

Reflections on The Concept of Ideology

Adair Adams

Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Rio Grande do Sul,
Vacaria-RS, Brazil

Elizabeth Fontoura Dorneles

Postgraduate Program in Sociocultural Practices and Social Development, University of Cruz Alta –
UNICRUZ,
Cruz Alta-RS, Brazil

Tiago Anderson Brutti (Corresponding author)

Postgraduate Program in Sociocultural Practices and Social Development, University of Cruz Alta –
UNICRUZ,
Cruz Alta-RS, Brazil

Abstract

This article presents narratives and arguments around the theme of ideology, based on the human condition of language. Despite having already been investigated by many authors, which hinders any claim to originality, the theme is not capable of a definitive delimitation. The issue of ideology will be addressed in line with the interpretation of notable intellectuals, with an emphasis on the culture irradiated by the media. The script of the article, constituted from a bibliographic review and a critical and reflective approach, gathers digressions on the issue of Lyotard's meta-reports and Baudrillard's hyper-reality.

Keywords: ideology; language; materialism; policy; post-modernity.

Initial thoughts

The following arguments refer to a theme that has made a name for itself in the last century and that continues to spark debates, especially in discourse analyses. Despite having already been investigated by many authors, which hinders any claim to originality, the theme is not capable of being definitively delimited. The discussion will be on the concept of ideology, in line with the interpretation of thinkers such as Lyotard and Baudrillard, with emphasis on the issue of culture irradiated by the media.

Contemporaneity is identified as the postmodern era. It constitutes a complex cultural phenomenon that encompasses a multiplicity of areas, theoretical disciplines and artistic practices. In the latter sense, the postmodern is linked to the contemporary development of new aesthetic and new artistic forms in cinema, literature, architecture, sculpture, etc. Thus, for example, in literature and cinema, the postmodern appears as a loss of the sense of unit, with emphasis on different and diverse realities that coexist without

a meaning unit, as a destination of subjects who no longer understand the world where they live nor understand themselves. In architecture, it involves the critique of modern lines, glass towers and concrete blocks that reduce individuality to uniformity and do not allow the differences and particularities of each site to develop their own forms. In these fields, among others, what we can call contemporary appears as an attempt to mix art and life, reality and fantasy, high culture and culture of masses, codes and styles of different ages and cultures. In general, however, it is a phenomenon that goes beyond the new forms of architectural and artistic expression. As Harvey (2001) pointed out with insight, the contemporary is “[...] a new structure or way of feeling”, a special way of being, interpreting and experiencing the world that undermined the feeling of security and self-confidence more typical of the modern age.

Another guiding idea to think about the contemporary is the cognitive position characterized by its distrust in totalizing discourses, reason and truth, especially in relation to the aspects of such discourses still linked to Cartesianism. Distrust also extends to all forms of essentialism and reductionism, typical of a mathematizing rationality. As in post-structuralism, discourse appears as the central instance of social life, but proposes indeterminacy, the primacy of difference and the incommensurability between discourses. Each of which, by means, has its own regime of truth, thus constituting an ascetic position with respect to the autonomy of the subject.

Its intellectual roots are complex, because its antecedents are found in irrationalist, relativistic and ascetic philosophies, especially Nietzsche’ philosophies. Moreover, the declination of structuralism, and especially the fragmentation and dissolution of the Althusserian School, as well as its replacement by post-structuralism, are also an important antecedent. The central problem of the contemporary are its doubts about reason, modernity and, especially, enlightenment.

Distinctly from post-structuralism, the contemporary no longer believes in emancipatory struggles such as those that marked the Enlightenment movement, in terms of reason, and Marxism, in terms of economic and political sociability, preferring to embrace the chaotic and unpredictable character of reality. However, under the postmodern label, there is a wide variety of authors who do not necessarily agree on every aspect. There is no consensus on the way of being and thinking of our time or about tradition. We can say that there is a differentiation between two important contemporary orientations: the skeptical and the affirmative. The skeptical, in the case here, Baudrillard, offer a gloomy, negative and pessimistic view of life, identified by the fragmentation, disintegration, malaise, senselessness and chaos of the human world. The affirmative, among which we can mention Vattimo, are also modernity criticizers, but have a more optimistic and hopeful view of contemporaneity. These are open to positive political actions, in addition to allowing themselves to accept that certain value alternatives are better than others.

The contemporary represents a type of reaction against modernity. While the latter highlights linear progress, positive science and reason, the former emphasizes indeterminacy, fragmentation, heterogeneity and difference. Furthermore, it suspects of both absolute truths and totalizing discourses of universal application, especially those that propose human emancipation. According to Boaventura, there is need to distrust the main ideas of modernity, which are:

Distinction between subject and object and between nature and society or culture;
reducing the complexity of the world to simple laws capable of mathematical

formulation; a conception of reality dominated by deterministic mechanism and truth as a transparent representation of reality; an absolute separation between scientific knowledge - considered the only valid and rigorous - and other forms of knowledge such as common sense or humanistic studies; privilege of functional causality, hostile to the investigation of “ultimate causes”, considered metaphysical, and centered on the manipulation and transformation of the reality studied by science (SANTOS, 2010, p. 25).

Since Nietzsche, at least, truth is considered to be built and imposed by power. That is, the claims about truth are forms of terrorism that silence those who disagree. For contemporary thinkers, in general, the world cannot be consistently represented in its entirety, nor does historical development have a universal meaning. By questioning our ability to achieve a truth unrelated to a particular discourse, and by doubting the existence of social relationships and essential contradictions of society, many contemporary thinkers make epistemological judgment implicit in ideological criticism impossible. Despite this, Lyotard and Baudrillard, as well as Foucault, initially very close to the Marxism’s positions, having been influenced by Althusser, as can be appreciated in their early works.

They all used a critical concept of ideology, although gradually, they became consciously away from it in their intellectual evolution. Maybe, for this reason, they end up reintroducing a form of ideological criticism through the back door (without recognizing it), so to speak, which subjects them to a contradiction: while they doubt the validity of total discourses and their ideological criticism, they must assume the validity of their own criticism.

1 Lyotard’s meta-reports issue

The first stage of Lyotard’s intellectual production was deeply marked by Marxism. In one of his first works, the author accuses Husserl of wanting to find a third way between idealism and materialism, and, through this ambiguity, conceal the imperialist crisis of 1914, which, according to Lyotard, is the main cause of the crisis of philosophy.

Lyotard criticizes phenomenology because “[...] its historicity, its intuitionism, its radical intention, its phenomenism, constitute ideological factors that seek to hide the true meaning of the crisis, to avoid reaching inescapable conclusions” (Lyotard, 1973, p. 56). Undoubtedly, here, there is a clearer implicit reference to a critique of ideology as concealment or false awareness of reality. Later, Lyotard repeatedly uses Marx’s concept of ideology when discussing philosophy and action. At this moment, he considers philosophy as an ideology, a false position, not because its contents are false, but because it tends to disconnect from the reality it represents.

The conception of ideology, from Marx’s perspective, is very close to Freud’s position, Lyotard says. It is admitted that there is a truth in ideology that corresponds to a real problem, “[...] which is that of one’s time, but its falsehood consists in the answer to this problem, as it informs and presents the problems of the real man, coming out of the real world and does not lead to its resolution” (Lyotard, 1973, p. 55). Later, the author theorizes about the “ideological canvas” (something that hides) and the “historicist-

dialectical ideology". Furthermore, Lyotard, thinking so, begins to distance himself from the concept of ideology. Analyzing the social effects of cinema, he states the following:

[...] let's highlight how miserable it is to answer this question in terms of the simple superstructural function of an industry, cinema, whose products, films, would act on the consciousness of the public *in order* to blunt (confuse) through ideological infiltrators (Lyotard, 1973, p. 55).

In a second stage, Lyotard produces a critique to Marx and tries to abandon the concept of ideology. The first problem he faces is that, in order not to contradict himself, he must deny that the point is to criticize Marx or read his writings as if they were a theory subject to evaluation. In one of his arguments, Lyotard strives to regard Marx's texts as works of art, drives of desire, libidinal values. Lyotard ponders that "[...] the signs can also be similar as [...] signs of intensity, such as libidinal values (which are not values of use or change), as pulsations of desire", and that money, taken as a commodity, in the same way as the other objects in the capital system, "[...] is not only a value that is converted, but a burden of libidinal intensity [...] the capital system is not the place to hide an intended value that would be prior" (1974, p. 101). For Lyotard, a discursive formation is not much different from a libidinal formation, and from this, it is inferred the need to renounce denounce and console.

Following Wittgenstein, Lyotard maintains in more recent works that society or social bonding is a series of language games, each with its own rules and criteria of truth. Language games or discourses are immeasurable among them, deriving from this the lack of unity and totality of society. What predominates is diversity and conflict. For this reason, the author exclaims: "[...] let's wage war against totality [...] We pay a high enough price for the nostalgia of the whole and the one" (2001, p. 82). Lyotard believes that totalizing social theories are not only extreme simplifications but also "terrorists", because they legitimize the suppression of differences. No game of language or speech can be privileged.

Science plays its own game, is unable to legitimize other language games, but above all is unable to legitimize itself without resorting to a narrative. Paradoxically, modern science has always thought of itself in conflict with narratives. While it produced objective and impartial knowledge, narratives were considered fables and stories that people invent to make sense of their lives, but which do not provide real knowledge. Lyotard believes that this modern conception of pure objective knowledge, unlike narratives, is a myth; in fact, it is another narrative. In other words, science is obliged to legitimize the rules of its own game and, to do so, it produces a philosophical discourse of legitimation or meta-discourse. The author argues that the meta-discourse of modern science draws attention to great reports. Among the influential meta-accounts of the last 200 years, which served to legitimize the myth of objective science, Lyotard mentions the heroic legends of "wealth creation", which underlies classical political economy, the "hardworking subject", who underlies Marxism, and the "dialectic of the spirit", which sustains Hegelianism.

As a consequence, scientificity is in the last term based on a certain class of meta-report. Each meta-report has its own immeasurable logic with others; no meta-report can be objectively proven or refuted; none is inherently better than another. For this reason, people became skeptical about the claims of truth of

all meta-reports. According to Lyotard, the condition of postmodernity is basically characterized by the incredibility of meta-reports: “[...] the great narrative has lost its credibility”; “[...] most people have lost their nostalgia for the lost narrative” (2001, p. 37). Lyotard situates this argument in the context of new communication technologies in advanced capitalist societies. Bell and Touraine’s theses on the transition from industrial society to a post-industrial society based on information, for which knowledge has become the main production force, continues here. Hence the status of knowledge has changed. It is no longer an end in itself, nor can it make emancipatory or universal demands. For Lyotard, “[...] knowledge is and will be produced to be sold, is and will be consumed to be valued in a new production” (2001, p. 15). Knowledge is now hopelessly enclosed in the plurality of language games.

This conception has consequences for the subject in his/her cultural productions, because each person lives in the intercession of many language games, that is, located in the nodal points of specific communication circuits so that the social subject even seems to dissolve in this dissemination of language games. It is not surprising, then, that, for Lyotard, there cannot be a subject of history. For the author, any claim of a language game to be more true or superior to others must be resisted. For this reason, the idea of a rational politics must be abandoned. Politics must admit to being the realm of opinions, the realm of multiplicity and diversity. There is no way to decide between opinions if there is no legitimate action to science: “There is never a question of a massive and unique reason - this is nothing but ideology. On the contrary, there are plural rationalities” (Lyotard, 2001, p. 74). The same idea of justice cannot intrude among the various language games.

Therefore, there is a central paradox in Lyotard’s thinking regarding the concept of ideology. He qualifies the idea of a single reason, or the supremacy of a single game of language, or the privilege of a meta-report as “ideology”, following the tradition that ensues it with Marxism. This conception would consist of distorted ideas, against which he argues effusively, not only distorted ideas but, moreover, apparently no longer reliable for ordinary people. But on the other hand, that same total critical judgment, which seems to accept the concept of ideology, loses its entire base of support by having to rely on a game of language that should criticize another game of language, something unacceptable to Lyotard himself. If we only live in a world of information, which cannot require any privilege, how to criticize other information?

This conception of a critical concept of ideology, which aims to know the social contradictions and how they can be really solved, shares with other meta-reports a totalitarian character. Lyotard does not really trust the iconoclastic attempts of Nietzsche, Freud and Marx¹. Lyotard and other French thinkers depart from these masters of suspicion, iconoclastic thinkers. But to claim a suspicion in relation to the masters of suspicion loses the entire basis of legitimacy, because this claim can also be imposed as truth.

Lyotard’s thinking about language games is based on relativistic premises, in which a new concept of ideology is redesigned with the prospect of being more appropriate for a democratic theory. This concept seeks to replace the Marxist conception of ideology, understood as similar to a veil or a bad representation that hides a pre-linguistic reality previously established and serves as the basis of truth. The main difference between this concept of Lyotard and Marx’s is that the former will accept his limitations as a particular language game, while the latter will consider himself privileged. The new concept of post-Marxist ideology

¹ Paul Ricoeur states that these thinkers are “masters of suspicion” (1988, p. 120).

debunks a particular language game that poses as universal. This new concept is understood as a specific language game that tolerates other language games only as long as they remain humble and self-limited, and therefore particular. Ideology should be eliminated because it stifles the plurality of discourses - in other words, it undermines democracy.

It should be noted that Lyotard, before attempting to derive from his theory a critical concept of ideology, possibly tried to detach himself from the term ideology itself in the false sense, while the existence of a single reason. But there is, implicitly, in Lyotard's position, an unconscious reintroduction of the notion of ideology. On the one hand, the critical use of the term ideology on one occasion corresponds to a slip or a bad custom that Lyotard possibly tries to overcome. For him, Marxism is one of those meta-accounts that they believe are right and do not respect the reasons of other discourses. On the other hand, our point is that the unconscious reintroduction of the concept is made by the back door, that is, not publicly recognized and in contradiction with Lyotard's explicit approach. The implicit notion of ideology cannot be theoretically justified by the same theory explicitly repudiating it.

There is a contradiction between the assertion that a concept of post-Marxist ideology can, with a particular language game, criticize and try to exclude another game of language simply because it is universally true, and the assertion that such a concept of ideology can escape to postulate this exclusion as something also exclusively true. The arguments according to which this concept accepts its self-limitations and is tolerant of other language games are not really sustained, because tolerance seems to evaporate before Universalist discourses. Lyotard disagrees with the idea that the only thing that guarantees democracy is the existence of discourses that do not claim to be true or do not claim to have the truth. But that is manifestly absurd. Democracy consists in allowing different positions to argue and propose their claims of truth, not in denying them the possibility of truth from the beginning. Why should real pretensions necessarily be arrogant? Is not it right that somehow, even implicitly, we claim to know?

2 Baudrillard's hyper-reality issue

Marx's concept of ideology receives a criticism, in another perspective, from Baudrillard. He criticizes the ideology of personal fulfillment as a triumphant illogicity of the impulses that have passed through the sieve of the purification of guilt, which is nothing more than a tremendous effort to materialize the superego. He also criticizes the ideology of consumption and states that in every isolated consumer there is a sustained illusion of the general discourse about consumerism. For the author, the ideology of consumption tries to convince us that we have entered a new societal era, which is no longer the time of production. According to Baudrillard,

[...] production and consumption are one and the same great logical process in the expanded reproduction of productive forces and their control. This imperative, which belongs to the system, goes inversely within the mentality, ethics and daily ideology, and this is its last cunning: in the form of liberation of needs, individual achievement, pleasure and affluence, etc. (2008, p. 50).

Baudrillard, contradicting Marx, states that society must be conceived as a system in which the signifiers have preeminence over the meanings, because “[...] usage values and requirements are only an effect of the exchange value. The meaning (and referent) is only an effect of the signifier” (2008, p. 70). Baudrillard questions the primacy of the value of use in Marx’s theory stating that neither needs nor usage values are autonomous realities, because both are modes of simulation produced by the game itself that is established between meanings and signifiers. This is why:

there is no reality or other principle of reality more than that directly produced by the system as its ideal reference [...] the value of use and meaning does not constitute another place with respect to the system of the other two: they are only their alibis [...] the value system of use is produced by the exchange value system with its own ideology (Baudrillard, 2008, p. 71).

Baudrillard claims that Marx was able to unmask the fetishism of the exchange value, but failed to realize that there was an even deeper mystery in the fetishism of the value of use. A consequence of this discussion about the secondary importance of use values and the primacy of signifiers (exchange values) is the displacement of the ideological phenomenon. Baudrillard understands that, for Marx, ideology can be understood as a relationship of infrastructure and superstructure, between a material production (system of production relations) and a production of signs (culture) that expresses and masks the contradictions in the ‘basis’. According to the French thinker, the weakness of Marx’s theory of ideology is that it cannot understand the function it plays in culture and signs, except at the level of its own meanings. This is the result of the artificial separation between the economic and the ideological, without realizing that ideology crosses both forms of production, whether of signs or of materials. Thus, Baudrillard understands that Marxist criticism of ideology has as its content a magical conception of its object.

Baudrillard argues against traditional dichotomies that are supposed to be at the center of Marxist theory: subject-object; infrastructure-superstructure; exploitation-disposal:

Ideology is thus properly situated anywhere in this division. And it is only and uniquely the form that crosses all fields of social production. Ideology takes all production, material or symbolic, in the same process of abstraction, reduction, general equivalence and exploitation (1995, p. 78).

For this reason, Baudrillard agrees with Roland Barthes on the subject of the denotation-connotation distinction. Barthes, in fact, abandons the exclusive distinction between these two terms that he had previously proposed and argues that “[...] denotation is not the first of meanings, but it is intended to be; under this illusion, it is in the last term nothing more than the last of the connotations” (1973, p. 9). Baudrillard takes advantage of this distinction in his theory of ideology. He states about the connotative that, in short, “[...] denotation is never really anything more than the most attractive and subtle of connotations” (1995, p. 89). The denotation seems objective and innocent, but, in fact, “[...] far from being

the objective term to which the connotation is opposed as an ideological term, denotation is thus (since it naturalizes the process of even ideology) the most ideological term” (*idem*, p. 90).

Later, Baudrillard distanced himself, in his research, from both Marxism and the concept of ideology. This distancing is due to the fact of understanding Marxism as a reflection of productivist capitalism, constituting itself as a small-bourgeois and conservative critique of political economy, which removes its revolutionary character. The main argument is, in fact, that Marxism depends on the same basis as political economics. Baudrillard declares that the era of object production has ended and has been replaced by a new era of sign production. For this reason, all fundamental concepts of Marx’s analysis (production, mode of production, productive forces, etc.) must be radically questioned and, to a large extent, can no longer be contextualized in the present.

Baudrillard develops a new theory of simulations, for which codes, spectacles, models, images and play between signs constitute the organizing principles of contemporary society within advanced capitalist societies. One of the main characteristics of these codes and signs is that they no longer refer to something “real”, but to something other than themselves. Therefore, the new mode is characterized by hyper-reality and simulation, from the perspective that, from that moment, the signs will exchange with each other without interacting with the real. The other main feature of the domination of the code is the end of the determination: “Determination is dead, indeterminism reigns [...] Everything is unspeakable” (Baudrillard, 1995, p. 120).

Baudrillard believes that there is no longer such a thing as ideology in the way of Marxism, but that there are only simulators. Thinking like this, the notion of ideology is equivalent to the conception of a sign that disguises something. The current times, a moment of simulation of the signs, only conceal what is not behind them, since “[...] the image is unrelated to any reality: it is its own simulation” (1991, p. 170). Just as modernity was the time of the destruction of appearances, and hence the importance of ideology, contemporaneity is the time of destruction of meaning, so there is nothing hidden or able to be revealed. In postmodern society, everything is visible, transparent and changing.

From these convictions, it is understood that Baudrillard does not agree with the idea of a possible political action capable of changing a given reality to something better. For him, this is an illusion, because his understanding of politics has a cynical tone, especially with the left-wing perspectives. Following different, albeit convergent, paths, Lyotard and Baudrillard abandon both Marxism and a general theory of history, more specifically the concept of ideology as a tool of analysis appropriate to the contemporary era. For Lyotard, the central problem of all ideological criticism is the incommensurability of discourses and the absence of an absolute discursive reference that allows the evaluation of other discourses. For Baudrillard, the problem is more complex and lies in the absence of a reality that can be falsified by representations. Everything is by signs, simulation and hyper-reality and can be seen without problems.

Final thoughts

Lyotard uses the term ideology in a critical sense, still in his earliest writings, without realizing the paradox. The thinker does not realize that one can only affirm the ideological character of something based on a totalizing meta-report, and that his concern to preserve the purity and uniqueness of each game of

language makes him stumble on the tip of the iceberg he tried to avoid: the affirmation of the primacy of a certain game. What Lyotard proposes, without recognizing it, is the unmasking of unmasking, the criticism of criticism. It should be noted, however, Lyotard's inconsistency in promoting plurality and heterogeneity "[...] of language games, and soon after excluding from his reign of speech those great narratives that suggest that they illegally monopolized the discussion and present illegitimate claims in favor of his privilege" (2011, p. 172).

Baudrillard also cannot avoid reintroducing criticism of ideology through a back door, through a false door. Upon proposing the interpretation of certain phenomena, he implicitly postulates that seemingly obvious realities are not real, or that certain particular realities that he analyzes conceal an excess of that same reality, hyper-reality. Implicit in such statements there is a contradiction.

According to Baudrillard, Disneyland presents itself as an imaginary childish world to hide the fact that the rest of North America is childish:

Disneyland is here, to hide the fact that it is the "real" country, the whole "real" America, Disneyland (as well as the prisons that are here to hide the fact that it is the social in its entirety, in its banal omnipresence, which is the jailer). Disneyland presents itself as imaginary in this order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America around it are not real, but of the order of the hyper-real and the simulation. It is no longer a question of the false representation of reality (ideology), but of hiding the fact that the real is no longer real, but rather saving the principle of reality (1991, p. 172).

Another example analyzed by Baudrillard is Watergate. It was presented by the media as the denunciation of a scandal aimed at reviving public morality. In the facts, Baudrillard argues, Watergate's depiction as a scandal, firstly, hides the fact that "there is no difference between the facts and their denunciation", since identical methods were employed by the CIA and Washington Post journalists, and, secondly, the fact that Watergate was not a scandal. Again, Baudrillard argues that if we had resorted to a concept of ideology, its role would have been to conceal the scandal, while in reality the media concealed the fact that there was no scandal, no principle at stake, no difference between those in the government and those who denounced the scandal.

For Baudrillard, the boundary between representation and reality implodes, and society is now governed by symbols and codes. To a large extent, we live in a "hyper-reality" of simulation, in which images, spectacles and the game of signs replace the logic of production and class conflict. Reality, as Marx knew it, no longer exists, or was subordinated to the new reality of sign produced by the media.

All these statements: "New York is already the end of the world"; "The social is prison"; "The real country is Disneyland"; "Watergate is not a scandal"; "The third world war has already happened", are the new realities that the ideology conceals, the realities that pass through its representations. Upon stating: the conference in New York, the prisons, Disneyland, Watergate, these events are presented as real, but in reality are hyper-real, in the sense that their reality goes beyond themselves. While, for Marx, the appearances fixed in ideology were the opposite of hidden internal relations, for Baudrillard, the elements

present in the events he analyzes reflect in miniature a broader reality that is hidden in the process. What is hidden is not the opposite but the excess of this same reality, hyper-reality.

For Baudrillard, on the contrary, the typical of postmodernity is the fact that the meaning itself was destroyed: “[...] in postmodern society [...] everything is visible, explicit, transparent, obscene.” The same logic is followed by the author in his criticism of other theories. When Baudrillard inadvertently invites us to “[...] unmask everything that is hidden behind the concepts of production, mode of production, productive forces, etc.” (Baudrillard, 1995), is not he implicitly alluding to a masked reality that he discovers through ideological criticism?

Instead of being ubiquitous, power was hyper-realized in simulation. Hyper-reality is finally the dissolution of reality. For this, Baudrillard states that “[...] the secret of great politicians was to know that power does not exist. That it is nothing but a perspective-space of simulation [...] and that if power seduces, it is because it is a simulation”. The same type of argument is repeated with respect to sexuality: “[...] what Foucault spoke to us so well about sexuality [...] just why was this figure of sexuality like that of power, in the process of disappearing”?

In his left-winged criticism, Baudrillard uses a concept of ideology of a more Machiavellian-Nietzschean character. The left, he says, believes in solidarity, the common good, honesty, public virtue, etc., it does not see that these are just masks, because politics consists of private vices, low instincts and distortions.

Paradoxically, therefore, the aggressive position of the contemporary in relation to the concept of ideology fails to try to completely eradicate - on the contrary, implicitly postulates - the totalizing perspective that he tried to abolish and, therefore, ends up contradicting himself. He repels the criticism of ideology, but introduces several ideological criticisms in his attack on meta-reports and in his analysis of various social phenomena that seem to hide a deeper reality.

As Harvey pointed out, “[...] obsessed with deconstructing and delegitimizing each form of argument”, one doubts their own legitimacy to the point where there remains no solid basis for rational action. Postmodernist conceptions want to abandon modernity, but do not want to account for their own positions; thus, they suffocated in such a way the differences between illustration and manipulation, truth and ideology, reason and domination, that they themselves cannot survive their own criticism. Thus, they constitute insensitive and unilateral theories, unable to see the positive aspects of modernity, unable to understand how those positive aspects are articulated and how they exist in opposition to the alienating and repressive traits that have in common with absolutism.

Ultimately, contemporary conceptions could be accused of being ideological for helping to mask the real contradictions of the global capitalist system and trying to divert people’s attention to the rarified world of simulations and hyper-reality. They could also be accused of ideological in the sense that, by unilaterally highlighting pluralism and difference, they try to hide the common elements of humanity between different cultures and races. By openly attacking the concept of ideology and, at the same time, using it secretly to criticize the theories (meta-reports) that propose critical concepts of ideology, postmodernism not only contradicts itself, but becomes a convenient ideology of the *status quo*. Relativism and trust in a contemporary rationality hamper people’s belief in a better future or in the possible resolution of larger social problems. The consciously sought-after change and politics in general, at least in the most

extreme postmodernist versions, seem to lose all meaning. In other words, reality and the whole agency have been dissolved. In times of accelerated technological change and political and economic crises throughout the capitalist world, no ideological form seems to be more appropriate than postmodernism to defend the system as a whole, because it makes chaos, disconcerting change and endless fragmentation of the normal state of society.

The new, hyper-real world, in which postmodernism is inspired, is the result of liberal market forces. In this scenario, according to Baudrillard, contemporary neoliberalism seems to stem from philosophical premises distinct from those that characterized liberalism in its origin. The second is Universalist: believes in reason and nourishes itself with the illustrated idea of progress. The first, in turn, attacks reason, does not believe in progress and highlights the particularity and locality. Nevertheless, what is usually not recognized is that by proposing the free play of market forces as the cornerstone of its theory, neoliberalism maintains and supports both the individual rationality of the private producer and the overall irrationality of the system or total result.

Finally, in terms of indications, we argue that the review of Lyotard and Baudrillard's positions on ideology and its resonances in contemporaneity is an interesting path for other authors with different perspectives on the same theme in later texts. And, above all, it indicates possibilities to understand cinema and its current settings. Perhaps there is no way to dispense with a thought that takes reality into account, however completely configured in the sygnic dimension, as Baudrillard argues. Is not his conception of hyper-reality another interpretation, among others, of contemporaneity?

We know that there are theoretical paths in which language games can be approached not as the basis for the construction of an absolute and authoritarian truth about others. These language games, in other scientific and philosophical domains, can be treated under the dominance of a discursive formation, as Foucault and later Michel Pêcheux, who is self-places as dominant, heterogeneous, with room for the different, but amalgamating language, subject, history and ideology. Thus, truths are formed by the convergence of several discourses under the dominance of a discursive formation. The ideology that governs formation is not equivalent to a veil that conceals pre-linguistic reality, but to a constitutive element of the meaning of language.

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