibility of difference and expression. The impersonal develops its own dictatorship in this lack of surprise and possibility of verification. Thus we amuse and entertain ourselves as impersonally it is done; we read, see and judge about literature and art as we impersonally see and judge ourselves; we also withdraw from the great crowds as one impersonally withdraws; we find "revolting" what the impersonal considers revolting (HEIDEGGER, 2024, p. 184).

Heidegger was precise in his critique of the "impersonal". The article published by the CEO of the magazine "Meu Valor Digital" represents the impersonal. This same impersonal that annihilates all possibility of existence of being. The judgment he makes about the Human

Sciences is not just an isolated fact, but an opinion of the impersonal in which the individuality of each subject is dissolved. In short, the subject is no longer master of himself, but is only a manipulable piece of the cultural industry that aims at profit. In his Zollikon Seminars, Heidegger demonstrates that:

[...] Human existence in its essential foundation is never just an object simply present in any place, and it is certainly not an object enclosed in itself. On the contrary, this existence consists of "mere" possibilities of apprehension that point to what it lacks and finds it and cannot be apprehended by sight or touch. All objectifying encapsulated representations of a psyche, a subject, a person, an I, a consciousness, used to this day in Psychology and Psychopathology, must disappear in the Daseinsanalytic view in favor of a completely different understanding (2001, p. 33).

Thus, Freitas' proposal in his article is nothing more than an inhumanity that takes away man's contemplative dimension and inserts him into a servile essentialist dynamic. Behind an apparently advising discourse, there is a slave tendency that hinders man's existence as possibilities. Now, if there are no possibilities, we fall into Camus' absurdity and are led to question "whether or not life is worth living" (CAMUS, 2025, p. 17) and suicide becomes the central theme of the discussion. Submission to the impersonal is, therefore, a form of existential servitude. Contemporary man, by identifying himself with his social and professional role, abdicates his own ontological freedom. It does not "is", but "works". Its existence is governed by external, measurable and comparable parameters. The sense of being, once rooted in the experience of the world of life (*Lebenswelt*), is converted into performance and productivity. The consequence is the ontological emptying of the subject, who, by losing the link with being, also loses the possibility of meaning.

This reduction of man to functionality is the reflection of what Heidegger called the age of technology (*das Gestell*), that is, the way of unveiling the being characteristic of modernity, in which everything (including man himself) is placed as a resource, as something to be calculated and manipulated. Man ceases to be the shepherd of being and becomes the administrator of beings. In "The Question of Technique", Heidegger (2012, p. 23) insists on this point:

The way in which the real is unveiled in the technical age is not something that man masters. He himself is swept away by that way of unveiling which impels him to regard all that is as a reserve fund. The danger does not lie in technique, but in the fact that man finds himself imprisoned in this way of thinking and acting, without perceiving the event that is taking place in him.

Modern administrative logic, by claiming efficiency and total control, mirrors exactly this *Gestell*: man becomes the guardian of a system that surpasses him, and whose rationality absorbs him. Work ceases to be an expression of being and becomes a form of self-forgetfulness. In this condition, *Dasein* no longer inhabits the world poetically, but operationally.

It follows from what has been stated that the author commits yet another error: an error of method and an error of object. By intending to affirm the primacy of practical activities, the author, as an administrator, does not take into account the fact that there are factors that cannot be measured. But the fact that they are not measured does not imply their non-existence.

Ontological phenomena are not perceptible sensorially, they have always shown themselves, necessarily before for perceptible phenomena. To be able to perceive a table as the table that it is, it is necessary to have already perceived before that there is such a thing as a presence. Ontological phenomena are, therefore, hierarchically the first, but, in order to be thought and seen, they are later. [...]. In relation to what is taken as real and being: only that which can be subordinated to uninterrupted causal connections of psychological forces is real and true, in Freud's opinion. And the world-renowned modern physicist Max Planck said, verbatim, a few years ago: "only what can be measured is real". One can rightly contest this: why would there not be realities that are impossible to measure exactly? A sadness, for example (HEIDEGGER, 2001, p. 35-36).

Following the guiding thread of Heidegger's thought, we can question it: "under what premises can we apply the method of the natural sciences to the study of the human condition as *homo faber* and dispense completely? What is really paramount?" This question is not merely rhetorical, but seeks to understand under what premises the annihilation of an essential aspect of the human condition can be carried out.

Kant was the first to explicitly express the character of nature represented in a scientific-natural way. For this reason, he was also the first to say what a law is in a natural-scientific sense. The fact that the true spokesperson of the natural sciences was a philosopher indicates that reflecting on where the natural sciences are headed is not a matter of the natural sciences, but of philosophy, without scientists generally knowing it explicitly (HEIDEGGER, 2001, p. 52).

Heidegger's critique in Zollikon's Seminars is extremely difficult for us to understand the fragility of Freitas' argument: his intention is to direct society towards a political and pedagogical project based on technicality: a doctor, for example, can understand man

technically, the functioning of his organs as the old *L'Homme-Machine* project by Julien Offray de La Mettrie (1748). However, this posture is limited, because it does not understand man as a man-being, only an entity in nature:

Natural science can only observe man as something simply present in nature. The question arises: would it be possible to reach the human being in this way? Within this natural-scientific project we can only see it as natural, that is, we have the pretension of determining the being-man by means of a method that was absolutely not designed in relation to its peculiar essence (HEIDEGGER, 2001, p. 53).

Now, if the method of the practical sciences is not adequate to the understanding of the human being, we can extend this criticism to the administrative sciences. By arrogating to themselves the right to try to measure what is immeasurable, namely human existence, Freitas and so many other authors corroborate the flourishing of a dehumanized and disposable culture. The very etymology of the term "resource" (from which the area and practice of "human resources" management comes) denotes the reification of man: derived from the junction of two Latin words "re" (undo) and "cursus" (path; career) demonstrates the emptying of being-man for his identification with his career. In other words, it is a matter of getting rid of oneself, getting rid of one's primordial characteristic as a being-there, open to possibilities to remake oneself, to mold oneself in such a way that it becomes a "piece in a stock". Freitas' regrettable position in his publication is a symptom of a structure that intends to turn *Dasein* into *Recursus*. In his latest Encyclical, Pope Francis writes:

In the age of artificial intelligence, we cannot forget that poetry and love are necessary to save the human. What no algorithm will be able to encompass is, for example, that moment of childhood that is fondly remembered and that continues to happen in all corners of the planet, even as the years go by (2024, p. 16).

The ontological crisis also reveals to us an ethical crisis. It is a heteronymic behavior that, due to the cultural industry, becomes autonomous. If the validity of something is conditioned to its usefulness, consequently there is a tendency to trivialize evil through prejudice against the elderly, homeless people, people with disabilities and other marginalized people in society. The serious consequences of this led Nazi-fascism to rise in Europe in the 1930s and these same prejudices are still fed in a banal way: the woman who is refused in a selection process because of her feminine condition (she can get pregnant and cause damage), the disabled person who is rejected because it may generate costs with

adaptability or the homosexual who is seen with looks of concern due to his sexuality. Now, it can be seen here that the way of being "voluntarily servile", this "ontology of voluntary servitude" has social, political, ethical and economic scalability. The classification and training of man, the power internalized in a biopsychic way, is translated into the cultural industry: it is a way of being that, instead of freedom of conscience, abdicates it and evil is seen as a benefit of society. Therefore, the homeless person is not seen as human, but as a despicable object, who deserves social disdain and is removed from society, sometimes treated as crazy and medicated.

Ontology allows us to understand in a broad way how the immense network of power and training of bodies relate to and determine the way of human existence. The man who is a mere possibility becomes dominated and, as in Plato's Republic, begins to have his social role strictly defined. The determinism that hides behind Freitas' statements reveals an antiquated form of discipline, sensation and punishment.

7 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The reflections developed throughout this work allow us to understand that the predominance of utilitarian logic, by converting human experience into a mere productive function, does not only represent a change in values, but a profound ontological reconfiguration. The transformation of the human being into a resource occurs silently, sustained by a pedagogy of submission that naturalizes efficiency as the only criterion of meaning. In this context, homo *faber* becomes not only dominant, but totalizing, redefining life from the paradigm of utility and producing a form of voluntary servitude in which subjects not only obey, but wish to obey. It is precisely this spontaneous adherence to productivism that configures the core of contemporary alienation: a process of internalization of calculation that inhibits phenomenological openness and reduces presence to performance. The loss of *the contemplative vita* is not a side problem, but the most evident symptom of the colonization of existence by technique, because where there is only time to do, the time to be disappears.

This study sought to show that technicality, when elevated to the condition of the ultimate measure of reality, does not present itself as a neutral instrument, but as a way of revealing and shaping the world. Its norms operate as ontological principles, establishing what is perceived as real, valuable, and true. In this way, management goes beyond the organizational field and becomes a universal grammar, imposing itself as a filter of experience and as a structure of subjectivation. The criticism of the pedagogical discourse that reduces

education to adaptation and utility, exemplified in the article analyzed, highlights the way in which instrumental rationality invades spaces originally intended for the expansion of freedom. Education ceases to form subjects to form products, and thought, reduced to the function of solving problems, loses its original dimension of openness to being. When thought is instrumentalized, not only is intelligence impoverished, but a new form of totalitarianism is produced without the need for explicit violence, since control is effective through consensus and the naturalization of effectiveness.

Now, the phenomenology workshops, developed in ten meetings in the city of Mogi das Cruzes (whose data and reports will not be presented for ethical and legal reasons) clearly demonstrated the capillarity of the power of the cultural industry. It is not a question of power by coercion, but of a power acquired and naturalized throughout the process of human development. This same power defines aesthetic values, judgments, prejudices, who should or should not have access to opportunities in the labor market. Foucault's "docile bodies" is Heidegger's inauthentic way of existing. This constitutes the substantial soil on which the concept of the "ontology of voluntary servitude" is erected: it is not a question of servitude through violence, but an imposition through discipline, repetition and propaganda. Contemporary totalitarianism differs radically from twentieth-century totalitarianism because it is not traceable. It is not possible to recognize its origin, how it acts and where it ends. We can only distinguish its effects: a massified, uncritical population subject to accepting the mentality of its owners as true.

Therefore, the proposal of the concept of the ontology of voluntary servitude is to demonstrate that the abdication of man of his own capacity to think and become a *Bestand* is to show that this biopsychic condition moves from the political and psychoanalytic axis to the question of the foundation of one's own being. In short, it is not only a structural and political critique, nor a psychoanalytic one, but an ontological one. It is the emptying of the being-there, as a possibility, to become a body trained in a power structure. Phenomenology, in this sense, as ontology, according to *Being and time*, is an act of rebellion, because it unmasks the created structures that keep *Dasein* attached "to the cave contemplating only shadows".

To conclude here means to affirm that there is no resistance possible without the rescue of the contemplative life and philosophy as a radical experience of unveiling. Thinking becomes a political act when it breaks the automatism of demands and restores to existence the possibility of signifying beyond utility. Philosophy is not opposed to technique, but to its

absolutization; it does not reject action, but action without foundation, moved only by the logic of results. Only through phenomenological suspension, which deactivates the domain of the impersonal, can the subject rediscover the dimension of meaning that the market and management try to subsume. The *epoché* is, in this horizon, more than method: it is ontological disobedience. Therefore, the task of thought is not to reform the system from within, but to expose its ontological poverty and reopen the space of the possible.

Between *homo faber* and *homo sapiens*, the decision remains open. As long as we persist in confusing value with productivity and autonomy with performance, we will continue to accept the mutilation of experience as the price of belonging. But where there is still room for contemplation and questioning, the administered world will find its limit. Resistance is not only in explicit refusal, but in the preservation of the interior space that no device can control. To think is to resist and to resist is to remember that the being is not exhausted in the function. Philosophy remains, therefore, as a gesture of care for the human and as the only way capable of bringing life back to its proper density. If technology organizes the world as a machine, it is up to thought to remember that before being useful, life must be true.

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