

Systemic Crises and Social Rationalization as Reification: A Reconstruction of Philosophical-Social Theories in Critical Theory

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Abstract

How can we understand the theoretical development and all the social-historical changes that drove the incoming recovery and the further alterations in the philosophical-social theories over the twentieth century? In spite of that, how would be still possible to recognize it on our contemporary society? Recovering Marxian social theory and Habermas's critical reconstruction, which includes Weber's rationalization paradoxes, Lukacs's reification definition, and the Horkheimerian-Adornian theoretical reception, which has largely influenced twentieth social critic, the present paper intends to discuss (and show up) a possible reading.

Keywords: Philosophy; Critical Theory; Habermas; Marx; Mmodernity

The theoretical debates that embraced twentieth-century were, mostly, discussions about the thinking development of thought and aimed to understand the exercise of rationality¹ in modern capitalist societies. Notwithstanding, even if we admit such large, and not

specific definition, it seems to be a paramount importance to demonstrate how all those debates were, and still are, differed from each other, precisely those that were dealt by philosophy and social theories in nineteenth-century, and how these theoretical distinctions are still in action over any critical reading operating on the contemporary capitalist societies.

At once, it seems significant to look over the philosophical conceptions of the twentieth-century: in the beginning of that century it was no longer possible to formulate a total, and unified, philosophical understanding about the world as a whole and over the knowledge because the reflexive consciousness, the same that accompanied the factual progress of the empirical sciences, began to address itself into formal conditions of knowledge rationality in a structured world that suggest

¹ It seems to be more appropriate to describe that this argumentative horizon is guided by those theories that have traversed the so-called Western civilization. Notwithstanding such expression, "Western civilization", or even "Western world", is, itself, inaccurate and multivalent, it is recovered from the Weberian argument that describes the Western civilization as something that has entangled in itself a "combination of circumstances [...] that allowed the arise of cultural phenomena in a developmental horizon with a universal meaning and values" (WEBER, 1958, pp. 13-31). So, to describe the model of social reason that had raised as a social identity though "a rational, systematic, and specialized pursuit of science, with skilled workers [who] only were existing in the Western" (*idem*, pp. 15-16).

“life is nowadays submitted, dominated, and commanded by capital” –Altamira (p. 18).

That process aimed to elaborate questions that were looking for a comprehensible understanding over world in philosophical terms: something that could no longer be understood as the argumentative foundation for sciences (in the same model it had been presented until the early nineteenth-century) because the split between theory and praxis wouldn't on that time allowed the presentation of any specific axiom in performance (one of the reasons for it is because the practical philosophy came to be presented only as a radical criticism process of understanding societies). Nor even it would be possible to maintain the prospect of the old perspective to comprehend an harmonious division between labor and religion, because this understanding had also been lost with the abandonment of the idea of Absolute (something that, for sure, led to inherent contradictions between absolutism and elitism, a factor that drove philosophy away from social action, especially when philosophy started to be used as an analytical method for understanding labor social movement).

Would that be, so, a consensus that the world, as it was known, has been dematerializing? Did geographies that ignore distances, a history over time, a value with no matter, and commercial transactions with no money coverage sustain the famous Marxian sentence about all solids melt into air? After all “we are facing a system that is founded on the imposition of universal commodification, in a process that includes a particular purchase and sold out of life time” –Altamira (pp. 26-27) and in fact it is a “tendency which is to suborning all human activities to the law of value, the law of exchange that would be socially imposed and related it to a metanarrative in which only money would rule” (*Ibid.*).

Within an economically regulated world that seems to be raised in a simulacrum-reality, where human actions appear to be reduced to the manipulation of abstractions, we shall recognize that it was only, and just only, subsumed to those changes over reality that a social criticism has been raised to dealt with the inner influence of scientific and technological advances in action over society, and to investigate how such advances exerted such influence on the development of our modern social rationality.

Based on a research and theoretical analysis of philosophical, economic, social, cultural and aesthetic problems circumspect to modern capitalist societies, this critical movement, which began in the first half of twentieth-century, resorted to a terminological

distinction from the historical materialism based on Marx's thesis (albeit as opposed to the traditional theoretical model because it was no longer desired for those thinkers to orient their critical analyzes solely by an economic analysis but in consideration that “critical thinking [should be] motivated by the attempt to really overcome tension in spite to eliminate the opposition between the awareness of one's goals, spontaneity, and in rational terms, on the one hand, and the relations of labor process that are subsumed as the basis of society, in the other hand”-Horkheimer (p. 140).

Those methodological changes would be justified mainly if we focus over the fact that “the theoretical substitutes for world images have not been devalued solely by the factual progress of the empirical sciences, but even more by the reflective consciousness that accompanied this progress” –Habermas (p. 1), arising from the thematic bottleneck from the emergence of Marxian political economy, in the nineteenth-century, which allowed the recognition that the historical and social dramatic changes happened implied into the radicalization of the modernization process² (over the nineteenth-century especially), the same circumstances that don't allow to “legitimize the social order by reference to tradition, because the very idea of tradition was shaken” –Habermas (p. 96).

The critical tradition discussed on the present paper, especially the first movement, from the early fifth years of twentieth-century, recognized that it was from the new world unveiled by Marx that it was possible to understand that the radicalization of social rationality model emerged from the technical and scientific advances and how it brought out some doubts about the rationality model on action, the one which underpinned the legal, bureaucratic, economic, and also the social relation that arose from a context of “retreats of ‘dogmatism’ and ‘superstition’ were accompanied by a fragmentation [of society], a discontinuity [of tradition], and a loss of meaning [of life]” –McCarthy (p. VII).

² At this precisely point of argumentation, the present discussion is guided through the Habermasian discussion presented in *Technique and Science as “Ideology”* (HABERMAS, 2014, p. 93 *et seq.*), objectively in the terminological uses which Habermas distinguish traditional society from modern society. It begins with the assertion that by traditional societies “we may comprehend those which only exist insofar as the development of rational end-action subsystems that remains contained within the boundary limits of the legitimating effectiveness of cultural traditions, that results in a “supremacy” of the institutional framework that does not prevent a restructuring process as a main result of the potential surplus of the productive forces, but would rather excludes the critical dissolution of the traditional form of legitimation” (*idem*, p. 95).

When realized that social order has been regulated by the technological and scientific development (assuming it as an articulated horizon inserted on the productivist disposition of the capitalist system), it became understandable how such situation would reduce the social sphere to a species of cognitive-instrumental rationality model of society.

Nevertheless, for our present purposes, it is interesting to ask: how did it come to be so? Considering the systemic theory of crises of capitalism as a not insignificant motto, what could be said about the emancipating potential revealed by science and technique that have been turned, themselves, in a medium for social repression? How far does this critique account for our current political and social horizon?

It seems interestingly to comprehend that among the twentieth-century the social theory debates came to recognize this reality split by the internalization of the capitalism system had its origins in nineteenth-century, thanks to the Marxian critical thinking – and it even though the controversy analyzes over modernity have been changed, mainly for the high technical and scientific development that were exceeding any previous expectations (including Marxian itself).

But even so, does the distinction about the claim suggested by Marx, in one hand, had “the objective presupposition for the supersession of capitalism the productive forces unleashed in capitalism itself” – Habermas (p. 367), Critical theorists, on the other hand, over the twentieth-century, assumed as a “logical” result of that theoretical development a technical progress which would no longer be understood as a blessing because they had identified such developments in a degree of complexity that started to exert a great deal of intricacy over social rationality until the situation would be considerable to conceive the end of freedom and self-determination of the social subjects, resulting in a transmutation of the previous model of social rationality into a functionalist techno-managed rationalization model just because they have re-read Marx from the impact of their own technological-scientific development on society? – and it even though what we would recognize that “the sciences [have been] increasingly strongly coupled with the unfolding of productivity through technical progress” – Habermas (pp. 367-368), impinging on the sciences an ideological role.

Considering the Habermasian argumentation presented in the *Theory of Communicative Action* (1981), we are able to follow that all the discussions about the

social rationalization process are prior to the twentieth-century itself. Indeed, Habermas attests that such discussion was inaugurated by Weber when he “broke both the premises of the philosophy of history and the basic assumptions of evolutionism” – Habermas (p. 143), and also when Weber “conceived the modernization of society in old Europe as the result of the historical-universal rationalization process” (Ibid.).

The hypothesis that the evolution of modern capitalist societies is the main result of a unilateral rationality process, which is based on assumption that “the pattern of rationality is now determined by the fact that the complex of cognitive-instrumental rationality imposes itself at the expense of practical rationality by reifying communicative relations of life” – Habermas (p. 222), gives an understanding of the loss of meaning and the loss of freedom resultant from the assumption that social dynamics are guided, and also controlled by the labor’s sphere, especially considering the emergence of “subsystems that are controlled by money and power, that is, the capitalist economy and state administration” – Repa (p. 79), which began to gain control over the institutional framework and also change the order of property – then such change imposes a modification over society: from a political relation to a production relation.

The theoretical changes, from the transition of a critique of society to a critique of reason, shows up possibilities to establish connections between the changes that occurred over the nineteenth-century and moved on to twentieth-century (changes over the dynamics of the capitalism development, especially when considered the regulation guided through a political order that became oriented by the market, new relation that imposes to the social analysis look for motives because it had been understood that the investigation should be “from within the concept of rationality underlying over our contemporary industrial culture in order to find out if this concept contains no flaws that essentially make it vicious” – Horkheimer (p. 7).

But this kind of articulation identified between social rationalization theory and the critique of instrumental reason are already a criteria shared by Marx, as well as the reception of Marxian theory by Weber, on one hand, and the Horkheimer and Adorno’s reception, on the other hand, of the readings assumed from Lukacsian discussion of Weber’s social rationalization theory.

Presenting this conceptual map it can enable us to comprehend how the understanding of modern social rationalization could attest its origins in both ways: the

Marxian theory of the unfolding productive forces “with the expansion of empirical knowledge, the improvement of production techniques, and the mobilization, qualification and the workforce socially useful organization” –Melo (p. 88), as well as the Weberian theory of a “rational action subsystem with respect to ends in which Western rationalism unfolds in social terms” –Habermas (p. 144), or, describing differently, in a relation between how it’s possible to understand political problems, from the beginning, to have referred to self-realization understood as productive activity, as to the notion of a rationality desubstantialized by the process of the disenchantment of the world.

If we would be assumed that path, to guide ourselves through such Ariadne’s thread on this issue, it’s necessary, at first, to think that this duality in social analysis is what allows authors, such as Habermas, to assert that the social criticism of the first half of the twentieth-century had interpreted Marx from a perspective that considered that “under the sign of an autonomized instrumental reason, the rationality of the domination of nature merges with the irrationality of class domination” –Habermas (p. 144), something that would indicate that “unleashed forces of production stabilize alienating production relations” (*ibid.*).

How appropriate would be to take, as an example of this junction, the emblematic criticisms presented in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*? Considering the criticisms that shifted the perspective of the disenchantment of the world to a perspective of desubstantialization of reason that assumed the process of social rationalization as a process of reasoning (something like “unceremoniously reverses Marx’s positive estimate: science and technique, for Marx, a uniquely emancipating potential, themselves become the medium of social repression”, –Habermas (p. 144), it would be such discussion that may suggests it wouldn’t be an absurd to consider that Weber *continued* Marxian tradition, particularly when he assumed the social rationalization process should propel the social sciences to play an ever larger and more active social role.

However, Weberian analysis of the institutional correlates for this progressive social rationalization would announce that “the rationalization of society does not allow any utopian perspective” –Wellmer (p. 41), as it would invariably lead modernity “to a new kind of dehumanized system” (*ibid.*) because it would occur over the capitalist economy, over the governmental bureaucracy, as well as over the so called professionalized empirical sciences; such formulation allows us to understand why Weber based his analysis on modernity

from the distinction of rational action subsystems in relation to ends – what was only possible because Weber assumed that communal action (*Gemeinschaftshandeln*) had been replaced, in the transition from traditional precapitalist societies to modern capitalist societies by a model of action rationally regulated (*Gesellschaftshandeln*).

In spite of that, the present articulation seems to ends in a paradox: Weber’s theoretical proposal tended to reflect the opposing tendencies to a societal of development, a constraint that the Weberian theory imposes to its own system even when considered the general meaning of the determination that would make the predictability of actions possible by a regulated strategic and instrumental aspect of the social conditions given – oriented by the aegis of formal rationality - when those conditions meet the determinations that might enable the calculability of action, through an instrumental aspect, it would increase the effectiveness of the available means, and it also would allow the probability to choice the means to be corrected in a preferential context, not ignoring means and aside conditions.

Within such argumentation it has begun to be unravel that social criticism of the first half of twentieth-century, the theoretical movement that assumed the loss of rationality for the point of “insofar as actions could be judged, planned, and justifies only in a cognitive aspect” – Habermas (p. 342), considered Weber’s proposition to “accentuates the increase in rationality that occurs with the differentiation of a cognitive sphere of scientifically organized values and learning processes” (*Ibid.*).

When we are equating the conceptualization of rationality with respect to ends, among a cognitive-instrumental reason model, the notion of a formal rationality assumes the meaning of a “subjective reason [which] reveals itself as the ability to calculate probabilities and thus coordinating the right means with a definite end” –Horkheimer (p. 11), Critical Theory, of the first half of the twentieth-century forced an argumentation over “a radical distinction between the positions of those authors, from the ambiguity that originally of the formal rationality concept presents in both aspects of an elective rationality with respects to ends” –Menezes (p. 142).

It is a radical distinction between the assumed frames taken by Weber and Critical Theory, regarding Marxian theories, especially because they couldn’t be understood if we do not go forward Weber and focus over the “increasing reification, as it was named by Lukacs” –

Wellmer (p. 41) – something that is identifiable in the process of social rationalization in modern capitalist societies.

The very own concept of “reification” (*Verdinglichung*) provides an illustrative explanation of how it is possible to understand the interpretative aspects of the Weberian theory of social rationalization as something that influenced the Western Marxism³, precisely when pointed to the analysis of the social identity destruction caused by the detachment of rational action systems in respect to ends – something that had been accomplished by Lukacs in his *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), in accordance to the understanding of:

[...] late capitalism revealed itself a larger new feature: the struggle to avoid crises and at the same time the need to secure the domination of monopolies that would led capitalism to the try of ‘rationalize’ world or, even, to submit the coordinated rational rules to a sector of consumer, what creates a vast and diversified system designed to manipulate individuals lives” –Coutinho (p. 17).

In the process of understanding the Weberian thesis understood by Lukács, we may try to comprehend that it had demarcated the shift from the social rationalization analysis to an interpretation of capitalist rationalization as a reification process. Besides that we may see why this transition can be understandable as “the modern super organization that virtually reduces the individual to a mere functional reactionary cell” –Horkheimer (p. 149) that would even encompassed labors transforming them into “organic members of the socio-economic system” (*Ibid.*).

³ Western Marxism can be understood as something in reference to the set of theoretical analyzes of Marxian theoretical orientation that were established in Western Europe (and partially in Central Europe). This intellectual movement differs from the official Marxism, the prevailing interpretation in the former USSR, and in the communist countries in Eastern Europe). Neto (1996) points a suggestive approach to this subject when discusses the question over Western Marxism should be, at first, issue to be dealt with Lukacs because “it’s necessary to go beyond the socio-political component of the historical-social level that is in its genesis and demarks his involvement, as well as certain cultural traits present in it – what should be emphasized here is, with the utmost emphasis, its strict theoretical dimension. Indeed, all the particularities of Western Marxism seem to go far beyond the undoubtedly significant aspects that mostly researchers have already emphasized (its academicals validity, its thematic innovations, the expansion of the horizon of analysis, the opposition and criticism of dogmatism and scholasticism in Soviet Marxism, the serious and qualified dialogue with ‘bourgeois’ tendencies, the attention to emerging phenomena in bourgeois reality, etc.” (NETO, 1996, p. 9) – furthermore, Neto points out that by Western Marxism it is still possible to understand those theories of Marxism orientation that “reject at once any ontological theoretical imputation” (*idem*, p. 14).

It is notable that it turned possible because Lukacs provided an understanding of the Weberian theses describing them as:

[...] the problem of commodity appears not only as an isolated problem, nor as a central problem of economics as a particular science, but as the central and structural problem of capitalist society in all its vital manifestations. Just in this case can the prototype of all objectivity forms, and all their corresponding manifestations of subjectivity in bourgeois society be discovered inside the mercantile relationship structure” –Lukacs (p. 193).

This conception of reification was presented by Lukacs in order to deal with social interactions that were regulated by capitalism (interactions that were previously regulated by some constituent norms and values that were lost since the transition of traditional precapitalist societies to modern capitalist societies). For this point on, Lukacs admitted “the reification of social relations (and the relation of social subjects among each other’s) finds its expression in the form of a capitalist enterprise well organized” –Habermas (p. 360), very alike the inner separation “from the domestic economy and [institutionalizes] corporate action” (*Ibid.*).

In other words: the reification theory has turned to be assumed as a social reality theory in Lukács conception⁴.

Such new theory, of a Marxian origins, would focus to the relation between the differentiation among the economic sphere (which is governed by exchange values), and the deformation of the lifeworld (which would be shaped through the interaction of social actors, and that determine the social experience and the subjective experience).

According to Habermas, Lukács sought to analyze the existing objectification into the regulation and interactions of the social actors while recognizing that “technical and economic rationality tend to subject all areas of the human existence, oppressing other forms of rationality and causing social problems” –Pinzan, (p. 37).

⁴ In *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), Lukács approached his critical theoretical model of Marx’s criticism (especially his Critique of Political Economy). For Lukács reification should be considerer a model to describe logical and historical development of the phenomenon of alienation and the commodity fetishism, but may we consider it as a theoretical program for new situations? Leo Maar (1996) points out that the basic assumption for the Lukacsian analysis must be assumed as “the translation of the objectification structure to an end-philosophical practice head together with the concept of consciousness, the very core of a philosophical apprehension of a modern practice” (LEO MAAR, 1996, p. 37).

When Lukács developed his concept of reification from the Marxian analysis of commodity form, specifically the fetish character of commodity, he sought to recognize the conversion of labor into commodity (within the scope of production), and its consequent transformation into something into something that could be sold, the market. It is such a consideration that would allow to think that circumscribed to the sphere of production of goods into exchange values, it started a new kind of dynamic, something very distinct from those relations that were previously regulated by norms (like interaction relations in the sphere of social work that used to be relative to tradition), it because the “action coordination mechanism is disconnected from the context and linked to the means of exchange value or by money” –Menezes (p. 154).

However, in such situation occurs an extrapolation of the Marxian prognosis: something very specific to this process would be the predominance of the object⁵ over the subject, over the social actors themselves.

Such consideration reveals an inversion in the real process by the one reality appears to be in its immediate based form, an appearance that to the capitalist personality “necessarily takes the form of an activity” – Lukacs (p. 337), even it would be only objectively an appearance; whereas to the worker (who has denied such image of apparent activity) the appearance “tends to be his boundless slavery” (*ibid.*), something that would impress upon himself to undergo into a “process in which commodity and where he would be reduces to a mere quantity” (*ibid.*),

It seems very intriguing that insofar the social interactions are no longer regulated through norms and values that are sustained by tradition but by a medium of exchange value, the social actors (or, as Lukács named them, labors) assume an objectifying attitude towards each other (and even over themselves), something that implies to the mechanism of coordinate action something external to the own individuals. It also seems indicative to considerer that Lukács had understood such question basing his investigations in the specification of the diagnosed social rationalization made by Weber, specifically over the point of the “intramundane

asceticism for the raise of the spirit of capitalism” –Lukacs (p. 336), even he had considered as a reiteration of the notion that “commodity form imposes itself as the dominant form of objectivity in capitalist societies” – Habermas (p. 360).

According to Habermas, Lukács did so because he proceeded assuming all the Western rationalism phenomena as indications of the process of capitalization over the entire society, and was that so because:

It was over the capitalism that objects started to be producing in adequacy to a unified economic structure addressed to the whole society, in a consciousness structure that (formally) unified the whole of society. Such Unitarian structure was expressed precisely in the fact that wage-worker-related problems of consciousness recur to the ruling class in a refined, spiritualized but, also, intensified way. The so called “virtuosi” expert, the one who sells his spiritual faculties, has not only become a spectator of social life, [...] but also assumes a contemplative attitude toward how it works his own objectified faculties –Lukacs (pp. 221-222).

Looking after Lukacsian theory by this view, would be possible to understand how the rationalization process has began to be correlated with a perspective of reification over the individuals and over their own interpersonal relations (cause it provides to assume it as being constituting parts of the same process), but it only happened because Lukács presented a discussion assuming as argumentative horizon the social relations inserted in the labor’s sphere (something that increase his Marxian understanding of social world).

Assuming the Weber’s concept of formal rationality to guided the investigation over possible approximations among the rational action with respect to ends (belonged to the economic sphere) and other areas of personal life, Lukács sought to understand the arising results from the social rationalization processes that were circumscribed to the social rationalization actuating in modern capitalist societies – looking for a way to understanding “the meaning that the commodity form assumes on a universal character and thus becomes the objectivity form of the capitalist society par excellence” –Habermas (356).

As far as the social interactions are no longer coordinated by tradition anymore, the “effect of the assimilation of the normative and subjective into the status of perceivable and handle things” –Habermas (p. 358) tuned up into an objectification (*Objektivierung*) or as a commodification (*Versachlichung*), something that

⁵ By “predominance of the object” would be interesting consider the “illusory objectivity” that is analyzed by Lukács. In fact, this discussion is based on the mercantile structure that regulate all interpersonal relations to be comprehensible as a relation among objects, a “duplication of personality, this tearing of man into an element of the movement of goods and a spectator (objectively and powerless of the own movement”, LUKACS, 2016, p. 336).

may drive capital realization into the lifeworld transforming social relations into instrumental relations⁶.

A lifeform ruled by a behavior of exchange values may eventually mitigate the lifeworld, transforming it into an objectivity world that instills into individuals an objectifying attitude regulated by a success-oriented model of action. Over such instrumental horizon, that converts social actors into objects of articulation that are regulated by a strategic action model of individualistic orientation, we shall have a “dominant form of objectivity in capitalist society [which] prejudices relations with the world, prejudices how subjects would be capable of speaking and acting to referring themselves to something in the objective world, and also the social world and the respective subjective world” –Habermas (p. 355).

Only through a Lukacsian perspective to convert the commodity into a form of objectivity would be possible to conceive a kind of conversion to “governs the individuals relations among each other, the very own opposition of men over biological nature and over the internal, the subjective nature” –Habermas (p. 361), and that would lead the “lifeworld to be reified and degraded for the individual” (*ibid.*).

However, Lukács converged his analysis about properties formal rationalization recovering the notion of an objective idealism: according to Habermas, Lukács developed the Weberian concept of formal rationality from the framework of a theory of action that was seeking to grasp social reality through a certain formalist-rational action which intended to refute the dogmatic pretensions of objective reason, in an aspect that would lead us to understand the “rationalization of the world, apparently

⁶ Over this point, Habermas presents the approximation of the Lukacsian formulation on the objectification of social relations with the Marxian writings on the super personal form of a domination through commodity. Such formulation might be understandable looking after Marxian statement that affirms, “The dissolution of all products and activities into exchange values presupposes the dissolution of all [historical] fixed relations of any personal dependence on production relation, as well as the multilateral dependence of producers to each other. The production of any singular individual dependent on the production of all the others; as well as the transformation of their products are dependent of livelihoods to becomes dependent to the consumption of any other individual” (MARX, 2011, p. 156). This argumentation reveals the “reciprocal and multilateral dependence of individuals mutually indifferent over each other to formulate their social connection. It’s a social connection that expresses the value of exchange, and only on it has expressed its values of exchange, its own activity and final product” (*idem*, p. 157), that is why “the social power, as well as the relation with society, is carried by the individual in his own pocket” (*ibid.*).

integral and that penetrates the deepest physical and psychic being of man, finds its limit in the formal character of its own rationality” –Lukacs (p. 223) – what apparently suggests Lukács had presupposed a certain unity between theoretical and practical reasons (along the lines of an Absolute spirit⁷) distinct of Marx’s theory and absolutely distinct of Weber’s paradox of modernity, that was supposed to deal with:

[...] paradoxes of social rationalization over the constitutional fact (and also institutional embodiment) of formal rationality as something with no irrational means, but in connection to a learning process that would preclude a resumption absolutely based on metaphysical images of the world in connection to an objective reason – Habermas (. 362).

Lukács seems to have started assuming the assertion over the integration in members participating conduct over modern capitalist societies and what it would implied; besides that, he seems to had considered the coordination of social groups (of distinct interests), social groups that remained united in face of multiples and distinct systemic imperatives – something that would addresses us to think about a certain review over the reification concept, especially when considered:

[...] it is essential for the reformulation [...] of reification concept that it would not be associated with a [...] rationalization conception (or even in connection to a rational action with respect to ends). Rather, it would be preferable to understand reification as correlated to something connected to “the functional conditions of systemic reproduction” that in modern societies would collide along with other and, ultimately, deteriorate the rational aspects of the communicative action in the lifeworld –Giddebs (p. 105).

Perhaps such consideration would be possible, it does not seem to be appropriate to criticize the Lukacsian theory assuming an assumption of a conversion of theory

⁷ Habermas affirms that Lukács “in taking over – unanalyzed – the basic concepts of Hegelian logic, he is presupposing the unity of theoretical and practical reason at the conceptual level of absolute spirit” (HABERMAS, 1984, p. 362), an affirmation confirmed and identified in History and Class Consciousness, when Lukács made it clear the concept of wholeness refers to “the authentic human being, the very true essence of man, liberated from false and mechanizing social forms, mas as a finished wholeness has surpassed or inwardly it overcomes the split between theory and praxis, reason and sensitivity, form and matter. [Whereas] this particular man the tendency to create his own form is not something related to an abstract rationality that sets aside concrete content. For this man, freedom and necessity coincide” (LUKÁCS, 2016, p. 286).

into practice – even if we represent it in terms of a revolutionary realization of philosophy, as Lukács seemed to considered:

The freedom achieved by digitization, by telecommunications, by network systems in a context of widespread commodification are provoking a massive crises based in a technological unemployment, a monopolized culture, the process of privatization of knowledge, matters that are vital for subsistence, but that now are transforming human beings in beings guided by the market statements –Altamira (p. 24)

The question now would be: doesn't it seem a largely problematic issue? It's because if we accepted as a theoretical sustained, and as demarcation (especially philosophy and Critical Theory), the social splitting process, ascribing a revolutionary aspect to philosophy, it would imply that "philosophy has to be capable of thinking not only the totality through the self-conscious practice of those who are enlightened by philosophy about their active role in the self-realization of reason" – Habermas (p. 364), and also assuming that "for the work of enlightenment by the avant-garde of world revolution, Lukács has to claim a knowledge that incompatible [even] with Weber's austere insight into the disintegration of objective reason" (ibid.), something that provides an understanding that "the very highest level of abstraction on which practical-political actions are placed [...] are exactly signals of how difficult is to verifying the very truthful knowledge secreted by [Lukacsian] theory" – Netto (p. 11).

This so called action seems to present to contemporary philosophy a greatest scope than the one attributed to metaphysics, what would eventually characterize this representative philosophy, the same as presented by Lukács, as an inverted metaphysics transformed into a dialectical philosophy of history that wouldn't be "not only capable of a conceptual perspective from which the unity of abstractly separated moments of reason can be grasped" –Habermas (p. 364), but also that "must believe itself capable of identifying the subjects who will establish this unity practically and of showing them the way" (ibid.).

Perhaps it is the case to considerer that Weber's investigation of the structural analogies between organization forms of capitalist enterprises and the public bureaucracy to describe the overarching character of his social rationalization was assumed by Lukács just considering the exchange value, or the notion that "commodity form imposes itself as the dominate form of

objectivity in capitalist society" –Habermas (p. 360) because Lukács assumed the Western rationalism as a phenomena that have roughly indications of the entire capitalization process of society that was identified by Weber.

The contemporary criticism is heir to Lukács's readings of the Weberian theses, although it is not exclusively concerned with the major consequences of a philosophy of an objective history that "decided" to recover the theoretical incoming-praxis of the revolutionary action facing a social-and-historical context where the pattern of rationality is well determined by a complex of cognitive-instrumental rationality.

Assuming the Marxian terms, theory and praxis can rather be understood as a complex of mediations to understand the concrete sociability in capitalist societies. However, this does not mean that it encompasses everything on since according to Marx it is an assumption that reality must be understood in dialectical terms, where the sensible world figures out as the synthesis of multiple determinations (considering there isn't a conception of totality under a determinate figure).

Such discussion aims to be adequate to the Marxian conception of revolutionary praxis, the same that was presented on Theses on Feuerbach, specifically on the argumentation point that is presented:

The main defect of all existing materialism conception is so far (including Feuerbach's) that the object [*Gegenstand*], reality, sensible world, can be only apprehended in the form of the object [*Objekt*] or in a contemplation state of mind, but not as a human activity, a sensible one or a practical; it cannot be subjectively apprehended. Hence, as an opposition to materialism, it has been abstractly developed by idealism – which, for sure, does not know the real, and sensible activity as such. Feuerbach wants to comprehend sensitive objects [*sinnlich Objekte*] that are effectively differentiated from the objects of thought, but he does not desire to apprehend human activity itself as an objective activity [*gegenständlich Tätigkeit*]. It because he sees, in The Essence of Christianity, only the theoretical behavior as something that could be an authentically human behavior, while, in the other hand, practice would be apprehended only as a Jewish manifestation. Therefore, Feuerbach does not understand the truth meaning of "revolutionary" activity and "critical practice" –Marx (p. 533).

While recovering the critical philosophy, as well as the sociological tradition from twentieth-century, we can

reveal the path that, largely, guided the social criticism of the first half of the twentieth-century.

Through this journey, it becomes possible to identify some appointments presented by Habermas that he named as theoretical limitations that resulted in a “very narrow explanatory hypotheses” –Braaten (p. 75) of those discussions because there were guided by a notion that considered “the process of rationalization as a [...] essentially a process of reification” –Pinzani (p. 75).

The great influence of the Weberian thesis about the social rationalization process for all the social critiques that followed it would be assumed, then, as “the background for the history of modern consciousness, for the constitution of instrumental reason as the dominant form of rationality” Habermas (p. 346) since they can be identified as a critical reading that attested the predominance of a cognitive-instrumental model of action reason over the social rationalization process (that would be based on the division of cultural spheres that “automatically transfers itself to the life of the spirit”, Horkheimer, 2010, p. 24) – and since the “division of the kingdom of culture is a corollary of the substitutions of objective truth for a formalized one, it became essentially a relativistic reason” (ibid.).

As much like Weber, Horkheimer was concerned with the dissociation between reason and morality, and that in a sense that was to be considered to be afraid of the “subjectivation of reason would correspond to the transformation of morality and art into an irrationality” – Habermas (p. 346); the Weberian theses became feasible to assumes that “the instrumental reason embedded in science and technique [would dominate] all spheres of social life, expelling the contents of meaning and sense, relegating them to practical-morals dilemmas to a technical issues” –Souba (p. 17).

This kind of suggestive approach seems interesting because when establish an interconnection between the instrumental reason conception discussed by Horkheimer and the calculability of action principle, distinguished by Weber as a functional requirements to underpin the rationality with respect to ends to a corporate action, reveals identifiable. In this terms, this is an interconnectedness that would better understood if we considered Habermas’s division among the notion of calculability of action. Indeed, it could be understood as divided into instrumental aspects that regulate “the effectiveness of available means” –Habermas (p. 345), and strategic aspects that “correct means of decision in a

context of preferences, through choices and aside conditions presented” (ibid.).

This perspective to calculate rational actions is admittedly guided by a formal rationality concept and entails into the notion of the purpose-based rationality model that characterizes the understanding in modern capitalist societies. Interestingly, even though it was conceptualized by Weber, it was with Lukács that the model of rationality with respect to ends over social phenomena⁸ in formal in action exercise could be understood as the one where “capitalist development created a system of laws that met its ends and adapt to its own structure” –Lukács (p. 214).

How important is this assertion? It is a way too much important because Lukacsian modern capitalist societies comprehension became to be considered as those societies based on a normative principle (structured through a cultural rationalization process that was formally characterized by predictability, calculation, and an instrumental control over the organizational social processes, something that was described as a rational conduct of life, *methodische Lebensführung*). Moreover, this rational conduct of life⁹ forced the inner

⁸ Teixeira (TEIXEIRA, 2010), affirms that Lukács’s references to Weber point to his own understanding of Weberian works, something that allows to conceive that “the Hungarian philosopher had indeed a vast knowledge of the Weberian work, as he quotes Weber’s political works, his religions (and not only the most widely read writing as *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*, but also the discussions about Hinduism and Confucianism), Weber’s conception of science (Lukács does not mention any specific text according to it, but he refers indirectly to Weber’s methodological writings), as well as to collected passages of *Economy and Society* (precisely about sociology of law and the kinds of the legitimate domination)” (*idem*, p. 157). Teixeira suggests about ten Weberian references included in the first chapter of Lukács’s *History and Class Consciousness*. However, beyond this discussion, it is undeniable that some aspects of the Weberian social theory were incorporated, and seems to be essential for the Lukacsian investigation over the modern capitalism, in a very alike way pointed by Arato, when it is said “Weberian categories are not mechanically used by Lukács; they only come into the play when it is required to development the dynamic Marxist framework. The analysis of reification moves through the movements of an ‘alienated labor’, of the reification process promoted by capitalist society in a whole and also the reification process of consciousness in bourgeoisie science and philosophy” (*idem*, p. 33).

⁹ In accordance to Habermas, this rational conduction of life establishes an understanding of the attributed connection formulated by Weber about cultural and social rationalizations, and it’s because Weber considered modernity was constituted through learning processes that were socially institutionalized and ‘decoupled from an understanding-oriented carrion’ (HABERMAS, 1984. P. 66), and just because the subsystems formation, the ones ruled by an model of action with respect to ends, are controlled by a

internalization of some values and ideas about how it supposed the social actors to interact, in accordance to the aspect “the realization of material factors [that] are not enough, [and] an internalization of values and ideas are necessary” –Agüerllo (pp. 70-71).

It's instigating to consider that perhaps the notion of a rational conduct of life, founded on a principle of calculable action (and that guided the understanding of a rationalization process of modern societies) is, in fact, a process that would led to a “new kind of dehumanized system” –Wellmer (p. 41), and also that it would be pointed as the conviction that “the primacy addressed to a rational action with respect to ends in modern culture produces a lack of moral meaning in everyday life and a decreasing of freedom” Giddens (p. 105).

In this argumentative context, it seems to make it possible to identify a notion of rationality with respect to ends that presented to Horkheimer a possibility to claim that:

Precisely because any and all life today is increasingly tending to be rationalized and planned, I mean every individual's life including its most hidden impulses, that were once belonged to a private domain, it is absolutely a must need to take into account the rationalization and planning requirements: the individual's self-preservation presupposes the adjustment to the preservation of the system. [Because] it can no longer go away from the system. And insofar as the rationalization process is no longer the final result of an anonymous forces from the market but is decided by a conscientious plan by a minority, the large mass of individuals must adjust themselves to this minority interests: all individual's energies, and work activity must be dedicated to be within and in accordance to the market movement in a pragmatist definition. Formal reality was opposed and confronted by an ideal that was developed in the presumably individual autonomous action in a past moment; it was also supposed reality to conform it. Nowadays such ideologies are discredited or omitted by a progressive thinking the ones that facilitates the uprising of reality into an ideal conceptual status. Therefore some adjustment becomes a model for any imaginable kinds of subjective behavior. The triumph of a formalized and subjective reason is also the triumph of a reality that confronts itself the subject as something absolute and overwhelming –Horkheimer (pp. 100-101).

rationalized economic principle (money) and a rational administration (power).

The identification that Weber's model of rationalization describes was considered as the theoretical fundamentals to understand the entire Western tendency of a technical-productive forces development; it provides to comprehend the importance of Weber's social theory had through Marx's influence understanding in Lukács reading and how it inflexed over a critique of an instrumental reason.

The critics presented in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, as well as in the Horkheimer's *Eclipse of Reason*, enabled thinkers as Habermas to trace the development of the critique of an instrumental reason on the plane of social rationalization, even if it's considered Horkheimer in a different understanding from Weber's, especially in relation to the distinguishes of cognitive, normative and expressive spheres. This can be identify looking over Horkheimer assumption that “the spheres of normative and expressive value are deprived of all immanent claim to validity, so [in this aspect] moral and aesthetic rationalities can no longer be described in their own” –Habermas (p. 347) – it's a change of approach that may have prompted Horkheimer to present to speculative thinking a certain restorative definition because it is now assumed as a critic, something apart from Weber's because “Weber would have considered it as utopian and would suspected it as a uncharismatic reason” (*ibid.*).

However, even with certain distinctions among Weber and Horkheimer, Habermas claims attention over the interconnection they both agreed: the metaphysical-religious images of the world unity thesis, that were founders and regulators of the life meanings and now are decomposed. This decomposition of such metaphysical images is seen, by both Weber and Horkheimer, as a “threat to the identity of socialized subjects and their social solidarity” –Habermas (p. 347).

Thus, like Weber did, Horkheimer would also assume a formal rationality as something as “underlying our contemporary industrial culture” –Horkheimer (p. 7).

Another agreement aspect between those two theorists identified in the formal rationality conception refers to the aspects of an elective purpose-rationality model (something that might demonstrate why Horkheimer decided to assumes his diagnosis of social rationalization recovering aspects of the meaninglessness and the loss of freedom). Such aspects, of meaninglessness and loss of freedom, arises from the precisely moment Horkheimer assumed the concept of historical reason grounded in a “historical process where cognitive structures have emerged” –Wellmer (p. 42).

While situation twentieth-century critical readings in an interpretative context of the reification process of the social rationalization, it seems suggestive to image Horkheimer may sought to attest that “the way of thinking the world images become obsolete [because] sacred knowledge and wisdom had dissolved into subjective beliefs” -Habermas (p. 347), or even says differently: how Horkheimer and Adorno decided to elaborate their emphatic conception of reason demonstrate their reconstruction of the rationalization paradox in a way that integrated Weber’s perspective with a Marxian-Lukacsian structure and it could aim to think they were looking for a procedure to substantiate the notion that in a world apart the metaphysical-religious conceptions, the sense of an objective reason could not be sustained since they integrated the process of social rationalization thesis in a materialist-historical framework (what turned impossible to present a meaningless worldview what was governed by technical imperatives with no moral or aesthetic aspects).

If we understood that the rationalization process implies in the separation of the claims of validity¹⁰ and the normative expectations, we may admit this separation would force room to an intervention of distinct interests from those we were sanctioned in a socially prevailing norms; while establishing a subjective rationality model that eventually reversed the very own meaning of communicational norms, we would have presented how the division of the communicative categories may have been understood, by Horkheimer and Adorno, as the foundation of the raising of the totalitarianism, the concentration and the economic bureaucratization, as well as the beginning of the progressive de-differentiation and commodification of the distinct spheres of cultural production.

¹⁰ By “claims to validity”, Habermas includes speech acts that are established by consensus (on agreement on a specific subject). Habermas also attests that all speech acts have a common claim: understanding. The concept of an understanding-oriented action (what is called communicative action) presupposes a performative attitude of speakers and listeners, in a relation that is presupposed the understanding between, at least, two persons, the truthfulness of what is communicated, the sincerity of the interlocutors, and also a certain agreement with the prevailing norms. “Normative expectations” refers to a certain projection, or anticipation, made by one of the interlocutors regarding the conduction of another interlocutor and it is use as a guideline to evaluate the subjects’ behavior. Habermas envisions that Horkheimer attested the splitting of these two categories because he needed to understand modernity because he ignored the possibility of a communicative identity happening in modern capitalist societies.

Historical experiences (such as the totalitarianism, the economic bureaucratization, the commodification of cultural production) turned it on possible to understand Horkheimer’s theoretical conception as something influenced by the notion that late capitalism historical transformations altered the conditions for a political enlightenment, and it was his great argumentation of his social critique.

However, even the conformity, the distinction between Lukács and Horkheimer refers to the concept of wholeness: there are, in certain aspects, many closeness between their theoretical dispositions, but even so, we may not ignore Horkheimer’s distinction over this point because his conception of wholeness is referential loss that the proletariat category has within Horkheimerian theory – in opposition to Lukács’s¹¹.

When Horkheimer elaborated the theory of a cultural rationalization process from a juxtaposition of cultural and societal spheres (that juxtaposed the separation of moral and aesthetic criteria of social rationalization discussion), he conceived that “the spheres of normative

¹¹ According to Nobre (Nobre, 1996, pp. 74-83) is is possible to “observe a curious appropriation of the Lukacsian model [by Horkheimer] if, in one hand, we recognize an ‘intention for the entire society’ is ensured and, in the other hand, we may accept it appears in a vague and inaccurate manner of a ‘general social praxis’. Everything indicates that the class situation keeps to determine the relation to ‘general social praxis’, but the truth meaning of this concept of class had been lost at the moment Horkheimer claims for ‘groups’ (*idem*, p. 77), and that is because “Horkheimer rejects the idea that the proletarian situation is the guarantee for a correct understanding” (Repa, 2008, p. 27). Such assertions seem to be supported by Horkheimer’s discussion in *Traditional Theory and Critical Theory* (1937), when he discussed about the proletarian class. Indeed, Horkheimer affirmed that “the intellectual who, in a suddenly veneration of the proletariat’s creative power, may find his satisfaction in adapting and presenting apotheosis and not seeing any effort to save his thinking and to refusal a suddenly opposition to the masses, this intellectual may lead his own thoughts to understanding the masses as blinds and weak, much more than they would need to be. In his own thinking this intellectual assumes the social development as something critical and exciting, but does that submitting to the respective psychological situations of the class, in which itself represents the transformation power, and that results in a professional optimism. However, when this optimism is confronted in harsh times, then it appears a deep pessimism and nihilism, equally exaggerated as optimism was. It is not acceptable the fact that precisely the most up-to-date intellectual thinking, the one that understands more the historical moment and understanding how promising may be the future, contributes to the isolation and abandonment of its representatives fellows. It is because it has been forgotten the relation between revolution and independence” Horkheimer (p. 143), what makes it possible to understand is that for Horkheimer the proletariat condition is not itself the guarantee for knowledge as envisioned by Lukács.

value and expressive [were] deprived of all immanent claim to validity" –Habermas (p. 347).

Horkheimer aimed to present a criteria of truth and efficacy that could determinate the cognitive-instrumental rationality model (especially by highlighting the process where happened the cultural distinction of cognitive domain (headed by a technical aspect) from the specialized spheres of action during the development of the disenchantment process of the world), what implied in a departure from his understanding of Weberian perspective of a social rationalization conception, precisely when it's considered that Horkheimer himself "relies on the interpretation of capitalist rationalization as a reification process" Habermas (p. 346).

When it has been assumed, by Critical Theory, that the process of capitalist rationalization was, itself, a reification process it has been recognized that a loss of rationality happened over the action spheres and it because "the experience of subjection and social exploitation were blocked and repressed by a counterfeit consciousness that, operating at the level of basic instincts, prevents the experience [of a resistance to domination] to becoming knowable" –Honneth (p. 22), and for "as much more ideas became automatic, instrumentalized, less probably someone sees in them thoughts with own meaning. [Because] they are considered as objects, machines" –Horkheimer (p. 27), a deference that implies in assuming that "language has become just another instrument, in a gigantic apparatus, to produce modern societies" (*ibid.*).

As discussed before, the exhaustion of the metaphysical-religious sense that was described by Weber in the rationalization process was grounded around the notion of a loss of the unity of the spheres of life in modern capitalist societies. This is such an expensive conception for the Critical Theory, especially the one for the first half of the twentieth-century; because Horkheimer's comparison of a model of rationality with respects to ends with a cognitive-instrumental model of rationality occurred from the overlap the identification, by Horkheimer, of the inner structure of the model of rationality in activity on the modern capitalist societies¹².

¹² This question can be represented recovering Horkheimer's statement, when he says, "having given in to its autonomy, reason has become an instrument" (Horkheimer, 2010, p. 26). In Habermas's understanding it could be understandable looking over Horkheimer's description of how it became fully exploited in social process, cause "its operational value, its role in the domain of men and nature has become the sole criterion for evaluating it" (*ibid.*).

This loss of meaning attested in modern capitalist societies was due to the regulation of the social norms by an instrumental reason that had been consolidated in the form of a formal rationality (which appear itself as a subjectivated reason), and no longer by universal validity claims, as in the past before. Such kind of understanding allowed Habermas to point how similar were Weberian notion of disenchantment of the world and Horkheimerian interpretation of loss of meaning¹³.

Such conceptualization would, then, configure Horkheimer's interpretation of the modern capitalist societies rationalization process because, according to Habermas, Horkheimer started from the previous foundation of instrumental reason and considered it as the process by what was established the formalization of reason by a subjectivation of reason itself.

Presenting the subjective notion of the rationalization process in this way provided the evidence to understand the differentiation of the value spheres (and recognizing that they are assumed as something governed by the principle of exchange), and the lifeworld deformation. Horkheimer's notion of subjective reason is opposite to the notion of an objective reason regulated that intended to be the ground to an ontology that propelled the rationalization process of the world images¹⁴.

The process of subjectivation of reason that presented by Horkheimer was identified on the principle that was regulating cultural reproduction through the internalization of de denial principle of will (since modern capitalist societies are regulated by a cognitive-instrumental model of action that aims to an attainment of ends). Habermas discusses it recognizing that

¹³ Habermas points to this direction by retrieving a speech from Horkheimer's Eclipse of Reason, when it was announced: "Concepts have reduced the synthesis of the characteristics that various specimens have in common. By denoting similarity, concepts have eliminated the hassle of enumerating qualities and are thus better suited for organizing knowledge subjects. They thought as a simple abbreviation of the referenced items. Any use of concepts that shall transcends technical and auxiliary summarization of the factual data has been eliminated as a last vestige of a old superstition. Such concepts were rationalized and by so they became tools to save labor power. It's like the thought itself has been reduced to the existed industrial process level, subjected to a strict program that has become a portion of the production" (Horkheimer, 2010, p. 26).

¹⁴ In a not so specific sense, the subjective reason notion refers to a model of action postulated to a principle of self-preservation that cannot counteract the self-destructive of this self-preservation character. Objective reason, so, refers to the model of action that seeks to promote and undifferentiated unity of spirit and nature and it proceeds like that because intents to nullify any founding sociocultural transformations of morality and truth.

Horkheimer identified on the subjective reason notion something that “functions as an instrument to self-preservation in a struggle where participants are guided by the fundamentally irrational and irreconcilable beliefs” –Habermas (p. 350) in a split between validity claims and normative expectations.

However, Horkheimer’s contrast objective reason and subjective reason in a way that suggests a non-resolution to such problem: rather, it seeks to recover a metaphysical-ontological perspective of a rational totality that should contrast with the modern notion of a partial rationality (regulated to obtain ends previously planned).

Presenting an ontological perspective argument to describe the constitution of instrumental reason as the dominant model of rationality, Horkheimer made use of an operation that was seeking to reconstruct the history of rationality in order to “establish a more deeply sustenance to the critique of reification process, expanding instrumental reason until the point of making it a category of the historical process of the world development” –Habermas (p. 366). To Habermas, this procedure is clear when he recollect Horkheimer’s words when he discussed the consequences of the formalization of reason:

Justice, equality, happiness, tolerance, all concepts which, as has been said, were in the preceding centuries judged inherent of sanctioned by reason, and they have lost their intellectual foundations. They remain as goals and ends but there is no more a rational power authorized to evaluate them and to link them to an objective reality. Endorsed by venerable historical documents, they may still enjoy some prestige and some are still present in the supreme laws of the most powerful countries. However, they do not have a confirmed reason in its modern sense. Who could say that any of these ideas are more closely related to the truth than its own opposite idea? –Horkheimer (pp. 28-29).

From this point on it would be appropriate to analyze the contradictory aspect that the critique of instrumental reason presents when it came to interpret the concept of a formal rationality (circumspect to the context of social rationalization, for sure) as an irrationality of restrictive and instrumental aspect that is regulated and surrounded by technical imperatives devoid of any moral or aesthetic aspect. An example of this is the recognizing statement presented by Horkheimer when he approached the Weberian notion of disenchantment of the world with his own hypothesis of a process of subjectivation of reason that arose from the replacement of the traditional

objective world to a modern formalizing reason that “modernity came to be characterized by the fact that this disenchantment, with which religion and metaphysics had superseded magical and mythical thinking, shook the own images of the rationalized world as its core” –Habermas (p. 347) that resulted in “the way of thinking that world images are becoming obsolete, sacred knowledge and worldly wisdom are dissolving into subjectivated power of beliefs” (*ibid.*).

Horkheimer’s critical formulations propel the identification of a cognitive-instrumental reason into the conception of a subjectivated reason driven by self-preservation to “drives subjective reason into madness” – Habermas (p. 349) especially when the thinking about anything about the world aims to go beyond self-interest and it is devoid of any formal rational impulse. Indeed, Habermas identifies in Horkheimer’s words the equalization of instrumental cognitive reason with subjective reason when it assumed, as an instrument for self-preservation:

The life of the totemist tribe, the clan, the church of the Middle Ages, the nation at the bourgeois revolution time, were followed by patterns shaped in a historical evolution. Such patterns – magical, religious or even philosophical – reflected the current forms of social domination. They constituted a cultural foundation even after their role in production became obsolete; thus, they also promoted the idea of a common truth. They did it because they had objectified themselves. Any system of ideas, religious, artistic or logical, insofar as it is articulated in meaningful language, reaches a general connotation and necessarily proclaims itself in a universal sense –Horkheimer (p. 148-149).

Such position can be seen in a peculiar approximation with what was recognized by Weber, when he presented the “world domination of non-fraternity” –Habermas (p. 350), an aspect that would shape modern capitalist societies. Thus, it is interesting to think that both Weber and Horkheimer assumed that social rationalization would refer to “a selective process of the rationality potentials inscribed in the structures of modern consciousness” –Repa (p. 214) that would, especially for Horkheimer, entail the institutionalization of the cognitive-instrumental complex in cultural systems and scientific production. This line of argumentation invariably seems to lead to a possibility to recognize that the dynamics of the labor’s world would eventually institutionalize aesthetic-expressive rationality “in the sphere of art and [manifest] itself in countercultural lifestyles such as bohemian, intellectual and artistic lives”

(*ibid.*), as already discussed by Marx and, in different moment, by Lukács.

The aim over this present paper is to demarcate the diagnosis of a social rationalization from the thesis of loss of meaning and the reification process because this may enable the delimitation of the constituent features of the consecrated lectures about the rationalization process of modern capitalist societies, the understanding that social rationalization, by destroying the traditional conception of metaphysical-religious images of the world, propelled criticism into the internal structures of reason, as, for example, when Horkheimer, assuming the social rationalization process as a reification process, presented the notion by in which “the precisely method of world images to thinking become obsolete” –Habermas (p. 347) because “sacred knowledge and worldly wisdom were dissolved into subjectivated beliefs” (*ibid.*). Such kind of argumentation are biased to present an idea that “in a world with no religion, or metaphysics, the conception of ‘objective reason’ has no place” (*ibid.*).

It is interesting how the overcoming of mythological figures (and the myth itself) became possible with the differentiation of the value spheres that determine modernity; this perspective guided an elaboration of a process to describe the subjectivation of knowledge and faith that both Weber and Horkheimer seem to agree (because they assumed the existence of religious and metaphysical images in the world that depend on a rationalization process that “they were tributary”, - Habermas (p. 350), something in opposition to Marxian tradition, because that overcoming of myth allowed Horkheimer to recognize the emergence of a modern consciousness that was regulated by the differentiation of value spheres which culminates in the own regression of culture and society: Enlightenment becomes myth and breaks down the modernity promises!

Considering that the rationality regression arises with the prediction of subjective reason, that would eventually act on the integration of world images and influence a some kind of irrational social solidarity, we may think in a process that would eventually “tear apart the cultural spheres of science, morals and art” –Habermas (p. 350), since there wouldn’t be any longer possible to found any common sense in the unity of lifeworld.

It is, for sure, an assumption that endangers social integration because integrative forces, as well as the notion of social solidarity that are based on the images of the world, would be so compromised by this brutal split of cultural spheres that it would have its frame of

reference shaken up. Something that would reverse completely the question: reason, in fact, would be regarded as irrational?

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