To reflect on the question of cosmotechnics as a collective intellectual project (and some insights from Brazilian perspectives)[1]
Refletir sobre a questão da cosmotécnica como um projeto intelectual coletivo (e algumas ideias de perspectivas brasileiras)

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1 Introduction

The present work aims to: 1) increase the resources available to the objective of exchanges between the perspectives of the North and the South, characteristic of the International Seminar on Research on Mediatization and Social Processes; 2) situate the issue of cosmotechnics as described by Yuk Hui (2017) as a collective intellectual effort; 3) present, briefly and for a broad and international audience, three Brazilian perspectives on technology capable of collaborating with contemporary and global debates on mediatization, namely, Álvaro Vieira Pinto (2008), Milton Santos (2017a, 2017b) and Muniz Sodré (2002, 2019).

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2 Mediatization and cosmotechnics

I think about the social process of mediatization based on the considerations of Muniz Sodré (2002, 2019), Eliseo Verón (2014) and Friedrich Krotz (2007). Considering those contributions, the main idea is that communication technologies change in correlation with changes in society and vice versa.

This is the understanding, for example, of Krotz (2007), for whom mediatization can be understood as the historical development related to changes in the media. Krotz situates mediatization as a meta-process, as well as globalization, individualization, commodification, among others. This idea also resonates with the semio-anthropological perspective held by Verón (2014), which associates mediatization with the human being's intrinsic process of semiosis. In his understanding, devices of technical-communication produce ubiquitous affects in society, but in different forms and intensities. The interesting question in Krotz and Verón's thinking is that mediatization is not a process that happens independently of other processes.

We should also keep in mind that technology, at today's industrial pace, is mostly a homogenizing force. One attitude in response to this question lies in the notion of technodiversity, as defended by Yuk Hui (2017). Take the notions of cultural diversity or biodiversity as references: to affirm the need to maintain technodiversity, Yuk Hui develops the concept of cosmotechnics.

Cosmotechnics is an idea derived from cosmopolitics as developed by Isabelle Stengers (2018) and other thinkers, as the idea that we should consider and consult other forms of living and thinking in political processes. We must reject the premise that there is a universally common, intrinsically good political intention, and always take a few steps back in decisions to consider different cultures.

Yuk Hui (2017) gives the name cosmotechnics to the set of unique characteristics of how each culture builds and relates to technology. Thus, in the same

way that human cultures are diverse, technology is also diverse. Thinking about cosmotechnics presupposes that technology is not unique, but, rather, it can be multiple and diverse, and we must pay attention to qualitative technological differences.

According to Yuk Hui (2017), maintaining technodiversity is necessary to refuse the homogeneous technological future that is presented to us as the only option, and think about different technological futures. Each culture has its cosmotechnics and studying and systematizing them is a way of resisting colonialism. We must, then, think about what different forms of digitalization imply for different existences.

Yuk Hui (2017) launches this concept as part of a decolonization project that is technologically aware. A proposal for a diverse vision regarding tech, aiming at the construction of non-homogeneous futures. He then places cosmotechnics as a central element of a collective intellectual project:

> Every culture must reflect on the question of cosmotechnics for a new cosmopolitics to come, since I believe that to overcome modernity without falling back into war and fascism, it is necessary to reappropriate modern technology through the renewed framework of a cosmotechnics consisting of different epistemologies and epistemes. (Hui, 2017, p. 8)

Thinking about mediatization as a process of transformation opens up space to use this concept to think about the future. The future is constructed, among other ways, through the actions, intentions and thoughts of social agents in the present and in the past, articulated by cosmotechnics. This vision highlights the potential of mediatization as a theoretical framework for criticizing technology and reflecting on our collective projects as a society.

3 Álvaro Vieira Pinto: machines do not arise spontaneously

Álvaro Vieira Pinto (2008) was a Brazilian philosopher, working mainly from the 1950s until his death in 1987. He was a professor of Paulo Freire. The concept of mediatization is not directly approached in Vieira Pinto's works. An important part of Vieira Pinto's thinking takes place in the distinction between naive consciousness and critical consciousness.

In general terms: the naive conscience does not know the factors and conditions that determine it, the critical conscience knows them, and pays attention to it and denounces such influences. The critical conscious also recognizes the reasons for their suffering and then engages in their liberation.

Vieira Pinto work focused on understanding the peripheral relationship between underdeveloped countries and the world and the need for a national project for such countries' economic development. Let's consider one of his books, The concept of technology (HUI, 2008), written around 1973, published only posthumously, in 2005.

Vieira Pinto (2008) is specially concerned with how technologies transform social relations of work and exploitation. For Vieira Pinto, technique is part of the nature of the human being and is a condition of the process of becoming human.

The process of making reason and theory about the technique gives rise to technology. Technologies are, therefore, the ways of thinking and systematizing technology. It is always the making of the technique into an ideology.

The colonial metropolis, by systematizing its technique into technology, mystifies it, and makes people believe that it is the only one to be praised. This denies the periphery of the freedom to define and develop their own technology.

Vieira Pinto (2008) argues that, through such an ideological operation, the imagination of the future is already given to us, and it is presupposed that the future will be within these current structures, without change.

Vieira Pinto (2008) reminds us, then, that machines do not arise spontaneously and that the way to criticize technology is to think about the history and the context of machines. Someone did idealize the machine, someone designed it, it only makes sense in a specific community, to a specific social group, and so on.

Very focused on thinking about the importance of work for understanding technology, Vieira Pinto (2008) explains that this is why we are amazed by technology.

> Man marvels at what is his product because, due to his distance from the world, caused by the habitual loss of the practice of material transformation of reality, and the impossibility of using the results of the work carried out, he has lost the notion of being the author of his works, which therefore seem strange to him. (VIEIRA PINTO, 2008, p. 35)

Vieira Pinto helps us, then, to think of technology as an ideology, and reminds us of the transnational operations that such an ideology carries out.

4 Milton Santos: information behaves like a resource

In such a context, it makes sense to also check on the work of Milton Santos (2017a, 2017b). Santos was a Brazilian geographer, an intellectual active throughout the second half of the last century, who left us in 2001. Santos (2017a, 2017b) does not mention mediatization directly as a concept in his works.

The concept of Technical-Scientific-Informational Milieu is central to his work. Milieu, here, has a similar meaning as environment, and, in this case, the technical-scientific-informational milieu is the environment we are nowadays living in.

For Milton Santos (2017a, 2017b), it is through work and technique that human beings transform space, and it is in space that techniques cease to be abstract and get integrated into one's life. It is in the space where we work, live, exchange, etc. And, at

the same time, it is in space that available techniques impose themselves as conditions of life.

The history of the geographic milieu can be divided into three stages: 1) the natural milieu, the space in its initial state, with little or no technical intervention; 2) the technical milieu, the space transformed by human beings due to technical advances in work; 3) the technical-scientific-informational milieu, the space not only worked on by technique, but also classified and systematized by scientific knowledge, transformed into information (SANTOS, 2017a).

This way of understanding considers technique as a set of means to live life and create our surrounding space. Knowledge behaves like a resource, but a resource with differences in access. The modernization of communications is a characteristic of this period, as communication is a mean for the fluidity of such information. Spaces become more or less fluid and such flows of information, ideas, and money run in specific directions.

Milton Santos (2017b) distinguishes three different forms of globalization: globalization as a fable, globalization as a perversity, and globalization as a possibility. The fable is globalization as it was promised to us, where communication on a planetary scale would guarantee full sharing of knowledge and resources, promoting full integration.

Perverse globalization is how it works on us, through the tyranny of money as a mediator for human life. It generates polarization between hegemonic actors, unequal competition and scarcity and poverty for those excluded. Space is then hierarchically differentiated and fragmented, the flow of environmental resources generates scarcity, and few enjoy the cutting-edge technologies (SANTOS, 2017b).

Finally, Milton Santos (2017b) then presents an other globalization as a possibility. He asserts that there is potential for the reversal of perverse globalization in

the struggles of the poor and the excluded from around the world. This other globalization is necessary to value humanity in the face of tyranny.

We can say that, just as another globalization is possible, another mediatization is also possible. The mediatization of big tech companies and the massive extraction of data can be understood as a "perverse" mediatization, and this is not the only possible mediatization.

5 Muniz Sodré: to communicate is to produce a common world

I point out another essential contribution to thinking about the relationship between communication, mediatization, and globalization. The Brazilian intellectual Muniz Sodré (2002, 2019), professor of media and communication studies.

He describes mediatization as a sociocultural mutation centred on the current functioning of communication technologies. To Sodré (2002), mediatization produces a separate sphere of existence. He is drawing from Aristotle, who distinguishes three genres of existence or "bios": bios theoretikos (of contemplative life), bios politikos (of political life) and bios apolaustikos (of pleasurable life and the body).

Sodré (2002) proposes to think of media as producing its own specific bios, a fourth sphere of existence, the media bios. This idea reinforces the fact that the media permeates social relationships and restructures the cognitive aspects of human life. This media bios is characterized by a fascination with technology, with the market and with a consumer-oriented morality.

Sodré (2019) also defends the value of communication sciences as a science specialized in understanding and producing the common in society, that is, the study of the way that each interaction produces the community life. We can say that these ideas, in turn, produce the expectations that are created about technology.

6 On considering cosmotechnics and the future

To achieve the maintenance of technodiversity, according to Yuk Hui (2017), a systematic study of cosmotechnics must be conducted. This intellectual endeavour can help to draw a sustainable technological relation between the North and the South. In this paper, a revision of these notions was conducted. Our collective research on mediatization, as a concept and as a research topic, has a place in this effort to construct non-homogeneous futures.

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