

THE REPRESENTATION OF LABOR IN THE ONE-DIMENSIONAL SOCIETY: AN ANALYSIS OF “WE’RE ALL SAMARCO” ON A SOCIAL NETWORK

Rosália Beber de Souza¹
Universidade Federal de Lavras (UFLA)

Odemir Vieira Baeta²
Universidade Federal de Viçosa (UFV)

Mônica Carvalho Alves Cappelle³
Universidade Federal de Lavras (UFLA)

Mozar José de Brito⁴
Universidade Federal de Lavras (UFLA)

ABSTRACT

The article discusses the one-dimensional labor society by grounding itself on the reflections of Herbert Marcuse. It also seeks to establish a connection between the concepts presented by the author, Bhaskar’s Critical Realism, and Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis. Through a theoretical and empirical study, we are discussing the contemporary understanding of labor built by discourses that were conveyed on Facebook in defense of the mining company Samarco after the accident in the city of Mariana (Minas Gerais, Brazil). Using Critical Discourse Analysis as both the theoretical and methodological support to this study, we are sticking to the representational meaning of the social actors involved, emphasizing the following categories: Social Representation, Interdiscursivity, and Lexical Choice. According to the analyzed discourses, Samarco is actively represented as a “savior” to the population, which, in turn, is portrayed as being passive and dependent on the company due to the necessity of keeping of their jobs.

Keywords: *One-Dimensional Society. Labor. Critical Realism. Critical Discourse Analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

The idea of this article arises from discussion concerning the labor in the contemporary society, and especially the idea of the transformation of humans into workers. Corroborating the thoughts of Marcuse (2015) that our current society as a whole is irrational, we advocate a reintegration of the critique on the “one-dimensionality” of men that the author suggested in the 1960s.

¹ Doutorando em Administração pela UFLA e mestre em Estudos Linguísticos pela UFV, professora assistente do Departamento de Letras da UFV. E-mail: rosaliabeber@ufv.br

² Doutor em Administração pela UFLA e mestre em Administração Pública pela UFV, professor adjunto do Departamento de Letras da UFV. E-mail: odemirbaeta@ufv.br

³ Doutora em Administração pela UFMG, professora do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração da UFLA. E-mail: edmo@dae.ufla.br

⁴ Doutor em Administração pela USP, professor do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração da UFLA. E-mail: mozarbrito@gmail.com

As discussed by Marcuse (2015), the productivity of society destroys the free development of human needs and faculties, for peace is maintained by the constant fear of war; its growth depends on the repression of real peacemaking possibilities regarding the “struggle for existence”—individual, national, and international existence.

We believe in the possibility of achieving or, at least, exercising our multidimensionality. Throughout this text, we are going to articulate Marcuse’s ideas from his work “One-Dimensional Man” under the ontological perspective of Baskhar’s Critical Realism, appropriated by Fairclough’s (2003) Critical Discourse Analysis. Our intention is to enable a greater integration of the criticism about the multidimensional nature of men, as well as providing greater autonomy and conscious freedom for men to perceive their multidimensionalities extirpated by the current one-dimensional society. The following chapters will present, as a theoretical and methodological support, the works of the aforementioned authors, as well as, as an empirical example, an analysis on the discourses produced about a multinational company of the mining sector: Samarco. The discourses in question refer to the testimony of a group of people in defense of the company after the breaking of the tailings dam in Bento Rodrigues (Mariana, Minas Gerais, Brazil). This group was created on the social network Facebook under the name “Somos todos Samarco” (“We’re All Samarco”), which aimed to provide support to the company by putting up against the other groups that were unfavorable to it.

The capabilities—intellectual and material—of the contemporary society are immeasurably greater than ever before, which means that the scope of the domination of society over an individual is immeasurably greater than before. Our society differs from all others by the achievements of dissident social forces, more due to technology than to terror, on the dual basis of an overwhelming efficiency and an increasing living standard. As stated by Marcuse (2015, p. 46), the hallmark of our advanced industrial society is its effective ability to stifle the needs that demand liberation while being able to sustain and absolve the destructive power and repressive function of production and consumption of superfluous items, as well as the need for stultifying work where it is no longer necessary and the need to maintain fake freedoms as “free competition”, with administered prices, a free press that censors itself, and the freedom to choose between identical marks and useless accessories. As foreseen by the author, liberty has become a powerful instrument of domination, under the rule of a repressive whole. It is not the options given to the individual that define his or her degree of human freedom, but what can be chosen and what effectively is chosen by him or her. For example, the possibility of freely choosing who their masters are does not negate

the existence of slaves and slavery. Thus, being able choose “freely” between the varieties of goods and services does not make you free, given that these goods and services sustain a series of social-controlling mechanisms, resulting in a life of toil, of fear, and, in other words, of alienation. Therefore, according to Marcuse (2015), reproducing “superimposed” needs does not mean that we have autonomy; it only proves the effectiveness of social-controlling mechanisms over us.

Thus, we believe in the importance of unveiling the ideological discourses conveyed on social media in order to foster a critical reflection about its effects on society.

1 MARCUSE’S ONE-DIMENSIONAL SOCIETY

In this session, we are going to present the main ideas of the work of Marcuse (2015) in order to substantiate the discussion we intend to have. Among the concepts addressed by the author, we highlight “ideology” and “alienation”. From these two concepts, we have the transformation of other concepts that are key to the existence of other dimensions of human beings and that have been modified by the one-dimensional society: “rationality”, “freedom” and “happiness”. According to Marcuse (2015), there is a distortion of these concepts.

On the new forms of control that Marcuse elaborates in his work, the author states they are not by any means new to us, but old and persistent. According to the author, in our advanced industrial civilization, we have a comfortable, pleasant, rational and democratic unfreedom, a sign of technical progress. As pointed out by him, what could be more rational than the suppression of individuality in the mechanization of performances that are, however socially necessary, painful? Or rather, what could be more rational than the concentration of individual enterprises in more efficient, more productive corporation? Than the regulation of free competition among unequally equipped economic subjects? Than the restriction of prerogatives and national sovereignties that prevent the international organization of resources?

For him, the power that society has acquired over men is daily absolved by their efficiency and productivity. When it assimilates everything it touches, when it absorbs the opposition, when it plays with contradiction, it demonstrates its cultural superiority. Similarly, the destruction of resources and the intensification of waste demonstrate opulence and high levels of well-being, conveying the message that the community is doing well and does not care.

Should we try to relate the causes of danger to the way society is organized and organizes its members, we would be immediately confronted with the fact that advanced industrial society becomes richer, bigger and better by perpetuating danger. Thus, the defense structure makes life easier for a larger number of people and extends the dominion of men over nature. Under these circumstances, our media have little difficulty in inculcating private interests as if they were the interests of every sensible man; this is universalization. The political needs of society become individual needs and aspirations, its satisfaction promotes businesses and the common good, and the whole appears to be the very embodiment of Reason. The major problem pointed out by Marcuse (2015, p. 34) is, “in the absence of demonstrable agents and agencies of social change, criticism is set back to a higher level of abstraction.” He points out, however, that the fact that the vast majority of the population accepts that society—or rather, is brought to accept that society—does not make it less irrational and reprehensible. It is important to validate the distinction between true and false consciousness, between real and immediate interests. The human being should be able to find the way from false consciousness to real consciousness, to understand their immediate, real interest. However, he or she can only do this if they feel the need to change their way of life, to deny the positive, to refuse. The author uses the term “positive” in his work to refer to the positivist and neo-positivist currents because, for him, the triumph of these schools of thought were essential for the installation and rise of one-dimensional philosophy. And it is precisely the need that the established society manages to repress, in the exact proportion that it is able to “deliver the goods” in an increasingly larger scale and to use the scientific conquest of nature for the scientific conquest of men. Thus, the author warns us that, faced with the total character of the achievements of the advanced industrial society, the critical theory is left without the rationale for transcending this society.

Independence of thought, autonomy, and the right to political opposition are being deprived of their essentially critical function in a society that seems increasingly able to meet the needs of individuals through the way it is organized. Our society can (and does) require the acceptance of its principles and institutions and reduce the opposition to the discussion and the promotion of political alternatives within the status quo.

From the beginning, free enterprise was not an advantage for the advanced industrial society. As the freedom to work or starve, it meant toil, insecurity, and fear for a large majority of the population. Technological automation and standardization processes can release individual energy into a yet unknown realm of freedom, located beyond our needs. The structure of human existence would be altered, and the individual would be released from

the working world that imposes such strange needs and possibilities. The individual would be free to exert autonomy over a life that would be properly his own. If the productive apparatus can be organized and directed to the satisfaction of vital needs, its control may very well be centralized; such control would not prevent individual autonomy, but make it possible.

Our society differs from all others by the achievements of dissident social forces, more due to technology than to terror, on the dual basis of an overwhelming efficiency and an increasing living standard. Investigating the roots of such development and examining their historical alternatives is part of the pretense of a critical theory of contemporary society. Referring to the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School, the author believes in a theory which analyzes society in the light of its capacity to improve human condition. Regarding the question of what the standards for such criticism are, the author tries to answer that it would require a series of abstractions. In order to identify and define the possibilities for a better development, the critical theory must perform an abstraction from the current organization and use of society resources and from the results it generates. Such abstraction—which refuses to accept the universe from the facts as the final validation context—, such 'transcendent' analysis of the facts in the light of prevented and denied possibilities belongs to the broad framework of social theory. Social theory is interested in the historical alternatives that surround the established society as subversive tendencies and forces. Society seems to be able to contain social change. A qualitative change that would establish essentially different institutions, a new direction of the productive process, new ways for human existence. As an attempt to recover the intention of criticism towards the categories that attribute polarities, tensions and contradictions, as well as to understand how that intent was canceled by social reality, the author points out the ideological character of the critique. It results from the fact that the analysis is forced to proceed in a position that is “foreign” to both the positive and the negative, the productive and the destructive tendencies in society. The central issue of modern industrial society is the identity of opposites. At the same time, the position of theory must not be mere speculation, but a historical position, in the sense that it must be based on the capabilities of the given society. Thus, the author explains the ambiguous situation of the one-dimensional man: (1) an advanced industrial society, capable of containing qualitative change, and (2) the forces and trends that may disrupt such containment and implode the society as a whole. The way society organizes the life of its members involves an initial choice between historical alternatives, which are determined by the inherited level of material and intellectual culture. The choice itself results from the play of the dominant interests. Productivity and the

growing potential of such system stabilize society and contain technical progress within the structure of domination.

Technological rationality has become political rationality. Based on philosophy, Marcuse seeks to deepen the discussion about what is real, what is true, what is illusory. In other words, he questions, “what is the reason that guides the logic of today’s society?” In this sense, the world of immediate experience is the one we live in. It needs, however, to be understood, transformed, even subverted to become what it really is. The totalitarian universe of technological rationality is the last transmutation of the idea of Reason. The closed operational universe of advanced industrial civilization, with its terrifying harmony between freedom and oppression, productivity and destruction, growth and regression, is pre-assigned in the idea of Reason as a specific historical project. The stabilizing trends collide with the subversive elements of reason; the power of positive collides with that of negative thinking. Even the achievements of advanced industrial civilization lead to the triumph of one-dimensional reality over all contradiction. This view reflects the experience of an antagonistic world unto itself, a world afflicted by necessity and by negativity, constantly threatened by destruction, but also a world that is a cosmos, structured according to final causes. Given that the experience of an antagonistic world guides the development of philosophical categories, philosophy moves in a universe that is broken in itself, that is two-dimensional; appearance and reality, falsehood and truth, lack of freedom and liberty. This distinction is rooted in the experience of the universe of which it is part, both in theory and practice, not for the lack of abstract thinking. In this universe, there are ways of being in which men and things exist “by themselves” and “as themselves,” as well as ways that they exist in distortion, limitation or denial of their nature, of their essence. The process of being and thinking is to overcome these negative conditions. To Marcuse (2015), then, the notion of the essence of men can serve as an example by analyzing men in the condition in which they are found in their universe, possessing certain faculties and powers that can make them fit to lead a “good life,” a life as free of fatigue, addiction, and ugliness as it is possible. Achieving this life is achieving a “better life”, is living according to the essence of nature or men. In this sense, we can understand the man as a “micro cosmos”, since, for being part of the universe, part of nature, he has the “power” to act and “create” his source of life. This, according to Marcuse (2015), is the maxim of the philosopher. He is the one to examine the human situation, and it is he who may subject the experience to his critical judgment, which, in turn, is endowed with value. The value that makes knowledge preferable to ignorance, that makes freedom preferable to domination. Philosophy is born of these values. As for the

scientific thought, it had to break this union between value judgment and analysis, because it became obvious that the philosophical values do not guide the organization of society or the transformation of nature. They were ineffective, unrealistic. Thus, there are forms of existence that can never be “true,” for they cannot stand in the realization of their human potential, in the joy of being.

The critical theory has no concept that can shorten the gap between the present and the future, but remains loyal to the purpose of engaging hope.

We believe, however, that the ontological perspective of Critical Realism can assist us in creating a “new subject” in our society. A subject who is aware that, from his or her “will”, they are able to exercise and rescue their multidimensional power.

2 CRITICAL REALISM AND HUMAN EMANCIPATION

In our view, Bhaskar’s CR resumes a multidimensional view of the world, surpassing the linearity of previous prospects that seemed “problematic” due to the fact that they are trapped in polarity issues.

According to critical realists, there is a “stratified ontology” in which the world is an open system composed by domains of what is real, current and empirical, and by different strata that operate simultaneously (physical, chemical, biological, semiotic, economic, among others), causing unpredictable effects in the world. In this perspective, it is unconceivable that the world be made only by the empirical domain, but by the three: the “real”, the “current” and the “empirical”, as summarized by Bhaskar (1978, p. 13).

To Sayer (2000, p. 9) the “real” is “whatever exists, whether natural or social, regardless of being an empirical object for us and regardless of the fact that we have a proper understanding of its nature”. In the real domain, different strata, such as physical, social and semiotic, operate simultaneously with their causal powers, generating unpredictable effects on other issues regarding events and experiences. Thus, the operation of any mechanism that possesses a certain (generative) power of these different strata is always mediated by the simultaneous operation of others, but are not reducible to one and always depend on and internalize features of others. Therefore, according to Sayer (2000, p. 11) “even though we do not need to resort to biology or chemistry to explain social phenomena, this does not mean that the former do not have an effect on society.” In this way, social phenomena also have effects on other strata or, in other words, contribute to generate new phenomena.

The “current”, as explained by Sayer (2000), is what happens if and when the powers

of what is real are activated. As an example, the author mentions the distinction between “workforce” and “work” or “labor” under the Marxist perspective. In this example, the ability to perform work, along with the physical and mental structures of the individual corresponds to the level of what is real. Labor, as an exercise of this capacity and its effects belongs to the current domain.

The “empirical”, however, would be the domain of effective experiences: the part of the “real” and current experienced by social actors. Therefore, we have the “real” as the domain of causal powers; the “current” as the domain of the events in which such powers are triggered, and the “empirical”, which is what you can notice from the activation of these powers in the field of experienced events.

Under the perspective of Critical Realism, it is not possible to have direct access to the domain of what is real, of the structures in which the mechanisms operate. It can only be reached through our knowledge of it, from the “current” and the “empirical”. Thus, CR deconstructs the belief that the “real world” can be studied objectively, since we can only investigate or study the world from our experience and from our view. The traditional conception of the empirical world reduces the three ontological domains to one: “what is” to “what we know about,” and the “what we know about” not always eliminates all the possibilities of what “actually is.” (BHASKAR, 1978, p. 36)

Therefore, to Sayer (2000), social search cannot be done by searching the events that happen with noticeable regularities, because social events, since they are not pre-determined and depend on contingent conditions, occur in various ways and, thereby, presuppose a transformational movement between human action and social structure.

The transformational model of society constitution, according to Bhaskar (1989, p. 32-37), differs from voluntarism, reification and dialectic models. According to the author, in the first model, social objects are the result of intentional behavior of individuals (there are actions, but not conditions). In the second, social objects are external and exert coercion on individuals (there are conditions, but not actions). In the dialectic one, the society and the individual are mutually affected (there would be no distinction between actions and conditions). In transformational design, companies and individuals are not reducible to one, but casually interdependent. Giddens (2003, p. 25) calls “duality of structure” the fact that the ownership of the social structure is both a mean to human agency and a result of the action that recursively organizes. To Bhaskar (1989, p. 34-35), society is “both the always present condition (material cause) and the continually reproduced outcome of human agency. And praxis is both conscious production and reproduction (usually unconscious) of production

conditions, which is the society. The first refers to the duality of the structure, and the last refers to the duality of the praxis.” CR proposes, according to Bhaskar (1989, p. 12) a critical-explanatory approach to social studies, which seeks to address the stratified nature of reality, including entities, structures and mechanisms that exist and operate in the world.

According to Barros (2015), to Bhaskar, society is not an object that can be predicted in a deductively justified way. Qualitative developments—which cannot be anticipated by the social scientific theory—usually occur. It is always of a provisional character.

Bhaskar (1998, p. 410-417) states that although the knowledge is necessary, it is insufficient to freedom. Being free entails: a) knowing the real interests; b) having the skills, the resources and the opportunities to act; c) being willing to act. Thus, the emancipatory politics must be founded on a scientific and revolutionary theory because, for him, it would be the only chance of a non-barbarism, of human survival. We understand that the “be willing to act” as a “will” that propitiates the individual to move and to exercise their power. Being aware of this will and power is important to be responsible for one’s actions, choices, thoughts.

In this sense, we believe in the “positive” sense of power as choice of movement for transformation. Human beings would always be potentially able to handle their creative and transforming energy from their will.

As stated by Barros (2015) the emancipatory potential is born from the intentional agency capacity and from the reflective practice and the individuals have causal powers to reproduce or transform social structures.

Archer (2000) discusses the relationship between social structure and agency without reduction or conflation. In the analysis of the morphogenesis of the agency, the author argues about the need to understand the properties and powers of human beings and how they emerge through the relations with the world. It highlights not only the construction of society, language, speech and dialogue, but also the ability of self-knowledge that is related to the practice of dialogue in society.

In this sense, the author (2000, p. 318) focuses on the need for each of us to discover through practices of “internal dialogue” as this would not only be a window on the world, but what determines our “being in the world”. For Archer, though there are external forces that induce us to follow a path, we are the ones who determine our priorities and define our identity. The human being, to Archer, is an extremely reflective and evaluative being, and it is through external information and through the internal dialogue that we achieve our personal identity and values. Specifically, as we open for internal conversations, we discover the

enchantment of every human being as well as a rich field of research. Thus, social agents build their reflections through internal conversations, and the reflective “I” constitutes a mechanism capable of connecting the causal powers to the agency. Corroborating the same reasoning, Bhaskar (1998) reiterates that all human behavior has a reason, therefore, intentional. What happens is that he may or may not be aware of the reasons that cause this behavior, since human behavior has psychological mechanisms that are unavailable to consciousness. According to the author, the capacity of self-monitoring causal interventions in the world is closely connected with language, conceived as a system of signs that are suitable for the production and communication of information. Therefore, we consider the discussion of the agency to be of great importance, since it is from our internal process that we build our values, identities and occupy our place in the social world. If we reflect on the world around us, we can also transform it. It is important to emphasize that what the author (Bhaskar) calls “I” is different from what he calls “ego”. The ego has been necessary to the current society, to capitalism and for almost all existing institutions. As Barros (2015) reiterates, the deep structures of oppression and alienation are structures of duality, founded on the principle of non-duality, which critical realism has theorized. These structures dominate not only the world of duality but also the non-dual basis, which is our fundamental state of being.

We were able to realize that the theories we chose here as our support converge to a common point: they argue that the possibility of human freedom is linked to its critical reflection enhancement and aware of the world. Both Bhaskar’s ontological perspective and Marcuse’s ideas envision that the transformation of a given reality depends primarily on the will of the individual (“I”), on its reflective capacity and on its agency to be able to occur. Thus, they emphasize the power of every human being and understand the political importance of these actions and, therefore, of all its impacts and repercussions, including science.

The ontology of Critical Realism proposed by Bhaskar provided the foundation for the theoretical and methodological approach of Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis. Thus, in the next session, we will focus on the contributions in order to proceed with our analyses that are grounded on the models of such methodology.

3 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AS A THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL SUPPORT

Based on Bhaskar, Fairclough (2003, p. 209) provides a framework whose discourse analysis starts from a social problem with semiotic aspects to only later identify the obstacles that must be overcome to “resolve” the problem. Thus, the analysis must be made in three lines: analysis of the situation, analysis of the particular practical and discourse analysis. The framework also proposes a reflection on the analysis, which, as it is the case in any critical research study, must question its effectiveness and contribution to the issues raised.

Fairclough (2003, p. 21) defines texts as “parts of social events, a way people can act and interact with social events through speaking or writing.” As elements of social events, texts have causal effects that can be immediate (we can change through learning or knowledge acquired by texts, change of beliefs, attitudes or values) or less immediate (through advertisements or commercial texts can help people identify themselves as consumers in their identity groups). Texts can, as exemplified by Fairclough (2003, p. 8), “start wars, change educational attitudes or relationships within organizations.”

According to Fairclough (2003), the effects may include changes in the material world, which can range from urban changes (in architectural design) to behavioral changes (attitudes of people, their actions, social relations). However, these changes are not simply mechanical. Texts have causal effects without necessarily having regular effects, because many other factors interfere in the context of how a particular type of text may take effect. Furthermore, a particular text may have a variety of purposes for a given instance in different interpretations. One of the main causal effects of texts is the ideological effects, i.e. “the effects of inculcation and support or the ideological changes” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 9).

In this sense, ideologies are defined by Fairclough (2003, p. 9) as “representations of aspects of the world that can help to establish, maintain, and change social relations of power, domination and exploitation.”

The representational significance is associated with the representation of the world. To Fairclough (2003, p. 124), different discourses indicate different “looks” or visions of the world, and these looks are associated with the relations that subjects establish among themselves according to their social positions, economic positions, family positions, etc. In this sense, the same episode can produce several different discourses that can confront one another or be compatible with the rest, depending on the existing relations of domination between them.

In certain socio-historical contexts, some discourses may have a greater degree of acceptance to the detriment of others and, on that basis, be more repeated and embedded in the texts, creating various representations. In contemporary times, for example, the neoliberal capitalist discourse has greater impact, simply because it is the discourse of the class that globally holds the most political and economic power.

To identify and characterize a discourse, Fairclough (2003, p. 129) points out that we can think of a discourse as: a) representation of a part of the world; and b) a representation of the world from a particular perspective. According to Fairclough (2003, p. 128), the relation between dialog and controversy is one way in which texts blend different discourses, but their “own” discourses are often mixed or hybridized. An inter-discursive analysis of texts is particularly concerned with identifying which discourses are designed and how they are articulated.

Additionally, Fairclough (2003, p. 129) considers that “discourses lexicalize the world in particular ways.” Discourses can also be differentiated by the metaphors in their usual sense of “lexical metaphor”, which, according to Fairclough (2003, p. 131), are words that usually represent a part of the world to be extended to others.

Fairclough (2003) states that, from the representational perspective, statements can be made out of three types of elements: processes, participants and circumstances. To Fairclough (2003), social events bring various elements. It is possible to see the text of a representational point of view, since some elements are excluded, and others, included, and, among those included, some will have greater prominence and relevance than others.

Regarding the representation of social actors, it is relevant to deepen this category, because, through the ways social actors are represented in the texts, we can see ideological positions related to them and their activities. Some actors, for example, can be emphasized or hidden, depending on the value judgments made in relation to the social roles they occupy or their economic or racial conditions.

As pointed out by Fairclough (2003, p. 145), just as there are choices to the representations of processes, there are choices to the representations of social actors. Normally, social actors are participants in sentences, but not all participants are social actors; they can be also physical objects. Fairclough (2003) rescues the theory of the representation of social actors (RSA) developed by Theo van Leeuwen (1997, 2008) and describes the ways in which social actors can be represented. Thus, Fairclough (2003, p. 145) proposes the following variables for analyzing the representations of the social actors: a) inclusion/exclusion (which can be performed by suppression, or rescued by inference); b)

pronominalization or appointment; c) grammatical role (“Is it represented as a participant in the phrase or as a noun or pronoun possessive?”); d) active or passive voice (“Is the representative an actor in the process, is it “affected” or is it beneficiary?”); e) personal or impersonal; f) named or classified (“Is it represented by name, by category or by social role?”); g) specific or generic (social actors can be represented specifically or generically, i.e. “doctors” may refer to a specific group of doctors (those who work in a private hospital) or to the medical class in general (all doctors)).

The discourse that will be analyzed was published in the Facebook group “We’re All Samarco”. According to information gathered in this group, its creation arose independently, on November 11, 2015, by voluntary initiative, i.e., without any connection with Samarco: “This is an independent initiative, which aims to support the company, employees and be a link between the company, the event and the people.” We hereby emphasize that the group had, to the date of collection (February 10, 2016), more than 5,000 “likes”. Despite testimonials criticizing this defense, there were many statements of support in favor of Samarco, which will be our corpus for this study. We are interested in understanding how the construction of these defenses was, in order to understand the rationale and guiding ideology of these discourses.

Even though we understand that the meanings proposed by Fairclough—representation, action, identification—should be considered together, due to the size limitations of this article and to the intent of specifically discussing the choices that illustrate the ideology surrounding the analyzed corpus, we chose a specific portrait of the representational meaning, as shown below.

4 THE CONTEMPORARY REPRESENTATION OF LABOR THROUGH DISCOURSES

In this analysis, we will focus on the representative meaning, articulating the categories of Social Representation, Interdiscursivity and Lexical Choice.

Regarding social representation, we are able to notice that Samarco is represented by discourse producers/partners in an active way, whose function would be to “help” people to “solve” the big problem of unemployment. In discourses such as, “Without Samarco, what would become of us?”, “And, without mining, who will help us??????”, “IT WILL BE MUCH WORSE if it closes!”, “We know how real is the need for the jobs generated by

Samarco”, “What we need is solutions, not more problems, nor more suffering”, “We already have enough of that...”, we can notice the “empowerment” given to mining, especially to Samarco, regarded as being essential agents for the population. The people portrayed by the “we” end up being represented as part of the beneficiary of the jobs provided by the company. Thus, people are placed as dependent on the company’s stock to become “active” through the work provided by Samarco and by other companies of the same segment.

The lexical choices help strengthen both the representations of actors, reported above, as well as to unveil the most prominent interdiscourses. From the choice of expressions and terms used by the subjects of the speeches, we realized that those were guided in the semantic field of fear or dread of being unemployed: “What will become of us?”, “Who will help us????????”, “MISERY”, “destroy”, “IT WILL BE MUCH WORSE if it closes!”, “suffer even more with the tragedy of unemployment/tendency to increase unemployment”, “another disaster”, “more problems”, “more suffering”. The excerpts express a sense of despair and terror that is perceptible by the choices of words, punctuation (great number of exclamations points, suspension points) and words in capital letter to emphasize the lines. As proposed by Fairclough (2003, p. 129), from the textual analyses, we were able to identify (1) the main “themes” or “parts of the world” represented in the text; and (2) from which point of view these themes are represented. Still, according to the author, the most obvious way to distinguish the discourse is through the vocabulary, for the talks “lexicalize” the world in particular ways. The choices of the discourse producers demonstrate the work as the main element to be considered. Nothing is worse than unemployment, not even the most serious consequences of environmental impact caused by mining. Lexical choices also lead to the strengthening of the ideology of domination and exploitation of labor, which also represents the power exercised by the dominant groups—in this case, the multinational corporations, specifically Samarco. As put by Fairclough (2003), ideologies are representations of the world that can contribute in establishing, maintaining, and changing social relations of power, domination, and exploitation. In the analyzed case, we realize the ideology that seeks to maintain the existing relations of domination and exploitation.

In the resumed lines, we can still observe a “mixture” of discourses or interdiscursivity. The interdiscourses that stand out the most are the fear of unemployment and the economic/political crisis. Of the first interdiscourse, we highlight: “We’re nothing without Samarco; in my town we live because of Vale and Samarco... Without the miners, who will help us???????? How much more will the whole society suffer from its failure! Not only those who work, but all will be indirectly affected! More than 600 thousand people! And

even the State and Federal governments, who gain a lot from its operation! If you let Samarco perform, it will perform! Samarco has no money to pay salaries of its employees. IT WILL BE MUCH WORSE if it closes! With several companies around the world working in this business, what would happen to the development of our Brazil?”.

Thus, we identified the main “themes” represented in the discourse and the point of view these issues represent. There is talk of the importance of work and the fear of doing without it.

The approach on work is as we know it: it is the most important thing in our lives, it controls and dominates the entire contemporary existence. The existing work in the one-dimensional society. We identified the interdiscourses on the economic/political crisis in the following extract: “Our STUPID PRESIDENT Dilma who wants once again to take advantage of the situation to do some MONEY LAUNDERING on the expenses of a company that has always paid great services to the society with hospitals, schools! Now the Federal and the State government want to get their hands on the money! We must remember that the money laundering is here! And the MISERY that is our society by the actions and heritage of PT (‘Workers’ Party’) will crush a lot of people... Which is already precarious and on the hands of politicians who are only involved in scandals and corruption.”

In these lines, the episode of corruption in the Federal Government prevails. However, the line of thought presented in the statements belong to a technical rationality which, as pointed out by Marcuse (2015), absorbs the negative and the positive and is validated in the daily experience that blurs the distinction between rational appearance and irrational reality. As the author also states, the power over men that this society has acquired is daily absolved by their efficiency and productivity. We can identify this acquittal in the discourses of the deponents who, even with the destruction of resources and the intensification of the existing waste in our society (intensified by mining), demonstrate their opulence and high welfare levels: the community is doing too well to care (Marcuse, 2015). We ask ourselves: Is society that well? What are the criteria or values that they have to state that the jobs propitiated by Samarco are that essential? As also stated by Marcuse, the defense structure makes life easier for a larger number of people and extends the domain of men over nature. Under these circumstances, our media has little difficulty in inculcating private interests as if they were the interests of every sensible man, i.e., the universalization. As discussed by Marcuse (2015, p. 199), “the commitment of analytic philosophy to the mutilated reality of thought and speech seems to be more impressive in its treatment of universals.” According to him, the contemporary analytic philosophy aims to exorcise such metaphysicians “myths” or “ghosts”

such as “mind”, “consciousness”, “will”, “soul” and “self” to dissolve the intention of these concepts in statements of operations, performance, powers, dispositions, propensities, skills, among others. Thus, according to Marcuse (2015), the industrial society ended up transforming the metaphysical into the physical, the interior into exterior, and the adventures of the spirit into the adventures of technology. Thus, we have examples of the consummation of technological rationality and the ideology of translation into reality. Thompson (2009) also points out the universal ideology as a way of operation because, through the universal strategy, agreements that would serve as interest to some people are presented as if they served all, or rather anyone who wants to be successful. The ideas of justice, freedom and humanity obtain their truth and good conscience on the sole ground that they might have truth and good conscience: the satisfaction of material needs of men, the rational organization of the realm of necessity (Marcuse, 2015).

The political needs of society become individual needs and aspirations, its satisfaction promotes businesses and the common good, and the whole appears to be the very embodiment of Reason. At that point, Archer also warns us of the distinction between the “I” and the “ego”. We noticed in the lines, “ego-ic” and not truly reflexive discourses, which comprise the human being as a “me” that is also part of a “whole”. Bhaskar (2000, p. 238) defends that our self is in its base state, and by connecting with other beings, it is connected to everything in the universe. Still, Bhaskar (1998) argues that the ego has been necessary to address the current society to capitalism and for almost all existing institutions. Exactly what we found in the analyzed lines.

Another important element used as argument for the company and which deserves some consideration is the distortion or lack of critical thinking about the events. In some passages, we see the attempt to temper what occurred with the expression “disaster”. Thus, the accident turns into an incident. What should have been foreseen and avoided becomes a “fatality” without any serious action to be taken. The term used by Marcuse is “false consciousness”. As the author warns, the problem is that “in the absence of demonstrable agents and agencies of social change, the criticism is then set back to a higher level of abstraction.”

The transcendental concepts of Critical Realism can also be noticed when the actors attribute to Samarco, in the discursive level of representation, a causal power: to provide jobs. In this sense, Fairclough recontextualizes the notion of causal CR powers by proposing that the texts have causal effects, and that the analysis of these effects is a part of the discursive analysis of texts (Resende, 2009). This is not, however, a simple mechanical causality: it is

not possible to suggest that particular traits of texts cause particular changes in the knowledge or behavior of people. The causes do not imply regularity or the pattern of cause and effect, but it does not mean that there are no causal effects. The causal relationship between social practices and texts is a two-way relationship. Thus, for Fairclough, Jessop & Sayer (2002), some discursive aspects of contextualized social practices can be identified as mechanisms to activate or to block causal powers. As an example, we have the selection of certain discourses to the interpretation of events that may lead to the legitimization of specific actions; set modes of conduct, such as specific organizational procedures; result in inculcation of these discourses in the construction of identities; influence the construction of action strategies. Our conclusion to this study is that linking the actors to address the new spirit of capitalism, with the absence of criticism, gives full power to companies by blocking action opportunities for improving the quality of life and current working conditions.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Interestingly, in the way the discourses are presented by the subjects, the company (Samarco) is exempt from its acts, and this exemption is justified by lack of money. It is not mentioned that the company's revenues, according to data published on its Internet website, were of R\$ 13.3 billion between 2010 and 2014, R\$ 2.8 billion in 2014 only. Furthermore, we also assume that a company of such proportions and working in this segment (mining) must anticipate possible expenses for such episodes—crisis management. It is also worth remembering that the profitability obtained by Samarco was due to the exploitation of their workforce.

The statements led us to infer that the company in question is the only “savior” to the people of the city and considered a “martyr”. There is a distorted view of labor, since the “achievements” of workers are no more than the result of their work; on the other hand, they are given no more than the minimum Samarco can offer without sacrificing its profit and exploitation. However, in the discourses, these achievements are presented as something that was made possible by Samarco in a kind, generous way.

Regarding the role of the company in this case, one of the deponents claims they have been doing everything possible to solve the problems they caused. Our question is, is it not their obligation? Incidentally, is it also not their obligation and responsibility to act safely? Another point that deserves to be discussed regarding the positioning of the speaker concerns the mutual help of people. If people are in need of aid, that aid should be paid by

those responsible for the disaster. Interestingly, the form of collection—fine, pension—is also put as if it were unnecessary, and as if the company were kindly helping the community by employing the people, meaning then they should not honor their minimum commitment and pay for the material losses.

Thus, as stated by Marcuse (2015), the fact that the vast majority of the population accepts that society—and is brought to accept that society—does not make it less irrational and reprehensible. It is important to validate the distinction between true and false consciousness, between real and immediate interests. In the case studied, whose interests are concerned? According to the analyzed discourses, they are ego-ic, immediate interests.

As Marcuse proposes (2015), the human being should be able to find the way from false consciousness to the real consciousness, to understand his or her immediate and real interest, but only can one do this if one feels the need to change their way of life, to deny the positive, to refuse. However, we found that, according to the presented discourses, this is not what happens. What can be perceived is nothing more than criticism, made without rational basis for the occurrence of transcendence. The false reality of our society, capable of “delivering the goods” in an increasingly larger scale and of using the scientific conquest of nature for the scientific conquest of men, can be perceived in the statements of the deponents.

Revisiting the question of Marcuse (2015) as to how the administered individuals are freed from themselves and their masters, the author argues that society would be rational and free in that it is organized, maintained and reproduced by an essentially new historical Subject. We believe that this historically new Subject can arise primarily through its internal expression, that is, through the redemption of art, which, as was put by the aforementioned authors, was distorted by the rationality of domination of the Reason of science.

However, as also stated by Marcuse (2015), the search for this rationality and freedom is no more than a possibility. After all, the critical theory does not provide us with conclusive answers, but remains loyal to the purpose of engaging hope.

Recebido em: agosto de 2017
Aprovado em: maio de 2018
rosaliabeber@ufv.br
odemirbaeta@ufv.br
edmo@dae.ufla.br
mozarbrito@gmail.com

REFERENCES

ARCHER, M. *Being human: the problem of agency*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

BARROS, Solange Maria de. *Realismo crítico e emancipação humana – contribuições ontológicas e epistemológicas para os estudos críticos do discurso*. Coleção: Linguagem e Sociedade Vol. 11. Campinas, SP: Pontes Editores, 178 páginas, 2015.

BHASKAR, R. *A realist theory of Science*. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1978.

BHASKAR, R. Critical realism. Essencial readings. In: ARCHER, M.; BHASKAR, R.; COLLIER, A.; LAWSON, T.; NORRIE, A. (Ed.). *Centre for Critical Realism*. London: Routledge, 1998.

BHASKAR, R. *The possibility of naturalism: a philosophical critique of the contemporary Human Sciences*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989.

BHASKAR, R. *From East to West: Odyssey of a Soul*. London: Routledge, 2000.

FAIRCLOUGH, N.; JESSOP, B.; SAYER, A. Critical realism and semiosis. *Journal of Critical Realism (incorporating Alethia)*, London, v. 5, n. 1, p. 2-10, 2002.

FAIRCLOUGH, Norman. *Analysing discourse: textual analysis for social research*. London: Routledge, 2003.

GIDDENS, Anthony. *As consequências da modernidade*. Trad. Raul Fiker. São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2003.

MARCUSE, Herbert. *O homem unidimensional: estudos da ideologia da sociedade industrial avançada*. São Paulo: EDIPRO, 2015.

RESENDE, Viviane de Melo. *Análise de discurso crítica e realismo crítico: implicações interdisciplinares*. Campinas, SP: Pontes Editores, 2009.

SAYER, Andrew. *Realism and Social Science*. London: Sage Publications, 2000.

THOMPSON, John B. *Ideologia e cultura moderna: teoria social crítica na era dos meios de comunicação de massa*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2009.

VAN LEEUWEN, Theo. *Introducing Social Semiotics*. London: Routledge, 2006.