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STRUCTURAL REFLEXIVITIES: A sociologist, the human imaginary and dynamic social fabrics

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1. Introduction

Human existence is, in itself, a constant dilemma that brings to the fore a series of tensions that position individual actions and the imperative movements of social structures. It is not by chance that Sociology, the science to which I have dedicated myself professionally, recurrently postulates this infinite "conflict" between the impulses, choices and life projects of individuals/actors/agents and the supposed structural determinants. Whether in Giddens (2001, 2003), in Bourdieu

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(2003, 2007), or even in Habermas (1973, 2001), I have always identified myself with the theoretical sets that proposed to look at and understand the social world and its interactional dynamics beyond the structural deterministic biases, or the prisms that attribute to the multiple individual microcosms of key meanings of possible readings the intricate web of relations that permeate life in society.

In this sense, the exercise of building the present biographical memorial of an academic career was a challenge that arose as part of the activities (common to professors and students) of the chair of Project Seminars that, together with friends Gabriel Kafure da Rocha and Zélia Maria Xavier, we taught in the current academic semester with the Professional Master's Program in Philosophy Teaching at IFSertãoPE – Petrolina Rural Zone Campus. In this way, to scrutinize my life trajectory was, in fact, to observe how much the course of human existence, especially in contemporary society, enunciates sinuosities permeated by confrontations with the existential realities posed by social systems, such as being reduced to what was once signaled as being the unbridled expansion of instrumental reason (Habermas, 2001) and economic logic to the various spheres of human sociability. As masterfully clarified by Weber (1958, p.,181),

For, when asceticism was taken from monastic cells to everyday life and began to dominate worldly morality, it played its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order. *This order is now bound*

up with the technical and economic conditions of mechanized production which today determine the lives of all individuals born into this mechanism, not just those directly involved with economic acquisition, with irresistible force. Perhaps it will determine them until the last ton of fossilized coal is burned. In Baxter's view, the care of external goods should fall only on the shoulders of the 'saint as a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any time'. But fate decreed that the cloak became an iron cage. [emphasis added].

Escaping the deterministic imperatives of the "iron cage"² and subverting the significant pressures of a human existence reduced solely to the economic order is an arduous task, which requires, in turn, access to knowledge, thoughts and feelings that verse, portray and design the world and its

² The metaphor of the "iron cage" (*Stahlhartes Gehäuse*, in German) appears directly in Talcott Parsons' translation of the original version (1905) of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. It is, therefore, a concept that encompasses the social macro-process of instrumentalization of rationality, which associated with Capitalism, initially anchored to the ascetic Protestant ethic, ends up becoming the dominant logic of sociability and social organization, *imprisoning* individuals in bureaucratic structures and impersonal techniques.

complexities in other forms of reason that support criticism, plurality, the contradictory and even the "irrational" as an essential part of human existence in society.

In similarity to Rocha (2025) who, at the beginning of his philosophical memorial, presented to readers his predilections about the option for the first-person position, I will use the same expedient to indicate the ways in which I see the narrative of my academic career as viable. Therefore, I choose as feasible, at this moment, not to focus on lists and summaries of publications or other possible scientific contributions, since I understand that the productions do not adequately speak of what I intend to give vent to now, that is, the most sensitive nuances that populate my personal sociological imaginary. The research conducted, the projects carried out, as well as the disciplines taught, are included in detail in the Lattes curriculum and are available to the public in almost all of them. Those who feel curious to know more details can access them in their own interests. I will make this memorial a moment of free writing under the poetic inspiration that philosophy allows us, *par excellence*, in its *modus operandi*, including, I believe, what I will present for now. In these terms, I will reconcile in this same narrative the description of paths of my academic and professional history with brushstrokes of sociological imagination, and, in the most daring moments, making use of the watercolor of philosophy. This, then, will be my way of seeing myself, that is, transmitting it under the flows of the sociological thoughts that inhabit me. To the standard rhetoric for memorial writing I ask the due come, and that's it.

2. Life in formation: sociology, studies and efforts to achieve it in work

Born in Campina Grande, Paraíba, in a small family, with only a couple of children, my parents are Francisco de Assis Feitosa and Maria das Graças Santos Feitosa. I was raised in a home that was very loving and, at the same time, strict about certain values. My father died in my childhood, when he was only four years old and my sister, ten months. Obviously, the moral elements I internalized were the result of the guidance, advice and teachings I received from my mother, my paternal grandmother and my aunts. The attention I directed to my studies after passing the entrance exam is largely due to them, whose speeches always warned of the hardness of the work for those who did not have higher education. With great firmness and rigidity, my mother led our upbringing, keeping us in terms of sustenance and love, without a new male figure by her side for a long time. The courage to overcome the hardships of life, as well as a good dose of coldness and rationality to deal with the greatest difficulties I learned from her, mainly, but also from my aunts Lourdes Feitosa and Inácia Feitosa, as well as from my grandmother Maria Hosana Feitosa (*in memoriam*).

Our origins and the primary love bonds of the family nucleus reverberate throughout our existence, through direct and indirect facets. And therefore, most of the time, they say much more about us than professional choices, the directions of our training, theoretical aptitudes, our works and other passing junctures of human sociability. Under my apprehension, at a time like this, in which I intend to constitute a

kind of selective thematic autobiography that resorts to the memorial narrative, I would commit violence to myself if, for the conveniences of academic formalism or scientific discursive standardization made at the expense of the denial of subjectivity, I avoided exposing how present certain people in my family are in everything I was and am.

That said, it is still up to me to mention the intricacies of the motivators of dedication to professional training in my field of study, which would later have repercussions on the option for an academic career until obtaining the title of doctor. In this sense, despite having a reasonable number of uncles, I assimilated few personality traits from contact with them, and female examples of fiber and honesty were much more present, with a few exceptions such as my cousin Érico Feitosa. After so much time and having achieved a certain intelligibility about the formative processes of collective morality and personalistic traits, I can understand how decisive the journey of these women's lives was for me, particularly regarding the recognition of human capacities for agency in the daily resistance of meanings and stigmas rooted in social structures.

In this aspect, the strategies used by them, as well as the efforts to transmit to me values and meanings consecrated to an existence whose meaning extends beyond selfish achievements. They are, therefore, indelible legacies imbued with love, altruism and social purpose, through which they subverted fallacious discourses and stratagems that, in a society with sexist traits, exempted women from the attributes of strength, resistance and resilience, as well as the protagonism of sacrifice for the greater good of the family. I am clear,

then, that they were living examples that "vulnerability is not passivity; it is a condition that can be mobilized for resistance", whose materiality can be realized, including in other generations and genders (Butler, 2021, p. 156). The recurrence of certain speeches, the unconditional support, as well as the harsh moral lessons and even reprimands that occurred as coercion to the errors of youth, were decisive in the perception that higher education was a necessary path to a more peaceful life and less personal deprivation, such as those that characterized their own biographies. In this sense, the continuous acts of dedication, teaching and affection of these women, managed to transform the rebellious thoughts of childhood and youth into a sense of responsibility and dedication, which led me from average and sloppy incomes in elementary and high school to positions of better prominence during university, as well as to a differentiated application in studies.

In the midst of life planning, the consolidation of an academic career became something important to me, from the moment I decided to study Social Sciences at the Federal University of Campina Grande. When I took the entrance exam, I opted for the second entry, that is, to start the course in the second semester. Even though I went on to the same course at the Federal University of Paraíba – João Pessoa Campus, the convenience of studying in the same city as my domicile was decisive in favor of UFCG. In the meantime, I had time to investigate what kind of readings, authors, works and theories I would find ahead, using the few technological resources available at the time and visiting the facilities of the Institution's

library in which I would spend, in the future, long hours and good moments of my life. In an effort of self-teaching, I read several referential works of social theory, in which I sought intelligibility about aspects and dimensions that would be duly deepened during the course of the training, in effect. Already at that moment, he considered that in order to achieve the understanding of things "[...] it is necessary, and enough, to be emancipated, that is, to be aware of the true power of the human spirit." (Ranciere, 2002, p. 15). In contact with the "hardness" of those social theories, I realized that a robust, diverse and methodologically judicious academic education would require a broad view and not tainted with analytical prejudices. In these terms, it would be up to me to position myself actively, especially in the sense of asserting the powers inherent in human agency and, with this, achieving the emancipation allowed by the clarification of the reality of "social things". At the time, I already had the perception that the analytical ascension of individuals, as well as the acquisition of philosophical and theoretical skills, were preceded by the individual recognition of the capacities to learn and understand the world, regardless of the mediation of knowledge carried out by their teachers and masters (Ranciere, 2002).

In the beginning, he saw so much "harshness" in sociological theories that he came to conceive them, as a specific scientific communicative set, as a kind of *autopoiesis* in the sense of self-defined closed systems, that is, as autonomous entities, whose communicative predisposition does not interact with the environment, "but operates by communicating about the environment in terms of their own internal structures"

(Luhmann, 1995, p. 87). Time being a patient gentleman, with the poring over the readings and the continuous treatment of studies, familiarity came and, with it, the intelligibility and clarity regarding the theoretical edifices and analytical enterprise that make Sociology a fertile and dense field, whose depth tends to reveal processes and dynamics in such a raw and unveiled way that they require notorious emotional parsimony for those who do it, as much as for those who appropriate it in reading with due wisdom. In other words, the "social pains" brought to the fore through the appropriation of the critical and sharp eye of sociological theories are not always accompanied by a sanative utopia, with possible comforting solutions and alternatives to the historical realities portrayed, which ends up imputing a certain uncomfortable tone to them³.

In this sense, despite the possible unpleasantness that could arise from reading the social world from a judicious and methodically constructed look at historically established realities, I understood that these would be bones of the trade intrinsic to Sociology (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, Passeron, 2004). Recognizing the mutability of social relations in the face of

³ As expressed by C. Wright Mills (2000, p.184) in the depths of his self-referential letters published posthumously, in which he reflected on sociological doing, its artisanal, creative and solitary condition: "The more we understand what is happening in the world, the more frustrated we often become, because our knowledge leads us to a *feeling of impotence*. We feel that we live in a world in which the citizen has become a mere spectator or a forced actor, and that our personal experience is politically useless and our political will a lesser illusion." [emphasis added]. In: MILLS, Kathryn; MILLS, Pamela. **C. Wright Mills: Letters and Autobiographical Writings**. Oakland: University of California Press, 2000.

historical conditions and the cultural anchorages of their respective "structures of conjunctures" (Sahlins, 1990, p. 15), as well as the particular rhythm and intensity of transformations linked to the "radicalization of modernity" (Giddens, 1991, p. 62), I learned early on that the nature of sociological action means always being in formation. Like Wright Mills (2009, p. 15), I assimilate that "the sociological imagination allows us to understand history and biography [as well as] the relations between the two within society", which means, logically, capturing the social world in a different way from what usually underlies common sense, developing the skills that allow. Beyond an evaluative dilemma about these two forms of reading reality, which does not fit in fact, it is important to realize that the inherent epistemological requirements of sociological work lead us, formally, to attributes such as theoretical density and keen analytical critical sense, which only reach the level due through the rigors and methodological predicates necessary for such a scientific field.

I have believed, for a long time, that the taste for Sociology brings us a certain peculiar perception of the world, which we use not only in the moments of professional practice or in the contexts of academic practices. On the contrary, there are rare moments when we are not perceiving, reflecting and interacting in the world without some sociological dimension coming to mind. Nevertheless, I have always allowed myself to live the academic and extra-academic formative processes dialoguing with the most diverse interlocutors and thoughts, whether they were teachers, advisors, colleagues, friends and even family. Except for the expanded dimensions about the

principles of truth instituted in the functionality of the factual application of a given axiom, I understand, like the pragmatism of James (2007), that all human experiences hold within themselves opportunities for practical learning and development. Therefore, I always see in human contact and in everyday interactions, an opportunity to broaden the understanding of social issues, clarify specific points and apprehend nuances of the perceptions of individuals and collectives in the face of some social dimension.

Throughout my academic training at UFCG (undergraduate and master's degrees), I sought professional maturity, the development of analytical skills on sociological issues, as well as conceptual and methodological refinement. In this sense, I was a scholarship monitor in the discipline of Anthropological Theory for two consecutive semesters under the tutelage of professors Dr. José Martinho de Souza Mendonça, Dr. Rogério Humberto Zeferino and Dr. Mércia Regina Batista; I was also a Scientific Initiation scholarship holder for two years in a row, in the first year developing a research on the State Commission for Labor and Employment of Paraíba and the dynamics of social control in employment policies, which was carried out under the guidance of Professor Dr. Roberto Veras de Oliveira; in the second scientific initiation project I worked on the theme of the Consumer Society and the Brazilian cultural modernization in the context of television media advertisements, under the supervision of Professor Dr. Anderson Moebus Retondar. The condition of scholarship holder was essential to pay for the photocopies of the texts of the disciplines, in a period when access to the works was not

yet as easy as it is today due to advances in information technologies and public availability of many works. Furthermore, the work in the projects brought me closer to great academic professionals who were also great intellectual tutors in that period, so much so that my advisors in scientific initiation projects also became advisors in the course completion work and in the master's thesis.

The technical learnings of a Scientific Initiation cannot be underestimated, as they are opportune moments of deepening and improvement in the professional practice of any future researcher. Thus, being alongside great masters during these moments of investigation was crucial for her to be clear about the epistemological and methodological specificities; of the singular doing of sociological research, as well as the dense scenario of reflection that involves its data collection instruments and the polishing of the paths of analysis, even more important when we shed light on complex nuances of the Brazilian reality. Each academic experience, in its own way, provided theoretical and methodological appropriations that were crucial to the understanding of the processes of modernization and their amplitudes in the social fabric. As far as our country is concerned, they emerge, therefore, in a peculiarly complex social bulge, in which the parameters of rationality and practices are markedly tensioned by significant, discursive and symbolic ambiguities that largely escape the pragmatism operating in Western European societies. Anchored and presented in a cultural, political and economic wake that is notably effervescent and interposed, in many cases, by geopolitical ties condescending to foreign hegemonies,

social realities such as the national one seem to us more intelligible, in many moments, if considered under the prerogatives of the "multiplicities of formations" and possible arrangements of rationality. As suggested by Eisenstadt (2001, p. 141, emphasis added), "one of the most important implications of the term *multiple modernities* is that modernity and Westernization are not identical; Western standards of modernity are not the only *authentic modernities*, although they enjoy historical precedence [...]."

Thus, it wants to shed light on the dynamics of social control in institutionalized spaces of public discussion about employment policies (Feitosa; Veras de Oliveira, 2009; Feitosa, 2010) or thinking about the distinct universe of the consumer society and the formation of cultural subjectivities in correlation with the media and television advertisements, I understood that the theoretical presentation of explanations about the Brazilian reality is always a very challenging undertaking, given that our social characteristics (Fernandes, 1972; Sorj, 2000); political (Souza, 2009) and cultural (Holanda, 1995; Ribeiro, 1995). All this is due not only to diversity, but especially to the density of constitution, which makes our social compounds have singular morphologies and physiologies, which, consequently, imputes to sociology the need for an explanatory plasticity capable of involving, at least, the intricate web of relations and correlations of these dimensions in the daily course of the phenomena under study.

Under the understanding that modernity takes on different contours in each society, resulting in tangles of different meanings about the standards of

rationality and tradition, I developed the concussion work of the undergraduate course in social sciences, delimiting my specialty in the area of concentration sociology. The monograph "The advertising discourse and the construction of the subject" critically explored how television advertising influenced Brazilian subjectivity between 1970 and 2000, anticipating concerns that would later reverberate in his investigation of contemporary sociability. At that moment, I consolidated many of my theoretical preferences and perceptions about the importance of rigor in the use of certain qualitative methodologies, especially those that envision accessing explanatory dimensions through the scrutiny of discourse (Foucault, 2005; Orlandi 2015).

Having seen the usual setbacks in scientific endeavors of a sociological order, I ratified the understanding of improving and developing methodological and analytical skills. Continuing my academic career, having joined the PPGCS – UFCG contemplated with a Capes scholarship, I studied for a master's degree (2010-2012). In the course of my studies, there were dreams and normal family pressures for financial independence, which is why I started taking exams. That was when the opportunity arose to join IFSertãoPE as a sociology professor, still in the first semester of 2010. Approved, I started working at the Petrolina Zona Rural Campus on September 16, 2010, took over technical and higher education disciplines, and completed the credits of the master's disciplines between weekly trips to Campina Grande-PB and return to Petrolina – PE.

I arrived in the city without acquaintances, nor family members, almost an *outlier* without preliminary social reference to facilitate the primary bonds in this new place that I would also recognize as mine, not only for the formality of the work I would perform there, but rather, for the passions and feelings inherent to the human condition which would be split here, in Petrolina. As Santos (2006, p. 218) observes, "The place is the framework of a pragmatic reference to the world [...], but it is also the irreplaceable theater of human passions, responsible, through communicative action, for the most diverse manifestations of spontaneity and creativity." Precisely in the flow of enchantment for the social and economic wealth of the territory of the São Francisco Valley, I changed my object of study and defended the dissertation dealing with dynamics in the rural world, specifically social processes of subordination of the small farmer to the agricultural enterprise within the scope of the irrigated perimeters, in which I critically examined the mechanisms of economic dependence and symbolic subordination present in the relations between small acerola producers and agro-industries. This study was supervised by Dr. Roberto Veras de Oliveira, a specialist in the sociology of work, and co-supervised by Dr. Aldenor Gomes, whose influence was also on the methodological approaches. At this point, I made use of Bourdieu's theory (2003) to understand the processes of symbolic domination in the productive field

2. In the torrent of existence, human agency: formation, profession and the world of life



For sociology, reflective delight is, particularly, a cunning abyss into which we fall, they say, when we prostrate ourselves only in the abstract conceptual universe of assumptions displaced and far from the everyday world. In fact, unlike philosophy, our doing is, to a certain extent, limited in terms of freedom by the finalistic assumption of the theoretical answer, which necessarily emerges from the analysis of the facts, as they are. As highlighted in the statement of Elias (1994, p. 22) "philosophy seeks a vision of the world; sociology analyzes the social processes that shape these visions" and, thus, is stuck to what is and not to becoming. It is consummated in the application of methodical procedures to scrutinize a given reality, recognized and delimited by the heuristic instruments available to it, through which it scrutinizes the web of social relations, their meanings and senses, the existence and functioning of institutions, as well as the structural dimensions and paradoxes of individuals' capacity for agency.

In the studies of the screen and in the construction of my doctoral thesis, I recognized the steps that led me to theoretical-methodological self-recognition and, consequently, to the selective maturity that allows me to define and defend my own ways of seeing the world sociologically. In practice, it was a matter of apprehending a complex face of the empirical world⁴

⁴ Namely, productive dynamics in the São Francisco Valley that exacerbate local tensions in the social relations of production, in the face of the interferences/influences of global determinants in the export fruit growing chain, affecting and modifying the logics of the world of rural work, the patterns of rationality, the productive spaces, the organizations and the strategies of control of the stages of the production processes.

related to rural sociology and putting to the test the theoretical explanations at which it had arrived. However, the flow of life is not programmatic and in the four years of the doctorate (2012-2016), a lot has happened, in addition to the completion of credits, qualification and defense of the thesis. As if it were not enough to exempt myself from leave to carry out my doctorate, I took on other challenges in the professional field, which would require a lot of dedication and diligence, especially because it was the administrative field.

Between 2013 and 2014 I was General Coordinator of Extension of the Petrolina Rural Zone Campus, experiencing bureaucratic processes inherent to the function, but trying to contribute to the improvement of routines and the repercussion and visibility of institutional actions with the external community. I am very proud in this sense, to have participated in the collective idealization of the initial and continuing education project aimed exclusively at adolescents in compliance with socio-educational measures⁵. At that moment, we broke not only institutional barriers through pioneering, but, above all, stigmas and prejudices, envisioning different realities for those young people.

From March 2014 to August 2015 I was administrative director of the Serra Talhada Campus, which I followed its construction since its foundation, having been responsible for the installation of the provisional headquarters, structuring the flows and initial procedures for opening processes for the

⁵ Project developed in partnership with the Foundation for Socio-Educational Service (Funase/PE), which has training carried out to this day.

acquisition of goods and services, as well as reception and training of the first employees of the Unit. Also during this period, we carried out the negotiations for the installation of Pronatec courses in the hinterland of Pajeú and Moxotó, taking to Sertânia the first Reference Center of the Professional and Technological Education Network formed by the Federal Institutes. In this torrent of responsibilities, I was unfolding between permanent displacements every week, between Petrolina and Serra Talhada, sometimes coming and going three or four times within 10 days. Many learnings, skills acquired, new colleagues, a divorce, a serious car accident on duty, a great love in a new and fruitful relationship, are also part of this story. Between mistakes and successes, difficulties and overcomings, I was left with what truly makes us great, the feeling of having experienced life, in its sweetness and also in its bitterness. As Montaigne (2006, p. 152) well captured, "the value of life is not in what we have, but in the way we face what life gives us", which is why I understand that we can deduce the beauty and the singular of human life in the midst of the chaotic that sometimes portrays our fleeting existence.

In life, the current of events brings us experiences and situations, however, the meanings and senses are attributed to us, and this goes beyond mere existence. As Simone de Beauvoir (2009, p. 296) said, "life is occupied with staying alive, but also with justifying life itself". In this way, the narratives that remained in my memory were about this period of maturation, professional, intellectual and loving. It would be unfair to omit such achievements, since during this period I (re)met the one who would be my companion and mother of my children, I

established my qualities as a researcher, as well as contributed to institutional advancement and helped to improve the social reality where I worked, in addition to which I achieved the desired title.

Under the affectionate, understanding and patient guidance of Professor Dr. Josefa Salete Cavalcanti, my thesis, entitled "Globalization and work: workers in the mango *packing houses* of the São Francisco Valley", shed light on the profound impacts of the macro processes that delineate global production chains in the context of rural labor relations, at the local level, incorporating, for this purpose, the content analysis of in-depth interviews and systematic observations and content analysis. The study revealed how the intensified control of work, the result of the demands of global markets, reconfigures the daily lives of workers, promoting forms of silent resistance and subjective reorganization (Feitosa, 2016; Feitosa, Cavalcanti, 2017). In this sense, Giddens' (1991, 1993) theory of structuring was essential to understand how local agents reproduce and transform global structures in everyday practices. While Foucault (2004) and his microphysical perspective of disciplinary power and control supported the understanding of the institutional and normative forms of labor regulation, Bourdieu (2007) provided theoretical resources for the reading of workers' dispositions, their *habitus* and symbolic strategies of resistance in the productive rural context.

No less important than the merits achieved throughout this period, the exercise of teaching has also become better over time, since the practice of teaching naturally magnifies itself with sensitivity that only maturity allows us. I

am referring to maturity *in the broadest sense*, that is, capable of encompassing the sociological, didactic and also emotional dimensions, the latter, by the way, extremely important to deal with the storms of the contemporary classroom that, in a long way, escape the formulas and manuals on which pedagogies of platitudes are based. Thus, in the multiple universes of the classroom faced by the teachers of basic, technical and technological education of the Federal Institutes, teaching practices are tensioned through the variability not only of the levels of training, but also of the body of students and their respective places of speech and life projects. In view of this and the dynamics of the instrumentalization of knowledge in professional training courses, which under different parameters of intensity, sometimes present themselves in the form of a reduction in the workload of the so-called propaedeutic disciplines, or stratagems that underestimate and/or underestimate the relevance of these same disciplines in the formative construct, it is necessary to underline how much Sociology and Philosophy encompass the resistance in favor of free thinking, critical and transformative. This knowledge brings with it a way of thinking and conceiving the world that does not match the waiting for action, appropriating the spirit of (re)action in the sense of change, that is, agreeing that "education is a process of living and not a preparation to live" (Dewey, 1970, p. 57).

Under these premises I carry out the exercise of teaching, understanding that intelligibility about the social life that concerns us is a pressing need for any citizen and, therefore, a *sine qua non condition* for the advancement of civil and political

society. Providing students with critical (re)knowledge is, therefore, an essential task for their formation, whose attribution falls especially, in this context, to the opportune knowledge of philosophy and sociology. Based on this understanding, I have never shied away from the presentation of the different sociological theoretical fields and their respective political implications, since the criticism and apprehension of social processes under an epistemologically adequate analytical sieve are independent of any predilections that I may have. I understand this to be part of the ethical set inherent to the pedagogical practice that allows not only the understanding, but also the engagement of individuals in the search for social transformation. As underlined by Arendt (2009, p. 247), "education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to take responsibility for it."

On the professional level, the subsequent years were spent on teaching, research and extension, while on the personal level, I started a family and experienced the gift of fatherhood, accessing deep sentimental dimensions that I had only heard of. These were a mainstay for many resignifications about my own existence, allowing me to redefine it, including the look at the beauty of everyday life and the simplicity of love and happiness in the lived instant of the present. In this sense, I recognized as true the axiom of Schopenhauer (2006, p. 29, emphasis added) who says: "*the greatest wisdom seems to consist in quietly enjoying the present*, which is always small, and not making one's inner peace dependent on a hope and expectation for the future, which is always uncertain."

In 2020, after an invitation, I took over the Administration and Planning Directorate of the Petrolina Zona Rural Campus, in a new management cycle, whose projects and ideals had been legitimized in an extremely fierce electoral election. In the midst of this effervescent political scenario, I have once again assumed the responsibilities of financial manager, responsible for the planning, management and budget execution of an autarchic unit, handling various items, managing processes for the acquisition of services and goods and their respective inspection attributions, as well as other various dynamics intrinsic to the function. A few days after taking office, the COVID-19 Pandemic took hold. Even with accumulated experience, developed skills and a good knowledge of the administrative procedures inherent to the portfolio, the challenges posed to the Public Administration at that time were new and frightened even the most experienced managers. In addition to all the responsibilities related to the protection of the lives of students, servers and outsourced employees, all the legal imputations and administrative risks fell on our shoulders, which were recurrently raised by the higher courts regarding the discretion of the administrative acts under our jurisdiction. Our decisions were always tense in relation to their possible repercussions in terms of the risks brought to people, the compliance with various sanitary measures, as well as the imaginable possible losses to the treasury.

To look at that moment is to realize that we endure, in addition to the endless psychological derivatives of COVID-19 to people, we experienced a stage of excessive overload of

responsibilities and fears, for which, in my view, we did not obtain the proper support, or even any recognition. According to Costa and Lima (2003), the problems were linked to the risks arising from the relaxation of public procurement rules, the need for integrated actions of rapid procurement and the development of robust strategies for public entities to meet emerging vulnerabilities. As managers, we have always been active in the workplaces, taking risks and, to some extent, risking our own families. Bones of function, we could say, if we intended to omit the perverse predicates of organizational structures and institutional systems marked by the objectification of people. Intriguingly, this also affects those individuals who perform managerial functions in the federal public administration (in this case, of autarchic devices), who, even being in high hierarchical positions in the organization, and even holding decision-making power capable of partially modeling organizational orders and dispositions, are not exempt from objectification. This, in turn, commonly goes hand in hand with systemic absenteeism with regard to peculiar subjective demands that contextually would require differentiated care with these moments. After all, we are talking about subjects who, in turn, routinely deal with a scenario that mixes an endless number of internal and external normative requirements, as well as demands for productivity and efficiency. To account for this, continuous processes of technical training and professional training occur, disregarding personal situations and previous conceptual and technical bases. Thus, even with the efforts driven externally or voluntarily chosen, the fact is that these strategic actions are moving at the dust of

the gallop of changes in legal and normative provisions, operationalized in virtual mechanisms and sophisticated complex operating systems, convulsing the daily work of this contingent of work in sets of weaknesses and excessive attributions attributed to small teams, whose core of operation concerns different institutional scenarios and, not infrequently, also under the influence of local political and economic forces.

However, even in the face of all this, I was left with human agency and all the potential that it contains in itself. As Castoriadis (1982, p. 177) points out, we cannot escape the unalterable maxim that "the institution of society is always the work of human activity, even when forgotten as such." In these terms, I took my watercolor to that storm and we designed the *works* we could as a team, adjusting contracts, conducting important renovations and improving planning and execution processes. As a result, in the face of the pandemic and the lowest historical budgets of the Campus, we still managed to recover several spaces and institutional structures, get donations of agricultural inputs and modify many limitations that existed until then, leaving the feeling of accomplishment, even if with difficulty.

The arrival of my second son, Igor Miguel, at the end of 2022, brought with it the need for personal and professional changes. With a congenital heart disease, he required special care and follow-up from our family, making me understand that the cycle of contributions to the Institution as a manager should end. Thus, I directed all attention to the family and we had in the year 2023 many trials and overcomings. Between Igor's treatments and surgeries, my wife Ana

Paula and I still had to deal with the responsibilities, obligations and duties of our work. We went through this together and strengthened ourselves as people and as a family, while consolidating our faith in God. In the end, we were rewarded with the hope nurtured even in the face of fears and uncertainties. On the basis of a faith shared by us and by many people close to us, we found support for the most terrifying moments of this journey.

After the dark fog of surgeries and hospital complications, we returned home recognizing ourselves grateful and more cohesive. In the face of trials of this order, it is through faith and religiosity "[...] that collective feelings are expressed and reinforced; it is through it that the moral cohesion of human groups is achieved" (Mauss, 1989, p. 128). Under the aegis of these events and the graces achieved, it is impossible not to feel gratitude to all those who shared these anguishes with us and softened the emotional burdens we carried. In my perception, such intense experiences and the threshold encounter with the emptiness of death brought even more clarity about the purposes of life, as well as the recognition of what truly deserves our unrestricted dedication and those who are worthy of being called friends. Hence the fact that the return home was carried out in full, having left the position of the Board of Directors and ending a cycle of contributions to the Institution.

I was able now to turn my eyes exclusively to the loves that have always been the most intrinsically related to the "immensity" of the meanings of life. Here, Bachelard's (1978) ideas are particularly useful for capturing

feelings and sensations that, inscribed in the fleetingness of everyday life, sometimes go unnoticed as to their revealing grandeur. In a world radically dominated by the colonization of subjectivity, as well as by the artificiality of social interactions, mostly intermediated by devices, structures, languages and codes of the virtual universe, to recognize the *spectacle* of everyday life is to see the beauty of the simple and the ordinary. In these terms, in the reverie of introspective reflection, it is possible for us to access, internally, the greatness of dimensions that overflow us and access others. This is how Bachelard (1978, p. 316) explains:

Immensity is, we could say, a philosophical category of daydreaming. Undoubtedly, reverie feeds on varied spectacles, but by a kind of innate inclination it contemplates greatness. And the contemplation of greatness determines such a special attitude, such a particular state of soul, that reverie puts the dreamer out of the nearest world, before a world that bears the mark of infinity. (

Admittedly, among so many compulsory and self-inflicted prisons, we have exhausted the meaning of life to reduced and instrumental dimensions, allowing the capture of our existence by structures and systems that, a priori, dispense with our time. By this, I mean that the time-experience of our

lives is singularly rare and valuable, being consciousness registered in the form of memory (Santos, 2006). In evolution and maturing, we can understand that work, academic career and professional achievements need to be balanced in such a way that they do not transform life time into a succession of empty moments, marked, above all, by the sacrifices of good and priceless family moments. When we ignore this, sooner or later the lessons will be hard from which we will learn such a maxim.

3. Reflective agency and dynamics of (cons)science: contributions to the understanding of the social world

As a bachelor in social sciences, we opportunely get to know the most varied theoretical approaches of anthropology, political science and sociology, and, consequently, we build a broader view of the social world(s) and their respective problems. As a result, the keen critical sense impels us to question our own doing, whether as a teacher, researcher, extension worker, or even in the position of administrative manager. From this point of view, I have long understood that teaching is a peculiar task, whose positive results do not always dispense exclusively with ourselves. There are, therefore, inexorably, several factors of a structural, social and subjective order that influence the results and successes of the learning processes, which have been expanded and intensified in recent years.

Contemporaneously, the dimension of the *spectacle* has expanded drastically, assuming crucial

relevance not only in the composition of massive communicative processes, but also in the daily forms of content directed to a few interlocutors (Debord, 1997). This is due not only to technological and communicational revolutions or globalization, but fundamentally to the diffusion of social networks in the virtual world to unimaginable levels, pulverizing their fragmented aesthetics, times and discursive styles. According to Castells (1999), these are processes that are both complex and ambiguous and still in development, but that today occur under the direct influence of other cultural, economic and political transformations, which potentiate a power-structure of communication whose anchor of spectacularization⁶ is given by the false idea of being able to speak and visibility, expanding in audience also by the conveniences of the auspices of algorithms and artificial intelligence.

According to Debord (1997, p. 30), "the more one contemplates, the less one lives; the more one accepts recognizing oneself in the dominant images of necessity, the less one understands one's own existence." In this way, it is understood that education and the knowledge and critical

⁶ Although it seems redundant, it should be emphasized that, in the eyes of Debord (1997), the spectacular is singularly constituted, not exactly in its thematic nature, but particularly in the way it lends itself to discursive construction, overvaluing emphases and traits, such as a caricature, that is, an exaggerated drawing, in some element(s) of a character, with the purpose of exalting it peculiarly distinct and, at times, holder of a cultivated and nurtured form in the contemporary world, mediatic and accustomed to significant and symbolic exaggerations.

views accessed in disciplines such as sociology and philosophy are crucial to the understanding of one's own existence and structural gears. However, the dominance of the spectacle form in many communicative fields is indisputable and, consequently, obscures reality itself, since "the spectacle is the affirmation of appearance and the affirmation of all human life as a mere appearance" (Debord, 1997, p. 10). As a consequence, the world of education is currently experiencing great dilemmas, the classroom, the curriculum, the methodologies and the role of the teacher itself are put to the test in two senses: in terms of skills and capabilities in the face of artificial intelligence; and regarding the overvaluation of "spectacularized" discursive forms with an air of entertainment, which deliver content under attractive clothes and languages, in tune with aesthetic models and with the times of social media. The question is not about social networks per se, but about the colonization of ways of thinking and the fixation of a discursive-type that has come to shape all other forms of communication of the subjects. In this regard, Castells (2013, p. 19) warns that "the fundamental battle to be fought in the network society is the battle for people's minds" and, in this sense, it is urgent that we reflect on the teaching practices and feasible alternatives so that we can get more engagements and *likes* from students.

In recent years, I have experimented with other ways of approaching and involving students, in an attempt to break the lack of interest shown by many students in reflective knowledge. I am inclined to the understanding that the social changes underway are paradigmatic and, logically, will

reshape much of the exercise of teaching as we knew it. It is a fact that we are already adapting; Active methodologies, aesthetic appropriations and new approach strategies capitalize on the role of the teacher in articulation with innovative resources to improve the teaching-learning processes and evaluation of contents and skills. Despite these efforts, the most avant-garde enthusiasts of artificial intelligences are emphatic in stating that they are already able to compile, correlate, synthesize, and present accumulated scientific knowledge in varied forms and models, more agile, productive, and "applicable", as well as more efficient to learning. In the face of this and the hegemonic expansion of the spectacularized and shortened discourse-form of *social media*, it is inevitable to question the auspices of this new technological era, especially regarding the predictable repercussions of yet another gap stratifying real access to critical and libertarian forms of human knowledge. Walking along this path, as suggested by Lipovestky (2007, p. 72, emphasis added), "we thus arrive at the era of trinket radicalism, of playful-spectacular dissidence, extraordinarily connected with the spectacle of advertising". Except for the specific situations that escape this idea, to demand from the teaching knowledge and pedagogical practice skillful and endogenous adventures to the media of the networks is to impute to it a logic of presentation and experimentation that is not always feasible to reflective, abstract and immaterial knowledge in its theoretical perception.

Institutionally, this type of reflection stimulated me to collaborate with the formation of the Professional Master's Degree in Philosophy Teaching and, more recently, with the

achievement of the Degree in Philosophy. With the help and dedication of professors from various IFsertãoPE Campuses and external collaborators, this training space emerged in an eminently agrarian Campus, ratifying the importance of human agencies in reflective actions, changing patterns and predilections

In fact, many of the circumstances I came across in the management processes, especially at the head of the Administration and Planning Board of the Petrolina Rural Zone Campus of IFsertãoPE, evidenced the complex relational movements between agency and structure (Giddens, 1991). In this sense, the constitutive processes of the bureaucracy inscribed both in the order of financial administration and in the instances of research, teaching and extension, inevitably bring to light the need to understand how public organizations mobilize power dynamics and games of interest, which are particularly problematic and tense in multiple modernities (Eisenstadt, 2001). Within this context, there is an important margin tangent to human actions that can bring important repercussions in magnitude, intensity and amplitude, whether positively or negatively.

The unintended consequences of action are of central importance to social theory insofar as they are systematically incorporated into the process of reproduction of institutions. [...] At least to the extent that such unintended consequences are involved in social reproduction, they also become

conditions of social action (Giddens, 2001, p. 22).

In view of the above, institutional experiences have always been understood by me under a revealing sieve of concrete sociological situations, in which social actors are not merely executors of norms, but rather *reflective agents* who negotiate meanings and structure institutional practices from an internalized theoretical-practical framework. In this case, we share the same understanding as Giddens (1991, 2003), for whom reflexivity, as a power of transforming human agency, is what allows us to act, even in the face of the constricted scenario of constraining structures. I understand that the achievements achieved with the philosophy courses portray this very well, and this is, today, a field of dialogue and action in which I feel comfortable to act, not only because of the atmosphere established in the dialogue, but because of the richness of the dialogues carried out with the body of students, advisees and peers of the teaching profession.

4. By way of signals to the future: new perspectives on emerging issues

In recent years, my academic career has moved between the rigor of empirical research and the ethical urgency of looking at the social world even more accurately. Since, more than ever, the reverberations arising from the current phase of modernity bring to contemporary society a peculiarly volatile

condition in which "[...] the conditions of action change before the ways of acting can be consolidated into habits and routines" (Bauman, 2001, p. 9). In an astonishing way, social ballasts lose their defining contours easily, under the frenetic tonic of changes and impositions of new meanings that circulate at the imperious speed of the fetishization of goods, services, people and ultra-modern totems of virtual universes and their alternative realities. In the midst of this apotheosis of volatile transformations, "sociology is indispensable to understand the world in which we live and to situate ourselves within it" (Giddens, 2003, p. 10). In other words, "sociology is the compass we need to navigate the confusing and rapidly changing world of the new millennium" (Bauman, 2011, p. 7).⁷

In 2024 I resumed a more intense academic participation, shedding light on new themes, I have sought more properly theoretical correlations and interfaces with other disciplines, thus expanding the range of interlocutions, as well as the fields of action. In this sense, I have allowed myself to incur in thematic fields that do not always converge easily, which requires me to have a theoretical basis of different foundation. Contrary to what conservative evaluations might say in this

⁷ Although they start from different conceptual definitions to apprehend the recent moment of modernity, as well as present different precepts to human agency and its conditions to alter the logic of structures, in the face of the chaotic condition in the rhythm of processing changes and transformations in recent history, Bauman (2011) and Giddens (2003), each in their own way, recognize in sociology a heuristic potential singularly capable of bringing some understanding and intelligibility about these ongoing dynamics and the possible paths to which they lead us.

regard, I do not see this as necessarily problematic, but rather challenging, insofar as it supposes the incorporation of new technical references, as well as unusual methodological designs and applications. Would there be a better inducer than this to the exercise of the researcher's creativity and to the improvement of what Mills (2009) calls sociological imagination? Unlikely, I believe.

Thus, inspired by the changes underway in the world of rural work and in view of the normative guidelines emerging in international organizations, I started the research project "Sociotechnical Mapping of Psychosocial Risk Factors in Agricultural Companies in the São Francisco Valley". The objective is to develop a diagnostic protocol capable of apprehending dimensions that often escape formal reports, as well as restricted psychological evaluations. It is an investigation guided by the Sociology of Organizations, which will bring to light not only operational data, but zones of uncertainty, informal structures and microdynamics of power often invisible in conventional diagnoses. From the articulation between the theory of structuring (Giddens, 2003) and the critical nuances of symbolic power (Bourdieu, 2003), we aim at a diagnostic mapping capable of capturing the subtle links between organizational practices and health at work, situating sociotechnical risk as a relational and historically contextualized expression, with the ability to reveal zones of

ambiguity, practices and informal strategies, as well as micro violence that crosses the daily work routine⁸.

Also at the end of 2024, I submitted selections to obtain resources, two projects that were born from the encounter between social history, collective memory, culture and identity, building on the interdisciplinary interface. Approved in their respective notices, their execution began this year, strengthening my views on this thematic axis, which, after all, interacts well with the graduate research of the advisees under my tutelage. In this context, both the study of João Vitor de Castro Vila Nova⁹ that aims at the philosophical analysis of the elements of black Brazilian identity that emerge from contemporary women's literature; and the research of Rosiane da Silva Xavier that, through a decolonial philosophical reading, seeks to understand the quilombola cultural identity and the social values present in a specific school locus; each one in its

⁸ In Feitosa (2016) we had already identified several informal strategies and practices in *export packing houses* that enhanced the productive over-effort and intensified the instances of control in specific categories of rural workers, conforming scenarios of latent psychosocial risks. The changes in *Regulatory Standard No. 01* brought about the mandatory assessment and management of psychosocial risks in organizations (Brasil 2024), leading my interest in revisiting this field of study from a more practical perspective. Furthermore, the skills and practical knowledge acquired in management experiences enabled me to take a different look at these issues, especially in view of the predominance of psychological methods and approaches. Today, this is also a field in which I work as a consultant in the São Francisco Valley region.

⁹ VILANOVA, João Vitor de Castro. Sertão dentro: A memorial of life and silences. **Re(senhas)**, [S. l.], v. 2, n. 2, p. e25019, 2025. doi: 10.71263/ggzny439. Available at: <https://resenhas.ojsbr.com/resenhas/article/view/50>. Accessed on: 27 May. 2025.

own way, they access the materialized collective memory (whether in literature, or in the values dispersed in the school context, in practices or curricula) and the movements of identity construction, disposing cultural elements in the movements for recognition and resistance.

Funded by the Foundation for the Support of Science and Technology of the State of Pernambuco (FACEPE), *Histories of the Confederation of Ecuador: 200 Years of Freedom and Resistance*¹⁰ is premised on the bicentennial of this relevant historical episode in Brazil. Its main objective is the creation of pedagogical instruments and materials for use in high school history subjects, as well as in other related areas of knowledge. Through the production of videos, podcasts and a didactic guide, we aim to reach preferably students from the public network of Pernambuco. From the narrative perspective of the forgotten, silenced or undervalued history of the emancipatory movements of the Northeast, we seek to mobilize what Arendt (2009, p. 17) called "the thread of tradition", not to restore it, but to, between the past and the future, *open a space for thought*. This, therefore, characterizes a critical and articulated apprehension of the past in order to provide the subjects of the present with the necessary agency capacities to build a political future with well-constituted Pernambuco identity roots.

The historical rescue of this political identity memory and the other instances of meanings intrinsic to the revolt of

¹⁰ Project approved and financed by FACEPE, submitted to Public Notice No. 28/2024 - Confederation of the Equator: Pernambuco tells a story of 200 years. Case No. APQ-2351-7.08/24

1824, which are not always properly explored in conventional historiography, as well as the construction of multimedia content and the respective support materials, are arduous works that continue to be carried out. To achieve these activities and achieve the goals, I am pleased to coordinate a pair of outstandingly dedicated and brilliant higher education students, these being Gabriela Torres Coelho (Degree in History - UPE) and Guilherme Pereira Evangelista Alves (Bachelor in Agronomy - IFSertãoPE).

Also in progress, the extension (and research) project "*Imagetic and Ethnographic Memorial of the Mass of the Cowboy of Petrolina*", accesses resources from an IFSertãoPE Public Notice aimed at traditional peoples. I coordinate and guide the scholarship holder, and also a cowboy, Amauri Pereira de Almeida Júnior in the activities that intend, through ethnography and oral history, to visualize and understand the forms of religiosity and community symbolic resistance that are congregated in the preparations and realization of the traditional Missa do Vaqueiro. As a theoretical-methodological mainstay, dense writing (Geertz, 1989) and Bourdieu's (2007) reflections on the mechanisms of consecration and social distinction are articulated in a crucial way. Under this conformation, we seek between speeches and images to apprehend the temporal and affective thickness of the spaces and times of religiosity, in order to reach what Bachelard (1978) calls *intimate immensity*, that is, the way in which the lived is poetically inscribed in the collective memory. Thus, as someone who collects vivid fragments of collective memory from one time to another, articulating oral history, ethnography and

digital platforms, we intend to create a memorial that not only preserves, but re-inscribes the senses of belonging and cultural resistance of the catingueiros/vaqueiros.

Since 2024, I have returned with intensity to the classroom and to the lines of research, dedicating myself to teaching Sociology and Philosophy at the undergraduate and Professional Master's Levels (PROF-FILO). I have taught subjects such as Rural Sociology, Sociological Foundations of Education, Project Seminars and, briefly, Scientific Methodology and Philosophy of Philosophy Teaching. In a time marked by the spectacularization of life (Debord, 1997), educating ends up becoming an act of resistance to the unproductive speed of information, safeguarding thought as a cultivated act. In each project, I make efforts to honor the *sociological imagination* (Mills, 2009), interconnecting individual experiences to broader structures. In the same way, in each class I access Dewey's (1970) interpellations on how to make education a democratic and transformative experience, going beyond these same milestones in its abstract condition, but rather, as a daily practice.

Between method and sensibility, between the field and theory, between the given and the gesture, I walk these roads with the commitment to root my academic work in local realities, without losing sight of their power of transformation. It is in this horizon that I inscribe my sociological practice, doing it inventively without stiffening it in the repetition of methodological formulas or canonical reification of authors and concepts, but rather as someone who thinks it for the changing world, either to apprehend it in its processes,

systems and agents, such as data in reality, or to criticize it, when necessary, or even to modify it through possible interventions.

And so, therefore, I close this text, whose challenge was quite instigating, insofar as the present philosophical memorial keeps marks, feelings, memories, knowledge, life projects and professional plans. Even within the limits of the lines of a text, I sought to bring to light, retrospectively, greater clarity to the splendid non-linear paths of life, as well as to the (mis)paths that led me to special places. As well portrayed by Deleuze (2004, p. 88), first of all, we are movement and transformation, we are never completely static, "Being is never a fixed rest, but an incessant becoming, a web of differences in constant movement: it is in difference and repetition that being itself is constituted as continuous transformation". Thus, I am satisfied with signaling, I am in motion, sharpening sensations, developing skills and incorporating knowledge and, of course, existing socially in the experience of the countless daily lives that touch me.

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