

Original Sense of Praxis in Karl Marx

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Abstract:

Background: The original meaning of the concept of praxis is being diluted in the genuine aspiration to update the thought of Karl Marx to the historical context of the individual being-in-the-world; Therefore, the question arises: what are the structural elements of praxis that make it possible to reconstruct the original meaning of its horizon of understanding? The study was carried out with the purpose of reconstructing the original meaning in the understanding of the concept of praxis through the characterization of its epistemic matrix.

Materials and Methods: An analytical and documentary study was carried out from the field of philosophical hermeneutics elaborated by Hans-Georg Gadamer; proceeded to build epistemic matrices.

Results: In each of Marx's writings, the contents of the notion of praxis that have been forgotten in the thematization were identified, recovering the original meaning through the hermeneutical situation, the ordering concepts, the category of the hermeneutical situation, the formal indication (data from of reality), the starting point (function), the horizon of understanding (meaning) and the fusion of horizons (system). The content of the following dimensions of praxis was also identified: ontological (man as a social being), epistemological (subject-object reciprocal cognitive relationship), methodological (materialist dialectic), and ethical (full humanism).

Conclusion: Praxis, a practical-critical activity, is the first thing that the human being recognizes and becomes aware of when being-in-the-world-with-another, so that the social being, the subject-object cognitive relationship underlie its original meaning, the materialist dialectic and the realization of full humanism.

Key Word: Praxis; practical-critical activity; humanism; self-awareness; private property.

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I. Introduction

In the history of humanity, the events that have contributed to inducing a significant change in the individual and social freedom of the human being, do not compare with the social events that occurred during the pandemic of the COVID-19 disease^[1]. The impact is observed in the economy^[2], trade^[3], health^[4], education^[5], information technologies, tourism, local governments, work^[6], care for the elderly, networks social, non-state actors, developed countries, international order, multilateral cooperation, spirituality, mental health^[7]. In other words, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world.

To understand the world in transition heading towards a "new normality" and, above all, in a free and voluntary act of transformation of social life, it is important to remember Karl Marx in the preface to The German Ideology, where he points out:

“Hitherto men have always formed wrong ideas about themselves, about what they are and what they ought to be. They have arranged their relations according to their ideas of God, of normal man, etc. The products of their brains have got out of their hands. They, the creators, have bowed down before their creations. Let us liberate them from the chimeras, the ideas, dogmas, imaginary beings under the yoke of which they are pining away. Let us revolt against this rule of concepts. Let us teach men, says one, how to exchange these imaginations for thoughts which correspond to the essence of man; says another, how to take up a critical attitude to them; says the third, how to get them out of their heads; and existing reality will collapse”^[8].

The analyzes carried out by the academic and scientific community expose multiple aspects associated with the effects produced by the COVID-19 pandemic on the social life of the human being; however, they have not delved into the response that, as a socially determined activity, each individual has implemented to adapt and/or transform the actions oriented towards self-care and care-for-others; that is, as a praxis, understood from the perspective of Karl Marx.

The thought of Karl Marx has influenced the vision of the world that contemporary society has. The philosophical, economic, historical, sociological, anthropological and political categories have been incorporated into the intellectual and academic tradition, permeating the deepest roots of the epistemic matrix of the 21st century, as is the case of the term "praxis". The use of language, as well as the application of the concept of praxis in multiple disciplines and activities of the human being, has led to the original meaning being diluted in the daily life of the historical evolution of society.

Various authors, from different scientific disciplines and schools of thought, have contributed to recovering and reconstructing the meaning of the concept of praxis in Marx's thought, which implies that the original meaning is being diluted in the genuine aspiration to update Marxian thought to the historical context in which the practical and daily activity of the individual unfolds in his relationship with nature while being-in-the-world. An approach to the conceptual context of praxis would be revealed if, from the Lakatosian approach^[9], the understanding of praxis in its historical evolution was analyzed to identify the hard core in which the original meaning of the conceptualization of praxis is possibly located. Marxian, surrounded by a protective belt in which the contributions made by different intellectuals who have contributed with their reflections to the enrichment, delimitation and updating of the concept of praxis are integrated, and a heuristic (positive and negative) in which the demarcation criteria will be enunciated. to incorporate the knowledge to the protective belt.

Following this line of reflection, what did Marx understand by praxis? How is the argumentation of praxis possible? What are the structural elements of praxis that make it possible to reconstruct the original meaning of its horizon of understanding? Is it possible to understand praxis in its ontological, epistemological, methodological and ethical dimensions? Specifically, what are the characteristics of Marx's epistemic matrix that made it possible to construct the concept of praxis?

In the investigation to explore these questions and focusing the analysis on the possibility of contributing to the discussion of the concept of praxis in the foundation of the materialist conception of the world, the study was carried out with the purpose of reconstructing the original meaning in the understanding of the concept. of praxis through the characterization of its epistemic matrix.

II. Methodological Horizon

Reconstructing the evolution of the notion of praxis that Karl Marx develops to support subsequent work is not an easy task, nor is it theoretical, rather, it is a hermeneutic enterprise of a practical nature. For this reason, an analytical and documentary study was carried out from the field of philosophical hermeneutics elaborated by Hans-Georg Gadamer^[10]. In Livergood's essay on "*Activity in Marx's Philosophy*", he points out that Marx used the following words to refer to the principle of activity: action, activity (*Tätigkeit*), and praxis^[11], remembering that to designate the word practice, in German the word praxis^[12] is used. Through philosophical hermeneutics, we will proceed to reveal the thematic contents that remain forgotten in the concept of praxis, for which we proceeded to build epistemic matrices for each of the texts analyzed. These matrices were proposed by Martínez Miguélez to represent the original source of the subject's way of knowing located in their world of life, in such a way that it reflects the cognitive relationship in which a piece of information is apprehended, which is "in a certain function, under a certain relation, insofar as it means something within a certain structure"^[13]. For the interest of the study, the epistemic matrix helps to identify the regularities of knowledge, as well as makes it possible to recognize the normalized meanings in concepts, categories, laws or principles that are involved in the symbolization of the world of life to transform it dialectically.

In the construction of the epistemic matrix, it is important to situate oneself at a starting point, from which it is possible to look towards the horizon that will open up to the eye as the characterization of the epistemic matrix under construction progresses through the following elements: characterization of the hermeneutical situation, organizing concepts, categories derived from the hermeneutical situation that are grouped into the organizing concepts, the formal indication (that is, the constitutive interpretation datum of the category), the starting point (that is, the function performed by the data in the context of the category and the hermeneutic situation), horizon of understanding (in which the meaning of the data linked to the components that precede it is recovered) and the fusion of horizons, where the system is exposed in the which is expressed in the reality of the person.

Different commentators on the extensive work of Karl Marx recognize that the notion of praxis is already defined in the texts known as "youth writings". This notion will be expressed without variations in his mature writings, particularly in *Capital*. Based on this perspective, the study included the following documents for its analysis: *Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*^[14]; *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*^[15], and *Theses on Feuerbach*^[16].

III. Result

Karl Marx was born on May 5, 1818 in Trier, Germany. During the period between 1838 and 1841, he developed the content of his doctoral dissertation entitled *Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*, with the purpose of rehabilitating the philosophical thought of the post-Aristotelian schools that had succumbed to the criticism of authors like Hegel. On April 15, 1841 he presented this thesis at the University of Jena; and is considered one of the first works of a philosophical nature of Marx. Although the depth analysis required of all philosophical works has not been carried out, scholars and commentators on the thought of Karl Marx recognize its importance in the debate between freedom and determinism^[17], in addition to containing the first approaches to the notion of practice^[18]. Videla, when analyzing the origin of praxis in Marx's doctoral Dissertation, recognizes that praxis is the path for the purpose of the Dissertation, for which reason he rehabilitates the practical philosophy, the philosophy of action, of Epicurus^[19]. In continuation with the Dissertation, and considering that Marx has established the main scientific-philosophical principles of his thought, the notion of praxis will present variations in the texts after 1841 that materialize in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.

The *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, also known as the *1844 Manuscripts*, the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* or the *Paris Manuscripts*, mark the advance towards the materialist conception of the world and historical materialism by intertwining philosophy and economics through criticism of the political economy of his time. Marx indicates in the prologue that he mainly exposes "the interconnection between political economy and the state, law, ethics, civil life"^[15, p.231].

The *Theses on Feuerbach*, were written in the spring of 1845 and published by Frederick Engels in 1888. It is recognized by commentators as the *locus classicus* of the concept of praxis in Marx^[17]; however, some commentators point out that they have an enigmatic, perhaps dark, even secret character. In this sense, Louis Althusser says: "it will undoubtedly be necessary to make visible, one day, the enigmatic nature of these eleven falsely transparent theses"^[20]. Thus, the notion of practice (praxis) enunciated, or announced, in the *Theses* has been misunderstood, being mistakenly interpreted as a purely immanent activity associated with the abstraction of thought, stripping it of tangible and transforming social action in the world of life^[21]. Consequently, the *Theses* are being constituted, more than in an epistemic rupture in the purest Bachelard style^[22], in a philosophical turn in the horizon of understanding that Marx outlines as the foundation of the world vision that he will end up building; so that by 1845-1846, notes Kitching^[12], Marx will have configured a philosophy based on the principle of activity.

Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature

In the conceptualization of the term "praxis", the young Marx is situated in the process of understanding the world of life with an inquiring and hermeneutic attitude that enabled him to "search for the Idea in Reality", so that in his process of interpretation -understanding-application, adheres to the fidelity of the data as a product of subjective sensory activity to insert it into a historically and philosophically preconceived general scheme. In this search, he finds self-awareness, with its characteristics of singularity and independence, which helps to explain the dialectic of self-awareness in its evolution as a subject of theoretical praxis that is directed towards the understanding of self-awareness as a subject of revolutionary praxis^[23].

In his hermeneutic transit in the thematic confrontation of identity of natural philosophy exposed by Epicurus and Democritus, he explores the theory-practice relationship through "truth, certainty, application of this science, and all that refers to the relationship between thought and reality in general"^[14, p.38]. Thus, it assumes the cognitive process of building an epistemic matrix that will characterize the theoretical praxis as a dialectical movement that will lead it to the construction of an epistemic matrix that will structure the revolutionary praxis, ontological, epistemological, methodological and ethical approach, which will be expressed in his philosophical production after 1844.

When examining the thought of Democritus through Aristotle, he acknowledges that the "*phenomenon is the true*", but at the same time he asks himself: how can the true be hidden? And he concludes: "concealment only begins where the phenomenon and the truth separate." From the perspective of Democritus, Marx argues that the triadic relationship phenomenon-truth-concealment is constituted in "*the way in which the relationship between the atom and the world which is apparent to the senses is determined*"^[14, p.39]. This statement centers the interest between the determination of the ways of knowing the objective world and the subjective world; two worlds that are in permanent contradiction, a process that unfolds in the self-awareness of the subject, where subjective appearance and sensitive intuition face each other. In Epicurus's position, Marx highlights the understanding of the sensible world as the objective manifestation, and in this regard he argues: "sensation was in fact Epicurus' standard, since objective appearance corresponds to it"^[14, p.40]. He emphasizes then, that the differences between Democritus and Epicurus in relation to the way of relating to the world in order to know it, lies in the "disparate energy and scientific praxis" that characterizes each one.

In this sense, in Democritus, the *praxic* content of scientific activity is in the recognition of the "world of sensible perception" as the world capable of knowing through empirical observation that configures "practical energy". Thus, scientific praxis in Democritus is the observation of the real world through the register made by the senses to assign content to the world. The way of knowing the world of Epicurus, is centered on self-learning and confidence in reflective introspection that characterizes Greek Philosophy and configures "theoretical consciousness" as the *praxic* content of Epicurean scientific work.

From the analysis carried out by Marx, the position of Democritus and Epicurus are two different and opposed ways of looking at the world, of reflecting on the contents of the real world, that is, the relationship between thought and being, where the reference to epistemic relationship between subject and object, for which Democritus resorts to necessity and Epicurus to chance; used as a way of thinking and not as a determination of the content of reality. As a consequence of this difference, Marx points out: "The principal consequence of this difference appears in the way individual physical phenomena are explained"^[14, p.43]; reason for which, it will delve into the conception of necessity and chance, identifying that possibility underlies both as a structure that configures the explanation of one or the other. He distinguishes two types of possibilities: the real possibility and the abstract possibility. The real possibility, associated with the explanation of necessity as a determination, is limited by understanding, it bases the reality of the object located in nature that appears finite to the senses. While the abstract possibility, associated with the explanation of chance, is unlimited but not in reference to nature, but to the infinity of the subject's thought that explains the phenomena of nature in such a way that the possible is independent of the real; Thus, "the chance of being is clearly transferred only into the chance of thought"^[14, p.45], which makes possible the *ataraxia* of self-awareness. Self-awareness in Marxist thought contributes to rehabilitate subjectivity as a substantive component on the path to understanding the action of being-in-the-world and in the claim of self-awareness in the cognitive process of the world of life, contributing to situate the subjective form of philosophizing in a presupposition of the existence of the human being^[19].

Marx indicates that there is a coincidence in the movement of the atoms enunciated by Democritus and Epicurus, but the movement that shows the difference between both philosophers is the "declination of the atom from the straight line", a movement defended by Epicurus. This movement allows Marx to highlight the following points: the determination of the phenomena of the material world; the phenomena of nature are expressed in concepts that are "being pure form, negation of all relativity, of all relation to another mode of being"^[14, p.48], and the concept of singularity as denial of the determination of one object by another; Thus, he will expose that the movement of objects in nature is opposed to their relative existence, so that "the immediate negation of that movement is another movement." Articulating these points, Marx concludes that:

"As a matter of fact, abstract individuality can make its concept, its form-determination, the pure being-for-itself, the independence from immediate being, the negation of all relativity, effective only by *abstracting from the being that confronts it*; for in order truly to overcome it, abstract individuality had to idealise it, a thing only generality can accomplish"^[14, p.50].

Marx extends this conclusion to Epicurean philosophy, acknowledging that it frees itself, deviates "from the restrictive mode of being wherever the concept of abstract individuality, self-sufficiency and negation of all relation to other things must be represented in its existence"^[14, p.50]. But Marx goes further, and continues to point out that the action has the purpose of "found therefore in abstracting, swerving away from pain and confusion, in *ataraxy*"^[14, p.51]. In this context, and understanding action as the concretion of the movement of the subject, the expression of the practical activity of the human being in the circumstance of the real and concrete world in which it is located with the Others, praxis translates into "*ataraxy*", in abstract singularity, in the abstractly-equal-to-itself that shows itself in acting freely in the totality of the world and of existence, since it is "Abstract individuality is freedom from being, not freedom in being"^[14, p.62], so that when it deviates, when it declines from what is established, it deviates from existence itself.

The consequences that Marx derives from his analysis of the declination movement of the atom enunciated by Epicurus, are expressed in the context of the realization of the negation of the relationship with other atoms; the existence of the relationship with the other atoms is determined by the relationship with itself, so that the atom in its relationship with itself finds itself; in the particular determination of the existence of atoms repulsion is generated as movement. In this line of reflection, Marx is situated in the man-nature relationship. First, it assumes that the human being is a product of nature, which, when conceptualized in its singularity, that is, as a real man, establishes relationships with other similar men. From this relationship arises the construction of reality as a relative existence, in which the materiality of the relationship with myself is gestated. Thus, Marx reveals that "repulsion is the first form of self-consciousness"^[14, p.52], which is conceived as self-awareness, that is, "immediately existing", a self-awareness that is also the affirmation of itself, it is say, "abstractly singular".

An interesting point that contributes to the investigation of the notional structure of praxis is time. The analysis that Marx carries out from the Epicurean philosophy on time in the constitution of existence and the sensible world, starts from the conception of excluding time from the world of essence, so that it becomes "the absolute form of appearance" [14, p.63], which is not reduced to displacing it to the self-awareness of the subject; on the contrary, time is its active form, that is, time is the movement that, in its objectification in the real form, contributes to separate appearance from essence, in such a way that it "is just as much the real form which separates appearance from essence, and posits it as appearance, while leading it back into essence" [14, p.63-64]. In this sense, Marx clarifies that time "Time, in contrast, is in the world of appearance what the concept of the atom is in the world of essence, namely, the abstraction, destruction and reduction of all determined being into being-for-itself" [14, p.64].

Marx agrees with Epicurus in the time-sensibility relationship by recognizing that the abstract form of sensible appearance is time understood as the mutability of the sensible world as a reflection of appearance on itself, so that time is endowed with a particular existence. so such mutability has a separate existence in conscious sensibility. It is clear then that "Sensuous perception reflected in itself is thus here the source of time and time itself" [14, p.64-65]. His analysis leads him to point out that "human sensuousness is therefore embodied time, the existing reflection of the sensuous world in itself" [14, p.64], and he ends by concluding:

"Therefore: just as the atom is nothing but the natural form of abstract, individual self-consciousness, so sensuous nature is only the objectified, empirical, individual self-consciousness, and this is the sensuous. Hence the senses are the only criteria in concrete nature, just as abstract reason is the only criterion in the world of the atoms" [14, p.65].

Finally, Marx analyzes the theory of "Meteors" exposed by Democritus and Epicurus, highlighting Epicurus' critical position in which he denies the eternal existence of celestial bodies and reveals the underlying contradiction between the macrocosm and the microcosm expressed through the contradiction between essence and existence, form and matter, contradictions that are resolved in the reconciliation of the antagonistic moments of the contradictions. In this sense, Marx says:

"In the celestial system matter has received form into itself, has taken up the individuality into itself and has thus achieved its independence. But at this point it ceases to be affirmation of abstract self-consciousness. In the world of the atoms, as in the world of appearance, form struggled against matter; the one determination transcended the other and precisely in this contradiction abstract-individual self-consciousness felt its nature objectified. The abstract form, which, in the shape of matter, fought against abstract matter, was this self-consciousness itself. But now, when matter has reconciled itself with the form and has been rendered self-sufficient, individual self-consciousness emerges from its pupation, proclaims itself the true principle and opposes nature, which has become independent" [14, p.71].

According to Marx, the reconciliation of opposites is achieved through the movement that goes from abstract singularity to concrete singularity, that is, in universality, as a reified refutation of singular-abstract self-consciousness, so that now, the universal it is nature and existence, it is the real world lived and perceived; and that in the analogy with Prometheus, he recognizes that self-awareness, self-recognition, is itself freedom in action [24]. In this process, he reveals the fundamental principle of Epicurean philosophy: singular-abstract self-awareness, to which he contrasts the universal-abstract self-awareness that denies itself in things themselves. And he concludes by noting that Epicurus' thought is understood as the "natural science of self-awareness" [14, p.73], whereas, in Democritus, his thought is characterized by "general objective expression of the empirical investigation of nature as a whole" [14, p.73].

Finally, one must ask, what are the standards that make it possible to understand the construction of the notion of praxis in Marx's doctoral dissertation? In response to this questioning, Table 1 indicates that the elements that initially contribute to the reconstruction of the original meaning of praxis are self-awareness, abstract singularity, the action and practical activity of man, and the action and activity of be-for-itself.

Table 1. Epistemic matrix of the notion of praxis in Marx's doctoral dissertation

Structural component	Identified structure
Hermeneutical situation	What are the standards that make it possible to understand the construction of the notion of praxis in Marx's doctoral dissertation?
Organizing concepts	Self-awareness
Category of the hermeneutical situation	Abstract singularity
Formal indication: data product of reality	Practical activity of man
Starting point: function	Activity of being-for-itself
Comprehension horizon: meaning	Theoretical activity

Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844

In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx exposes the relationship of political economy with the State, law, morality and bourgeois life. Supporting the criticism of the concealment of the devaluation of reality and of human life in capitalist society^[25], the analysis that Marx carries out of the political economy begins with the conceptualization of the salary through characterizing work as the merchandise that the worker to sell in the labor market; and advances in the critique of private property, the division of labor, exchange value, as well as the distinction for the separation between labor, capital, and land, differentiating wage labor from the benefits of capital and land rent. He warns of the effects of competition and monopoly, and outlines the configuration of two social classes: "the property owners and the propertyless workers"^[15, p.270].

In this exercise of philosophical criticism of the political economy of his time, Marx places man in his relationship with the real world, with sensible nature; and he says: "Man is a species-being"^[15, p.275]. Man, as a being-that-is-in-the-world, develops practically and theoretically in freedom, appropriating the world that surrounds him and himself, therefore, he is "a *universal* and therefore a free being"^[15, p.275]. Thus, being-in-the-world implies living from inorganic nature, which Marx defines as "life of the species". In addition, he recognizes that theoretically human consciousness is shaped, on the one hand, by the natural means of life provided by inorganic nature, and on the other, by the spiritual means of life, by "spiritual inorganic nature"^[15, p.275]; which implies that human life and human activity take place in these two areas, that of nature itself and socio-cultural and historical nature. But he is also building the margins of humanism from praxis^[26].

Marx will explain that "Nature is man's inorganic body -nature, that is, insofar as it is not itself human body"^[15, p.276] while "Man lives on nature -means that nature is his body, with which he must remain in continuous interchange if he is not to die"^[15, p.276], then, the man who lives in nature, the species-being and universal man, shows himself when he makes nature his inorganic body, and nature will be the immediate means of life, as well as the matter, the object and the tool of his activity vital. Being-in-the-world implies that the human being is concretizing his active function, in a vital activity that is shown in the realization of a free, conscious and productive life. This vital activity is the means by which he satisfies his needs to preserve his existence through production that is carried out free of necessity, which in terms of "life of the species", produces universally, that is, it reproduces nature for the whole species. In this sense, Marx will declare: "life itself appears only as a means to life"^[15, p.276]. This activity is work, understood at this point as "*life activity, productive life itself*"^[15, p.276]; what contributes to connect the essence of man with existence, links productive activity with the awareness of being-in-the-world^[25].

Then, it will be the work that allows the human being to "creating a world of objects by his practical activity"^[15, p.276]; creation and recreation, work and reality, the objective world product of human work is configured as its "active species-life". In this sense, the man-worker requires nature to carry out his work on the way to producing the material and spiritual basis of his life. Work will make man-nature unity possible as long as man is-in-the-world creating an objective world to live in freedom and without any need, and nature offers him, in addition to the objects in which to carry out his work, the means of subsistence. Subsequently, Marx focuses the analysis on the work-salary and work-capital relationship, to explain that work is a process that develops being-in-the-world that allows it to appropriate the external world, the sensory nature; and initially reveals that it is a practical activity oriented to the production of merchandise, that is, it is work materialized in an object; but he also indicates that labor produces itself and the worker as merchandise; so that the work that is oriented to build the world of life in which it is located, is carried out in the product that elaborates and synthesizes the practical activity of production.

In this context, the product of work is shown as the specifically human universal realization that materializes in the objectification (*Vergegenstaendlichung*) of work, he comments that "labour's realisation is its objectification"^[15, p.272]. This implies, Marx explains, that the labor-product relationship underlies the very process of elaboration of the product, that is, of production, which represents the articulated set of man's social activity in his being-in-the-world. as a worker. Thus, the objectification of work recognizes the function of man's social practice in being-together-with-others; as Marx indicates: "man's relation to himself only becomes for him objective and actual through his relation to the other man"^[15, p.278].

Following the lines of analysis enunciated by Marx in the *Manuscripts*, the question arises: in the relationship of man with nature, in the process of elaboration of the objective world, how does man make it possible to appropriate nature? The analysis that Marx develops through the relationships that the evolution of work has in the practical activity of being-in-the-world to appropriate nature, reveals the relationship between work and capital, emphasizing that "capital is accumulated work"; but in this relationship, the worker is reduced, spiritually and bodily degraded to the condition of a machine, making it possible for him to become an abstract activity as a human being, thus configuring the degrading transformation of work into merchandise, and into the factors associated with production. that make possible the appearance of the conditions for the emergence of misery. He explains that precisely, the man-worker is related to the production process, the practical activity that

enables him to elaborate the materials obtained from nature, and with the product of work. In this sense he indicates:

“It is just in his work upon the objective world, therefore, that man really proves himself to be a *species-being*. This production is his active species-life. Through this production, nature appears as his work and his reality. The object of labour is, therefore, the *objectification of man's species-life*: for he duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore he sees himself in a world that he has created. In tearing away from man the object of his production, therefore, estranged labour tears from him his *species-life*, his real objectivity as a member of the species, and transforms his advantage over animals into the disadvantage that his inorganic body, nature, is taken away from him” [15, p.277].

But to the extent that work is historically degraded and to the extent that it deprives man of his livelihood, vital practical activity appears as an activity alien and external to man, it no longer belongs to him in freedom and will, and in the same way, the product of work is transformed in his consciousness into an object that is also alien, strange, and although he produces it, it does not belong to him; so that the product of labor is in itself the alienation of man. Through these relations between man and work, Marx reveals alienated work. Estranged labour, alienates man from nature; it alienates man from himself, as well as from his “active function” and his “vital activity”, so that life becomes an individual way of life; it turns the human being into a being alien to him, it reifies him, so that man is himself the means of his individual existence; and finally, the “estrangement of man from man” [15, p.277] is generated. In a lengthy explanation of estranged labor, Marx will insist that alienation (*Entfremdung*) refers to the object of labor, that is, to the loss of the product of labor; thus, *estrangement* is “the loss of the object, of his product” [15, p.273]. Interesting point that Marx states is self-alienation. In this sense he says:

“Every self-estrangement of man, from himself and from nature, appears in the relation in which he places himself and nature to men other than and differentiated from himself. For this reason religious self-estrangement necessarily appears in the relationship of the layman to the priest, or again to a mediator, etc., since we are here dealing with the intellectual world. In the real practical world self-estrangement can only become manifest through the real practical relationship to other men. The medium through which estrangement takes place is itself practical. Thus through estranged labour man not only creates his relationship to the object and to the act of production as to powers that are alien and hostile to him; he also creates the relationship in which other men stand to his production and to his product, and the relationship in which he stands to these other men. Just as he creates his own production as the loss of his reality, as his punishment; his own product as a loss, as a product not belonging to him; so he creates the domination of the person who does not produce over production and over the product. Just as he estranges his own activity from himself, so he confers upon the stranger an activity which is not his own” [15, p.279].

In man's relationship with the product of work, the worker is also alienated, but Marx points out that this alienation is also linked to the activity of work itself, so that “If then the product of labour is alienation, production itself must be active alienation, the alienation of activity, the activity of alienation” [15, p.274]. In this context he argues:

“The *alienation* of the worker in his product means not only that his labour becomes an object, an *external* existence, but that it exists *outside him*, independently, as something alien to him, and that it becomes a power on its own confronting him. It means that the life which he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien” [15, p.272].

Marx ends up deriving “the *relation of the worker to labour and to the product of his labour and to the non-worker*, and the relation of the *non-worker to the worker and to the product of his labour*” [15, p.281] from work alienated; obtaining as a consequence the foundation of private property as a material expression of alienated work. However, the historical-social evolution of private property is shown in its purest form in the labor-capital relationship. Private property will express itself materially and sensorially as “alienated human life”. Private property in the capitalist and industrial society will be associated with growing poverty, an increase in the proletarian class, job insecurity, and impoverishment of working conditions; characteristics that are becoming more acute in the 21st century [27]. Private property will become the for-itself of consciousness, in the subjective being of wealth and “with private property being incorporated in man himself and with man himself being recognised as its essence” [15, p.291]. Initially, Marx reveals that work, as a particular mode of existence

determined by nature, is the subjective being of wealth, which will evolve, historically, towards understanding the manifestation of industrial capital as the "objective form of private property"^[15, p.293]; thus, private property will become the universal historical force.

When Marx considers the need to overcome self-consciousness through the conception of communism, he recognizes the social dimension of work. Initially, he identifies the conceptualization of the work community, in which he underlies the natural relationship of man with nature that materializes in the relationship of man with another man; Later, when understanding the historical movement as an authentic generative, revolutionary act, he will find in it the way to solve the contradictions of existence-essence, objectification-self-confirmation, freedom-necessity, individual-gender, and he will point out: "The positive transcendence of private property, as the appropriation of human life, is therefore the positive transcendence of all estrangement—that is to say, the return of man from religion, family, state, etc., to his human, i. e., social, existence"^[15, p.298]. basing from this perspective the way of existence of the social man and the social being in the man-nature link, as being-for-the-other and being-of-the-other-for-him. Thus, through the social man, the man-nature relationship is fully shown, so that society will become the essential unit of the real social relationship, where the individual, as a social being, is the expression of social life real.

Table 2. Epistemic matrix of the notion of praxis in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*

Structural component	Identified structure
Hermeneutical situation	What are the standards that make it possible to understand the construction of the notion of praxis in the <i>Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844</i> ?
Organizing concepts	Man-nature unity
	Man-work relationship
	Private property
	Social nature of man
Category of the hermeneutical situation	Human essence
	Objectification
Formal indication: data product of reality	Work as vital activity
Starting point: function	Unhide the "alienation" and "alienation" of human life
Comprehension horizon: meaning	Transforming the objective and historical-social world
Fusion of horizons: system	Free realization of the human being

Finally, one must ask, what are the standards that make it possible to understand the construction of the notion of praxis in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*? In response to this questioning, Table 2 indicates the elements that initially contribute to the reconstruction of the original meaning of praxis: the man-nature unity, the man-work relationship, private property, the social nature of man, the human essence, objectification, work as a vital activity, the "alienation" and "alienation" of human life, the transformation of the objective and historical-social world, and the free realization of the human being.

Theses on Feuerbach

In Thesis 1 elaborated by Marx as a criticism of Ludwig Feuerbach's position in relation to materialism, he states that the object, reality and sensoriality should be conceptualized "as human sensory activity, as practice. The activity of the human being is an objective activity, that is, as a real, sensory activity, which is understood as a "revolutionary" activity, that is, practical-critical. Commentators recognize the depth of this thesis, focusing on the exposition of a theory of knowledge, which contributes to the epistemological perspective of the content of the notion of praxis, adding to the ontological vision exposed in previous texts. In addition, it places praxis as a revolutionary activity that promotes the bidirectional interaction of the epistemic relationship between subject and object in a conscious, free and voluntary way; so that by being-in-the-world, man apprehends the content of the real world through the sensory activity in which man relates to nature and to others^[28].

In Thesis 2, he establishes the difference between the understanding of the construction of theoretical and practical problems in the process of attribution of objective truth, indicating that it is precisely in practice, where man demonstrates the truth of his thought. He recognizes the epistemological content of praxis in two senses: as a cognitive process supported by the problematization of the existence of man by being-in-the-world and as a theoretical-practical instrument to determine the truth of the content of thought. In the inquiry, as a way to know by doing and appropriating by transforming, the practical-critical activity and the practical-material activity are included to attribute the truth content to the product of thought activity^[29].

In Thesis 3, he recognizes that man is the one who modifies the circumstances of his environment, so that this modification coincides with human activity through revolutionary practice. Being-in-the-world, the human being is in full cognitive activity exploring, inquiring, acting in the world of life, so this being is not passive, but rather active, and will be the reciprocal and conscious action of man over nature, as well as nature

over man, which contributes to promoting, managing and directing where he wants to meet his vital needs, which will contribute to transforming, modifying the world that surrounds him.

In Thesis 4, when criticizing the unfolding of the world into an imaginary world and a real one, reducing the first to the earthly base, he shows the contradiction of the latter with itself and the need to practically revolutionize it, so that this process translates into the elaboration of a theoretical critique followed by the revolution in practice. In the conception of the world that Marx is building, human sensory activity is not separated from human spiritual activity, on the contrary, he reconstructs the theory-practice relationship by connecting thought with existence in a real world^[30].

In Thesis 5, he clearly defines that sensory is a practical activity, that is, as human sensory activity. In the process of knowing to transform the real world, Marx highlights the human senses as a way to perceive it, then the action of the senses in the practical activity of being-in-the-world will be the starting point to consciously apprehend the world^[31].

In Thesis 6, Marx indicates that the human essence in reality is the set of social relations; so that, as a social product, man is determined by the form of society in which he is immersed, as he points out in Thesis 7; so that, "social life is essentially practical" (Thesis 8), which will allow him to argue in thesis 9, that the conceptualization of contemplative materialism places the individual in "civil society", while the materialism that conceptualizes sensory as a practical activity, assumes human society as the point of view of socialized humanity (Thesis 10). In Marx's thought, practical activity is based on the action that the human being develops when being-in-the-world-with-another, in such a way that it makes it possible to understand the essence of man in terms of the social relations that he establishes, building and rebuilding in their daily events by investigating and transforming the world of life.

Derived from this argument, Marx will enunciate the much-cited Thesis 11, "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it." Marx's deep reflection when synthesizing the philosophical activity in the process of interpreting the world of life, refers on the one hand to the social construction of thought, as well as to the implicit relativity in the recognition of the tradition in which the human being, but one must also remember that every time one understands oneself, one understands oneself in a different way^[31]. In this context, it should be borne in mind that when the world is interpreted in different ways, there will also be multiple ways to transform that world that is seen, experienced, lived, and it is in this diversity of doing that revolutionary praxis opens the horizon to the conception of the world in permanent revolution.

Finally, one must ask, what are the standards that make it possible to understand the construction of the notion of praxis in the *Theses on Feuerbach*? In response to this questioning, Table 3 indicates the elements that initially contribute to the reconstruction of the original meaning of praxis are human sensory activity, the construction of theoretical problems differentiated from practical problems, social relations, social production and socialized humanity, practical-critical activity, revolutionary practice, and transforming the world.

Table 3. Epistemic matrix of the notion of praxis in *Theses on Feuerbach*

Structural component	Identified structure
Hermeneutical situation	What are the standards that make it possible to understand the construction of the notion of praxis in the <i>Theses on Feuerbach</i> ?
Organizing concepts	Human sensory activity
	Theoretical problems
	Practical problems
Category of the hermeneutical situation	Social relationships
Formal indication: data product of reality	Social production and socialized humanity
Starting point: function	Practical-critical activity
Comprehension horizon: meaning	Revolutionary practice
Fusion of horizons: system	Transform the world

IV. Fusion of Horizons

The post-pandemic world by COVID-19 is a different, real world, which shows the precariousness of life in a reality that seems out of this world. Its impacts are no longer discussed, rather it is about determining the magnitude of the damage caused. Faced with these facts, Philosophy does not remain silent, and understands itself as a process that has the responsibility of conducting a practical activity that shows paths to revolutionary action in the face of a "new normal".

In this sense, the Philosophy of praxis requires renewal, seeking the meaning of its being-in-the-world to do-transforming, be it from the Eurocentric philosophy or the philosophy from the south, at the end of the road, they will first contribute to offer a vision of the world, and on the other to base the sense of change that contemporary society demands, as Marx rightly points out, the struggle of opposites is the motor of the history of the human being. In the study carried out, different elements have been revealed that need to be articulated to link the different components of the epistemic matrix of the notion of praxis. Next, the results obtained in each

of the analyzed texts will be integrated and that make it possible to show the original meaning of the concept of praxis.

Hermeneutical situation

In the structure of the epistemic matrix, the "hermeneutic situation" makes it possible to characterize, problematize and identify the problematic knot of the concept of praxis. Derived from this core, the question arises: what are the standards that make it possible to understand the original meaning of praxis in Marx's thought? Questioning that situates the analysis in the real and experiential world, demarcating the "sense of reference" to direct the gaze to the "how" of human sensory activity, the "sense of content" that will indicate the "what" of the thought that is looked at, itself as human sensory activity to give content of truth to what is experienced and lived, and finally, the "sense of execution" that translates into the socially determined activity in the process of interpreting-understanding-applying that involves the transforming and revolutionary [32,33]. It is in the hermeneutic situation in which the notion of praxis is characterized, as a representation of reality composed of a reference object, a word and/or an image, to which a content, a meaning, a meaning, is attributed. associated with the reality that is represented [34].

Organizing concepts

The ordering concepts make it possible to thematize praxis in the real world as an epistemic object based on the factual life of the world of life, in such a way that they relate the pre-conceptual system and pre-logical thought to identify the internal and external relations of praxis as a hermeneutic situation [35]. Sergio Tobón mentions that concepts are a set of propositions linked to a general notion that contains a set of qualities accepted by a community [34]. In the analysis of the three writings produced by Marx, a conceptual continuity of a progressive nature is identified that derives from his reflective activity that links thought with existence. In the practical-critical activity of the dialectic in action, the following are recognized as ordering concepts that articulate pre-conceptual and pre-logical systems: self-awareness, man-nature unity, man-work relationship, private property, man's social nature, human sensory activity, construction and differentiation of theoretical problems and practical problems.

Category of the hermeneutical situation

In the categories of the hermeneutic situation, reference is made to the integration of concepts in systems to approach and understand reality [34], in such a way that prejudices and pre-understanding are recognized when approaching the notion of praxis, but placing the subject in its historical-social context, which makes it easier to reduce the historical distance that violates the triadic relationship of interpretation-understanding-application. Prejudices, as prior judgments in a positive sense that the subject possesses before interacting in factual life, make it possible to recover previous experiences, which contributes to eliminating prejudices that distort the original meaning of the notion of praxis. Thus, the link between the historical reality of the individual and the historical-effectual consciousness is maintained [10]; which in the case of the concept of praxis are: abstract singularity, human essence, objectification and social relations.

Formal indication: data from reality

Escudero points out that the formal indication in the Heideggerian proposal is an analytical instrument referring to the "basic concepts that serve to reflexively explain the understanding of life, being-there, has of itself" [36], which allows articulating the categories of the hermeneutic situation of human existence. In the case of the analysis of the original meaning of praxis, the formal indication points the way to continue exploring the reality of being-in-the-world in such a way that when recovering the problematization of praxis as a hermeneutic situation, it resorts to identifying the data from reality. In order to broaden the methodological horizon in the construction of the epistemic matrix, it is important to remember Nietzsche's sentence: "there are no facts, only interpretations" [37], and in the same way, Vattimo will indicate that "there are no data, only interpretations" [38], in addition to confirming that all data represents a hermeneutic process of interpretation-understanding-application. The analysis carried out on Marx's manuscripts revealed the following as formal indications: practical activity of man, work as a vital activity, social production and socialized humanity.

Starting point: function

The starting point in the epistemic matrix, has a simultaneous connotation in which it links the theoretical with the practical that delimits the margins of the destination towards which one wants to arrive; this means, Gadamer will say, "that many continuations are still possible – within certain limits, of course –" [39]. In this sense, when analyzing the function in which the data that contributes to understanding reality is involved, it requires opening up to the experience of being-in-the-world; so that the beginning, the starting point, expresses different attributes, such as the "historical-temporal meaning, the reflective one in relation to the beginning and

the end, as well as the one that perhaps suggests the most authentic representation of the beginning; the one at the beginning that still does not know what the continuation will be”^[39]. In this context, the paths that Marx shows to have traveled in the construction of the concept of praxis are the following: activity of being-for-itself, revealing the "alienation" and "alienation of human life, and the practical-critical activity.

Comprehension horizon: meaning

The world is shown as a horizon that opens to the human being towards infinity to the extent that he is-in-the-world and concretes his action in human sensory activities in company and in relation to the other^[40]. Thus, to understand the original meaning of the notion of praxis, it is necessary to put it in relation to the set of experiences that give meaning to existence in community with the other. Being relational experiences open the meaning towards the comprehensibility in which existence moves. In this context, the possibility of knowing the real world through human sensory activity that Marx has demonstrated, opening in praxis the original meaning of theoretical activity, the transformation of the objective and historical-social world and revolutionary practice.

Fusion of horizons: system

The fusion of horizons, the convergence of diverse horizons that open up to the human being in his dialectical relationship with nature and with other individuals, horizons that are not divergent, on the contrary, converge temporally and spatially in existence when the human being is -in-the-world-with-another and require mutual understanding. Complementing this perspective, Gadamer indicates that “it is part of true understanding to recover the concepts of a historical past in a way that contains our own conception at the same time. It is what we have previously called fusion of horizons”^[39]. Understood this precision enunciated by Gadamer, the data coming from reality is articulated with the meaning attributed to it during human sensory activity, which is finally configured in a systematic structure, in a system that contextualizes the data characterized through the situation. hermeneutics, so that the standards that contextualize the original meaning of the concept of praxis demarcated by Marx are freedom in existence, the free realization of the human being and the transformation of the world.

Finally, the overall view of the analysis of Marx's writings (*Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature; Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, and *Theses on Feuerbach*); as well as the elaborated epistemic matrices, contribute to delineate the following dimensions of the concept of praxis:

- Ontological dimension: man as a social being.
- Epistemological dimension: the subject-object reciprocal cognitive relationship.
- Methodological dimension: the materialist dialectic
- Ethical dimension: full humanism, that is, humanization of nature and naturalization of man.

V. Conclusion

Investigating the structure of the notion of praxis in search of the original meaning in the main writings of Karl Marx from the period prior to 1844, is in itself a complex activity, which on many occasions will be shown to academic criticism as a mere approximation. However, the challenge was assumed and it was possible to recover the thematic content that has been forgotten and hidden in the task of understanding Marx's thought and, above all, revealing its relevance in the application to daily life in a post-pandemic world.

Marx's doctoral dissertation opens a horizon of understanding that situates the notion of praxis in a context delimited by the philosophy of self-awareness as a dyadic relationship of the movement of man's practical activity, a dialectical movement that moves from theoretical activity to physical activity. revolutionary. Self-awareness appears to philosophical reflection as an abstract singularity, making it possible for what is abstractly-equal-to-itself to express itself in the activity of being-for-itself, freedom in existence.

The *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* circumscribe the concept of praxis to the totality of the human essence, so that it is the historical-social path that makes it possible, first, to reveal the "alienation" and "alienation" of human life, and second, to transform the objective and historical-social world. Both possibilities lead the being-in-the-world to recover free and conscious work aimed at the free realization of all the "essential forces" of the human being. In relation to the *Dissertation*, the *Manuscripts of 1844* represent the transition from theoretical praxis to the foundation of revolutionary praxis.

The *Theses on Feuerbach* situates praxis in the epistemological field and circumscribes it to human sensory activity as a practical-critical revolutionary activity. The activity of problematizing reality and exposing the solution paths in an active way, will configure a horizon of understanding in which the praxis is based on the revolutionary activity that, in addition to transforming the world, is a human sensory activity.

Finally, it is possible to conclude that praxis understood as a practical-critical activity is the first thing that human beings recognize and become aware of when being-in-the-world-with-another, so that the social

being underlies its original meaning, the cognitive subject-object relationship, the materialist dialectic and the realization of full humanism.

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