

# ANTIDESTINY, ANTIFRAGILE AND ANTIMETAPHYSICAL: THE DISCOURSE FOR A NEW MODEL OF INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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**Abstract:** The present text aims to present the argument that there is a new vocabulary being developed to support the new models of institutional development (in the public and private sector), an argument that has emerged in recent years. We argue that this new vocabulary, although not restricted to the academy, is designed from the standpoint of rejection of Enlightenment metaphysics and its terms can be integrated into the reflective support of pragmatism. We also present some examples of institutional management models that represent some facets of the terms of this new vocabulary.

**Keywords:** philosophy, pragmatism, contemporaneity, management, reform

## INTRODUCTION

In major centers of research in social planning, in the financial market and academic circles, the promotion of innovative practices had a dominant discourse. Thus, throughout the West, thousands of NGOs, Start Ups and social research centers are betting on building the means by which we can have the structures available that will guarantee the promotion of innovative practices. However, what is at stake is not only a provision for the novelty, but the way in which models of efficiency in institutional management (whether in the public or private sector) have undergone transformations over the last few years. Large companies and Model Cities are increasingly betting on creativity rather than on the discipline of new professionals and managers. We

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can affirm with some precision that words like Innovation and Intelligence come gradually taking up the prominent place that words like Rigor and discipline had next to the criteria of efficiency analysis of the management models. The set of terms that accompany the advancement of the discourse of innovation ends up creating a new vocabulary for social narratives about how we should manage the public space and our interest here is to present a reading on how political, financial, and moral utopias can interact in the Interior of this new vocabulary.

In the present text we will approach three cases of terms that participate in this new vocabulary: the ‘Antifragile’ of Nassim Nicholas Taleb, the ‘Antidestiny’ of Roberto Mangabeira Unger and the ‘Antimetaphysical’ of Richard Rorty.

There are two central goals in our text. The first one is to present some facets of this new vocabulary in the works of each of the aforementioned authors, and the second goal is to point out what kind of benefit we can draw from the experience of interaction between the terms of this new vocabulary.

The course we are going to take is divided in three moments: firstly, to present the content of each author's proposals; secondly, to expose the challenges of uniting the suggestions of Taleb and Professor Unger in a single hermeneutical framework; and thirdly, to show which reflective background serves the purpose of integrating both vocabularies. In this last moment we will also present some structural forms that we could subsidize from this new vocabulary.

## THE ANTIFRAGILE

As mentioned before, the term Antifragile was conceived by Nassim Nicholas Taleb. He is from a rich and traditional Lebanese family, and as a cosmopolitan millionaire he made his academic career at Wharton and Yale. His characteristic feature as a financial market operator is the disbelief in the predictions of behavior about the market, over time this characteristic has ceased to be just a professional adjective to become an intellectual landmark when he was able to conclude that the impossibility of forecasting in the financial market was not an isolated fact, but a mark of Western society in contemporary times.

In an article published in February 2013, the journalist Clemente Nóbrega presented the profile of Nassim Nicholas Taleb. It seems to be a manifesto against the orthodoxy of the financial market, however, he indicates that Taleb should not be seen as restricted to the world of

finance, “do not think that this is a book [*Antifragile: Things That Gain from Disorder*] about finance, this is about decision making under risk, it is a book about how to live better”.<sup>1</sup>

What arouses particular interest in the article is the way in which the author by betting ideologically against all the most reliable forecasts of the time, more than that, betting against the idea of Forecasting itself. It happened with the case Fannie Mae<sup>2</sup> and Société Générale<sup>3</sup> when his right reading noted that the biggest mistake of managers in both cases was to apply confidence in the idea of predictability of complex situations.

Taleb believes that dependence on predictions, the fear of error, and the attempt to survive intact to changes has become a strong feature of contemporaneity, a situation that would be directly linked to ambitious modern / enlightened (social, political, economic) projects. The source of his inspiration for this position comes from his first experience in the financial market, Nóbrega describes such an experience:

[...] just out of university, he was shocked and perplexed to realize that the market operators were rough people with no intellectual refinement, who did not use mathematics, theorems, equations, did not read papers, ignored analyzes. He tells the epiphany that he experienced when he discovered that traders considered sophisticated were the ones who ‘managed at most to spell out the names of the streets where they lived’ and even though he acted in financial academicism, he made these types his heroes. It was like a ‘streetwise’ kind of logic, based on heuristic rules, never in any artifice of modernity (which Taleb despises).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Clemente Nóbrega (2013). “O Nietzsche de Wall Street.” *Época Negocios*, n. 72, p.56.

<sup>2</sup> In 2003, the journalist Alex Bereson, from the *New York Times*, presented a confidential report from Fannine Mae’s enterprises to Taleb. The report showed the company’s calculation risks. Taleb, using heuristics described in his book, detected that the company was sitting “on a barrel of dynamite” and it would explode. The *New York Times* published this story. The perceived more: the whole financial Market was counting on forecasts similar to those of Fannie Mae. See Clemente Nóbrega, *op.cit.*, p.58.

<sup>3</sup> “In 2008, right before the crises he warned Société Générale about the risks they were running. Taleb was harassed by the company’s big bosses and the department of risk analyses of the French bank. Few weeks later Société had to burn US\$ 70 billion in a hurry, losing US\$ 6 billion in the operation” writes Clemente Nóbrega, *op.cit.*, p.58.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*.

With Taleb's position on the possibility of prediction in the complex situations of the financial market, it must be demonstrated that such contempt can be linked to the same kind of contemptuous attitude that Richard Rorty and Roberto Mangabeira Unger maintains in relation to the epistemological ambitions of modernity and as how this kind of contempt is related to the promotion of innovation discourse. To this end we can begin by looking at the work of Taleb himself:

The involvement of this author has not been so much in asserting this impossibility to ever know anything about these matters—the general skeptical problem has been raised throughout history by a long tradition of philosophers, including Sextus Empiricus, Al-Ghazali, Hume, and many more skeptics and skeptical empiricists—as in formalizing and modernizing as a background and footnote to my anti-turkey argument. So my work is about where one should be skeptical, and where one should not be so. In other words, focus on getting out of the Fourth Quadrant—the Fourth Quadrant is the scientific name I gave to the Black Swan domain, the one in which we have a high exposure to rare, “tail” events and these events are incomputable<sup>5</sup>.

Taleb leads the reader to note a bridge between his skepticism about attempts to predict the financial market and Hume's skepticism about science in the context of modernity. Regarding the relationship between Taleb's skepticism and that of Hume, it is interesting to note that both understand skepticism as a tool to live better by avoiding as many traps as possible, and especially by building fewer trap for ourselves. In Taleb's understanding, such traps are observed primarily in the authority we give to those who promise predictions about the behavior of complex structures. The author of *Antifragile* presents his concept as one which is opposed to 'fragile', and yet it can't be confused with the robust or resilient. The distinction of the concept of anti-frail from that of robust is simple:

Antifragility is beyond resilience or robustness. The resilient resists shocks and stays the same; the antifragile gets better. This property is behind everything that has changed with time: evolution, culture, ideas, revolutions, political systems, technological innovation, cultural and economic success, corporate survival, good recipes (say, chicken soup or steak tartare with a drop of cognac), the rise of cities, cultures, legal systems, equatorial forests, bacterial resistance ... even our own

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<sup>5</sup> See Nassim Nicholas Taleb (2012). *Antifragile: Things That Gain from Disorder*. New York: Random House.

existence as a species on this planet. And antifragility determines the boundary between what is living and organic (or complex), say, the human body, and what is inert, say, a physical object like the stapler on your desk.<sup>6</sup>

In this way we can imagine that the ideal intellectual support for the anti-frail is based on openness to the unexpected and limits of human imagination, intelligence understood as the ability to learn perpetually rather than to account for the essence of objects and situations (thus generating the possibility of predicting their behavior). A planning idea based more on overcoming borders and opening windows to the unexpected rather than on deepening the ideal and definitive concept to describe objects and situations.

### THE ANTIDESTINY

This scenario of openness and rebellion is similar to that promoted by Mangabeira Unger outlined in his proposal, especially in his work *A Segunda Via de Desenvolvimento* (2001). The central axis of Unger's proposal emerges from the author's observation that there are two models of development and social planning that alternate in Brazil, he proposes an intermediate way between these two models. The first path of development is that which is regarded as the inexorable fate of the world economy, neoliberalism as we know it<sup>7</sup>. The third route is the attempt to resist the effects of this march, worth noting that the third way does not seek to change the destination, only does delay it. In a summarized form, the Second Way can be defined in the following words:

The second path is the democratizing development, to be won by the renewal of the institutions that define representative democracy, the market economy and free civil society. It is not enough to transfer resources from the richest to the poorest; We must enter a path of reorganization of political, economic and social institutions.<sup>8</sup>

The proposal of the Second Way requires four essential commitments: A State that is active and with a high level of public revenue, training the people (more than training employees, training citizens), democratization of (access to) the market, strong party regime.

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p.8.

<sup>7</sup> Roberto Mangabeira Unger (2001). *A Segunda Via de Desenvolvimento*. Ed. I. São Paulo – SP: Boitempo, p10.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*.

Each of these commitments relates to a specific condition for making structural changes that the Second Way promises, and although we can take great advantage from a broad analysis of Unger's work, in our paper we will be retained by what Unger calls 'High Democracy'. In this model, in addition to the necessary structural resources, the substitution of a disposition for obedience to a rebellious disposition in the national discourse, a need to overcome the old reflexive and institutional paradigms that block the expansion of Ties of freedom:

Every country has to say 'no' to the dominant ideas and interests in the world and at the time it emerges. This is what the countries that we admire did and today we try to imitate. We insist on doing what they said rather than doing what they have done. The rulers of Brazil prefer to see the country rewarded for its obedience. Doing homework - the submissive student's metaphor - became his favorite metaphor. It is a path that, for a big country, never worked out. There is only national rescue through national rebellion<sup>9</sup>.

If the First Way is perceived by the developed countries as the inexorable destiny of the economic and political relations of the West, and the Third Way, the model of resistance allowed by the powers, the Second Way would be, for Brazil, the means of abandoning this path of servitude. This servitude to which Unger refers is close to that reliance on predictions described by Taleb, for as Brazil follows the agenda proposed by the great powers, these powers continue to construct development plans based on the prediction that neoliberalism is the destiny of any country, Brazil itself shares the trust in the prediction that fate is defined, that truth is (in the economy) something to be discovered or found. The discourse, that there is a definite truth about economic arrangements, solidifies criteria for the validation of statements based so broadly on the adequacy of statements (in relation to economics) to the field of comprehension of what is considered the definitive truth of economic arrangements.

Resisting the temptation to see the First Way as unrelenting fate is the mission that Unger suggests for the country:

Rebellion needs a program and the program always has to change. It is no longer the national-populism nor is it the humanization of the

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, pp.19-20.

inevitable by social policies. It is the antidedestination [...] and to put every Brazilian standing so that Brazil does not get on its knees.<sup>10</sup>

The antidedestination referred by the Professor is the non-subordination of social planning to any prediction about some inexorability of a certain path, of any path. Unger's manifestation against the idea of relentless fate may be related to Taleb's contempt for the idea of prediction. At first the idea of antidedestination can even be confused with the idea of anti-frail, however it is necessary to distinguish them to demonstrate the enriching character that one can add to the other if paired in a certain order that we are going to propose later.

Both Unger and Taleb bring about the abandonment of prescriptions based on models of predictability guided by an enlightened and metaphysical rationality, the first because it leads us to the fear of experimentalism, the second because it presupposes the granting of authority to agents who construct the predictions and at the same time they spread prejudice over what is considered unexpected. Both reasons lead to differences in the model as each addresses the question of the future of strategic management (for the public or private sector); Unger seems to want to create the conditions for a grand future, meanwhile Taleb is concerned to point out the Failures in the political and economic design of modernity.

If these two thought frameworks are drawn closer without a proper care, it is possible that the detail with which Unger describes his proposal might conflict with Taleb's contempt for proposals based on predictions and centralized planning, the way we can approach them without the risk of trauma is by finding a reflective background that unites the intellectual ambitions of the renowned financial market operator trained at Wharton and the political ambitions of the renowned intellectual at Harvard (with a first degree from UFRJ).

The vocabulary used by Unger is insufficient to cover the terms suggested by Taleb, just as the vocabulary used by Taleb also demonstrates the same inadequacy. The reason for such insufficiency lies not in any fault of the authors or even in some incapacity, but only in the fact that neither of the two authors is concerned with an integrating function. The creative and purposeful impetus of both led them to produce vocabularies that perfectly fulfilled the function of

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<sup>10</sup> Roberto Mangabeira Unger (1998). *Rebelia Nacional*. Folha de S. Paulo, São Paulo, 21 de Julho de 1998  
<http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/opiniao/fz21079807.htm> [accessed 02.01. 2017].

being the reflexive support of their proposals. All the reflective background that goes through Unger's proposal is necessarily based on an informed pragmatism and a call to social experience of high energy. In this environment at some point the antifragile would find obstacles since his proposer presents it as the almost metaphysical support of everything that gets better with time, such as evolution, political transformations and even our existence as a species.

Unger's antidestitution is a term conjured up for the reality of a country that historically has been subordinated, either by force or tradition, to external models, in this way the national rebellion in relation to these interests can take various forms, including the construction of robust or resilient structures and to ensure continuity of rebel drive. The antifragile does not deal with such a specific situation, although it is not a term that is limited to questions of market operation, the antifragile says about a planning experience based on the recognition of unpredictability when it comes to complex environments such as social life, financial and economic, a project that has as ideal environment the rich democracies of the North Atlantic.

Although both proposals are based on non-adherence to the planning model of modernity that sought to overcome the mysticism of the Middle Ages while replacing God's Will for Reason and Truth (as justifications in themselves), and even though both are based on the praise of an innovative and intelligent model that learns from the shocks, none has in itself the capacity to cover the other in a satisfactory way and with the minimum of possible sacrifices.

## CHALLENGES TO THE INTEGRATION OF ANTI-FRAGILE AND ANTI-DESTINATION

One of the obstacles mentioned can be identified in the objective of the works of each of the authors. Their biographies favor an approximation as they designate individuals who do not resign with the boundaries established for their areas of activity; Unger wants to participate in the political life of his country more than is expected of an intellectual, and Taleb wants to write more than what is expected of an operator of the market.

Roberto Mangabeira Unger, in describing the reflective center of his proposal, features:

The spirit of this program is the attempt to combine empowerment with connection. The forms of empowerment most readily available to us in the contemporary world can be acquired by the price of disconnecting

others. The forms of connection to which we have the easiest access are subsumed in the price of some contempt, some diminution of our powers of individual and collective self-transformation. What we should desire above all is to find ways to empower ourselves, individually and collectively, that also connects us, and to find ways to connect us that also empowers us.<sup>11</sup>

The title of the lecture of Professor Unger is *The Transformation of Experience* (2002), which he presents the ideal content of a renewed sociability and openness to a continuous process of innovation. However, this process is not open to the expectation of chance, but directed to achieve certain ends, among them that of empowering both individuals and collectivities. The explicitness with which Unger presents the need to combine empowerment and connection makes it possible for us to be assured that although its practical objectives (creation of public/private funds to foster innovation and entrepreneurship...) may be enriched by Nassim Taleb's ideas, although the reflective support he employs for this purpose may not be so compatible with that used by Taleb. The reflexive support that Nassim Nicholas Taleb uses is not at all explicit, as his featured work does not offer a reflective foundation in the academic model we are used to. However, it is possible to find some suggestion about this reflexive support from a minimally suggestive study of its propositions.

In addition to the previously mentioned adherence to Hume's skepticism, Taleb takes further steps and manifests some contempt for the idea of rationality understood as the ability to establish destinies that will be pursued. The most explicit moment he presents this contempt is in Book IV, Chapter II "Do you really know where you are going?"<sup>12</sup>

This entire heritage of thinking, grounded in the sentence "An agent does not move except out of intention for an end," is where the most pervasive human error lies, compounded by two or more centuries of the illusion of unconditional scientific understanding. This error is also the most fragilizing one<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Roberto Mangabeira Unger (2002). *The Transformation of Experience*. The Boutwood Lectures. Corpus Christi College. Cambridge University. <http://www.robertounger.com/en/wp-content/.../01/boutwood-lectures-second-way-2pdf> [accessed 04.01.2017]

<sup>12</sup> Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *op.cit.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p.188.

The phrase to which Taleb refers in the text belongs to St. Thomas Aquinas, and Taleb interprets it as follows: “In other words, agents must know where they are going, a teleological argument (from *telos*, ‘based on an end’) which originated in Aristotle”. It remains clear that Taleb has little appreciation of the idea that we are able to design or to build *a priori* the means by which we developed our institutions and social experiences we desire (or more specifically those institutions and experiences that Unger suggests). The full proof of Taleb’s contempt for the idea of planning can be seen in Nóbrega’s article:

In addition to economists, his main focus is what he calls the “Soviet-Harvard ‘mentality, linked to’ false knowledge”: the illusion that the world’s dilemmas can be solved with more research, more studies, more theories or more data. [...] Business planning is bullshit, because charting a way to “get there” is something of suckers who believe in predictions. Innovation does not come from people studied, comes from practice, experimenters, entrepreneurs, risk takers.<sup>14</sup>

While his attachment to experimentalism brings him closer to Unger, his disdain for the general idea that planning/research are capable of providing us with solid tools for the future, it gives us enough clues to say that the antifragile may not be able to share the same support reflective than the antidestruction, since this presupposes long-term actions. In this way, we still need to understand what would be the reflexive support that offers the space for the experimentalism in a quasi-romantic sense of Taleb, with the pragmatic and centered experimentalism of Professor Unger.

#### ROMANTIC PRAGMATISM AND LIBERAL UTOPIA

Following the line of presentation of rebellious subjects in relation to their own sphere of action, Richard Rorty is recognized as an anti-philosopher and at the same time as one of the most influential intellectuals of his time<sup>15</sup>. The biography of Rorty helps us to understand some of the central theme of his work, still early, with 15 years, Rorty was accepted into Chicago school, where he specialized and held academic career. His relationship with analytic philosophy

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<sup>14</sup> Clemente Nóbrega, *op.cit.*, p.59.

<sup>15</sup> It is important to notice that Professor Unger himself wrote about a radicalized version of pragmatism (really appreciated by Rorty), we will however focus on the suggestion of the opportunity of integration between his proposal of antidestruction and antifragile, we will refrain ourselves on Rortyan Pragmatism.

earned him a distinct fame, and even though his positions on the subject-mind theme were an element of controversy in the corridors of America's most important center of analytical philosophy, he remained one of the leading intellectuals in the area. However, although he possessed a privileged position at Princeton he accepted an invitation to teach comparative literature at Yale University, to teach about the Derridean notion that philosophy is nothing more than a literary genre. This decision, in fact, surprised everyone who knows a little about traditional clash between continental philosophy and analytical in the US context.

As he would later write in the memoir *Trotsky and the Wild Orchids* (2000), the initial purpose of his intellectual journey was finding a way to bring together in a single understanding of reality system, the moral correctness linked the figure of Trotsky (who used to be a regular guest of his parents in the United States) and his aesthetic vanity in relation to the feeling that the American orchids were superior to those of Latin America, in a more synthetic way: to bring together beauty and justice, beauty and morality. Although he had already abandoned this goal at the time of *The Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, only twenty years later he would return to Dewey's pragmatism (which he inherited from his parents but eventually gave up during his student years in Chicago).

About 20 years or so after I decided that the young Hegel's willingness to stop trying for eternity, and just be the child of his time, was [12] the appropriate response to disillusionment with Plato, I found myself being led back to Dewey. Dewey now seemed to me a philosopher who had learned all that Hegel had to teach about how to eschew certainty and eternity, while immunizing himself against pantheism by taking Darwin seriously<sup>16</sup>.

If Taleb's critique looks at the idea of foresight and modern rationality, Mangabeira Unger objects to foster a kind of national and institutional rebellion, Rorty, in his role as an intellectual, devotes part of his concern to two concepts whose version we use is that inherited from Modernity: Truth and Reason.

According to Richard Rorty, while modernity was the moment of solidification of the liberal political project, it was also the period of

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<sup>16</sup> Richard Rorty (2000). *Pragmatismo. A Filosofia da criação e da mudança*. Organização por Cristina Magro e Antonio Marcos Pereira. Belo Horizonte. UFMG. p.190.

crystallization of an intellectual project that would prove to be limited. Regarding the term of truth, Rorty makes no objection to the term itself, but his understanding as referring to something more than a casual and coherent description of how things are now, that this something else would be a metaphysical element able of establishing an Archimedean fixed point and thus close the investigations on what to do with ourselves. To this understanding of the term truth, Rorty refers to “redemptive truth”, which “would not consist in theories as to how things interact causally, but on the contrary, fulfill the necessity which philosophy and religion have attempted to satisfy”<sup>17</sup> This use of the term truth would have been introduced in the philosophy in a relevant way by Plato (and his suggestion that there is a world with the ‘real’ shapes of objects beyond appearances we know) and during Hellenism the same use of the term would have contaminated religion by superimposing the comparison between the force and nature of the various gods by the assertion that only one of them can exist and be true, all those who worship other gods is either ill-informed or ill-intentioned. During the Enlightenment, when intellectuals throughout Europe promoted a rebellion against mysticism, the search for truth took a new form: “Knowledge in this way is redemptive. It can, therefore, replace religion. Striving for truth can take the place of the search for God”<sup>18</sup>.

Richard Rorty considers that this form of formulating the concept of truth lose space among intellectuals as literature, initially by names like Shakespeare and Miguel de Cervantes, especially when observing the fact that literature has come to play a role antagonistic to that of philosophy, arguing that human diversity is too broad that any effort to seek a unique essence or nature may not be capable of dealing with all the necessities that human beings can come up with<sup>19</sup>. This statement, according to Rorty, envisages to giving an alternative to the concepts of truth and reason inherited from the modernity, he pointed out an effort to overcome the metaphysics that has taken place within the entire tradition up to the modern philosophy. For him such concepts, although they served the purpose of overcoming the mysticism that permeated the period prior to the Enlightenment, contains a restrictive element insofar as it makes us more concerned with the satisfaction of

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<sup>17</sup> Richard Rorty & Paulo Ghiraldelli Jr. (2006). *Ensaio Pragmatistas, sobre subjetividade e verdade*. Rio de Janeiro: DP&A, p.83.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p.80.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.

abstract criteria of validation of statements than with the criterion of utility. The metaphysical aspect of the concept of truth embedded in the discourses that serve as the basis for our institutions sometimes becomes an obstacle to the reform of institutions.

The tool by which Richard Rorty believes it is possible to overcome the narrowing he refers is overlapping the imagination with reason by means of irony, which he defines as the practice of launching a vocabulary against another in a perpetual process of vocabulary renewal<sup>20</sup>. Although he does not provide as specific policy suggestions as Roberto Mangabeira Unger does, Rorty summarizes much of his contribution on a reflective support for progressive reforms in the form of a version of pragmatism already informed by the linguistic turn, to this version of pragmatism he refers as a “romantic pragmatism”.

Richard Rorty inherited the pragmatism movement, as a way of reading the world, from his parents, who were close friends of Dewey, one of the creators of this philosophical tradition. However, it was not only by repeating and reproducing what Dewey thought that Rorty gained recognition as one of the leading intellectuals of pragmatism; what gave him such fame was the fact that he had covered the pragmatism of that content generated by the Linguistic Turn. While the initial goal of pragmatism would take the focus from theory to practice, at least in the preparation of statements of validation criteria, Rorty suggested that we should treat language itself as a tool that can be implemented by overcoming its metaphysical aspects. Thus, if pragmatism in its classic formulation suggested a shift in focusing on the statements of legitimacy criteria, the theoretical foundation for the practical utility, the pragmatism of Rorty’s formulation suggests that, since the search for the “essence of man” the “last and founder truth behind appearances” have not offered good resources to overcome the obstacles that prevent us from reforming our institutions, we must

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<sup>20</sup>“This term and its reference, as Rorty himself suggests, are not original ones. The concept of irony has a long history and an important role in the philosophical tradition. It was of fundamental importance to Socrates and to Kierkegaard, who both have their name attached to that. However, Rorty did not think of his own theoretical use of the idea of irony, [...] as being related to what was thought by those philosophers, but as strictly linked to the Hegel-Nietzsche-Heidegger-Derrida sequence: [...] the young Hegel broke with the Platonic-Kantian sequence and began a tradition of Ironistic Philosophy which continued in Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida.” See R. C. Araujo (2010), *O entrelaçamento de esteticismo e utopia na obra de Richard Rorty*. Dissertation (UFPEL), v. 31, p.105.

replace these searches by curiosity about the limits of human imagination. The sense in which he uses the term imagination refers to a new ability to suggest ways of describing things in the world, something that typically attach to the poets, but that is not exclusive of them:

Imagination, in the sense in which I use the term, is not a distinctively human capacity. It is, as I said earlier, the ability to come up with social useful novelties. This is an ability Newton shared with certain ingenious beaver.<sup>21</sup>

From such a pathway we can define the ‘romantic pragmatism’ as a reflexive project of Richard Rorty to implement the transformative impetus of pragmatism as a greater number of doors and windows than those that the Enlightenment project could offer. If the value of philosophy, as Rorty argues, and that Posner<sup>22</sup> refers to pragmatism itself, is to clear the terrain of all the metaphysical rubble that is coming together as we solidify new institutions, then ‘romantic pragmatism’ is the way we can use to get rid of the remnants of fundamentalism from pragmatism, rubble that were inserted there from the Enlightenment tradition of which pragmatism was a part of.

The social design available from the formulation of Rorty’s romantic pragmatism he will call Liberal Utopia. This project is a society whose goals are never fully satisfied, hence its utopian character, while maintaining alive the liberal impulse of an eternal quest for expansion of freedoms available. This opening has two objectives, the first one is to maintain social structures as flexible as necessary for continued reform process, and the second is to open public space for groups that are systematically excluded as blacks, women and people without financial access. The presence of a particular social type would be striking for this project, the liberal ironist. As the ironist activity would be to foster continuous reforms of vocabulary we use to describe ourselves, liberal policy would remain

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<sup>21</sup> Richard Rorty (2007). *Philosophy as Cultural Politics: Philosophical Papers*, vol.4. Brazilian translation (2009): *Filosofia como política cultural*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, p.195.

<sup>22</sup> “The great value of pragmatism lies in preventing the premature closure of debates and not in solving them”. See Richard A. Posner (1995). *Overcoming Law*. Brazilian translation (2009): *Para Além do Direito*. São Paulo - SP. WMF: Martins Fontes, p.415.

as the most appropriate means of continuously subsidizing the process of expansion of freedoms.

We designed this path up to here to express that Rorty's doubts about the need to ground (in the metaphysical sense) our republican social institutions, and argues that, for liberals classic purposes, the most suitable intellectual contribution is to erode the metaphysical vocabulary that was allocated around our institutions.

From here we will demonstrate how this project of Richard Rorty offers a reflective support for the integration of the concepts of Antidestiny and Antifragile.

### ANTIFRAGILE, ANTIDESTINY AND ANTIMETAPHYSICAL

Although innovation is the dominant term in the development strategies (social, financial and personnel) to observe the dominant practices informs us that the dominance of the discourse on innovation is only discursive. The Orthodox perspectives, often immersed in a fundamentalist vocabulary full of words like "nature", "the essence of" or "the truth behind" mostly dominate the social planning, the practices of economic operators, laws and (as is showing the growth of conservative discourse the world) the self-image of the West. This gap between the dominant discourse and dominant practices already suffered several analytical approaches, and our goal here is not to enter the debate that will likely end up with an argumentation over the inherent mind structures or in human societies. Our aim is to propose a reflective support able to unite the best of discourse and practices proposed by Nassim Nicholas Taleb to better discourse and practices advocated by Roberto Mangabeira Unger in order to contribute to overcome the ideological, doctrinal and epistemological obstacles that hinder the debate on institutional reforms in the West.

Briefly, recap the topics we have covered so far:

1. Antifragile: creative and entrepreneurial Willingness to build structures that are not intended to resist (the stiffness or the elasticity) the shocks of the big changes.
2. Antidestiny: social and institutional arrangement for the rebellion in relation to the prevailing narrative in social, institutional and economic discourse in Brazil and worldwide.
3. Antimetaphysical /Romantic Pragmatism: statements classification system that is guided by the call for transformative practices and the creative impetus in the development of new social narratives. This

system depends deeply on the rejection of the vestiges of metaphysics still embedded in our culture.

The description of the three authors of the main obstacle to overcoming the challenge of expanding the scope for innovation in the West is similar, both report that there are obstacles in the vocabulary we use to create new narratives for our time, an important part of these obstacles speech soaked in attempts (which will always be frustrated) of predicting the behavior of complex structures (Taleb), and yielding unconditionally since the destination designated by external agents (Unger) and immersed in enlightened vocabulary.

The suggestive aspect of these authors aims to present the means by which we can overcome these three categories of obstacles so that their proposals, once integrated in a common background, impel us to aim at a development and management system freed from the trap of the attempt of metaphysical foundations of institutions, and guided mainly by the ability to learn (Taleb) and to foster transformative practices (Unger).

Both proposals of Taleb and Unger share contempt towards the obstacles from a tradition that seeks certainty and security as key values on which to erect institutions. However the constraints that both establish to the core terms of the vocabulary they use fulfill the function of obstacles to a comprehensive integration of the terms of each other produce. In order to design a reflective support for both Rorty's romantic pragmatism comes as the vocabulary that assumes the role of ensuring the space for both the romantic experimentalism of Taleb, and for the pragmatic and radicalized experimentation of Unger. The Liberal Utopia proposal allows the impetus toward Taleb's unexpectedness to have not only space, but a centrality since the utopian aspect of Rorty's proposal suggests that the social structures constituted within this new vocabulary maintain a perpetual openness to new; since none of them will have a final form to be pursued by its operators, but the improvements resulting from external changes will always be open. Also Unger's rebellious impetus will have a special place since the solidification of institutions will depend on discourses and attitudes that serve the role of promoting constant self-reform as a goal to be perpetually pursued. Although it is not the case that there are current examples of this proposed society format, our purposeful proposal leads us to the need to pointing out at least some current tools that could serve as a basis for thinking about this model of social and economic planning that we aim for.

The currently available tool that is closest to what we suggest would be the Intelligent Cities model, a management format characterized by the high learning capacity of management in relation to the mobile aspects of a society (such as consumption habits and citizens' habits in relation to an environment or specific study). Also, there are the deepening of democracy through the application of the principle of secularism of the State to moral doctrines, the promotion of the culture of plebiscites and referendums. All these proposals could be put together in a single, anti-fragile, antidestiny and anti-metaphysical reflective medium, outlining the existence of a new vocabulary that rises among the intellectuals of different aspects in the contemporary world.

The three perspectives we dealt with here, and our effort to integrate them into a common background, are examples of a new vocabulary that has manifested itself among intellectuals, managers and market operators; thus to understand that the nuclear sector of this vocabulary is a requirement for intellectuals engaged in social, political and state issues.

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