

Neoliberal subjectivity and deconstruction of the commons in the face of the climate and environmental crisis

Subjetividade neoliberal e desconstrução do comum frente à crise ambiental climática (resumo: p. 17)

Subjetividad neoliberal y desconstrucción de lo común ante la crisis ambiental climática (resumen: p. 17)

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This article discusses neoliberal subjectivity and the consequent deconstruction of the commons, analyzing their effects on the environmental crisis. Neoliberal subjects are the entrepreneurs of themselves, driven by competition in a market characterized by opposed interests. To shape this subjectivity, it was necessary to deconstruct the commons, the basis of the social bond, accused of the tragedy of the collective spontaneity that needs to be emptied. The deconstructive subjectivation of the commons, fed by boundless consumption, is the origin of the environmental crisis. To recover the commons as a solution, it is necessary to overcome the view of an inert and passive nature that must be protected from human intervention, as it is home to intense biogeochemical activity that creates the conditions for the existence of life. The human being is just another actor. The recovery of the commons is determinant for constructing solutions of socio-environmental resilience for the crisis, as these solutions are constituted by collective activities related to the commons.

Keywords: Neoliberalism. Subjectivity. Common. Earth. Environmental crisis.

Introduction

Neoliberalism was the ideology that determined the organization and development of the world economy after World War II. It is not a simple re-edition of 19th-century liberalism, as it has its own characteristics. The first is that it does not eliminate state intervention; rather, it demands it. The question is: in the service of what objective? It is no longer a state that aims to build social justice through public policies, but a state that guarantees the functioning of the market. There are two trends. One is the ordoliberalism of the German economist Walter Eucken, which argues that the state must organize and defend the legal order, thereby guaranteeing the structural and organizational conditions for the market to function. Ordoliberalism served as the economic theory for the reconstruction of Germany after World War II and guided the formation of the European Community of Nations' common market. The other trend is that of the Austrian American economist Friedrich Hayek, a more radical version of neoliberalism that advocates the formation of a state-company that follows the rules of the market. The state not only guarantees the market but also needs to function as if it were a company in the market, as another actor in the market. This trend was transformed into an economic rule during the governments of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, deconstructing the welfare state and imposing the state's submission to market laws^{1,2}.

Another difference between neoliberalism and classical liberalism is that the focus is not on the pursuit of one's interests, with the different interests at play being harmonized by the invisible hand of the market. In the new version, the market's fundamental rule is competition between interests, so that the best results, from an economic point of view, can be achieved^{1,2}.

However, the most important characteristic of the neoliberal version is not merely to mold the state according to the market, but to shape a consumer subjectivity fully adapted to the functioning of the market. The state, through its cultural, media, and educational organizations, must create conditions to foster the formation of neoliberal subjectivity. The subject captured by market values reproduces the model through their consumer practices and demands that the state they support conform to and be guided by the rules of the market. This was the perverse genius of neoliberalism: to create a captured subjectivity that reproduces the system permanently and prevents any criticism of the neoliberal model^{1,2}.

Georgescu-Roegen's ecological economics provides a relevant contribution to reflections on the consequences of the neoliberal consumer mentality on the use of natural resources, insofar as it advocates adapting economic processes to ecological dynamics and introduces a rule to govern the market, limiting the use of natural resources and preserving environmental dynamics as conditions for the functioning of the economy. Nature must be assumed as a limit for the market^{3,4}. However, this economic premise points to something deeper that underlies the consumerist mentality: the neoliberal subjectivity that reproduces this system, driven by a device that knows no limits. The imperative that the climate and environmental crisis imposes is precisely the need to put limits on consumption. Well, this is something that this

subjectivity is unaware of. Thus, we reach a civilizational ethical impasse: the urgent need for an ecological economic model that opposes the neoliberal one⁵.

The article aims to discuss the systemic contradiction between the urgency of finding solutions to the climate and environmental crisis and the neoliberal subjectivity that sustains and reproduces the current economic model, which is responsible for the crisis. To do so, it is necessary to analyze the symbolic configuration of neoliberal subjectivity, a phenomenon that deconstructs the perspective of the commons, essential for preserving the ecosystemic balance of our common home - the Earth. It is necessary to shed light on the ecological dynamics that explain the climate and environmental crisis to respond effectively to the approaching and accelerating climate catastrophes that threaten the environmental balance of the Earth system. Environmental problems cannot be disregarded by public health because, today, it is based on an ecosystemic vision of health in which socio-environmental conditions are determinants for the population's health and quality of life⁶.

Neoliberal subjectivity

The dismantling of public social protection policies, advocated by neoliberal ideology as the best solution to defeat poverty, is based on the belief that individuals need to become entrepreneurs of themselves and pursue improved versions of themselves on a continuous basis. These individuals compete in the labor market as economic actors. The ideology of entrepreneurship permeates economic relations, which are driven by a competition in which the strongest corporate identity imposes itself and wins the game. In this game, those who invest capital and those who provide labor force are placed on the same level as economic actors and need to be entrepreneurial to impose themselves in the competition - a basic and fundamental rule of the market, which is the only institutional reference, as the state is in the service of its functioning. It is clear who the weak link in this economic relationship is, deprived of the state's social protection².

The question is: how can the individuals who are part of this weak link, most of them needing to sell their intelligence and work in the service of the market, identify so deeply and naively with this ideology?

The explanation lies in the perverse genius of neoliberal ideology, which manages to symbolically shape a subjectivity that is completely captured by the values of entrepreneurship and competition and reproduces the model continually, through the practice of embodying the rules of the market, preventing any critical questioning because failures are attributed to the subject's inefficiency. What defines the neoliberal subjectivity?

If, in the anthropological conception of neoliberalism, every individual needs to become an economic actor in market competition, they must act on themselves to become stronger and survive in a competitive world. This is the logic of neoliberal rationality expressed in the ideology of entrepreneurship. The focus is no longer on men becoming productive, as in classic industrial liberalism, but on transforming men into calculating and competitive beings whose identity comes from the economy,

driven by the effectiveness of economic results according to market criteria. This means identifying with the corporate subject who imposes corporate governability on themselves. Thus, the corporate economic dynamic becomes a personal discipline that transforms the professional, the worker, into a commodity that needs to be valued in the market competition. Therefore, it is no longer the disciplinary action of training the body as in the era of industrial liberalism, but the constitution of a subjectivity that is adequate to the market. We have moved from managing bodies to managing minds².

The management of the mind related to corporate self-governance is manifested through the performance device, which means adapting the self to the reality of market competition, making it operational in difficult risk situations. This performance relies on the persuasive power of the self, driven by a desire to win. It is a mode of subjectivation based on an excess of the self, on an indefinite, boundless self-overcoming, immersed in a continuous trans-subjectivation. Therefore, the self is in a permanent horizon of boundlessness and does not admit limits to its operationalization. The performance device is driven by the pragmatics of effectiveness, which seeks immediate results and faces risks in a competitive environment. Thus, taking risks becomes a style of life. Therefore, it is a performance that brings joy through continuous self-overcoming when facing risks².

The performance device and the joy one feels when facing risks, characteristics of neoliberal subjectivity, have a psychological cost revealed in clinical diagnoses. The weakening of the work collective and the intensification of evaluation controls reinforce isolation and competition and promote suffering in the workplace. Competition between colleagues destroys a stable framework of fidelity and loyalty and erodes character, especially when it comes to empathy and cooperation, creating relational and psychological chaos. This erosion undermines moral sense in relation to the corporate community, preventing collective solidarity due to the ideology of individual success in a competition to beat others. This leads to widespread depression, caused by the continuous discourse of self-fulfillment and success in life, in contrast to the stigmatization of those who fail and are incapable of achieving the expected results, bringing about accountability disease with its depressive symptoms. Continuous innovation undermines the establishment of permanent symbolic ideals within the company in a world with no limits, fostering demobilization, a characteristic of the current psychic economy. This leads to the instrumentalization of the symbolic, emptied by the omnipotence of the market that knows no limits. Finally, a widespread perversion in relation to the object takes hold, since everything is transformed into business in the service of the enjoyment of consumption, including the other, transformed into a commodity consumed with total joy, without limits. This is the true face of the neoliberal subject that does not correspond to what is disseminated in psychological coaching courses².

Deconstruction of the commons

The neoliberal subject is a tyrannical individual. Only their own interests exist, imposed in a competitive environment devoid of common interests, as the other

and the collective, seen as competitors in an arena of struggle, must be defeated by corporate competence⁷. What is the nature of this commons that is emptied?

Dardot and Laval's thought⁸ serves as a key reference for discussing the commons. Historically, the commons have taken two forms: nationalization, based on Roman law, or spiritualization, with Christian theology in the context of the Middle Ages. In the first, goods were made public or common by the state authority as a common will; in the second, goods were declared common by divine authority through ecclesiastical power. In modern times, the commons can also mean humanity as a species. These understandings are present in the current context: such cases share a reification of the commons, as the authority must define what is part of the commons. Otherwise, it is necessary to determine the criteria to control who participates in and belongs to this essentialized commons. This is an identity common for which material content can be defined, with criteria for its identification. This understanding is present in the conservative communitarian movement, which attempts to recover the commons from its neoliberal emptying by defining belonging criteria that can be ethnic, sociocultural, or religious, excluding those who do not identify with these criteria. In a plural society, this conception cannot be the basis of the commons because it creates discrimination and marginalization⁸.

In this sense, Dardot and Laval argue that the commons cannot be defined as co-belonging, co-appropriation, or co-possession, as occurs in reified conceptions, but as co-activity, since the commons is constructed not from community goods or identity definitions, but from shared actions. "The commons must be thought of as co-activity and not as co-belonging, co-ownership, or co-possession"⁸ (p. 27).

The Greek word *koinon* means instituting the common, to put in common, always presupposing reciprocity among those who participate in an activity or share a way of life not defined by common goods. Common action is the basis for understanding the commons.

It is necessary to state that only the practical activity of men can make things become common, in the same way that only this practical activity can produce a new collective subject, instead of stating that the subject preexists the activity as the holder of rights⁸. (p. 28)

Therefore, the collective subject does not exist prior to the commons so that it can define what the commons is. On the contrary, the collective subject is constituted in the very activity of defining what the commons are.

It can only be defined if the link between the free subject and the material thing offered to their sovereign domain is broken, so that it is not a substantiated good. Therefore:

The commons is not a good, and adding an 's' does not change anything in this aspect, because it is not an object to which the will should tend, either to possess it or to constitute it. The common is a political principle from which we must build the commons⁸. (p. 28)

Therefore, goods are not seen as the commons through belonging or appropriation of rights. On the contrary, goods become common through the activity of the collective commons. Thus, commons as a noun are identified with the participatory, cooperative, and shared activity of building commons, constituting collective subjects. In the Brazilian culture, there is a social practice called *mutirão* that aptly expresses the commons understood as activity: the coordination of collective actions oriented toward a common goal. This understanding contradicts and opposes neoliberal subjectivity, which is based on a boundless subject and the permanent activity of competition to appropriate goods as private elements. For this subject, there are no common goods and interests because they are in boundless competition, privately appropriate as rights.

At this point, it is important to introduce a reflection on the relationship between the commons and the law based on Exposito's ideas⁹, as the social bond needs a legal basis. In its Latin etymology, common means *cum + múnus*, that is, with a duty in relation to the collective. Therefore, *communitas* (community) means having a duty and an obligation of activity toward the collective commons, a duty in relation to the commons. The basic meaning of activity appears in the construction of the commons. Traditional societies were founded on the community-based social bond. Modern society is based on the contractualization of individuals⁹.

In modern times, individual rights take the place of common duties as the cement of society and the basis of law. Thus, immunity has become the logic of the system's functioning. *Immunitas*, as the opposite of *communitas*, means lacking the *munus*, the duty or obligation in relation to the commons. It includes exemption but also privilege. It is an exception in relation to the rule that everyone else must follow¹⁰.

The immunizing role of law has always been to defend the survival of society against disruptive threats. It imitates the biological immunization system that defends the body against agents that disrupt its balance. However, in the immunizing system of modern law, it plays this role indirectly and in a deflected way, because the immunization performed by law has a negative meaning: it does not defend against external risks to the community, as was traditional, but against internal risks - demands from the collective. This appears in the term *munus* (duty) from which *immunitas* protects. Modern law defends against the connecting power of *munus*, of common duties. This is the aporetic nature of the law that is in force in contemporary society. It seeks to defend against disruption, but it creates disruption: it defends the rights of individuals and immunizes against the commons, the cement of the community¹⁰.

Thus, the law preserves the community through its destitution, that is, it constitutes it by destituting it. The law immunizes individuals against the duties of the commons, defending the property of each one. In this sense, modern law has its origins in the defense of private property. The law is in the service of the social contract of individuals, not the preservation of communal coexistence¹⁰.

This continuous and permanent denial of the commons in economic liberalism has a long history, as recorded in Hardin's 1968 article on "The Tragedy of the Commons". According to Hardin, the commons is accused of causing indiscipline and chaos because it stands between the private and state sectors, which are regulated

and disciplined. Therefore, it is necessary to extinguish the commons because it is a tragedy. It is important to bear in mind that he presents this discussion in the context of the environmental crisis, arguing that viewing nature as something common is counterproductive because it does not help the preservation of nature. Hardin takes a stance against any *commonism* that stands between private and state and creates confusion. Nature needs to be privatized or nationalized to be preserved but never considered a common because it will be plundered. He argues that the dynamic of the commons, which results from spontaneous social relations and interactions, needs to be continually emptied, and he fights permanently for the deconstruction of commons¹¹.

This explanation proposed by Hardin expresses the position of liberalism and neoliberalism in relation to the commons, considered the realm of spontaneous and undisciplined social interactions that need to be domesticated. Classical liberalism invented the concept of civil society as a correlation of the commons that must be disciplined, interposing itself between the market and the state as a space for the citizen.

With the advent of neoliberalism, which captured all social spaces through the market's corporate criteria, civil society began to lose its meaning as the citizens were replaced by the economic actor competing in the market arena. Mendes and Cava provide a good explanation of this process. The citizen had his place in industrial society. In the neoliberal market era, they were replaced by the consumer, defined by purchasing power and underpinned by the guarantee of finance, which occupies a central place in society. Thus, finance as the basis of consumption gradually occupies the place of civil society under neoliberalism. The citizens of civil society is replaced by the consumers of market and finance society, as a way of emptying the commons. Civil society used to be the way of domesticating the spontaneity of the commons; in neoliberalism, consumption and finance empty the commons¹².

In neoliberal governance, the commons is continually threatened through the practice of the financial market, which invades all sectors of activity and subjugates every individual through the credit card. Thus, new forms of relationships are defined by the device of credit and the consequent debit, which replace the commons. These relationships captured by this device are based on the intimate interaction between finance and the production of subjectivity, as the financial dynamic produces a subject who is always in debt due to their subjection to the credit device. The assumption is that the financial economy is based on permanent debt. We stand before the *homo debitor*, the indebted man for whom financial debt is a factor of production of the subject, as Lazzarato¹³ explains it. The debt or duty in relation to the commons is replaced by indebtedness and the consequent duty in relation to the financial market. Thus, the permanent dynamic of financial obligations continually deconstructs the space of the commons. The device to affect this aggressive deconstruction is subjectivation based on finance, which creates the subjection of the indebted man. The indebted subject and individuals as entrepreneurs of themselves are two coherent faces of the same neoliberal subjectivity¹³.

This analysis first points to the fact that constituting the commons is the central conflict affecting today's civilization. On the other hand, this constitution cannot be

disconnected from the production of subjectivity, as neoliberalism deconstructs the commons based on the production of an indebted subjectivity that is the entrepreneur of the subject. It is necessary to constitute a subjectivity based on the dynamics of the commons, not identified with goods, but with relationships¹².

There is an irresolvable and systemic contradiction between the neoliberal model, based on a subject driven by competition and indebtedness, and the commons model, grounded on sharing and cooperation, in the definition of non-appropriable commons, intended for the use of all individuals. Faced with the urgency of the climate and environmental crisis, with its gradual and increasingly destructive catastrophes, the recovery of the commons is imperative as the only possible response.

The commons are something that needs to be instituted. However, this institution is not a task of government administration run by the state, which can only resolve conflicts. The commons are indicated by the common collective that demands the subordination of the state and the market, for it must impose limits on these entities when defining the commons. The commons are characterized by the norm of non-appropriability of environmental goods, as they must be destined for common use. The collective subject that indicates the non-appropriable goods does not precede this definition; it is constituted when it defines them. On the other hand, the meaning of non-appropriable can only be understood by considering the two types of appropriation: appropriation by belonging, when something becomes an object of property, and appropriation by destination, when something is preserved for a certain purpose, such as satisfying social needs or preserving biodiversity and ecosystems. Institute the non-appropriable means subtracting something from belonging so that a common destination can occur⁸.

The basic rule of the neoliberal model is competition, in the context of the market, of individual economic interests, while the fundamental norm of the commons model is the non-appropriability of goods that were instituted as commons. Given the ecological and climatic urgency of the environmental crisis, it is clear which model best responds to the problem. It is necessary to limit the economic processes that affect this crisis, instituting that the environmental dynamics of certain territories and ecosystem flows that depend on the natural biodiversity of a region are common, defined as non-appropriable in order to guarantee the ecological balance of the Earth system¹⁴.

Climate and environmental crisis

To effectively respond to the climate problem through the proposal of the commons model, we need to understand the systemic environmental crisis, as it affects the Earth as a whole.

Two assumptions need to be overcome. The first is the classic distinction between nature and culture/society, which views the former as an inert, static, inactive set that exists to be admired and is at the disposal of human intervention, and the latter as the sphere of human action, initiative, and construction. The radical criticism of this opposition problematizes the very use of the concept of nature, which has been increasingly neglected due to the perspective of inactivity and beauty. Biology and

ecology have shown that the natural environment is shaped by numerous permanent biogeochemical processes in which thousands of microorganisms work to ensure the balance of the ecosystem, providing the conditions for the existence of life. Therefore, there is an immense network of actors that shape the environment¹⁵.

This view is behind the proposal of the Anthropocene, which replaces the geological era of the Holocene, responsible for the climate stability of the last 12 thousand years, which has enabled the evolution of human life. With the end of this stability, are we entering a new period of instability caused purely by human action?

Latour states that the Anthropocene does not mean an immoderate extension of anthropocentrism. Humans have not become super actors in the geological arena, but merely co-participants in a network formed by many agents with conflicting interests in the geo-history of the Earth. It is necessary to consider all the actors that intervene in the environmental arena, from bacteria to humans, as they do not pursue a single goal. Therefore, the Anthropocene does not mean the victory of the exclusive action of humans; rather, it encompasses the action of multiple beings that have always shaped the biogeochemical cycles of life. The proposal of the Anthropocene responds to the understanding of an immense network of actors that shape Earth¹⁵.

Another assumption that needs to be overcome and criticized is the Copernican view of the Earth as a star in the solar system, identified as a globe that revolves around the Sun. This astronomical conception of the Earth – a spherical planet alongside others – has prevented the understanding of its specificity as a habitat for life. Photographs of the “Blue Planet” taken from spacecraft from the 1960s onwards have moved people and confirmed the perception of Earth as a planet inhabited by life. The Earth is characterized by the diversity of actors that act on its surface. Considering the biogeochemical processes of the Earth’s crust as factors that shape the environment means not conceiving the Earth as a terrestrial globe, because this view undermines awareness of the biogeochemical interactions that occur locally¹⁵.

This new conception of the Earth was proposed by Lovelock in the 1970s. According to his famous “Gaia Theory”, the Earth’s crust is not only surrounded by biogeochemical mechanisms responsible for the circulation of vital energy, as Vernadsky¹⁶ had already stated in 1940; at the same time, it creates the environmental conditions for life to exist. Contrary to Darwin’s thinking, Lovelock states that living beings shape their environment - they are not simply shaped by it. The shaping of the Earth’s crust by the vital dynamics of living beings provides the conditions for the permanence of life. Therefore, the Earth is an integrated system of self-organization and self-regulation of life¹⁷.

Latour uses this theory to discuss the climate issue, noting the difference between Galileo’s and Lovelock’s perspectives. The former viewed the sky as a cosmic space and reinforced the similarity between the Earth and other celestial bodies, while the latter focused on the Earth’s surface and showed the specificity of our planet. Galileo understood that mechanics explains the Earth as a planet; for Lovelock, chemistry helps to understand the processes that shape the Earth. Unlike other stars, the blue planet is characterized by a long series of historical, random, specific, and contingent events: a provisional and fragile result of geo-history¹⁵.

Two assumptions need to be overcome: 1) nature understood as an inert, static, and beautiful entity that exists to be admired and is at the disposal of human intervention - an entity that, today, due to the environmental crisis, we want to defend romantically as an object of protection; 2) the Earth understood as a star like the others in the solar system and not as a living planet. Both assumptions indicate that it is necessary to pay attention to the surface of the Earth, where biogeochemical mechanisms that make life possible take place. This will be crucial to understanding the climate and environmental crisis and seeking answers to mitigate its catastrophic effects.

Focusing on the Earth's surface, according to Latour¹⁵, means, on the one hand, overcoming the globalizing view of the world, disseminated by the neoliberal ideology and prevalent in the modern mentality, which advocates that the local needs to be abandoned in view of the global. On the other hand, returning to the singular place does not mean supporting a community perspective that emphasizes the ethnic and cultural, which is discriminatory. It is not a matter of modernizing the world according to economic globalization criteria, nor of particularizing it culturally, but of ecologizing it through activities focused on the local ecological environment. Therefore, the focus is on the network of biogeochemical interdependencies that create conditions for the reproduction of life and that are being affected by the environmental crisis.

This redefinition strikes at the heart of the modernity project: autonomy, the basis of liberalism, which attempted to combine the abundant wealth made possible by the economic progress derived from the extraction of natural resources with the freedom of decision to have access to consumer goods for a better life, a contradiction proposed by Charbonnier¹⁸. Escaping the humiliating poverty through the caprices of fortune is currently facing an impasse: should we abandon the ideal of modern emancipation due to its harmful effects on the environment, or should we enjoy the last moments of this freedom that has no future due to the catastrophic effects of the irreversible climate crisis? The challenge is to reinvent freedom in the era of the climate crisis, that is, in the Anthropocene. How can we think of freedom in a critical ecological context that imposes limits? There is widespread dissatisfaction with the compromise between economic growth and democratic freedom, expressed in the tension between economic abundance and freedom of decision in the consumer market. This tension is the origin of the climate and environmental crisis. The necessary ecological policy would be to dissolve this polarity, indicating its exhaustion and building new political paths through the definition of the commons. Here lies the core of the problem: the deconstruction of the neoliberal subjectivity that was born from this polarity, advocated by the ideology of entrepreneurship¹⁸.

The way to overcome the tension between economic abundance (market) and freedom of decision (consumption) that is at the root of the climate and environmental crisis is to recover the commons in order to regulate abundance and freedom, with limits imposed by the environmental sustainability of the biogeochemical processes of the local ecosystem, and by the social sustainability that demands equal access for all to the goods necessary for the reproduction of life. The model of the commons must be based on the norm that establishes the non-appropriability of goods instituted as commons and defines their use according to their destination. The scope encompasses

the goods and conditions that the Earth produces and offers, necessary for its ecological balance: biodiversity, water, air, rocks, the climate, and the soil where biogeochemical processes occur, forming a network of interdependencies that make life possible. These environmental conditions must be guaranteed as non-appropriable, and limits must be placed on human greed in the market and consumption. Only an ecological model of economy that respects the limits of entropy and the ecosystemic interdependencies of the environment can promote this, as it will understand these processes as biological, not mechanical. However, the adoption of an economic model based on ecological criteria depends on a prior cultural transformation that institutes the collective subject, which in turn depends on the advent of an ontology of the commons¹⁹.

Appropriation by destination defines the use of a good according to the purpose for which it exists. This includes all the natural goods that enable climatic and environmental balance. One of them is the soil, which needs to become the focus of environmental issues. Several sectors of the economy rely on this good. This is the case, for example, of modern agriculture and agribusiness, which depend on the massive use of chemical products to function. Such products alter the soil completely, destroying the microorganisms responsible for their homeostasis and balance²⁰. Another sector that interferes with the soil, creating environmental wounds that destroy ecosystems, is the exploration of minerals and oil. Generally, the justification for this destructive intervention is economic progress, with the promise of improving the lives of the surrounding population, which is a big and deceptive lie.

Given the ecological urgency, the solution undoubtedly is the preservation of the necessary conditions for the recovery of the environmental balance. To achieve this, it is necessary to overcome the view of nature as a cornucopia of resources to produce economic and commercial circulation in the service of consumption. Nature, rather than offering a set of resources for extraction, provides an invaluable service in creating the conditions for life to exist on planet Earth. Its resources can even be the object of appropriation, but the set of environmental conditions indispensable for life, dependent on biodiversity, cannot be destroyed by appropriation. They must be preserved as common for their intended purpose.

As previously argued, this perspective will only be possible through the recovery of a social model centered on the commons, radically opposed to the neoliberal model, which is centered on the market and consumption and shapes subjectivities suited to its regime. Thus, we seem to have reached a dead end. However, as the climate and environmental crisis worsens with increasingly catastrophic events that will become part of people's daily lives, this ecological shock therapy may raise people's awareness of the need to build resilient rather than entrepreneurial subjectivities. Resilience is more efficient than entrepreneurship in facing the devastating effects of destructive climate events. Neoliberal subjectivity needs to be replaced by resilient subjectivity. However, the latter requires collective conditions to be able to emerge. It cannot develop in a context of competition and indebtedness that will never be the solution to recovering the human, social, and economic environments that have been destroyed.

The only responsible attitude in this situation is solidarity to deal with catastrophes, as demonstrated by the experience during the floods in the Brazilian State of Rio Grande do Sul in 2024. Solidarity gives rise to collective aid actions that allow for

the creation of resilience in the affected groups. It does not simply mean creating adaptation technologies, but something deeper: recovering the commons destroyed by modern individualism to create a culture of collective resilience to deal with climate risks and damage. This is a social and political issue more than a technological one, for it points to the collective capacity of the population that inhabits this destroyed social space to recover its sociability and sustainable environment, minimizing the negative effects and preventing new disasters. Resilience can be proactive/preventive, when it proposes collective actions to prevent the environmental risks of negative events, or reactive/restorative, when it encompasses collective actions to restore the environment from the damage caused by disasters²¹. Both types of resilience do not depend primarily on individual competencies, but mainly on collective capacities, established in the space of the commons, where common activities of response to environmental disasters are discussed and constructed.

Proactive resilience requires refraining from reducing the climate disaster to the moment when a flood or a landslide occurs and involves considering the social processes of socio-environmental vulnerability that preceded the event and explaining the tragic dimensions of the destruction. Thus, the necessary collective actions to generate the corresponding socio-environmental resilience of the affected social group can be addressed²². This explains the close interrelationship between the socio-environmental vulnerability processes that affect the territory and the collective actions of restorative resilience that are required. Both are essentially socio-environmental because they cannot be restricted to the reconstruction of the housing spaces destroyed by the disaster; they must include the restoration of the ecological balance of that environment²³.

Final remarks

The text discusses the climate and environmental crisis based on two central concepts: the need to focus the discussion of the problem on the surface of the Earth, where the biogeochemical processes that create the conditions for life to develop take place, and the need to think about the construction of the commons as a response to this crisis, not based on the goods that are considered to be the commons, as could be the case with nature, but on the commons identified with the activities and practices that institute environmental and ecological goods as commons, which are, therefore, non-appropriable.

This stance on the crisis represents a critique of the traditional concept of nature as something beautiful and organized to be admired and rescued from violent destruction, since at the basis of this concept lies the understanding that nature is an inert, static, and inactive set that needs to be protected from human action. This view was overcome by the introduction of the Anthropocene, an era in which the human being is just another participant, now observable, in the network of actors that shape the environment as a result of their intense biogeochemical activity.

Another criticism concerns the conception of the Earth as just another star in the solar system. Unlike other planets, it is the result of geo-history, as the migration



of vital energy occurs in its crust, creating the conditions for the emergence and development of life. The Earth is a living planet, a conception that lies at the basis of the Gaia Theory.

This understanding of the crisis and its respective path of response requires the symbolic deconstruction of neoliberal subjectivity, which is in total contradiction with the need for the institution of the commons, since it feeds on the ecologically insoluble impasse of the combination of the unlimited economic abundance of the market and the unlimited individual freedom of decision regarding consumption. This impasse points to the dead end in which humanity finds itself in the current climate and environmental crisis, with its increasingly catastrophic and devastating effects.

Conflict of interest

The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

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Artigo discute a subjetividade neoliberal e a consequente desconstrução do comum em seus efeitos sobre a crise ambiental. O sujeito neoliberal é empresário de si mesmo, movido pela concorrência em um mercado de interesses contrapostos. Para conformar essa subjetividade foi necessário desconstruir o comum, base do elo social, acusado da tragédia do espontaneísmo coletivo a ser esvaziado. Essa subjetivação desconstrutiva do comum, alimentada pelo consumo sem limites, está na origem da crise ambiental. Para recuperar o comum como solução, exige-se superar a visão da natureza inerte e passiva a ser protegida contra a intervenção humana, quando atravessada por intensa atividade biogeoquímica, criadora das condições para a vida. O ser humano é apenas mais um ator. A recuperação do comum é um fator determinante para construir soluções de resiliência socioambiental para a crise, pois elas são constituídas por atividades coletivas do comum.

Palavras-chave: Neoliberalismo. Subjetividade. Comum. Terra. Crise ambiental.

El artículo discute la subjetividad neoliberal y la consecuente desconstrucción de lo común en sus efectos sobre la crisis ambiental. El sujeto neoliberal es empresario de sí mismo, movido por la competencia en un mercado de intereses contrapuestos. Para conformar esa subjetividad fue necesario desconstruir lo común, base del eslabón social, acusado de la tragedia de la espontaneidad colectiva que había que vaciar. Esa subjetivación desconstrutiva de lo común, alimentada por el consumo sin límites, está en el origen de la crisis ambiental. Para recuperar lo común como solución, se exige superar la visión de la naturaleza inerte y pasiva a ser protegida contra la intervención humana, cuando atravesada por intensa actividad biogeoquímica, creadora de las condiciones para la vida. El ser humano es solamente un actor más. La recuperación de lo común es un factor determinante para la construcción de soluciones de resiliencia socioambiental para la crisis, puesto que ellas están constituidas por actividades colectivas de lo común.

Palabras clave: Neoliberalismo. Subjetividad. Común. Tierra. Crisis ambiental.