

EDITORIAL, v. 24, n. 1, JAN./ABR. 2020: O SILÊNCIO – OU APATIA – DA UNIVERSIDADE, A CRISE E A EROÇÃO DA RAZÃO DEMOCRÁTICA

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EDITORIAL, v. 24, n. 1, JAN./APR. 2020: THE SILENCE - OR APATHY - OF THE UNIVERSITY, THE CRISIS AND THE EROSION OF DEMOCRATIC REASON

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The political and cultural tradition of Brazilian society seems to have turned to its most perverse roots through the civilizing movements that, from time to time, impose on us a new one that qualifies and improves, in theory, our personal and social relations. It is intriguing to think about why this is happening, because, at the same time that we are involved in a cyclical “crisis” and, in my view, structural in the society in general and, in particular, in the Brazilian State, which is where relations are most deteriorated than ever. There is also the political and economic “crisis”, there is the academic “crisis”, the social “crisis” and, now, the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) “crisis”, this one, it seems, was not expected (or was it?). In this context, the word *crisis* takes on such a polysemic dimension that it serves as an argument for almost everything that happens. From the perspective of the country, with its cultural, social and ethnic diversity and miscegenation, what we see is the search for evidence of the difference that disqualifies, for the divisionism between groups that use an imperative tone when they manifest themselves making the nature of the contradictory in the democratic debate a instrument of aggression. The argument is: democracy in Brazil is in crisis and its origin are the internal “enemies” and, therefore, the capacity for persuasion and democratic responsibility are less and less supported by reasoning, in the debate in search of understanding the contradictory and in the clear perception of the problems that crush and afflict the population. Taking democracy as a principle, it is necessary to have in perspective a broader view of the complexity that involves

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Brazilian society and, therefore, favor the broad debate from different perceptions and ideas about the constructed reality and not in the manipulation of the unconscious in different social groups. The qualified description that evidences this way of thinking is found in the text by Brittany Kaiser, in her book, appropriately titled “Manipulados” (Manipulated), where the author shows how the company Cambridge Analytica and Facebook invaded the privacy of millions and redirected political trends effectively consolidated, putting democracy in the face of great difficulties, to the point of having its foundations questioned and, to a certain extent, challenged. In this regard, although not so evident in principle, it shows, through the different faces of persuasion, the manipulation of the most unusual desires (and/or needs), in the deepest dimensions of the human unconscious, how to lead the individual to where he wants to be. This “market” democracy does not need the logic of the argument to persuade, it needs to explore the illogical and inconsistent fragility of people through disinformation in a context where the “market” is determined (dominated) by the convenience of corporations that, with the pressures they exert on the set of political systems, they disrupt democracy by producing conflicts between the regulation produced by decisions taken politically by citizens legitimately empowered by the whole society and the needs to attend to the predatory greed of an economic power to whom the state, as a Nation, has little or no meaning. Political legitimacy is weakened, the exercise of political power is transferred to economic power and submitted to it. The latter, in turn, is not accountable to society, but to investors and, here, it is where the differences widen and divisive landmarks in society are established. This submission causes democracy to be constantly disorganized by empowered policies and politicians with authoritarian traits acting in the name of economic power. It is challenged by the speed with which information (true or false) is disseminated under the rule of law and the slow, bureaucratic, idiosyncratic legal power and, generally, also submissive to that same economic or corporate power, define what is the truth and what is not, but fails to act quickly enough to contain the disinformation established in society. In this context and sense, the new communication techniques virtualized and streamlined through social networks disseminating “fake news” also subvert the rule of law, modify the democratic debate and change the political rhythm in the dynamics of decisions that affect everyone. They establish a form of communication that builds and guides reality in their favor (better to remember the role of Cambridge Analytica).

After this contextualization, the question remains; where is the university? There is, at least apparently, no single plausible answer to this question, but we can reflect on this silence (or apathy) of this institution which, by its nature, is the one who can and must, critically, assume its role and function in society and introduce itself to the clarification that qualifies and

criticizes the political debate in favor of the whole society, if not, what is its value and its meaning for the society that today is subject to this situation? The University can no longer be an institution subjected to this situation and in the service of a democracy of (and for) consumption (the market).